

English Bios of Lecturers Teaching in English

Rabbinit Shayna Abramson was born in New York and currently resides in Jerusalem. She is a musmekhet of Beit Midrash Har'el. She is also an Eden Center-certified instructor in the laws of niddah. Rabbi Shayna holds M.A.s in Jewish Education and in Political Science from Hebrew University, and a B.A. in History from Johns Hopkins University. Her M.A. thesis focused on women's mivkah experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. She is currently pursuing a PHD, with a focus on gender and halacha, from Bar Ilan University.

Rabbi Sara Brandes was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Rabbi Sara Brandes is author of *Magical World: Stories, Reflection, Poems* and hands-on healer at Awakened Body. Making her home on in the intentional community, Kibbutz Hannaton in the north of Israel, she guides clients in weaving narratives of meaning, in order to feel more vitally alive.

Dr. Michal Fram Cohen received her Ph.D. in Hebrew Literature from Bar-Ilan University in 2017 and has M.A.'s in Jewish Studies and Comparative Literature. Following a career in computer programming, she became a Hebrew-English translator/interpreter and taught Hebrew in American Universities. Dr. Fram Cohen is currently affiliated with the Open University of Israel as a seminar paper supervisor (since 2018) and lectures both here and abroad on Hebrew Literature, focusing on the early Hebrew women writers.

Rabbi Sara Cohen is a member of Kibbutz Ketura where she has lived and worked since 1986. Sara was ordained by the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary in Jerusalem in 2017 and presently as a regional rabbi in the Eilat region in the southern Arava valley of Israel, making her the first Conservative Rabbi to receive government funding to serve as a municipal rabbi. Sara was one of the founders of the Keren Kolot educational tourism business located on Ketura, and served as the Community Manager of the kibbutz for seven years. She holds a M. A. from the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jewish Studies and Gender, and a B.A. from Barnard College, Columbia University, in Comparative Religion.

Naomi Graetz taught English for 35 years at Ben Gurion University of the Negev. She has been living in Israel since 1967 and in Omer, since 1974. She is the author of *Forty Years of Being a Feminist Jew in Israel: A Book of Essays*, *Unlocking the Garden: A Feminist Jewish Look at the Bible, Midrash and God*, *The Rabbi's Wife Plays at Murder*, *S/He Created Them: Feminist Retellings of Biblical Stories*, and *Silence is Deadly: Judaism Confronts Wifebeating*. For more than 10 years she has been teaching bible as a volunteer. Since 2020 she has been teaching bible and modern midrash classes on zoom. She blogs at the Times of Israel. All of her books are available on-line. Contact her at naomigraetz1943@gmail.com.

Rabbi Nathalie Lastreger was ordained by the Schechter Rabbinical School, is serving as Rabbi of Kehilah Haminyan Hamishpachti in Kfar Vradim in the Upper Gallilee for over four years, from summer 2016. Before that she served in Masorti Rabbinical and educational positions in Israel and abroad and pre-Army academies. She is active in organizations for social change with emphasis on the rights of women and minorities. Rabbi Lastreger has a B.A. in Life Sciences and an M.A. in Political Science, from the Hebrew University and has completed studies for an advanced degree in Midrash, Halacha and Talmud at the Schechter Institute.

Rabbi Amy Levin: The second woman ordained by the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary of the Masorti Movement, has trained in the Rav Hamachshir program of The Jewish Theological Seminary and the "Consulting for Vital Congregations" program of The Alban Institute. She has served as rabbi in congregations in Israel and in the United States and is also the past president of The Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island. In that role she has testified before the Rhode Island General Assembly supporting new legislation regarding same sex marriage, gun control, funding for domestic violence education and more. Rabbi Levin has served on the faculty of the Schechter Institute, Hebrew Union College and The Conservative Yeshiva. Since 2011, Rabbi Levin has served on the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the international Rabbinical Assembly. She returned to Israel in the summer of 2016 and lives on Kibbutz Hanaton. From there, she has established two projects: Pirka: Mobile Jewish Learning (www.pirkalearning.net) providing on line adult Jewish learning and Tzibur Strategies for Vital Congregations and Their Leadership (www.tziburstrategies.net) providing consulting and coaching for congregations.

Rabbi Dr. Haviva Ner-David is a rabbi and writer. She is the founding rabbinic chairperson of Shmaya: A Mikveh for Mind, Body and Soul, at Kibbutz Hannaton. She is the author of two published spiritual journey memoirs: *Life on the Fringes: A Feminist Journey Towards Traditional Rabbinic Ordination* (JFL Books, 2000) and *Chanah's Voice: A Rabbi Wrestles with Gender, Commandment, and the Women's Rituals of Baking, Bathing, and Brightening* (Ben Yehuda Press, 2014). Her debut novel, *Hope Valley* -- the story of an unexpected friendship between a Palestinian-Israeli and a Jewish-Israeli woman in Galilee -- is due to be published in 2021, as well as her third memoir, *Dreaming Against the Current: A Rabbi's Soul Journey and a marriage and wedding preparation book titled Getting (and Staying) Married Jewishly: Preparing for your Life Together through Ancient and Modern Wisdom*. Rabbi Ner-David is a spiritual director with a specialty in dreamwork, and she works with both individuals and couples. At Shmaya, she officiates and creates mikveh ceremonies and runs workshops for visiting groups.

Cantor Shula Resnick made aliyah from Latvia in 1995. She received cantorial ordination from the Maalot Seminary in 2004 and graduated from the Si'im Israeli Folk Dance Instructor program in 2008. She has extensive experience in both the performing arts and Jewish communal work in Israel, the former USSR and the United States. Shulamit has served as Director of the Eilat Folkdance Ensemble (Riga, 1992-1995), spiritual leader of the Beit-Chaverim Congregation (Calvert County, Maryland, 2003-2005) and director of the Shirat Hasharon immigrant outreach program (Raanana and surroundings, 2005-2008).

Rabbi Dr. Sigalit Ur is a graduate of the Shalom Hartman Institute and Ha'Midrasha Be'Oranim's Beit Midrash for Israeli Rabbis. She received her PhD in Rabbinic Literature from Tel Aviv University. Sigalit co-directs the (recently formed) Israeli Rabbis Movement, is a Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, and teaches Jewish texts and ideas in a variety of venues across the Galilee.

Rabbi Diana Villa, born in Argentina, is a graduate of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary. She has academic degrees in philosophy, Jewish philosophy and psychology and a research M.A. in Talmud. She is currently a doctoral student in Philosophy of Jewish Law at Bar Ilan University. She was one of two senior researchers at the Center for Women in Jewish Law until it closed down in 2009. She is the co-

author of "Za'akat Dalot - Halakhic Solutions for the Agunot of Our Time" (published in Hebrew in 2006) and "Ask the Rabbi – Women Rabbis Respond to Modern Halakhic Questions" (in English), published in 2010. The Center published two series of booklets: "Jewish Law Watch" (alternative rulings to agunot cases tried in rabbinic courts, in Hebrew and English) and "To Learn and to Teach", dealing with issues related to women in Jewish law, in 5 languages, available at <https://responsafortoday.com/>

Rabbi Villa lectures in Talmud and Jewish Law in the Mishlei Program (M.A. at the Schechter Institute) and the Torah Lishmah and Rabbinic ordination track programs at the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, She represents the Schechter Institute at I.C.A.R., The International Coalition for Agunah Rights.

Rabbi Villa is a member of Knesset Rabbanim's Committee on Jewish Law. She has been a member of the Women's Study staff since its inception in June, 2000.