

Hello Temple Sinai!

Well, it's another eventful week here at Temple Sinai (I wanted to say something like Lake Wobegon, but Lake Jewbegon just didn't have the same quaint innocence.) This weekend we have our **Scholar in Residence Shabbat with Rabbi Michael Cohen, and a Tot Havdalah in honor of Tu B'Shevat. President Trump** also released his "**peace plan**" for Israel and **Palestine**. To jump to my comments and some more information about that, click here.

But first - **PLEASE PLEASE VOTE REFORM (ARZA)**



Control + Click button to VOTE

in the current **World Zionist Congress elections**. And If you could forward the 'thank you for voting' to info@templesinaivt.org we can get a sense of how many of us have voted. Also, take a picture of the "I Voted" email and post it on social media to encourage your friends to vote. **If you are over 18, identify as**

Jewish, and can afford \$7.50, please vote. It is a two step process: 1) First you register to vote, pay the \$7.50 and they send you a pin for registration; then, 2) They send you a second pin for the actual vote, either by text or email. Then you click on 'ARZA' Reform and Reconstructionist. **Your vote will effect where and how the Jewish agency expends funds, and whether it will support egalitarian liberal Judaism in Israel, as well as other progressive causes.**

Now, for the **MAIN EVENT**. Rabbi Michael Cohen's teach-in with Temple Sinai on Judaism and the Environment, and Dual Narrative in Conflict Resolution.



SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE
Rabbi Michael Cohen
JUDAISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT
In anticipation of Tu B'Shvat -
January 31-February 1, 2020

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE – Rabbi Michael Cohen

JUDAISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In anticipation of Tu B'Shvat -

January 31-February 1, 2020

Join Sinai and Rabbi Cohen as we celebrate Shabbat together and reflect and learn Judaism's teaching about the environment, and our responsibilities to it.



- **KABBALAT SHABBAT, Jan 31, 6:30 pm.** Join us for a song-filled service focused on the environment with Rabbi Cohen giving the d'var (sermon).
- **SHABBAT DINNER, Jan 31, 7:45 pm** After services, join us for Shabbat Dinner with Shabbat table songs, and more teaching from Rabbi Cohen.
- **SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES (Shacharit) Feb 1, 9:30-10:30** A spiritual chanted morning service with all the greatest 'hits' of Shabbat morning.
- **JUDAISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT. Feb 1, 10:30-Noon** Judaism is filled with deep and profound messages about our relationship to the environment; our shared home. In place of our usual Torah Study, we will explore with Rabbi Cohen many of those sources from our tradition, drawing on Rabbi Cohen's extensive work with the Arava Institute in Israel. Bagels and Donuts provided!
- **HAVDALAH AND DUAL NARRATIVE APPROACH TO CONFLICT. Feb 1 5-7 pm**
The Balfour Declaration & Resolution 242: A Dual Narrative Approach.
Resolution 242 and the Balfour Declaration are two seminal documents from the Arab-Israeli Conflict. In a conflict that seems overwhelming to understand these two documents provide a way to understand both sides when viewed through the *Dual Narrative approach*; or as Hillel said (Mishna Avot 2:4), "Do not judge another until you are in his place."

RABBI MICHAEL COHEN graduated, with a B.A. in History, from the University of Vermont, and in 1990, he was ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and become the first full-time rabbi of the Israel Congregation in Manchester Center, Vermont. Since 2000, he has divided his time between Vermont and Kibbutz Ketura, Israel, and has written extensively about the environment and the Middle East peace process in North American and Middle Eastern publications and is the author of *Einstein's Rabbi: A Tale of Science and the Soul*. Rabbi Michael is a faculty member at Bennington's Center for the Advancement of Public Action..

THE ARAVA INSTITUTE is an environmental and academic institution in the Middle East, dedicated to preparing future leaders from Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and around the world to cooperatively solve the regional and global challenges of our time. The Institute advances cross-border environmental cooperation and cross-border environmental discourse, regardless of political conflict, in the Middle East.

