

Rabbi Michael M. Cohen

Professional History:

Conflict Resolution:

Policy Advisor, Office of the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace, U.S. Department of State (2013 - present)

Provide analysis and ideas for negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians for Special Envoy's office.

Administrative:

Bennington College (2013 - present)

Director of Community Standards, Chairperson of Judicial Committee

The position of Director of Community Standards was created to help the students and college community deal with the existential and philosophical challenges of freedom and self-restraint. Much of the work is done with literally hundreds of individual meetings with students yearly. Out of that work an A.A. group was started. As chair of the Judicial Committee oversaw the revamping the Judicial procedures for the college.

Teaching:

Bennington College (2012 - present)

Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice; The Dual Narrative and the Arab-Israeli Conflict; The Bible & Conflict Resolution; Environmental Conflict and Mitigation: The Book of Genesis; The Book of Deuteronomy and the Advancement of Society; The Bible and the Environment.

The Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, Kibbutz Ketura (1996-97; 2000-01; 2004-2007;2009)

Judaism and the Environment; The Prayer Book as Environmental Text; Moses as Model of Environmental Leadership

Keren Kolot Education Center, Kibbutz Ketura (1996-97; 2000-01; 2004-07; 2009)

Variety of informal education workshops for American high school and college students studying in Israel. Workshops in the classroom and out in the local desert included Bible studies, Judaism, Judaism & the Environment, Kibbutz Values, and Pluralism.

Green Mountain College (1999-2000)

Classes on the Bible and the Environment

Congregational work:

Rabbi, Israel Congregation, Manchester Center, Vermont (1990-2000)

First full time rabbi in history of than 70 year old congregation. Led services, taught classes, life cycle events, counselling. Expanded membership, the synagogue school, and service attendance. Reinvigorated the Interfaith Council of Manchester Center,

Student Rabbi, Rabbi, Israel Congregation, Manchester Center, Vermont (1989-1990)

Led services and taught classes.

Administrator, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, Wyncote, PA (1987-90)

Oversaw numerous tasks needed for the association ranging from Convention organization to creation of rabbinical net service to creation of new materials needed for contemporary rabbis.

Student Rabbi, Beth Jacobs Synagogue, Montpelier, Vermont (1985-86)

Led services and taught classes.

NGO Work:

Friends of the Arava Institute, Manchester Center, Vermont (2000 - present) Held various positions including first Executive Director, Director of Special Projects, Director of Strategic Partnerships. Tasks of fundraising, PR, and student recruitment. Liason to U.S. Government regarding fundraising. Raised funds including six figure gifts. Author of numerous articles on the Institute. Helped with the establishment of the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP)

The Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (1996-97; 2001-01; 2004-07; 2009)

Founding faculty member in 1996 when on sabbatical from Israel Congregation. In addition to teaching duties played important role in Student Life for activities in a student body made up of Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, and international students. Directed the Peacebuilding and Environmental Leadership Seminar (PELS) where the Arab-Israeli Conflict is dealt with directly through the lens of the Dual Narrative. Liason to U.S. Embassy and Israeli government for Palestinian visas including taking case to Israeli Supreme Court. Media duties as well.

Business:

Arava Power Company, Kibbutz Ketura (2007 - present)

Co-Founded the Arava Power Company (APC) the first commercial solar company in Israel which is presently building a solar field that will supply one-third of the city of Eilat's daily electric needs.

Education:

1976	Ewing High School, Ewing, New Jersey
1981	University of Vermont- History B.A. with Honors
1990	Ordination, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters (MHL)
June 2015	Doctor of Divinity Degree, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Semester, year or summer courses:

1975-Trenton State College in Paris, France and Florence, Italy; 1978-Ithaca College in London*; 1978-79 Hebrew Union College on Kibbutz Ma'ale HaChamisha*;1982- Tochnit Tabak, Kibbutz Tirat Tzvi; 1983-Hebrew University; 1985- Ulpan Etzion; 1986-87-Machon Meir and Hebrew University.

*part of two year solo journey around the world

Honors and Awards:

Sustainable Honor Award, Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, November 2008
Semi-Finalist, Eliav Sartawi Awards for Middle East Journalism, Fall 2008
3rd Place, Photo Contest, Ayn Avrona, Israel, February 2005
Rabbi Emeritus, Israel Congregation, August 2000 - present
Commencement Speaker, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, June 1996
"Bob Dylan, Baseball, and Blessings: A View Of A Contemporary American Rabbi"
Unsung Hero Award, Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 1993
Sokolov Hebrew Award, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, 1990
Marva, Hanich Miztayan, 1984
Paul Evans History Award, University of Vermont, 1981
Honors Paper, University of Vermont, 1981 "Lenin's Theory of Self- Determination and the Muslims of the Soviet Union"
Boys State, New Jersey, 1976
Worthington Civic Award, 1976 For Establishing First Recycling Center, Ewing, N.J.

