

Friday Dec 11 6:30pm

YOEL SYKES OF *NAVA TEHILA*

Live by ZOOM for

KABBALAT SHABBAT HANUKKAH



TEMPLE
SINAI

As Temple Sinai's Hanukkah gift to the community this year, we have invited Yoel Sykes of the famed Nava Tehila. Yoel invites us to travel into the landscape of holiness and joy. Through chanting Psalms and Shabbat prayers with original melodies and guided intentions, we will connect to the spirit and allow it to fill our hearts, uplift our souls in celebration of Hanukkah and Shabbat.

Yoel Sykes has been a main prayer leader and composer in the Nava Tehila Jerusalem based community for 14 years. He is now living in Boulder CO, and studying to be a Rabbi and spiritual director in the Aleph ordination program.



Hello Temple Sinai,

This week's Torah portion, *Vayishlach*, (Genesis 32:4–36:43) is among the most compelling of the many stories the Hebrew Bible has given to world literature. It is the story of Jacob. Having worked decades for his father-in-law Laban to marry Leah and Rachel, he now makes his way by foot with his family and flocks back to his home in the Judean desert. As he returns, he must also confront what he did to his brother Esau, stealing his birthright from him by trickery and deception. He now has been tricked by Laban, so he sees his actions in a new light. When he left, Esau was pursuing him to kill him for the betrayal. Now Esau is coming toward him with an army, and Jacob realizes he might finally pay with his life. Quickly dividing his camp in two, and moving both across the river away from Esau, Jacob crosses back into the space-between, and spends the night alone. As he sleeps, he wrestles with a man who is powerful but does not prevail against Jacob. As the dawn begins to lighten the horizon, this man begs to go and Jacob demands a blessing. Injured, exhausted, with his hip wrenched from the fight, he is blessed with a new name: Israel. This mysterious man tells him it means that he has wrestled with beings human and divine and prevailed.

My teacher Rabbi Larry Kushner famously used this portion to point out that Israel means "God-Wrestlers," and that we each struggle with God, struggle with our angels and our demons, and that our intellectual curiosity and skepticism is part of being the "children of Israel."

There are other meanings as well, and one is that Jacob is wrestling with himself, with his past, with his flaws, and with his injuries from life. Coming back to place from whence he had fled many years before, he confronts how much life has changed him and the terrible cost of all those years. We all think of Jacob wrestling with an angel, but the Torah very clearly uses the word "*ish*" or "man," not "angel." The mysterious man seems to me none other than Jacob himself, and the wrestling is that of a person trying to come to terms with who they are and what life means. It is the wrestling of the spirit and the soul, the wrestling of the disparate parts of the self striving to become whole, and holy.

Remember that God had just once again promised to Jacob that he would be fine and the father of the nation, but hearing Esau is coming, Jacob's faith is shaken. Alone, in the middle of the night, on the banks of the river, all of the disconnections in his life, the losses, the betrayals, the harm he has caused other ,

the *parts of the self that just don't seem to fit together*— these all come to head and to move past them, he must change, he must reunite the split parts of himself in order to be able to fulfill the divine blessing and promise he has inherited.

We are all Jacob. At some point in our lives, we all must wrestle with our pasts – who we were, what we've done, what we hope for that never came to be, who we lost, and how we lost them - in order to gain what we can call wisdom. Wisdom doesn't change the past, or even make sense of it, but it means we have learned from the past, and we have made meaning in our struggles and our injuries as we go forward, even with a limp. We all learn more from our failures than from our successes, and that includes our personal failures toward others. By honestly confronting the things we have done, the people we've hurt, and the defenses we have built up, we have the opportunity to become something new-integrated, whole, and wiser. This struggle is profound and holy; through it some higher potential within us is realized. For those of us that are religious, our sense of faith and our connection to God deepens and broadens. For everyone, our sense of connection to what it means to be human deepens and broadens.

Jacob gets a new name – Israel. Perhaps it is God with whom we wrestle; perhaps it is our selves, or our demons and angels. If we read Jacob's blessing, the divine and human become one through the wrestling. His new name reminds him that despite feeling at times that change isn't possible, that we can't get to the other side of the struggle, we can prevail. Indeed, it is our duty to struggle and grow.

As we move into this darkest time of year, before we light the lights of Hanukkah, it is a fitting time to do some wrestling. Like Jacob, we can look into the mirror of the darkness and wrestle to be more whole (shalem), and to find more peace (shalom.) Out of darkness, let us find light.