YOUNG FAMILIES:
TOT HAVDALAH MUSIC and STORY
THIS SATURDAY, FEB 1 4-6 PM



TEMPLE SINAI

MUSIC & STORY HAVDALAH
TU B'SHVAT

Saturday, February 1, 4-6 PM
For kids ages 1-7 & their families



Saragail Benjamin leads us in our monthly **Young Families Havdalah** celebration focus on a celebration of nature and trees for Tu B'Shvat, the New Year for Trees. We'll sing, dance, do crafts, tell our favorite tales, & say good-bye to Shabbat with a kid-friendly Havdalah and a pot-luck nosh. Bring a dish to share!

NEXT FRIDAY NIGHT,
FEBURARY 7, 6:30 PM:
SHABBAT SHIRA with SOCIAL BAND.

Join us for a very special musical Shabbat in honor of this week's Torah Portion BaShallah that includes the Israelites' *Song of the Sea* after crossing over in safety. Members of **Social Band** will perform, accompanied by a **string trio**, Jewish music from the

SHABBAT SHIRA
A MUSICAL SHABBAT SERVICE



Friday, February 7
6:30 pm *oneg to follow*

Join us for a very special musical Shabbat service in song celebrating the Israelites' crossing of the sea in this week's Torah Portion.

Music will range from Jewish Baroque to modern, with performances by Social Band, Howard Kalfus, an instrumental trio and others!

Open to all, everyone welcome.



Renaissance [such as Hashkivenu by Salamone Rossi](#), as well as modern compositions by Cleary, Jamison, and our own [Dr. Bruce Chalmer](#).

Howard Kalfus will share a beautiful setting of "[L'Dor vaDor](#)" by [Josh Nelson](#),

Cantorial Soloist Mark Leopold will sing Minkovsky's setting of [Bialik's Sabbath the Queen](#), and other members of the Sinai Community will also be performing so please come and let the sounds of beautiful song wash away the week's stresses.

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TEMPLE SINAI EVENTS ON UPCOMING SHABBATOT

Friday	Jan 31	6:30-7:45pm	SHABBAT SERVICE with SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE, RABBI MICHAEL COHEN ON JUDAISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT followed by Community Shabbat Dinner from <i>Pulcinellas</i> .
Saturday	Feb 1	9:30-10:30am	SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE
Saturday	Feb 1	10:30 am-12	JUDAISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT TORAH STUDY With Rabbi Michael Cohen with bagels and donuts.
Saturday	Feb 1	5-7pm	DUAL NARRATIVE APPROACH TO ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT with Rabbi Michael Cohen
Saturday	Feb 1	4-6pm	TOT HAVDALAH with TU BISHVAT NATURE THEME with Saragail Benjamin with nosh and kiddush.
Friday	Feb 7	6:30-7:45pm	SHABBAT SHIRA - A very special musical service in honor of Torah Portion BaShallah (Song of the Sea!) with performances by ensemble from Social Band, Howard Kalfus and others. <i>Oneg to follow</i> .
Saturday	Feb 8	9:30-10:30 am	FULL SCHOOL SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE WITH TORAH READING OF SONG OF THE SEA, <i>oneg to follow</i>
Sunday	Feb 9	6-8pm	TU B'SHEVAT SEDER AND CELEBRATION DINNER to honor the Jewish New Year for Trees and celebrate the final class of the Introduction to Judaism Course

TU B'SHEVAT SEDER Feb 9, 6-8pm

Together with participants from our Introduction to Judaism class, we will celebrate the holiday of Tu B'Shevat, Judaism's original "Earth Day", the new year for trees. We will build on a ritual created in Tzfat, Israel in the 1500's by Jews escaping the Spanish Expulsion, reflect on the powerful connections between spirituality and nature.



