

NAME: Mark E. Washofsky

ADDRESS: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
3101 Clifton Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

E-MAIL: mwashofsky@huc.edu

DATE OF BIRTH: September 26, 1952

POSITION: Chair, Solomon B. Freehof Institute of Progressive Halakhah
Professor of Jewish Law and Practice, Emeritus, Hebrew Union College-
Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati

EDUCATION: Ph.D., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati,
1987.
Rabbinic Ordination, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion,
Cincinnati, 1980.
B.A., University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, 1974.

DISSERTATION: *The ROSH and the RAMBAM: The Halakhah of Ashkenaz Confronts the
Tradition of Sefarad.*

BOOKS:

Reform Responsa for the Twenty-First Century: Sh'eilot Ut'shuvot. New York: CCAR Press,
2010.

Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice. New York: URJ Press, Revised
edition, 2010.

(with W. Gunther Plaut). *Teshuvot for the Nineties: Recent American Reform Responsa.* New
York: CCAR Press, 1997.

.

ARTICLES:

[“Reform Halachah and the Claim of Authority: From Theory to Practice and Back Again,”](#)
CCAR Journal 67:2, (Spring, 2020), pp. 54-73.

[“Is There a Jewish Version of the ‘Just War’ Doctrine? Some Notes on the Nature of Halachic
Interpretation,”](#) *CCAR Journal* 66:2 (Spring, 2019), pp. 74-94.

[“Kiddushin as a Progressive Halakhic Concept: Toward a Theory of Progressive Halakhah,”](#) Walter Jacob, ed., *The Modern Family and Jewish Law*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2018, pp. 27-80.

“A Time to Heal and a Time to Cease from Healing: Reform Halakhah on End-Stage Medical Care,” in David Birnbaum and Martin S. Cohen, eds., *U-vacharta Ba-chayim*. New York: New Paradigm Matrix, 2018, pp. 215-228.

“The Jewish Path,” in Dana Evan Kaplan, ed., *A Life of Meaning: Embracing Reform Judaism’s Sacred Path*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2018, pp. 191-198.

[“Halakhah as Translation: On the Custody of Children in Jewish Law,”](#) in Walter Jacob, ed., *The Modern Child and Jewish Law*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2017, pp. 1-63.

“Halakhah, Responsa, and Reform Judaism,” *Uniao do Judaismo Reformista*, 2017, www.ujr-amlat.org/art/enhalakhah-responsa-and-reform-judaism.

[“What’s So Special About Halakhic Reasoning? Cigarette Smoking, Jewish Law, and Rabbinical Decision Making,”](#) in Walter Jacob, ed., *Addiction and Its Consequences in Jewish Law*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2015, pp. 37-88.

[“Ha-p’sikah ha-reformit: al mishpat v’retorikah b’chayei k’hilah y’hudit-liberalit”](#) (“Reform Halakhic Decision Making: On Law and Rhetoric in the Life of a Liberal Jewish Community”), in Avinoam Rozenak, ed., *Hayahadut hareformit: hagut, tarbut v’chevrah*. Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute/Hakibutz Hame’uchad, 2014, pp. 161-182.

“Getting Our *Get* Back: On Restoring the Ritual of Divorce in American Reform Judaism,” in Lisa J. Grushcow, ed., *The Sacred Encounter: Jewish Perspectives on Sexuality*. New York: CCAR Press, 2014, pp. 407-414.

“It’s *Our* Book: A Talmudic Reading for Reform Jews,” *CCAR Journal* 61:3 (Summer, 2014), pp. 17-30.

[“Privacy, the Internet, and Progressive Halakhah,”](#) in Walter Jacob, ed., *The Internet Revolution and Jewish Law*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2014, pp. 81-142.

[“The Woodchopper Revisited: On Analogy, Halakhah, and Jewish Bioethics,”](#) Walter Jacob, ed., *Medical Frontiers and Jewish Law*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2012, pp. 1-64.

[“Torture, Terrorism, and the Halakhah,”](#) in Walter Jacob, ed., *War and Terrorism in Jewish Law*. Pittsburgh: Solomon B. Freehof Institute of Progressive Halakhah, 2010, pp. 3-50.

“Faith and Fertility in Reform Jewish Thought,” in Eric Blyth and Ruth Landau, editors, *Faith*

and Fertility: Attitudes Towards Reproductive Practices in Different Religions from Ancient to Modern Times. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2009, pp. 225-245.