Shalom,

David.

PS. Join us for our regular Shabbat services Friday night at 6:30, Saturday morning at 9:30 am, and then Torah study of [Vayishlach](#) at 10:30am. All are welcome regardless of background or knowledge.



Temple Sinai

HANUKKAH 5781

Night	Date	Time	Events
1	Thursday Dec 10	11:00am	SISTERHOOD MENORAH ZENTAGLE WORKSHOP with master Zentangler Jan Orlansky Learn this creative way to draw, relax, focus and make beauty. 
	Thursday, Dec 10	6:30pm	FIRST NIGHT MENORAH LIGHTING Set up your menorahs, fry your latkes and zoom in to light candles and sing together. This will be short and sweet, with a song or two, the blessings, and maybe a fun video. If you just want to feel connected to others while you are lighting your chanukiah this year, just drop in. (ZOOM)
2	Friday Dec 11	6:30pm	KABBALAT SHABBAT w Yoel Sykes of Nava Tehila.  Temple Sinai's Hanukkah gift to the community is to bring Yoel this year. Nava Tehila leads wildly popular song-centered Shabbat services in Jerusalem. Yoel led the groups music for 14 years. will be taking us through a series of songs and <i>kavanot</i> to enlighten our Hanukkah spirits. (ZOOM)

<p>3</p>	<p>Saturday Dec 12</p>	<p>4:00pm</p>	 <p>YOUNG FAMILIES HANUKKAH PARTY with <i>Saragail Benjamin.</i></p> <p>Celebrate! Play! Sing! Light Candles! A special event for families with young children.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Saturday Dec 12</p>	<p>8:00pm</p>	<p>NEFESH MOUNTAIN, "LIVE FROM THE BARN AT LEVON HELM STUDIOS" A Hanukkah 2020 Holiday Concert</p> <p>Sinai's <i>Membership Committee</i> is offering this Hanukkah gift to all our members: tickets to this concert! Stacie will be sharing the info. <i>Members check your email!</i></p> 
<p></p>	<p>Saturday Dec 12</p>	<p>7-8:30 pm</p>	<p>4th ANNUAL STATE-WIDE VERMONT HANUKKAH PARTY Join with our community across the state to light candles, sing, and celebrate (virtually). <i>Proceeds go to Capstone Community Action's Heating Assistance Program.</i></p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Sunday Dec 13</p>	<p>4-5:30 pm</p>	<p>HANUKKAH: A CAUTIONARY TALE FOR US Join our Introduction to Judaism Class to learn more about how the story of Hanukkah touches on issues in our lives: assimilation, zealotry, partisanship, conspiracy theories, and the danger of becoming the thing you fight.</p>
<p></p>	<p></p>	<p>6:30pm</p>	<p>FOURTH NIGHT MENORAH LIGHTING Set up your menorahs and zoom in to light candles and sing together. (ZOOM)</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Monday Dec 14</p>	<p>6:30pm</p>	<p>MENORAH LIGHTING & SUFGANIYOT WORKSHOP WITH RABBI EDLESON(ZOOM)</p>  <p>The Rabbi will show you how to make these Israeli specialty donuts for Hanukkah, filled with warm caramel!</p>

<p>6</p>	<p>Tuesday Dec 15</p>	<p>5:30pm</p>	<p>HANUKKAH CONCERT with SHIR-LA-LA</p>  <p>Join the incomparable <i>Shir-La-La</i> (Shira Kline) and PJ Library for a concert geared to young families.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Wed. Dec 16</p>	<p>6:30pm</p>	<p>SEVENTH NIGHT MENORAH LIGHTING</p> <p>Set up your menorahs and zoom in to light candles and sing together. (ZOOM)</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Thursday Dec 17</p>	<p>4:30pm 6:30pm</p>	<p>HEBREW SCHOOL HANUKKAH</p> <p>EIGHTH NIGHT MENORAH LIGHTING</p> <p>Set up your menorahs and zoom in to light candles and sing together. (ZOOM)</p>
	<p>Friday Dec 18</p>	<p>6:30pm</p>	<p>HANUKKAH FINALE AND SHABBAT</p>  <p>We'll do an <i>encore</i> menorah lighting of all the candles, then light Shabbat candles and celebrate light in the darkness.</p>