

DIANA LOBEL
Boston University Department of Religion
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EDUCATION

PH.D. HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Jewish and Islamic Thought, June 1995

M.T.S. HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

History of Religions, June 1982

B.A. OBERLIN COLLEGE

Religion and Philosophy, May 1979

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Moses and Abraham Maimonides: Encountering the Divine. The Spark of Illumination, the Divine Name, and the Revelation at Mount Sinai. Boston: Academic Studies Press, forthcoming in March 2021.

Philosophies of Happiness: A Comparative Introduction to the Flourishing Life. New York: Columbia University Press, November 2017.

The Quest for God and the Good: World Philosophy as a Living Experience. New York: Columbia University Press, July 2011.

A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue: Philosophy and Mysticism in Bahya Ibn Paquda's Duties of the Heart. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's Kuzari. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

Articles

"Ehyeh asher Ehyeh and the Tetragrammaton: Between Eternity and Necessary Existence in Saadya, Maimonides, and Abraham Maimonides." *Review of Rabbinic Judaism*, Volume 23, Issue 1, April 2020.

"Being and Goodness: Maimonides on Ontological Beauty." *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, 19:1, October 2011.

"On the Lookout: A Sufi Riddle in Sulami, Qushayri, and Bahya Ibn Paquda." *Studies in Islamic and Arabic Culture*, Volume II. Edited by Binyamin Abrahamov. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 2006.

"'Silence is Praise to You': Maimonides On Negative Theology, Looseness of Expression, and Religious Experience," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* Volume 76, No. 1, Spring 2002.

“A Dwelling Place for the *Shekhinah*,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol 90 (1-2), July-October 1999.

Book Chapters

“Philosophers and Sufis in the Medieval Mediterranean World.” *History as Prelude: Jews and Muslims in the Medieval Mediterranean World*. Edited by Joseph Montville. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2011.

“Speaking About God: Bahya Ibn Paquda as Biblical Exegete.” *Philosophers and the Bible*. Edited by Robert Eisen and Charles Manekin. Maryland Universities Press, 2008.

"*Ittisal* and the *Amr Ilahi*: Divine Immanence and the World to Come in the *Kuzari*." *Esoteric and Exoteric Aspects in Judeo-Arabic Culture*. Edited by Benjamin H. Hary and Haggai Ben-Shammai. Leiden: Brill, 2006, 107-130.

“Taste and See that the Lord is Good: Halevi’s God Revisited.” *Be’erot Yitzhaq: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky*. Edited by Jay M. Harris. Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA:, 2005.

Encyclopedia Articles

“Bahya b. Paquda.” *Encyclopedia of Islam*3, 2012.

“Bahya Ibn Paquda.” *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter Publishing House, 2009.

Reviews

Review of Ehud Krinis, *God’s Chosen People: Judah Halevi’s Kuzari and the Shī’ī Imām Doctrine* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2014). *Journal of Semitic Studies* (Autumn 2016).

Review of Raymond Scheindlin, *The Song of the Distant Dove: Judah Halevi’s Pilgrimage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). *Speculum* 85/1 (January 2010).

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Associate Professor of Religion

Boston University, Promotion to Associate Professor with tenure as of September 2006.

Assistant Professor of Religion, Fall 2000-Summer 2006.

Harry Starr Fellow in Judeo-Arabic Culture

Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 1999.

Anna Smith Fine Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies and Graduate Advisor

Rice University, Department of Religious Studies, 1997-2000.

Visiting Research Fellow

Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies

University of Maryland at College Park, 1996-97.

Lecturer in University Honors Program and Judaic Studies

University of Maryland at College Park, 1996-97.

Teaching Fellow

Harvard University, 1986-97.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Member of Faculty Merit Review Committee, Department of Religion, Spring 2019-Spring 2020.

Member of Boston University GRS Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship (GRAF) Committee, Fall 2017-Spring 2019.

Department of Religion Liaison to Department of the Provost for Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2015-present.

Associate Director of Graduate Studies in Religion for Teaching Fellow Training, 2012-2019.

Graduate Teaching Fellow Coordinator, 2019-2020.

Run a seminar on pedagogy for Teaching Fellows and place all Religion Department Teaching Fellows and graders in their teaching assignments.

