

RABBI AMY SCHEINERMAN, VISITING SCHOLAR

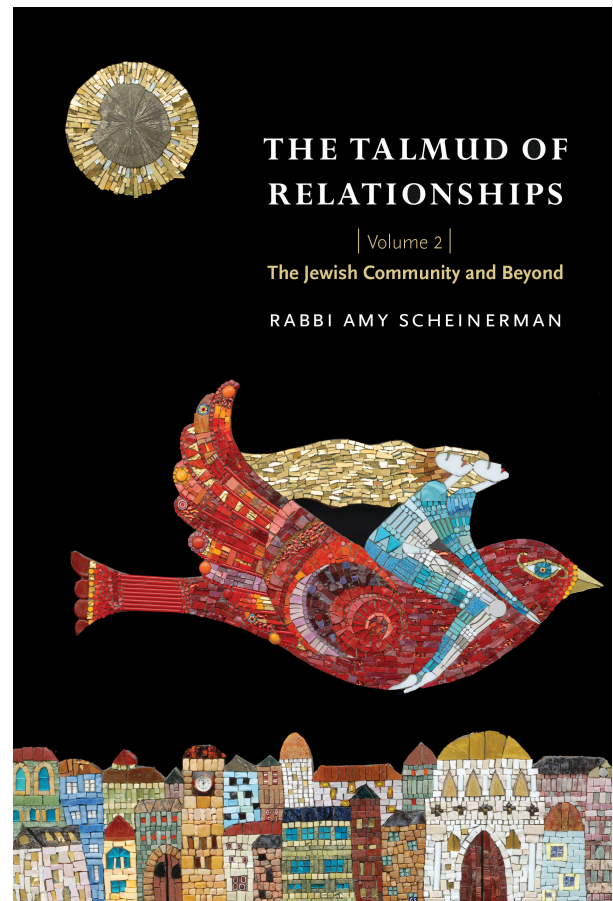
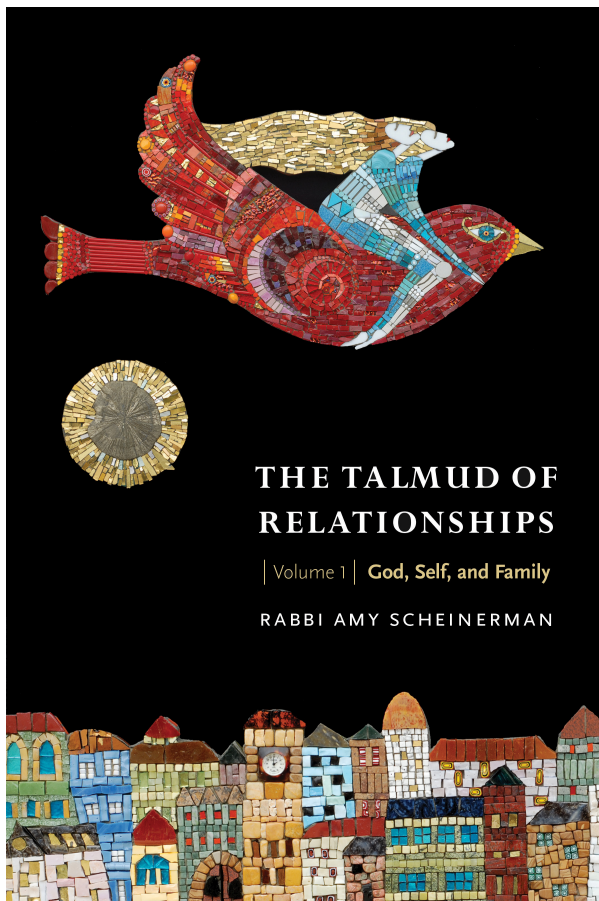


Energetic and engaging, Rabbi Amy Scheinerman is available for spiritually inspiring and intellectually stimulating scholar-in-residence engagements. Her style is inclusive, making all learners feel welcome. Rabbi Scheinerman is known for interpreting Talmudic texts that respond to our human concerns of the present through the Jewish wisdom of the past. Through her engagement with learners of every kind, the Oral Tradition comes alive—relevant and meaningful in the 21st Century.

