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# Dr. Aryeh Cohen

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## Functional summary

Aryeh Cohen is Associate Professor of Rabbinic Literature at the University of Judaism. He has taught at Hebrew Union College/Jewish Institute of Religion, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Brandeis University. Dr. Cohen is the author of *Rereading Talmud: Gender, Law and the Poetics of Sugyot* (Scholars Press, 1998) and co-editor of *Beginning/Again: Towards a Hermeneutics of Jewish Texts* (Seven Bridges Press, 2002). He is also a member of the *Sh'ma* advisory board. Cohen is a popular lecturer on Talmud, on politics and on the contemporary Jewish scene. His writing on these topics and others has been published in *Conservative Judaism*, *Sh'ma*, *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, *The Association of Jewish Studies Review*, *Tikkun*, *The Reconstructionist*, *Kerem*, *The Jewish Spectator*, *The Jewish Journal* and elsewhere.

Dr. Cohen's varied experiences bring a unique perspective to some of the focal issues facing the contemporary American Jewish community. Cohen grew up in the Orthodox world, made aliyah at the age of 17 and served in the Army in the Hesder [joint yeshivah and army] program while at Yeshivat Har Etzion—one of the premier institutions of the Hesder movement. He lived in Israel for twelve years. During this time he completed his B.A. at the Hebrew University and worked with Geshar promoting dialogue between religious and secular high school students. He studied at the Hartman Institute in Jerusalem for two years before returning to the United States to do his Doctoral work at Brandeis University. While at Brandeis, Cohen was a member and teacher at Havurat Shalom, an egalitarian and consensus-based prayer and learning community in Boston. Dr. Cohen came to Los Angeles in 1995 to join the faculty of the University of Judaism. As a professor of Talmud in the Conservative Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Dr. Cohen had the responsibility and privilege of creating the curriculum for the Talmud program and was tasked with being the inaugural chair of the Rabbinics department. In this capacity he helped train the first class of Rabbinic students ordained west of the Mississippi. Since then the Ziegler School has ordained many classes of Rabbis.

Dr. Cohen is one of the founders of the Shtibl, a hassidic egalitarian minyan, which combines the passion of ecstatic prayer with commitments to egalitarianism and social justice. He is also the past president of the Progressive Jewish Alliance. As a board member of the PJA he helped found the Jewish Community Justice Project. This project—founded in partnership with Bet Tshuvah—trains mediators to help bring resolution to non-violent crimes by facilitating a conversation between victim and offender. JCJP has trained forty five mediators in a combination of technical mediation training and Jewish text study on issues of justice, compromise, tshuvah (repentance) and change. Dr. Cohen wrote all and taught much of the text study curriculum. He is also a mediator with the program.

For the past three years Dr. Cohen has been a participant in a unique and groundbreaking project at the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton

University. The project called the Scriptural Reasoning Group brings together Christian, Moslem and Jewish Scholars to study their holy texts together and to learn from each other.

Dr. Cohen is also a member of the advisory board of the Religious Perspectives on Work project of the Chicago based Interfaith Worker Justice.

## Education

**Brandeis University**, Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.

PhD - February 1996

M.A. - February 1992

Summer 1992:

**The School of Criticism and Theory at Dartmouth College**, Hanover, NH.

September, 1986 to June, 1988:

**Shalom Hartman Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies**, Jerusalem, Israel, Research fellow and member of the Institute's Center for Medicine, Ethics, and Halakhah.

September, 1982 to June, 1988:

**Hebrew University of Jerusalem**, Departments of Philosophy and Jewish Thought. B.A. -January 1988.

June, 1978 to August, 1982:

**Yeshivat Har Etzion**, Alon Shvut, Israel.

September, 1976 to June, 1978:

**Yeshivat Shaalvim**, D.N. Emek Ayalon, Israel.

## Employment

2001 - 2005: Associate Professor of Rabbinic Literature and Chair of Rabbinic Studies, **Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, University of Judaism**, Los Angeles CA.

2000 - 2001: Assistant Professor of Rabbinic Literature and Chair of Rabbinic Studies, **Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, University of Judaism**, Los Angeles CA.