Professional and Voluntary Services:

Member, Israel Task Force, Reconstructionist movement, 2015 - present
Advisory Council, Shomrei Breishit: Rabbis and Cantors for the Earth, 2014 - present
Advisory Board, Jerusalem Peacebuilders, 2014 - present
Board Member, KaTO Architecture, INC., 2014 - present
Member, Interim Board, Jewish Communities of Vermont, 2013 - 2015
Member, Board, Mt. Equinox Preservation Trust, 2013 - present
Member, Steering Committee, Manchester Library Expansion, 2011 - 2014
Member, Steering Committee, Vermont Jewish Justice Initiative, 2009 - 2012
Member, Energy Committee, Town Manchester, 2008 - 2010
Delegate, 35th World Zionist Congress, 2006
Delegate, 34th World Zionist Congress, 2002
Co-Founder, Green Zionist Alliance, 2002
Board of Trustees, Burr & Burton Academy, Manchester, Vt.,1999- 2004; 2006 - present
Selection Committee, Athena Award, 1999 - 2000
Vice-President, Manchester Arts & Entertainment, 1999 - 2000
Board Member, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, 1999 - 2000
Tree Commission, Town of Manchester, 1998 - 2008
Co-Founder, Isle LaMotte Coral Reef Preservation, 1998 - 2000

President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, 1995 - 1997
Faculty, Green Mountain Academy of Lifelong Learning, 1996 - 2000
Member, Ethics Committee, Bennington Hospital, 1995 - 1996
Board Member, Manchester Food Cupboard, 1994 - 1996
Member, State of Vermont, Department of Education,
A.I.D.S Curriculum Review Committee, 1993 -1995
Chairperson, Pastoral Care, Bennington Hospital, 1993 -1995
Executive Committee, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, 1991 - 1999
Member, Manchester Human Service Committee, 1990 -1996
Member, Manchester Interfaith Committee, 1990 - 2000
Sherut La'am, Jerusalem, Israel, 1985

Books:

Einstein's Rabbi: A Tale of Science and the Soul (Shires Press, 2008)

Publications:

Middle East Peace Process

"An intractable conflict with no solution?," Jerusalem Post, February 6, 2016
"Untying the Israeli Palestinian Knot," IPD, December 22, 2015
"Israelis and Palestinians: Arab Lives Matter, Jewish Lives Matter, IPD, October 29, 2015
"Two States: A Solution," International Policy Digest July 14, 2015
"Bibi, Moses, and Churchill," Huffington Post, February 19, 2015

"What would RFK say about the Arab-Israeli Conflict," JPost Blog, January 23, 2015
"Arava Institute as Oasis of Peace," Jewish News (London), January 19, 2015
"Maps," JPost Blog, January 6, 2015
"Jacob and Esau today" JPost Blog, December 31, 2014
"Why a Palestinian State is Essential," J Post, Oct 26, 2014
"Israelis and Palestinians Fight: Don't Forget Jordan," Huff Post, July 11, 2014
"Kerry's Reality Check-Time; Questions that should be ask," JPost, April 18, 2014
"Negotiating in all the wrong places," Saudi Gazette, April 17, 2014
"Water As A Challenge, And Answer," Jewish Week, March 19, 2014
"Another missed opportunity for Israelis and Palestinians," Saudi Gazette Dec.15, 2013
"A statement for the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams," JPost, Nov 29, 2013
"Obama's Peace Assets in the Middle East," Jerusalem Post, July 17, 2013
"NGOs and the Peace Process," Jewish Currents, February, 2013
"The Demolition of homes in the Palestinian village of Sussiya," J Post, August 21, 2012
"US and Israel haven't learned their history lessons: Palestinians and Abbas have,"
Christian Science Monitor, November 16, 2011
"Can Netanyahu Become a Leader Like the Biblical Joshua?," Huff Post, July 27, 2011
"Nature Without Borders," Huffington Post, June 8, 2011
"U.S. Middle East Foreign Aid: Investing in Quiet, not Peace," Arab News, March 20,
2011
"How Israel Should Respond to the Arab Revolutions," Foreign Policy in Focus, March 3, 2011
"Why Israel Must Seize the Day," Arab News, February 16, 2011
"Mideast peace: Where things went wrong," Arab News, December 16, 2010