The Talmud of Relations

Published in 2 volumes by the Jewish Publication Society

2018 National Jewish Book Award Finalist!



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"I had the honor and pleasure of welcoming Amy Scheinerman to our congregation as a Scholar-In-Residence. Her visit was, from start to finish, a joy. Her intelligence is truly wonderful, as is her ability to make text clear and compelling to lay-people (and to rabbis!). My congregants were engaged and challenged the whole time. If you're looking for a scholar to bring in, you really need to consider Rabbi Scheinerman. She was such a pleasure to work with, and such a great presence for my synagogue."

Rabbi Jason Rosenberg, Congregation Beth Am, Tampa, Florida

"Rabbi Amy Scheinerman, in addition to having an incredible grasp and understanding of Talmudic text herself, has a rare ability to be able to convey the deep meanings of that text to laypeople. My congregants were totally enthralled and enchanted by her and by the texts to which she exposed them and, following the wonderful scholar-in-residence weekend over which she presided, were thoroughly moved spiritually and intellectually by her exciting presentations of Talmudic passages... Simply saying thanks for your being here doesn't do it. For all of us, the weekend was a time of intense growth! And you whetted the appetite for continued Talmudic learning within the hearts of a significant number of my congregants. Could anyone ask for more?"

Rabbi Howard A. Kosovske, Sinai Temple, Springfield, Massachusetts

"Thank you for bringing the light of Talmud and Talmud Torah to Temple Beth Shalom. The community has been inspired by your scholarship, wisdom, warmth and love for text. With heartfelt thanks."

Rabbi Jay C. Perlman, Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, Massachusetts

"Amy Scheinerman is a sparkling teacher with deep roots in Talmud and Midrash. She can bring our textual tradition powerfully into the present, conveying it, weaving them, and drawing in those who come with very diverse backgrounds, with humor, poignancy, story, metaphor and receptivity. A true gift for our community!"

Rabbi Vicki Hollander, Congregation Shaareth Israel, Lubbock, Texas

"The 2011 convention of the National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis... was attended by more than 150 participants. I want to thank, particularly, Rabbi Amy Scheinerman, our visiting scholar. Rabbi Scheinerman presented Talmudic material with insight, knowledge and understanding of the rabbinic sources and their historic social context. She accomplished this with humor, respect for her audience, and responsiveness to questions and challenges. We could have listened to her beyond the time allotted on the program..."

Rabbi Stanley Relkin, President, The National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis

"What struck me most of all about your visit was the personal attention you paid to all of the attendees, whether at the more crowded Shabbat Eve service or at the less formal gatherings... Without exception my members remarked broadly about your warmth, friendliness and personal outreach... Your skill in presenting what is so often difficult and intimidating material to the less tutored is masterful. You did so with humor, clarity and enthusiasm."

Rabbi Yossi Liebowitz, Congregation B'nai Israel, Spartanburg, South Carolina

Let's talk about how I can bring exciting, engaging, spiritual Jewish text study to your community!

Proposed Topics

1 • Getting Relationships Right: Ancient Advice for Modern Living

It's not a kumbaya world. Our lives are a complex tapestry of relationships. The terrain can be treacherous and there are no easy formulas. We will immerse ourselves in Talmudic sources (in English translation) offering surprising insights and remarkable wisdom for improving our relationships – with community, colleagues, neighbors, friends, family, God, and let us not forget ourselves – the foundation of so much of our happiness.

2 • Who learns from whom?

Torah tells us that God walked through the Garden of Eden and parted the Reed Sea with a “strong hand and an outstretched arm.” Our Rabbis talk about God’s prayers, anger, and jealousy. Is God our role model? Or are we God’s? What happens when God learns from human role models? What does that say about the nature of God and about the nature of humanity? We will explore together some remarkable and radical texts that raise eternal questions about the struggle to be human in a less than humane world.

3 • Jews and Power: From Pesach to Purim and beyond

Do Jews have power? Do we want power? Do we deserve power? The Passover story of the Exodus suggests we are powerless and dependent upon God for redemption. Purim, in contrast, affirms our vulnerability, but asserts we are able to affect our own redemption through cunning. The Jewish ambivalence about power runs throughout our history and culture, and today when the State of Israel is a reality, it is a pressing issue to explore.



4 • Siblings: Competitors? Companions? Confidants?