[“Narratives of Enlightenment: On the Use of the ‘Captive Infant’ Story by Recent Halakhic Authorities,”](#) in Walter Jacob, ed., *Napoleon’s Influence on Jewish Law*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2007, pp. 93-147.

[“On the Absence of Method in Jewish Bioethics: Rabbi Yehezkel Landau on Autopsy,”](#) in Alyssa Gray and Bernard Jackson, eds., *Jewish Law Association Studies XVII* (2007), pp. 254-278.

[“Halachah, Aggadah, and Reform Jewish Bioethics: A Response,”](#) *CCAR Journal* 53:3 (Summer, 2006), 81-106.

(With Harvey Gordon). “Jewish Bioethics,” in John F. Peppin, Mark J. Cherry, and Ana Iltis, eds., *The Annals of Bioethics: Religious Perspectives in Bioethics*. Leiden, Netherlands: Taylor and Francis, 2004, pp. 131-146.

[“Against Method: On Halakhah and Interpretive Communities,”](#) in Walter Jacob, ed., *Beyond the Letter of the Law: Essays on Diversity in the Halakhah*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2004, pp. 17-77.

[“Taking Precedent Seriously: On Halakhah as a Rhetorical Practice,”](#) in Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer, eds., *Re-Examining Reform Halakhah* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), pp. 1-70.

[“Halakhah in Translation: The Chatam Sofer on Prayer in the Vernacular,”](#) *CCAR Journal* 51:3 (Summer, 2004), pp. 142-163.

[“Responsa and the Art of Writing: Three Examples from the Teshuvot of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein,”](#) in Peter S. Knobel and Mark N. Staitman, eds., *An American Rabbinate: A Festschrift for Walter Jacob*. Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2001, pp. 149-204.

“Conversion to Judaism: The Question of Motivation,” in Stephen J. Einstein and Lydia Kukoff, eds., *Introduction to Judaism: Instructor’s Guide and Curriculum*. New York: UAHC Press, 1999, pp. 88-105 and 156.

[“Is Old Age a Disease? The Elderly, the Medical System, and the Halakhah,”](#) in Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer, eds. *Age and Aging in the Halakhah*, Tel Aviv and Pittsburgh, Freehof Institute of Progressive Halakhah, 1998, pp. 43-82.

Twenty-two entries in R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1997.

[“Abortion and the Halakhic Conversation: A Liberal Perspective,”](#) in Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer, eds., *The Fetus and Fertility in Jewish Law*. Tel Aviv and Pittsburgh, Freehof Institute of Progressive Halakhah, 1995, pp. 39-89.

“Reinforcing our Jewish Identity: Issues of Personal Status,” *CCAR Yearbook* 104 (1994), pp. 51-57.

[“Responsa and Rhetoric: On Law, Literature, and the Rabbinic Decision,”](#) *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder*, London, Sheffield Press, 1994, pp. 360-409.

[“Halakhah and Ulterior Motives: Rabbinic Discretion and the Law of Conversion”](#), in Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer, eds., *Conversion to Judaism in Jewish Law*, Tel Aviv and Pittsburgh, Freehof Institute of Progressive Halakhah, 1994, pp. 1-47.

“Medieval Halakhic Literature and the Reform Rabbi: A Neglected Relationship,” *CCAR Journal*, Fall 1993, pp. 61-74.

“*Minhag* and *Halakhah*: Toward a Model of Shared Authority on Matters of Ritual”, in Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer, eds., *Rabbinic-Lay Relations in Jewish Law*, Tel Aviv and Pittsburgh, Freehof Institute of Progressive Halakhah, 1993, pp. 99-126.

Biographical entries on: Samuel Atlas, Alexander Guttmann, Jacob Z. Lauterbach and Moses Mielziner in Mark Raphael, ed., *Reform Judaism in America*, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1993.

“The Proposal for a National *Beit Din*: Is It Good for the Jews?”, in Michael Shapiro, ed., *Divisions Between Traditionalism and Liberalism in the American Jewish Community*, Lewiston, NY, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991, pp. 35-54.

“The Study of Talmud and Halacha: A Survey of Some Recent Scholarship”, *Journal of Reform Judaism*, Spring, 1991, pp. 1-16.