Member of Religion Department Tenure Review Committees, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2018.

Drafted reports on research, service, and teaching of three junior colleagues.

Co-coordinator for Track 2, Religious Thought, Graduate Division of Religious Studies, 2015-16.

Advisor to Religion Department Search Committee for position in East Asian Religions, Fall 2015.

Read 75 dossiers; created short list of 12 candidates with detailed notes on each candidate, which the Search Committee used in their deliberation.

Member of Dean's Committee to appoint new Director to BU Center for the Humanities, Spring 2008.

Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies in Religion, Fall 2008-Spring 2012.

Member of College of Arts and Sciences Academic Policy Committee (APC), Fall 2008-Spring 2011.

Member of Religion Department Search Committee for position in Islamic Studies, Spring 2009.

Coordinator for Philosophy of Religion, Division of Religious and Theological Studies, 2007-08.

Chair of CAS/GRS Humanities Curriculum Committee, Fall 2007-Spring 2008.

Member of Religion Department Search Committee for position in East Asian Religions, Spring 2007.

Member of CAS/GRS Humanities Curriculum Committee, Fall 2000-Spring 2006.

Associate Director for Graduate Admissions and Placement, Division of Religious and Theological Studies, 2004-05.

Reviewed and evaluated all files of students approved by area coordinators. Contacted by phone especially promising applicants and communicated findings and recommendations to Department Chair.

Member of Dean's Committee on Student Retention and Graduation, Fall 2000-Spring 2001.

Anonymous Peer Reviewer of Manuscripts for Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Columbia University Press, *Association for Jewish Studies Review*, *Brill Studies in Jewish History and Culture*, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, *Harvard Theological Review*, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*; review grant proposals for the Israel Science Foundation (ISF), 2000-Present.

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEES

Timothy Maness, *Redeeming Time: Special Relativity, Flowing Time, and Subjectivity in Religious Thought*. Examiner, December 2020.

David Rohr, *A Critical and Constructive Interpretation of C.S. Peirce's "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God"*. Examiner, April 2020

Andrew Linscott, *Negotiating Anthropomorphism: Reconsidering the Onto-Theological Tradition in Light of the Bio-cultural Study of Religion*. Third Reader, August 2019.

Troy Dujardin, *Faith and Evidentialism: The Concept of Faith and its Epistemic Implications*. Chair and Examiner, March 2019.

Maoqin Tang, *Self, the Ultimate, and "Others" in Pre-Qin Conceptions of Sagehood*. Examiner, August 2018.

Bin Song, *A Study of Comparative Philosophy of Religion on "Creatio Ex Nihilo" and "Sheng Sheng" (Birth Birth)*. Chair, July 2018.

Chaim Elly Moseson, *From the Spoken Word to the Discourse of the Academy: Reading the Sources for the Teachings of the Besht*. Chair, July 2017.

Benjamin Samuels, *How Advances in Science Change Jewish Law and Ethics: Assisted Reproductive Technologies and the Redefinition of Parenthood*. Examiner, June 2017.

Brian Jenkin, *John Dewey and an Ecological Philosophy of Religion*. Chair, January 2017.

Rebecca Esterson, *Secrets of Heaven: Allegory, Jews, the European Enlightenment and the Case of Emanuel Swedenborg*. Chair, December 2016.

Brian Loh, *Confucian Ritual and Solidarity: Physicality, Meaning, and Connection in Classical Confucianism*. Chair, May 2016.

Mireille Bishay, *Constituting Selves: Augustine, Sartre, and the Role of Religion in Structuring the Relationship Between Self and Other*. Third Reader, April 2016.

Achmad Tohe, *Muqatil ibn Sulayman: A Neglected Figure in the Early History of Qur'ānic Commentary*. Examiner, June 2015.

Kevin Taylor, *Habits of the Hearth: Parenting, Religion and the Good Life in America*. Examiner, March 2015.

Yair Lior, *Kabbalah and Neo-Confucianism: A Comparative Morphology of Medieval Movements*. Chair, January 2015.

Ezra Labaton, *A Comprehensive Analysis of Rabenu Abraham Maimuni's Biblical Commentary*. Third Reader, Brandeis University, July 2012.