Got a sibling? Raising siblings? If ever there was a relationship fraught with tension and rivalry, this is it. If ever there was a relationship with the potential for lifelong devotion and companionship, this is it. Torah, midrash, and modern commentaries elucidate the ins-and-outs, highs-and-lows, gut-wrenching potholes, and exalted peaks on the road siblings tread together through life, with some unexpected insights and advice.

5 • Envy: Neutralizing Emotional Toxins

Envy and jealousy may be natural emotions, but they can be toxic. Healthy envy can inspire us to develop fully our potential; unhealthy envy can damage our relationships, our self-image, and stunt our potential for growth. Our tradition provides fascinating models for sorting out the ups and downs of sibling relationships.

6 • Human Dignity: The Most Essential Value

Underlying all Jewish ethics is the compelling need to preserve human dignity. For our Sages, our dignity is a reflection of God’s dignity. How can we preserve human dignity in a fast-paced, competitive world? How do we decide when we feel we’re stuck between a moral rock and an ethical hard place? What personal attributes most preserve human dignity -- both ours and that of others? How can we cultivate them?

“I can’t tell you how much I appreciated your being at Temple Etz Chaim as our scholar-in-residence. Your teaching was of the highest order, and your ability to connect with both adults and teenagers was remarkable. Your visit came at an important time in our community and strengthened us in many ways.”

Rabbi Tom Alpert, Temple Etz Chaim, Franklin, Massachusetts

7• Gender, Sex, & Sexuality: the good, the bad, the funny, and the funnier

What does our tradition say about sex, gender, and sexuality? The Torah -- never shy about difficult topics -- lays the groundwork for a Jewish view. Our Sages -- absolutely not shy about such topics -- further the discussion in directions that may surprise, delight, and shock you. Find out what the Talmud *really* says.

8• The Rabbis' Radical Views of God: Not What You Might Think

Our Sages did not envision God as a perfect, wise, and patient role model for humanity. Struggling with the same issues we wrestle with -- important relationships, raw emotions, difficult moral choices -- the Rabbis paint a radical picture of God wholly different from what we might expect, yet one is deeply moving and challenging to us.

9• Religious Fanaticism

Extremism of many kinds can creep into any religious tradition, and on many levels, from that of individual observance to communal values and practices. The Rabbis were wary of extremism in all forms; they warn us that it is dangerous to both the individual and community.

"We had the most wonderful weekend with Rabbi Amy Scheinerman. She is a true scholar—bringing wisdom, warmth, and wit to our congregation. If you are looking for a scholar-in-residence who can bring serious learning to your community in an accessible and meaningful fashion, I HIGHLY recommend you connect with her. Thank you, Amy, for sharing your gifts and passion with us!"

Rabbi Ilana Baden, Temple Chai, Long Grove, Illinois

10 • Suffering

Over the course of a lifespan, does anyone escape suffering? Clifford Geertz, religious anthropologist, said: "[T]he problem of suffering is, paradoxically, not how to avoid suffering but how to...make [it] bearable, supportable – something, as we say, sufferable." The Rabbis dive into the theological pool of suffering, and barely tread water in their attempt to make sense of suffering. Their ideas are shocking... even to themselves.

11 • Tzedakah Revisited and Re-envisioned

If God cares about the poor, why doesn't God provide for their needs? Why does our tradition mandate that we take care of the poor? Is tzedakah an act of obligation, religious self-benefit, or altruism? Our Sages have conceived tzedakah in varying (and surprising!) ways, with profound implications for us.

12 • Business by the Book

Jewish tradition has much to say about the mundane matters of our lives, and the ethical dimension of the mundane. The commercial world of business is an area rife for deception and corruption, but also transparency and honesty. What are the Jewish standards for conducting business, both as the buyer and the seller? Our tradition's teachings in this arena are as relevant in the 21st century as at any other time.

"I cannot recommend Amy Scheinerman enough as a scholar-in-residence. She enthralled my congregation this whole weekend through a lecture at Erev Shabbat services, Torah study Shabbat morning, a teen lunch teaching, and a teaching for our Sisterhood Brunch on Sunday. She taught Talmud the whole time to a group that normally shies away from the term, making the material incredibly accessible and relevant. She is warm, engaging, smart, and funny."

