



Meet Israeli Reform Rabbis



Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism
התנועה הרפורמית והחדשה בישראל



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התנועה הרפורמית מחלקת ישראל הפועלת

Rabbi Golan Ben-Chorin



Community Position: Founding Rabbi of RPRC – The Rosh Pina Reform Congregation, 2011–present
Born: Philadelphia, PA, USA (Aliya at age 3 weeks)
Ordination: HUC Jerusalem, 2007
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City/region: Pioneering Reform Judaism in Rosh Pina, Israel’s original Moshava (agricultural village), in the Northern periphery of Israel, is creating cutting edge reality with historic significance. We made history when I taught the entire class of 6th grade public school girls, culminating with the first public Bat Mitzvah ceremony which was integrated into the town’s Shavuot festivities. In 2015 we conducted the first public Tu Bishvat Seder in the town’s 134 year history. During a Bar Mitzvah we conducted in Rosh Pina’s original 1885 synagogue, we honoured the sanctuary by having the first woman chant Torah within its walls.

Special activities in my community: We are continuously designing programming to arouse Israelis to find meaning in Judaism, overcome their alienation from Jewish life, and enhance Jewish meaning-making.

Formative event in my history: At 14, while participating in Israel’s Reform Youth Movement I attended a study session co-led by my father and his orthodox best friend. In a moment of sheer joy I realized that I loved study even though I hated school.

Dreams for personal and professional future: My life’s journey is motivated by “the past, the

present and the possible”. As a third generation liberal Rabbi, grandson of one of the founders of the IMPJ and son of the first Sabra Reform Rabbi I stand on the shoulders of visionaries. I am honored to impact the present by founding and leading RPRC, and strive to create meaningful and sustainable settings for the construction of possible Jewish identities of the future. One such dream is to create The **Beit Midrash of Soul & Soil**, a sacred space combining a community garden and an indoor sanctuary. This setting of Jewish permaculture will include Biblical plants, holiday flora and Shabbat herbs. The natural richness of the garden will enhance our study, and our learning will enrich the garden.

A place in the world which is special to me: Having led journeys of spiritual significance and taught Judaism on five continents I will not take my wife to Boulder Colorado, where my friends from Har Hashem have hosted me twice

for scholar-in-residence Shabbats. I am afraid we will never want to leave.

Unusual experience in the Diaspora: During my 1990 Shlichut in Melbourne Australia I met Amos Oz. In describing my rabbinic role I borrow a line I learnt from him down under. I am not in the business of convincing anyone to move to Israel, he said, but rather I am from Israel’s “seduction core”. I will tell anyone why I am in love with living in Israel and if interested, they can join. Paraphrasing Oz, in my rabbinate I share with great passion why Reform Judaism fills me with meaning and joy and anyone who wants to join is welcome.

A gift I would you like to give to my peers around the world: Collaboration with RPRC is a “Glocal” engagement. In partnering with us you contribute to designing a unique community in Israel’s local Northern periphery by which we may impact the “global” reality of Israel’s society and state.