



# Meet Israeli Reform Rabbis

## Rabbi Yael Karrie



**Community Position:** Rabbi of Sha'ar Hanegev Community Initiative since 2013

**Born:** Haifa, Israel

**Ordination:** HUC Jerusalem, 2016

**Contact:** yaelbeharim@gmail.com



**City/region:** I work in Sha'ar Hanegev Regional Council, which includes ten Kibbutzim and one Moshav. Sha'ar Hanegev is situated in the area that surrounds the Gaza Strip, and sometimes suffers from border clashes in the area.

**Special activities in my community:** I believe that the best way to fight darkness is to increase light. In my work I try to encourage independent thought – to open as many interpretive channels as possible, and create a respectful and empowering atmosphere. In order to increase love between all people, I arrange meetings between the diverse communities that make up the Sha'ar Hanegev region: the LGBT community, Ethiopian Jews, Bedouin Muslims, Orthodox Jews from the Torah settlement groups and so on. The Beit Midrash programs I developed, have discussed the ways to repair and rebuild communities and individuals, by learning about active social involvement, catalyzing change, and the importance of hope.

**Formative event in my history:** During my military service I worked at Sde Shikmim Field School in Nitzanim. The school staff included smart, creative, and talented women from all corners of Israeli society. The encounter with them and our joint study and work were an

important milestone for me and made a real contribution to my rabbinical work.

**Dreams for personal and professional future:** The Sha'ar Hanegev region creates possibilities for encounters between the Bedouin Muslim population and secular Jews. I believe that part of my work as a rabbi is to deepen these encounters to include common social and moral values of Islam and Judaism. My dream is to establish a seminar center in southern Israel for encounters, research, and joint learning.

**A place in the world which is special to me:** I love music and tend to bond to places that leave a "musical mark" on me. I recently visited Nashville, Tennessee. I enjoyed a warm welcome from local residents and listened to great music in every pub.

**Unusual experience in the Diaspora:** The idea of becoming a Reform rabbi was actually born

after I met a great guy from Berkeley, California who worked with me as a guide on a Birthright group. He described his work with such enthusiasm, sensitivity, and wisdom that I felt an inner desire to lead a community and undergo a meaningful and profound process with it.

**A gift I would you like to give to my peers around the world:** I think we are living in an age of a global crisis in leadership, and we all bear responsibility for repairing society. I began to feel that it was urgent to bring together different groups in Israeli society after Operation 'Protective Edge' in the Gaza Strip. When the racist monster rears its head, our role is to make sure that no-one feeds it. I encourage you to get to know groups you haven't encountered yet, to strengthen bonds that have been weakened, and above all to widen your hearts to make room for new people whose light you have discovered in the darkness.