Rabbi Suzanne Singer, Temple Beth El, Riverside, California

13 • The Longing for, and Fear of, Redemption

The Exodus is our paradigm for redemption. Parshat Bo takes us from the pit of plagues to the height of redemption. After the Destruction of the Second Temple, we would expect our Sages to long for another redemption: the Messianic Age. But their longing was mixed with a healthy fear. We will consider their ambivalence and what it means for us.

14 • Radical Women Behind the Scenes in Egypt

If you think you know the story of the Exodus, come read it through the eyes and fertile imagination of our Sages. They provide a truly behind-the-scenes view that might shock you.

15 • Honoring Parents: “The Hardest of the Hard”

There is a line of thinking that holds that the commandment to honor our parents is the most difficult one to fulfill. The Jerusalem Talmud beautifully opens a discussion of the conflicting goals, facets, and understandings of what is entailed in this mitzvah.

Additional Publications

- “At Dinner With Yalta: A Talmud Lesson,” *Hadassah Magazine*, November 2019. (<https://www.hadassahmagazine.org/2019/11/05/dinner-yalta-talmud-lesson/>)
- “Giving Voice to the Unspeakable: Rabbinic Responses to Disaster,” *Reform Jewish Quarterly*; accepted for publication, Fall 2015, pp. 109-123.
- “When Loss = Gain,” *Reform Jewish Quarterly*; Spring 2015.
- “The Human God and the Divine Human: ‘And’ or ‘Or’?,” *Reform Jewish Quarterly*; Winter 2015; pp. 84-110.
- “Talmud and Reform Judaism Renewing Each Other,” *Reform Jewish Quarterly*; Summer 2014; pp. 55-64.
- “Sexuality: Human Biology versus Rabbinic Decree,” *The Sacred Encounter: Jewish Perspectives on Sexuality*, Lisa Grushcow, ed., ch. 1, pp. 7-18, CCAR Press. 2014.
- “I Knew That Within Me There was God” — Teaching Spiritual Awareness to Children,” *Reform Jewish Quarterly*; Winter, 2014; pp. 134-149.
- “Rabbis Undermining Rabbis: Subversive Midrashic Narratives,” *Reform Jewish Quarterly*, Spring 2014, pp. 107-124.
- “Exodus, Esther, and the Maccabees in Conversation, or: ‘They tried to kill us; we survived; let’s eat,’” *Reform Jewish Quarterly*; Spring, 2013; pp. 3-23.
- “Viewing *Un’taneh Tokef* through a New Lens,” *Reform Jewish Quarterly*, Summer 2013.
- Contributor, *Voices of Torah: A Treasury of Rabbinic Gleanings on the Weekly Portions, Holidays and Special Shabbatot*, Hara Person, ed., CCAR Press, 2011.
- Religion Columnist, *Carroll County Times*, 2005 – 2011.
- Editor and writer, *Voices of Torah* column for CCAR newsletter, 2006 - present.
- Torah Commentary Columnist, *Baltimore Jewish Times*.
- *Facing Death and Mourning: Comfort and Strength from Jewish Tradition*, publication of the Baltimore Board of Rabbis (Chair of the rabbinic committee)

Rabbi Amy Scheinerman • Bio

Rabbi Amy Scheinerman is the author of *The Talmud of Relationships*, published by the Jewish Publication Society in two volumes. She is the hospice rabbi in Howard County, Maryland and serves on the Responsa Committee of the CCAR and as editor of the Torah Commentary column of the CCAR newsletter. In addition, she is the past president of both the Baltimore Board of the Rabbis and the Howard County Board of Rabbis. She has served Conservative, Reform, and unaffiliated congregations. Rabbi Scheinerman received her bachelor's degree from Brown University; studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Princeton Theological Seminary; and was ordained at HUC-JIR in New York, where she also received a Doctor of Divinity in 2009.

Rabbi Scheinerman is married to Dr. Edward Scheinerman, professor of applied mathematics and statistics and Vice Dean for Faculty at The Johns Hopkins University. They have four children and four grandchildren.

Contact information

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Talmud Blog <http://tasteoftalmud.blogspot.com>

"Rabbi Amy Scheinerman mesmerized folks here at Monmouth Reform Temple with a series of studies based in personal and sexual relationships. We had over 80 captivated adults wondering through rabbinic texts made most relevant to the world in which we live. Amy is a rabbi's rabbi."