"Nature Knows No Borders," Present Tense, November 7, 2010
"The latest round of peace talks: Why failure is not an option," Arab News, Sept. 25, 2010
"Einstein, Obama, and Bibi Netanyahu," The Jerusalem Post, April 25, 2010
"All we are saying is give peace a chance," Arab News, Oct. 13, 2009
"The Desert as Meeting Place: Where Students from the Middle East and Around the World Come Together" IENetworker, Spring 2009
"Establishing an IFFIPP," Search for Common Ground News, March 19, 2009
"Grassroots Power," The Washington Times, Dec. 12, 2008
"Building Bridges to the Middle East," Rutland Herald, Oct. 26, 2008
"Arava Institute," Manchester Journal, May 30, 2008
"Zionism & Power," The Jordan Times, May 19, 2008
"One Land, Dual Narratives," Rutland Herald, Jan. 20, 2008
"Salvaging Peace with Syria," with Salem Ali, Policy Innovations, Nov. 20, 2007
"Palestinian Permits and NGOs," The Palestine Times, Dec. 5, 2006
"The Paralysis of the Victim," Ha'aretz, Oct. 30, 2006
"AIES: Nature Knows No Borders," Palestine-Israel Journal, Spring 2006
"Land above politics," The Jerusalem Post, Mar. 21, 2006
"Zionism Today: A Reconstructionist Reflection," The Reconstructionist, Fall 2005
"The Land Can Bring Us Together," www.israel21c.org, Dec. 11, 2005
"Small Gestures Point the Way," Rutland Herald, Dec. 16, 2004
"Feeding the Enemy," theglimpse.com (English), Jun. 2001
"Feeding the Enemy," Al-Quds newspaper (Arabic), May, 27 2001
"Jerusalem, D.C.," Al-Quds newspaper (Arabic), Sept. 12, 2000
"The Diameter of a Bomb", The Jerusalem Post, April 1996

Israel

"The value of voting for Aytzim," JPost, April 14, 2015
"Israel and her minorities," Huffington Post, March 23, 2015
"The Green Zionist Alliance: The Acorn That acted like a Tree," Tikkun, May, 2008
"Zionism Looks Forward," Biyachad, JNF, May, 2008
"Time for a Green Chief for the JNF," Ha'aretz, March 26, 2006
"The Green Zionist Alliance: Making Tu B'Shvat Real," JTA, Feb. 2006
"In the Land of Green Zionism," Reconstructionism Today, Winter 2002-03
"The Greening of Zionism," Jerusalem Post, Feb. 22, 2002
" We Haven't Yet Addressed Our Hate," Bennington Banner, May, 1991
" A Vermonter Defends Israel," The Vanguard Press, Nov. 28, 1982

United States

"Bernie Should Run as a Republican," Rutland Herald, March 8, 2015
"10 Years Later, We Must Do Better," Huffington Post, September 8, 2011
"Genesis of Civility," Rutland Herald, February 2, 2011
"Governor Shumlin Invocation," Manchester Journal, January 16, 2011
"After Arizona shooting, how can Congress heal the division? Break bread together," Christian Science Monitor, January 11, 2011
"Dear Mr. President-elect," Rutland Herald, Jan. 18, 2009

"Reflections on the inauguration," Rutland Herald, Jan. 29, 2009
"IM or I am," Rutland Herald, Nov. 22, 2007
"Some news that's fit to print," Rutland Herald, March 4, 2004
"Passing September 11th," Manchester Journal, Sept. 20, 2002
"A more encompassing truth," Rutland Herald, Aug. 7, 2002
"Thinking September 11," Chicago Jewish News, Jan. 18, 2002
"From 9.11 to the Season of Lights," WAMC radio, Dec. 2001
"Holy Speech, Holy Words," The Reconstructionist, Spring 2001
"The Times They Are A' Changin'," Brattleboro Reformer, Feb. 2000
"A False and Dangerous Inference," Vermont Cynic, Feb. 12, 1981
"on the death of john lennon," Vermont Cynic, Dec. 11, 1980

