

Rabbi Sofia Zway

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EDUCATION

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles, CA

- Rabbinic ordination **Expected 2022**
- Capstone: *B'rachamim Rabim*: New Rituals for Pregnancy, Birth and Postpartum
- Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters **2020**

University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Drama **2015**
- Thesis: Remembering the Holocaust: Theatre and 'the Generation After'
- Bachelor of Arts in Drama and Psychology **2014**

CONGREGATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Temple Beth-El, Las Cruces, NM

2020 – Present

- Prepare and lead virtual and in-person Shabbat and holiday services and sermons for congregation of 118 units, incorporating reflection, meditation and song
- Engage congregants in spirited discussion of weekly portion and other Torah topics, including a 4-part curriculum for adults on Women in the Talmud
- Collaborate with the Religious Practices Committee to create communal Shabbat, holiday and special event observances and to shape the religious life of the congregation
- Connect regularly with congregants for one-on-one conversations using active listening, warmth and humour to guide Jewish thought and personal reflection
- Officiate life-cycle events, innovating traditional ceremonies to accompany families in finding comfort and connection to Torah and Jewish ritual
- Guide children and teens in the religious school in exploring their Jewish heritage
- Meet monthly with lay-advisors and rabbinic mentor for feedback, reflection and supervision

Temple Israel, Cape Town, South Africa

2015 – 2017

Youth Development Officer and Rabbinic Intern

- Envisioned, developed and raised funds for The Kabbalat Torah Academy, a leadership and Jewish ethics programme for post-bnei mitzvah students
- Collaborated with rabbinic team to plan and lead synagogue services and events
- Created and taught unit on Women in the Bible in the Jews-by-Choice Programme
- Compiled haggadah and facilitated interactive Young Adults Seder connecting ancient narrative to issues in contemporary, post-Apartheid South Africa
- Mentored Hebrew School teachers, assisting with the planning and implementation of creative, content-rich and experiential lessons
- Tutored bnei mitzvah students, helping to cultivate proficiency, confidence and personal connection to Torah, haftarah and the prayer service

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PASTORAL EXPERIENCE

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA

Summer 2021

Chaplain Intern (Clinical Pastoral Education, ACPE Accredited Unit – 400 hours)

- Utilised prayer, meditation and active listening to offer spiritual care to patients, families and staff in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Outpatient Cancer Centre, and other units
- Engaged in clinical learning and reflection with interfaith student cohort and supervisor in both group and individual settings
- Served as lead chaplain in Emergency Department and on all units during 4 nighttime on-call shifts
- Assisted peers in providing spiritual care to Spanish-speaking patients
- Arranged and offered weekly Shabbat worship to meet needs of patients, families and staff
- Organised “Tea for the Soul” and “Code Calm Cart” sessions to spiritually support medical staff

Beit T’shuvah, Los Angeles, CA

2019 - 2020

Spiritual Counselling Intern

- Offered weekly individual spiritual counselling for up to 8 clients in a residential addiction rehabilitation programme that combines Jewish spirituality, 12 Steps, and personal growth
- Engaged up to 75 residents in spirited and personal discussion of weekly Torah portion to reflect on their journey from active addiction to recovery
- Communicated with treatment team about clients’ individual progress and needs
- Co-facilitated weekly reflection groups with other spiritual counsellors
- Collaborated with clergy team in preparing for community events and observances
- Met weekly with supervisor for feedback and personal reflection

TEACHING AND YOUTH EXPERIENCE

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles, CA

2020 - 2021

First Year Programme Intern and Teacher’s Assistant (remote)

- Facilitated the Beit Midrash section for 10 students for the Reading Rabbinic Texts class, supporting students in developing their translation and textual analysis skills
- Met with students to discuss the programme, assist with homework, and offer pastoral counselling
- Collaborated with other interns to run weekly programmes for first year graduate students

East End Temple, New York, NY

2018-2019

Lead Teacher

- Created and implemented weekly experiential Hebrew and Jewish Studies lessons for 4th and 6th graders, including a stop-motion animation project based on the Book of Proverbs
- Managed classroom dynamics and offered pastoral care to students
- Supervised and collaborated with two other teachers on my team

Limmud South Africa, Cape Town Conference

2014-2015

Co-chair of Young Limmud, Cape Town Conference

- Designed curriculum and coordinated logistics for children’s programme at Limmud’s weekend festival of Jewish learning
- Liaised with other committee members and communicated with parents and programme volunteers

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- Supervised programme facilitators and oversaw the running of the programme at conference

Netzer South Africa (The Reform Zionist Youth Movement), Cape Town

2012-2013

National Chairperson, Head of Camp

- Planned and oversaw sleep-away camp for 100 campers, including the curricula, budget and logistics related to travel, food, board and healthcare
- Envisioned and executed two large-scale fundraising events in the local community that raised R25000 for camp scholarships
- Supervised and trained new youth leaders in communication skills, managing groups, developmental psychology, leadership, and Torah
- Collaborated with local organisations in planning and implementing social action initiatives in underprivileged communities

FELLOWSHIPS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Resetting the Table: Building a Culture of Dialogue Training, Los Angeles, CA

2021

- Learned the skills and tools for facilitating and convening difficult conversations
- Modeled the learning by engaging in dialogue with other students in the cohort

West Coast Hartman Clergy Student Fellowship, Los Angeles, CA

2020

- Engaged with students from across the denominational spectrum in important conversations about Israel through a values-and text-based framework

Summer Beit Midrash, HUC-JIR, Los Angeles, CA

2019

- Spent eight weeks studying Talmud and Torah through chavruta learning

AWARDS

The Professor Stanley Gevirtz Award for Excellence in Bible (2021)

The Samson H. Levey Memorial Prize in Rabbinic Literature (2020)

The Louis & Dorothy Sperling Memorial Prize in Modern Hebrew Literature (2019)

The Rhoda & Jerome Malino Prize in Bible (2019)

The Samuel Ellenson Memorial Prize in Rabbinics (2019)

References available upon request