Rabbi Marc Kline, Monmouth Reform Temple, Tinton Falls NJ

"Rabbi Scheinerman is gifted and engaging teacher. Her work with our congregation made Talmud study relevant, human and fun in ways I have never experienced. I truly believe that after engaging Rabbi Scheinerman your students will ask that study of Talmud should part of every adult education program. I personally wish she was one of my own professors when I was at HUC-JIR!"

Cantor Gabrielle Clissold, Monmouth Reform Temple, Tinton Falls NJ

"Rabbi Amy Scheinerman is a fantastic Scholar-in-Residence and easy to work with! She teaches beautifully from the pulpit, enticingly engages adults and teens even in mixed groups, and tirelessly manages to create a weekend-wide curriculum that builds as each session happens, and is still accessible and interesting for those who dip into a single session. In addition, she is charming and delightful socially and impresses community members and leadership with her approachability and warmth."

Rabbi Jonathan Freirich, Temple Beth El, Charlotte, NC

"Those who have brought scholars-in-residence to your congregations already know the great benefits, but this was the first time for me. I want to tell colleagues who have never had a visiting scholar what a great experience Temple Sinai had this weekend with Amy Scheinerman. She gave terrific and meaningful shiurim on Talmud that had my folks telling me, "I would love to take an adult ed course on Talmud." (That's a direct quote.) Even more, Amy validated and reinforced the most important messages I want my people to hear: Judaism and Jewish learning matters. It speaks to the issues we face every day. It teaches us how to live rich, fulfilling and happy lives. It tends to our broken hearts. If you have the resources to bring a great teacher like Amy, do it. If you don't have

the money now, ask for it. It will make your congregation a better community and it will help you become a better rabbi.”

Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser, Temple Sinai, Cranston, RI

Communities I have visited as a scholar-in-residence:

Congregation Beth Emeth, Wilmington, Delaware
Israel Congregation of Manchester, Manchester Center, Vermont
Beth El Congregation, Winchester, Virginia
The Community Synagogue-Temple Beth Am, Port Washington
Congregation B’nai Israel, Spartanburg, SC
Congregation Beth Israel, and the Hartford Clergy Institute, West Hartford, Connecticut
Temple Beth Tikvah, Wayne, NJ
Temple Beth Rishon, Wykoff, NJ
Temple Beth Sholom, Santa Ana, CA
Temple Jeremiah, Northfield, IL
Congregation Beth Israel, Northfield
Congregation Shaareth Israel, Lubbock, TX
Congregation B’nai Tzedek, Fountain Valley, CA
Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, MA
B’nai Yehuda Beth Sholom, Homewood, IL
Temple Concord, Binghamton, NY
Temple Israel, Canton, OH
Temple Beth El, Riverside, CA
Congregation Hakafa, Glencoe, IL
Temple Etz Chaim, Franklin, MA
Seaside Jewish Congregation, Rehoboth Beach, DE
Congregation Gates of Prayer, Metairie, LA
Congregation Beth El, Sudbury, MA
Monmouth Reform Temple, Tinton Falls, NJ
Ohef Sholom Temple, Norfolk, VA
Temple Sinai, Cranston, RI
Temple Emanuel, Greensboro
Temple Beth Israel, Longboat Key, FL
Temple Beth El, Charlotte, NC
Congregation Beth Am, Tampa, FL
Temple Emanuel and Congregation Ahavas Israel, Grand Rapids, MI
Temple Beth Tikvah, Madison, CT
Temple Shalom, Aberdeen, NJ
Kol HaNeshama, Sarasota, FL
Sinai Temple, Springfield, MA
Temple Oheb Shalom, Baltimore, MD
Reform Temple of Rockland, Nyack, NY
Temple Chai, Long Grove, Illinois

Scholar-in-residence for Rabbinic Groups:

National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis, San Diego, CA
Amsterdam, Holland, the Liberal Rabbis of the Netherlands
Women’s Rabbinic Network Conference, *Rabbi Judith Abrahams Memorial Lecture*
West Hudson Valley Region, Central Conference of American Rabbis
Greater Carolinas Association of Rabbis,
Cleveland Board of Rabbis