Scott Girdner, *Reasoning with Revelation: The Significance of the Qur'ānic Contextualization of Philosophy in Al-Ghazālī's "Mishkāt Al -Anwār" ("The Niche of Lights")*. Second Reader, May 2009.

Catherine Hudak, *The Virtue of Humble Authority in Saint Thomas Aquinas and Master Zhu Xi*. Examiner, March 2009.

Aaron Spevack, *The Archetypal Sunni Scholar: Law, Theology, and Mysticism in the Synthesis of al-Bajuri*. Examiner, University Professors Program, March 2008.

Johannes Wich-Schwarz, *Transformations of Language and Religion in Rainer Maria Rilke*. Chair, May 2006.

Martin Kavka, *Being and Nonbeing: The Appropriation of the Greek Concept of to mé on in Jewish Thought*. Second Reader, Rice University, May 2000.

MASTER'S COMMITTEES

Eli Shaubi, *R. Abraham Maimonides: The Process of Attaining Prophecy*. Third Reader, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, December 2019.

Kamal-Edin Khashoggi, *Inverting the Void: A Comparison of al-Ghazālī and Descartes*. Second Reader, Department of Philosophy, May 2016.

Michael Peter Bacovcin, *Translating the Esoteric: Linguistic Mysticism and Medieval Jewish Translation*. Second Reader, May 2009.

Melissa Dupere, *The Jesuits in Japan and Their Interactions with Zen Buddhists*. Co-supervisor, December 2008.

Becca Rathburn, *Living Emptiness: The Liberation Story of Milarepa*. Second Reader, May 2007.

Scott Girdner, *Juan de la Cruz and the Via Negativa*. Co-supervisor, May 2004.

Danielle Perfit, *Focused on Freedom: Heschel's Hidden Dialogue with Maimonides*. First Reader, May 2003.

INVITED LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

"Maimonides on Faith and Trust." Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 28, 2020.

"The Voice at Mount Sinai." Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. June 8, 2019.

“Show Me Your Glory: Abraham Maimonides on God’s Created Light.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 19, 2018.

“The Divine Name *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*: I am that I am/I will be who I will be.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 30, 2017.

“Love Songs of the Soul: *Yedid Nefesh* and the Biblical Song of Songs.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. June 11, 2016

"How Can We Pray? Ibn Gabirol on the Paradox of Prayer," Alumni Weekend, Elie Wiesel Center of Judaic Studies, September 27, 2015.

“Finding God Within: Sufi Themes in the Poetry of Halevi and Rumi.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 23, 2015.

“Ibn Gabirol on the Paradox of Prayer.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. June 3, 2014

“The Unseen Seeing God: A Riddle in Medieval Hebrew Poetry.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 14, 2013.

“Maimonides on Prophecy and Revelation.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 26, 2012.

"Sufi Themes in Bahya Ibn Paquda's *Duties of the Heart*." Presentation as part of series Faith and Reason, moderated by Rabbi Benjamin Greenberg. Harvard Hillel. December 5, 2011.

“Being and Goodness: Maimonides and Augustine on Ontological Beauty.” Presentation to Boston University Department of Religion Faculty Colloquium, February 6, 2011.

“Maimonides on the Revelation at Mount Sinai: *Guide of the Perplexed* II:33. Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 13, 2010.

“Deuteronomy and the Rabbis on Mount Sinai.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 28, 2009.

“The Wisdom of Creation: *Genesis Rabbah* and *Proverbs* 8.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 8, 2008.

“Hymns of Creation: The *Rig Veda*, the *Tao Te Ching*, and *Genesis* 1.” Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 21, 2007.

“A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue.” Cambridge Community Authors Series and Porter Square Books. Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 9, 2007.

“On the Lookout: A Qur’anic Verse and its Sufi and Jewish Exegesis.” Presentation sponsored by the Luce Program in Scripture and Literary Arts, Boston University, February 8, 2007.

“On Prayer and Philosophical Contemplation in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Thought.” Presentation to the Society for Comparative Theology. Boston University School of Theology, November 10, 2006.

“The Afterlife in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish Thought.” Presentation to “Death and Immortality.” Boston University Department of Religion, October 20, 2005.

“Maimonides and Medieval Philosophy.” Presentation to “Christian Theology I.” Boston University School of Theology, February 24, 2005.