1995 - 2000: Assistant Professor of Rabbinic Literature and Chair of Undergraduate Jewish Studies, **University of Judasim**, Los Angeles, CA

1994 - 1995: Instructor, **Reconstructionist Rabbinical College**, Wyncotte, PA.

1991 - 1992: Hebrew Language Instructor, **Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies**, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.

## Books and articles

- Beginning/Again : Towards a Hermeneutics of Jewish Texts*, ed. with Shaul Magid, Seven Bridges Press.
- Rereading Talmud: Gender, Law and the Poetics of Sugyot*, Brown University Series in Jewish Studies, Scholars Press.
- "Permeable Boundaries," *Conservative Judaism*.  
Anthologized in *Best Jewish Writing of 2002*
- "A New Prayer for Israel," *Tikkun*.
- "'This Patriarchy Which is Not One': The Ideology of Marriage in Rashi and Tosafot," *Hebrew Union College Annual*.
- "Teaching Troubling Texts," *Sh'ma*.
- "Giddul's Wife and the Power of the Court: On Talmudic Law, Gender, Divorce and Exile," *Review of Law, Women and Society*.
- "This Patriarchy Which is Not One: The Ideology of Marriage in *Rashi and Tosafot*," *Hebrew Union College Annual*.
- "'Do the dead know...': The Representation of Death in the Bavli," *AJS Review*.
- "On Fathers and Daughters," *Kerem: Creative Explorations in Judaism*.  
Anthologized in *Dancing on the Edge of the World*
- Review of David Kraemer, *Reading the Rabbis: The Talmud as Literature*, *Hebrew Studies*.
- "Towards an Erotics of Martyrdom," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*.
- "Getting From Tisha B'av to Yom Kippur," *Conservative Judaism*.
- "Reading, Exile and Redemption: A Meditation on the Talmudic Project," *The Reconstructionist*.
- "On Judaism and Jewish Studies," *Textual Reasoning*.
- "The New Sodomites," *Tikkun*.
- "Notes Towards An Erotics of Matryrdom," *Textual Reasoning*.
- "Framing Women/Constructing Exile: A Reading of Bavli Gittin 34b-35b," *The Postmodern Jewish Philosophy Bitnetwork*.

## Lectures

- "The Beginnings of Judaism: The Rabbis Write Their Own History"
- "Talmudic Spirituality or 'Is this the answer to my prayer?'"
- "When God Cried: Talmudic Stories of Exile and God"
- "The Woman Who Was Midrash: The Relationship Between Beruriah and Rabbi Meir"
- "Zionism, Post-Zionism, and the Relationship Between Israel and the Diaspora."
- "The New Sodomites: A Rabbinic Approach to Social Justice."
- "Israel, Zionism and the Ethics of Power."
- "We Are Still Slaves of Ahaseurus": Purim in the Talmud
- "Who is the Evil Son?": Understanding the Seder
- "The Hole in the Middle of the Table: The Mishnah and Talmud Interpret Passover"
- "Leading a Traditional Life as a Spiritual Path"
- "The Talmud and Death."

## Synagogues and

Valley Beth Shalom, Encino  
Temple Anshe Emeth, Chicago

**Institutions taught at**

JESNA National Board Kallah  
Temple Kol Emeth, Palo Alto  
Malibu Jewish Center, Malibu  
Temple Beth Am, Los Angeles  
Temple Chai, Phoenix  
The Fire Island Synagogue, Fire Island  
Temple Aliyah, Woodland Hills, CA  
Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles  
Temple Emmanuel, Los Angeles  
Ohev Sholom Congregation, York, PA  
Congregation Beth El, San Diego  
Brandeis Bardin Institute

UCLA  
Stanford University  
Johns Hopkins University  
Jewish Theological Seminary  
Hebrew Union College  
Hebrew College, Boston  
San Diego State University  
University of Toronto

**Professional memberships**

Association for Jewish Studies  
American Academy of Religion  
Society for Biblical Literature  
The Authors Guild