



Meet Israeli Reform Rabbis



Rabbi Or Zohar



Community Position: Rabbi of congregation Ma'alot Tivon in Kiryat Tivon (since 2013) and of Misgav Regional Council (Since 2015).

Born: Jerusalem, Israel

Ordination: HUC Jerusalem, 2012

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City/region: I serve as a Rabbi of 2 Reform congregations in Northern Israel: Kiryat Tivon is a vibrant and beautiful small Israeli town, rather secular and spiritual in its nature. Misgav Regional Council is a mountainous region in the Heart of the Galilee, in which 35 small villages make up a multicultural mosaic of communities where Jews and Arabs of all kinds and denominations live side by side.

Special activities in my community: Our congregation in Kiryat Tivon has existed for 45 years, and is now going through exciting processes of renewal and development. In Misgav, we are creating a network of activities and activists, laying the grassroots infrastructure for Reform Judaism in the region. In both locations, we are nurturing a new "Galilean Blend" of Israeli Reform Judaism: liberal, spiritual, musical, and sensitive to the multicultural nature of the population in our region.

Formative event in my history: The first time I lead a large scale Shabbat Service in a spiritual festival in Israel, and realized how powerful music can be in bringing people closer to themselves, to each other, and to our tradition.

Dreams for personal and professional future: To share our gift of original sacred Hebrew music with as many people as possible, for instance through the music of our new album "Mikolot Mayim Sacred Music"; To develop a vision of "Reform Kabbalah", integrating liberal values, ancient wisdom, and spiritual practice; To nurture the "next generation" of Israeli Reform Judaism, one that is organically integrated into Israeli society, including reaching out to our non-Jewish neighbors.

A place in the world which is special to me: In Hararit, the tiny Galilean village in which we live, there is a point in which you can stand and see the Sea of Galilee, Mount Hermon and the Mediterranean at the same time. You should come and see it.

Unusual experience in the Diaspora: In one of my recent trips to the USA, I visited three wonderful congregations, in LA, near Chicago, and in New Jersey. I was amazed by the complimentary feelings of familiarity and diversity, and by the deep commitment to Judaism shared by so many people in these communities.

A gift I would you like to give to my peers around the world: Listen to our music, use it in your services and pastoral care sessions, and at your leisure. Invite us to share our music with you in your congregation, in one of our coming tours. Come visit us in the Galilee, Join in for a Reform Kabbalah tour of Tzfat, sign in for a spiritual and musical retreat, and collaborate with us in promoting a vision of spirituality, pluralism and coexistence the Galilee.