Tu B'Shvat Seder
 CELEBRATING THE NEW YEAR OF TREES
 AND ISRAEL'S SEVEN SPECIES

Sunday, February 9 6-8 pm

Building on our time with Rabbi Michael Cohen, Scholar in Residence, we will celebrate the wonders of our earth and reflect on our responsibilities to it.

The Seder will include a celebratory dinner that is also the culmination of our Introduction to Judaism Class.



VOTE REFORM

#VoteReformWZC

**DO YOU BELIEVE THE REFORM MOVEMENT
SHOULD HAVE A STRONGER PRESENCE IN ISRAEL?**

**IF SO, WE'D LOVE FOR YOU TO GET INVOLVED IN THE
WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ELECTION!**



The World Zionist Congress Elections are coming soon, and your vote is critical to maintaining a large Reform presence in Israel and the United States!

Your vote is the only democratic opportunity you have to influence Israeli society as we continue our efforts towards equality, pluralism and tolerance. Our congregation saw a positive voter turn out last election, but we know that we can do better.

Voting takes place online starting January 21, 2020 to March 11, 2020 and will take less than 90 seconds to participate. If you're 18+ and identify as Jewish, we hope we can count on you to vote Reform.

Intrigued? Visit the ARZA website to learn more: ARZA.org

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED:

WORLD ZIONIST
CONGRESS ELECTION
January 21 - March 11, 2020

**VOTE
REFORM**

*Control+Click
button to VOTE*

SOME THOUGHTS AND INFORMATION ON PRESIDENT TRUMP'S PEACE PLAN FOR THE ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

On Tuesday, President Trump released the details of his and Jared Kushner's plan for a settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. As in most anything this president does, it has been met with very strong and polarized reactions ranging from strong support to 'hair on fire' condemnations. As you might be learning about me, I try to avoid instant reactions especially on issues of the Middle East, since cause and effect can be notoriously difficult to untangle there, because we as Americans don't have enough direct experience in the matter, and because the gap between ideals and realpolitik there is so wide there on all sides.

Instead of focusing on my own reactions, I want to share *some articles for you to read*, inform yourselves, and come to your own informed conclusions. To that end:

1. Here is a link to the full text of the actual plan: [TRUMP PEACE PLAN](#)
2. Here is a link to a [short statement by URJ President Rabbi Rick Jacobs](#) on the plan and Netanyahu's announced plan to unilaterally annex territories.
3. Here is a link to a very critical article from POLITICO written by three Israelis with impressive resumes: Ami Ayalon (former director of Shin Bet, Israel's top security agency), Gilead Sher (former Chief of Staff of Ehud Barak and senior peace negotiator) and Orni Petruschka (an Israeli high-tech entrepreneur): [Trump's Peace Plan Is Immoral, Impractical—and Could Blow Up the Middle East](#)
4. David Ignatius wrote this article for the Washington Post, that captures some key aspects of what this deal reflects about realpolitik in the region: [The Trump peace plan is a squeeze play against the Palestinians. It might work.](#)
5. Here is an article from THE NATIONAL REVIEW that is supportive of the president's approach: [The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Plan Is a Much-Needed Dose of Reality](#)
6. Here is a thoughtful article from *The Atlantic*, by Shadi Hamid about the emotional cost of the plan for Palestinians. [The Israeli-Palestinian Dispute Is Only Partly About Land](#)
7. Here is a very critical article of American Policy for decades by Nathan Thrall that places Trump's plan in a context of American policy: [Trump's Middle East Peace Plan Exposes the Ugly Truth](#)

I spent about three hours writing some thoughts on this proposal, but the more I wrote, I've decided not to share those and let the articles be enough for now. I will only say that I believe in the rightness of self-determination, and the rightness of peace and the necessity of justice. Which road might actually take us in this conflict where those in power rely on the perpetuation of conflict to remain in power and both side are convinced justice is on their side – that is a question for prophets, not rabbis. All we can do is be among the disciples of Aaron, seeking peace and pursuing peace as best we can.

