



ACADEMY
for JEWISH
RELIGION

Sacred Arts Summer Institute *2016 Presenters*



Rabbi Alan Brill, PhD

Alan Brill is the Cooperman/Ross Endowed Chair for Jewish-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University in New Jersey where he teaches Jewish studies in the graduate program. Brill is the author of *Thinking God: The Mysticism of Rabbi Zadok of Lublin* (2002), *Judaism and Other Religions: Models Of Understanding* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), and *Judaism and World Religions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Dr. Brill received his BA, MA, and Ordination from Yeshiva University and his PhD from the Department of Theology at Fordham University. Currently, he is engaged in long term research on a book on the Varieties of Modern Orthodoxy. He was a Fulbright Senior Scholar awardee to research and teach at Banares Hindu University in Varanasi, India. Brill is completing a book tentatively entitled *Rabbi on The Ganges*, a comparative theology seeking to understand Hindu religions with Jewish eyes.



Rabbi Jill Hammer, PhD

Rabbi Hammer is the Director of Spiritual Education at the Academy for Jewish Religion. She was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2001 and holds a doctorate in social psychology from the University of Connecticut. At AJR, she specializes in ancient and contemporary midrash, mysticism, and spirituality.

Rabbi Hammer is the author of seven books: *Sisters at Sinai: New Tales of Biblical Women*, *The Jewish Book of Days: A Companion for All Seasons*, *The Omer Calendar of Biblical Women*, *The Garden of Time*, *The Hebrew Priestess: Ancient and New Visions of Jewish Women's Spiritual Leadership*, *Tree Psalms*, and *The Book of Earth and other Mysteries* (forthcoming 2017). Rabbi Hammer is the co-founder of the Kohenet Institute, a program in Jewish women's spiritual leadership. Her academic articles, essays, *midrashim* and poems have been published in many journals and newspapers.



Rabbi Hanniel Levenson

Rabbi Hanniel Levenson is a sabra, not the thorny desert plant, known in English as Prickly Pear, but born on the same soil. His formative years were shaped on the middle east side of Manhattan. An expert in the train system, Hanniel received a B.A. in Religion & Art from New York University, a Master of Science in Environmental Policy from Bard College, and rabbinical ordination from the Academy for Jewish Religion in Yonkers, New York.

Hanniel was a competitive gymnast for 15 years and is now a yoga teacher and personal trainer. Founder of The God Shop and Seven Heart Center, Hanniel asks all free seekers and spiritual warriors to join him on the body-mind-soul train.

Hanniel most recently served as the Associate Rabbi and Director of Education at The Jewish Center of the Hamptons.



Rabbi Jeff Hoffman, DHL

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman is the Rabbi-in-Residence at the Academy for Jewish Religion. He holds a doctorate in liturgy from the Jewish Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Karov L'Chol Korav: For All Who Call A Manual For Enhancing the Teaching of Prayer*; and the editor of *Siddur Tisha B Av* for The Rabbinical Assembly. He is also the author of several articles and reviews including “*The Image of the Other in Jewish Interpretations of Alenu*,” “*El Adon: An Historical, Literary, and Spiritual Commentary*,” and “*Akdmut: History, Folklore, Meaning*.” As a member of the AJR administration and faculty, Rabbi Hoffman teaches courses in Liturgy, Rabbinics, and Professional Skills.

He served for three years as an assistant rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Vancouver, British Columbia and for twenty years as rabbi of Congregation Sons of Israel in Nyack, New York.

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