Religion

"The Second Passover: a minor holiday with a major message," May 3, 2015
"Defuse the Religion Bomb," JPost Blog, January 15, 2105
"Telling the Story of Israel's Trees," Forward, Feb 4, 2014
"A Jewish Question: To pray for snow or not to pray for snow," JPost, Jan. 29, 2014
"Freedom of Religion," VPR, Nov 27, 2013
"Einstein's rabbi goes looking for a publisher," Jerusalem Post, March 7, 2013
"Thanksgiving & Hanukkah," Jerusalem Post, November 21, 2012
"Lessons of the Holocaust Museum," Jerusalem Post, October 3, 2012
"And God Commanded," reprint of Huff Post piece, Sacred Journal, vol 63. No 3, 2012
"Opening our Lives to the Holy," Huffington Post, April 20, 2012
"This Tu B'Shvat – A Nobel Environment Prize," Jerusalem Post, February 6, 2012
"God is One: A Kabbalistic Explanation," Huffington Post, November 29, 2011
"Beginning the Jewish Year in the Aftermath of Hurricane Irene," Huff Post, October 6, 2011
"And God Commanded, Not Use the Computer One Day a Week," HuffPost, Sept 24, 2011
"Religious interpretation and the Arab-Israeli conflict," SFCG, December 23, 2010
"Sharing the Holy Sites," Search for Common Ground, August 10, 2010
"Rabbi Max B. Wall, my teacher, my rabbi," Burlington Free Press, May 16, 2009
"The Genesis of Diversity," Jewish Education News, Summer 2008
"Tu B'Shvat: Where Rashi and Buber Meet," Jerusalem Report, Jan. 21, 2008
"Calendars," VPR, Jan. 1, 2008
"Moses in The Promised Land," Bible Review, Dec. 1999
"Reconstructing The Synagogue," CLAL, Fall 1999
"Hearing The Inner Voice," Jewish Bible Quarterly, Oct-Dec. 1999
"The Jewish New Year," Bennington Banner, Sept. 11, 1999
"The Blessings of Yitzhak & Ishmael," Living Text, Summer 1999
"Bread," Bennington Banner, May 22, 1999
"After Columbine: A Theological Reponse," Manchester Journal, April 30, 1999
"Nachshon: A Midrash on a Midrash," Kerem, Spring 1999
"Finding The Desert: Finding Ourselves," Bennington Banner, Jan. 16, 1999
"Dedicating The Memory of a Friend," The Forward, Dec. 11, 1998
"Sukkot: Yom Kippur's Counterbalance," The Forward, Sept. 1998
"On Being A Paradox Jew," Reconstructionist Divrei Torah, July 1998
"Summer Countings," Bennington Banner, July 27, 1998
"Reclaiming Our Reconstructionist Zionist Roots," Reconstructionism Today, Spring 1998
"Holy Space: Holy World," Bennington Banner, Feb 14, 1998

"Pluralism Within Judaism," Ha'artz (Hebrew), May 1997
"On Being Commanded," The Reconstructionist, Spring 1995
"Being an American and a Jew," Sh'ma 24/474, May 13, 1994
"Hesped for Rabbi Daniel I. Kamesar," Raayanot, Spring 1991
"Fair Trade," K'fari, Feb. 1989
"Two Nations Under God," The Reconstructionist, Sept. 1988
"Perpetuating the Memory of Hershel Jonah Matt," Raayanot, Spring 1988
"Yom HaAtzmaut: A Rebirth," The Student Zionist, April 1983
"Israel's Humanitarian Work with the Third World", Focus, Feb. 1983

Sports

"Turning weakness into strength," Burlington Free Press, August 29, 2012
"Enduring lesson from the World Cup," Rutland Herald, August 1, 2010

Environment

"The Lawnmower," VPR Commentary, October 2, 2012
"Why not a Nobel Environment Prize," Rutland Herald, January 15, 2012
"The time has come to establish a Nobel Environment Prize," Huff Post, January 12, 2012
"The Solar Field and the Mezuzah," Huffington Post, July 18, 2011
"Heal the world," Haaretz, Jan. 29, 2010
"The Lesson of Tu B'Shvat: A Judaism for Every Season," The Forward, Jan. 13, 2010
"Environmental Diplomacy and the Middle East," Todays Zaman, Dec. 26, 2009
"Learning Diversity from Trees," Hadassah, Feb. 2009
"Diversity is the Way of the World," Rutland Herald, Dec. 21, 2008
"Tu B'Shvat: Truth & Justice, Tress & Land," Brit Zedek v'Shalom, Jan. 2008
"Tu B'Shvat: Asking Who We Are," JNF Green Times, Jan. 2008

Contributions:

"What is Jewish About America's 'Favorite Pastime'?"
Essays and Sermons on Jews, Judaism, and Baseball"
Ed. Raphael & Abrams, June 2006
"Tu B'Shvat 2004: A Book of Sermons," J.N.F. Jan. 2004
"Tu B'Shvat 2003: A Book of Sermons," J.N.F. Jan. 2003
"When A Rabbi Catches a Sermon," in "Rabbis: The Many Faces of Judaism,"
George Kalinsky, Universe Publishing, New York. 2002
Photographs, "Fostering Peace in a Land of War," Vermont Quarterly, Winter 2002
Commentaries, "Reconstructionist Haggadah," Spring 2000
Commentaries, "5756:Learn Torah With..." Grishaver and Kelman, Editors, Alef Design, 1999
Essays, "A Book of Blessings," Olitzky and Forman, Editors,
Jewish Lights, Woodstock, Vt. Sept. 1999
Commentaries, "Rabbi's Manual," Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, 1997
Commentary, "Kol Haneshamah:Shabbat Vehagim," The Reconstructionist Press, 1994
Photographs, "Why Not Now?", Mendek Rubin, Philosophical Library, New York, N.Y. 1982
Travel Insights, "World Wide Travel Handbook," New York, 1980

Other:

Invocation at Inauguration of Governor Shumlin, January 2011