“The Search for a Liberal Halakhah: A Progress Report”, in Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer, eds., *Dynamic Jewish Law*, Tel Aviv and Pittsburgh, Freehof Institute of Progressive Halakhah, 1991, pp. 25-52.

“Morality and Choice: A Response to Daniel Callahan”, in Barry S. Kogan, ed., *A Time to Be Born and A Time to Die: The Ethics of Choice*, New York, Aldine de Gruyter, 1991, pp. 73-82.

“Nancy Cruzan and the ‘Right to Die’: A Jewish Perspective,” *Midwest Medical Ethics*, Fall, 1990, pp. 5-10.

“R. Nissim b. Reuben Gerondi and the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides,” *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Hebrew section, Jerusalem, 1990, Division C, v. 1, pp. 187-194.

“The Commentary of R. Nissim b. Reuben Gerondi to the Halakhot of Alfasi: A Study in Halakhic History,” *Hebrew Union College Annual*, v. 60, 1989, pp. 191-258.

“Halakhah and Political Theory: A Study in Jewish Legal Response to Modernity,” *Modern Judaism*, October, 1989, pp. 289-310.

“AIDS and Ethical Responsibility: Some Halakhic Considerations,” *Journal of Reform Judaism*, Winter, 1989, pp. 53-65.

Biographical entries on: Simcha Assaf, Louis Ginsberg, J.Z. Lauterbach, Saul Lieberman, Moses Schreiber and I.H. Weiss, in *The Blackwell Companion to Jewish Culture*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989.

“A Fitting Response: A Jewish Perspective” (on discontinuation of heroic therapy in terminal cases), in *Second Opinion*, published by The Park Ridge Center, An Institute for the Study of Health, Faith and Ethics, v. 7, March 1988, pp. 34-39.

“R. Asher b. Yehiel and the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides,” in David R. Blumenthal, ed., *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times III*, Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1988, pp. 147-157.

(with Howard L. Apothaker) “Patrilineality and Presumption,” *Journal of Reform Judaism*, Summer, 1984.

“The Recalcitrant Husband: The Problem of Definition,” *Jewish Law Annual*, v. 4, Leiden, Brill, 1981.

“Abortion, Halacha, and Reform Judaism,” *Journal of Reform Judaism*, Fall, 1981.

REVIEWS:

Fishbane, Simcha, *The Boldness of an Halakhist: An Analysis of the Writings of Rabbi Yechiel Mechel Halevi Epstein's Arukh Hashulhan*. H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews. December, 2008.
URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=23501>

David Novak, *Natural Law in Judaism*, in *AJS Review*, vol. 26 (2002), pp. 384-385.

Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture*, in *Speculum* 74/4 (October, 1999), 1035-1037.

Peter J. Haas, *Responsa: Literary History of a Rabbinic Genre*, in *Shofar* 17:2 (Winter, 1999), 134-135.

Simcha Fishbane, *The Method and Meaning of the Mishnah Berurah*, in *AJS Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1994, pp. 106-108.

Walter Jacob, *Questions and Reform Jewish Answers: New American Reform Responsa*, in *Reform Judaism*, vol. 22, no. 4, Summer, 1994, pp. 64-67.

Jonathan R. Ziskind, transl. and ed., *John Selden on Jewish Marriage Law: The Uxor Hebraica*, in *Shofar*, v. 11, no. 1, Fall, 1992, pp. 148-150.

Richard Kalmin, *The Redaction of the Babylonian Talmud*, in *Shofar*, v. 8, no. 4, Summer, 1990, pp. 134-136.

Nina Beth Cardin and David Wolf Silverman, eds., *The Seminary at 100*, in *American Jewish Archives*, Fall-Winter, 1991, pp. 270-272.

Simon Greenberg, ed., *The Ordination of Women as Rabbis*; J. Simcha Cohen, *Intermarriage and Conversion: A Halakhic Solution*; and Aaron Levine, *Economics and Jewish Law: Halakhic Perspectives*, in *Religious Studies Review*, 1988.

Joel Roth, *The Halakhic Process*, in *Religious Studies Review*, 1987.

R. Shain, *All for the Boss*, in *Religious Studies Review*, 1986.

RESPONSA:

“*Tzedakah*, Recession, and Social Policy,” *CCAR Journal*, Spring, 2010, 45-58.

“Compulsory Immunization,” *CCAR Journal*, Fall, 2000, 96-106.

“The Second Festival Day and Reform Judaism,” *CCAR Journal*, Spring, 2000, 41-52.

“Who Is a Rabbi?” *CCAR Journal*, Winter, 2000, 67-76.

“May a Physician Refuse to Treat a Patient Who Lacks Health Insurance?” *CCAR Journal*, Fall, 1999, 35-42.

“Orthodox Minyan in a Reform Synagogue,” *CCAR Journal*, Summer, 1999, 74-82.

“In Vitro Fertilization and the *Mitzvah* of Childbearing,” *CCAR Journal*, Winter, 1999, 87-99.

“The Reform Rabbi’s Obligations Toward the UAHC,” *CCAR Journal*, Fall, 1998, 55-61.

“On Homosexual Marriage,” *CCAR Journal*, Winter, 1998; *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook* 108 (1997-1998), 43-76.

“On the Treatment of the Terminally Ill,” *CCAR Journal*, Spring, 1997 (= *Teshuvot for the Nineties*, pp. 337-364).

“Kaddish for Adoptive and Biological Parents,” *CCAR Journal*, Winter, 1994, 79-85.

PAPERS AND LECTURES:

“*Halakhah* as a Language for Reform Jews,” Symposium One, HUC-JIR, New York, November 14, 2016.

“Reform Halakhic Decision-Making,” The Van Leer Institute Conference on Reform Judaism, Jerusalem, December 25, 2007.

“Jewish Law, Bioethics, and Stem Cell Research.” University of Tulsa College of Law, January 18, 2007.

“Human Stem Cell Research: A Jewish Perspective,” John Carroll University, March 21, 2002.

“*Halakhah* and Interpretive Communities,” Conference on the Academic Study of Jewish Law, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, March 16, 2001.

“Judaism and Advertising,” The Jules Backman Lecture, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, May 15, 2000.

“Is There a Jewish Bioethics? A Response to Elliot Dorff,” The Second International Conference on Jewish Perspectives on Bioethics in the 21st Century, Boston University, October 10, 1999.

“Reform Judaism and Homosexual Marriage,” Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC, February 18, 1999.

“From *Halakhah* to *Mishpat Ivri*: Women’s Suffrage and the Politics of Rabbinic Decision”, International Conference on *Mishpat Ivri* and Talmudic Sources, New York, February 14-15, 1993.

“The Study of Medieval Halakhic Literature: The State of Present Research”, Symposium on the Academic Study of Judaism and the Reform Rabbinate, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio, Nov. 1, 1992.

Response to Dr. Daniel Callahan, “New Developments in the Abortion Debate,” The Starkoff Institute of Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems, Cincinnati, Ohio, October 16, 1989.

“R. Nissim b. Reuben Gerondi and the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides,” Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, August 21, 1989.

“The Halakhic Process in American Reform Judaism,” North American Chevra Conference, CLAL (National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership), Homowack Lodge, NY, June 9, 1987.

“The Warrant for Abortion in the Halakhic Tradition,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, May 8, 1987.

“R. Asher b. Yehiel and the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides: A New Look at Some Old Evidence,” Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, Dec. 16, 1986.

“Halakhah and Political Theory: Rabbinic Thought and the New Jewish State,” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Washington, DC, Nov. 14, 1986.

“The Langer Case: The Conflict Between Equity and Halakhah,” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Knoxville, TN, November, 1983.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT:

Professor of Rabbinics, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1985-present.

Instructor in Homiletics, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, 1982-1985.

RABBINIC EMPLOYMENT: Beth Israel Synagogue, Hamilton, OH, 1981-1985.

Temple Ohev Israel, Newark, OH 1979-1980.

Temple Israel, Blytheville, AR, 1976-1978.

OTHER:

President, Solomon B. Freehof Institute for Progressive Halakhah, 2018 – present.

Chair, Committee on Responsa, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1996-2017.

Simon Lazarus Memorial Prize, HUC-JIR, 1980.

Rabbi Morris H. Youngerman Prize, HUC-JIR, 1980.

Mother Hirsch Prize, HUC-JIR, 1978.

Bnai Zion Medal, HUC-JIR, 1976.

Phi Beta Kappa, University of Alabama, 1974.