“Maimonides and the Sufi Strand in Jewish Thought.” Presentation at the Boston Colloquium for Philosophy of Science conference “Maimonides: Philosopher and Scientist.” Boston University, Monday November 8, 2004.

“Poetry and Philosophy: The Context of Bahya Ibn Paquda’s Philosophical Mysticism.” Presentation to the Humanities Foundation Society of Fellows, Boston University. March 30, 2004.

“Bahya Ibn Paquda as Biblical Exegete.” Invited participant in conference on “Philosophers and the Bible.” Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland. November 9, 2003.

“Maimonides on Knowledge and Passionate Love.” Presentation sponsored by Luce Program in Scripture and the Literary Arts and Medieval Conversations. Boston University, March 27, 2003.

“Imagination in Medieval Islamic Thought.” Chair of Study of Islam panel of the American Academy of Religion. December 2002, Toronto, Canada.

“Medieval Philosophy,” Presentation to PH 100 “Introduction to Philosophy.” Boston University, Feb. 2002.

“Philosophers and Sufis in the Medieval Mediterranean World.” *History as Prelude: Jews and Muslims in the Medieval Mediterranean World*. Consultation sessions of the Preventive Diplomacy Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 9, 2001, Washington, DC; May 11, 2001, Boston.

“The Sufi-Jewish Encounter in Muslim Spain: Divine Unity in Bahya Ibn Paquda’s *Duties of the Heart*,” Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, Washington, DC, December 2001.

“Maimonides and Bahya on Love and Awe: the Sufi Context.” Starr Seminar on Judeo-Arabic Culture, Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University, Spring 2000.

“Taste and See that the Lord is Good: Ha-Levi’s God Revisited.” Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, Chicago, December 1999.

“*Ittisal* and the *Amr Ilahi*: Divine Immanence and the World to Come in the *Kuzari*.” International Conference of the Society for Judeo-Arabic Studies. Emory University, August, 1999.

“Maimonides and Spinoza on Divine Knowledge.” Joint Conference of the North American Spinoza Society and the Academy for Jewish Philosophy. Hamilton College, June 1999.

“Silence is Praise to You:” Maimonides on Negative Theology and Religious Experience.” American Philosophical Association, Washington, D.C. December 1997.

“Maimonides and Ha-Levi on Revelation.” Academy for Jewish Philosophy, University of Nebraska, June 1997.

“The Religious Thought of Judah Ha-Levi.” Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, March 1996.

“Jewish Philosophy and the Spiritual Quest.” Six part lecture series. Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, Fall 1998.

“On Turning and Return: Maimonides’ Laws of Repentance.” Center For Theological Studies, Houston, Texas, September 1998.

"Jewish Philosophy: Philo to Spinoza." Four part lecture series, Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, July 1998.

"Duties of the Heart." Four part lecture series, Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, March 1998.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2003 Humanities Foundation Junior Fellowship, Boston University
- 1999 Harry Starr Fellowship in Judaica, Harvard University
- 1999 Graduate Teaching and Mentoring Award, Rice University
- 1999 Nomination, Phi Beta Kappa Award for Undergraduate Teaching, Rice University
- 1988 Danforth Award for Excellence in Teaching, Harvard University
- 1988 Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture Grant
- 1985 Fein-Pinansky Award, Combined Jewish Philanthropies
- 1978 Phi Beta Kappa, Oberlin College

COURSES TAUGHT

Boston University

- RN 206 Scriptures in World Religions
- RN 245 Religious Thought: The Quest for God and the Good
- PH 245 Philosophy and Religion (Crosslisted as RN 245)
- RN 323/623 Classical Jewish Thought
- RN 338 Mysticism and Philosophy: Jewish and Islamic Perspectives
- PH 408 History of Medieval Philosophy (Crosslisted as RN 338)
- RN 452 Topics in Religious Thought: Religious Thought, East and West
- RN 452 Topics in Religious Thought: Maimonides in Comparative Perspective
- RN 452 Topics in Religious Thought: Happiness, East and West/PH 450 Types of Ethical Theory
- RN 452: Topics in Religious Thought: Mysticism: East and West
- STH TT 901 Core Texts and Motifs in World Religions—East

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Academy of Religion

Association for Jewish Studies

Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies