

Israeli Solar Pioneer Calls on Jews Worldwide to Join Climate Marches

Climate Marches on the Sabbath Poses Dilemma for Some Jews

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES , April 28, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Despite the People's Climate March being held on the Jewish Sabbath tomorrow, Israel's leading solar pioneer is calling on Jews worldwide to participate since the commandment to save lives takes priority over traditional Sabbath observance.

Appearing on i24's news program Thursday night (<http://i24news.tv>), Yosef Abramowitz, a religious Jewish leader and a founding father of the solar industries in Israel and East Africa, said that it is a religious imperative to march to save the planet. "Extreme droughts in sub-Saharan Africa threatens the lives of millions of people and fuels growing Jihadism," said Abramowitz. "We want to the United States to remain in the Paris Climate Agreement."



Solar pioneer Yosef Abramowitz on Kibbutz Ketura in Israel

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Spreading the practice of a true day of rest every week could be the most powerful market force on the planet to fight climate change.”

*Israeli solar leader Yosef
Abramowitz*

Writing in the Jerusalem Post, Abramowitz further added that "If we consciously scale back our consumption, our driving, our materialism, our work with a true day of rest, and if every faith community in the world followed suit, we could reduce by 1/7th greenhouse gas emissions – enough to bring the earth back into balance. In Israel, our greenhouse gas emissions are nearly nonexistent on Yom Kippur and there is a 30% reduction on Shabbat. Spreading the practice of a true day of rest every week could be the most powerful market force on the planet.

Abramowitz, named by CNN one of the top six Green Pioneers worldwide, will be joining from Jerusalem Hazon and other Jewish groups in the faith delegation to the climate march April 29th in Washington, DC. He is a former Israeli presidential candidate and is working on a book on climate change and faith.

The full text of of "Marching for Jewish Values" appears below:

This religious Jew is going to observe next Shabbat in Washington, DC, in an unorthodox yet deeply

Jewish way – marching to save the planet.

The fact that there is some ambivalence in the Jewish community about whether to participate in the People's Climate March on our holy day shows a fundamental lack of understanding of the seriousness of the climate threat to human life. The mitzva of pikuah nefesh – the commandment to break Shabbat to save a life – applies here, since the fate of millions, and ultimately billions, hangs in the balance.

In Israel, the sister climate march will take place on Friday, April 28, in Tel Aviv, and dozens of sister marches will happen worldwide on Shabbat that Jews everywhere should join as a religious and civic duty.



former Israeli President Shimon Peres visits a solar field with Abramowitz

I travel the world advancing the creation of solar markets, which has now become big business in the service of protecting the majesty of God's creation. While the cherry blossoms will bloom as usual in Washington, biblical level droughts are devastating parts of Africa, fueling jihadism. While the sun is likely to be shining on the million marchers past Capitol Hill, super-charged typhoons in the Philippines may be gathering strength from warmer waters and rising tides, which drowned 6,300 people and displaced over 2 million in 2013. While Washington, DC, may have enough water, a majority of US states are moving toward water scarcity and increased wildfires. And while the lights are on in Israel, Gaza sits in darkness, and without the power to fuel the wastewater treatment plant, desalination projects or hospitals. The sparks that lit the crimes against humanity called the Syrian civil war and the Darfur genocide were in part because of increasingly scarce water resources, heralding even greater climate-ignited crises in the future.

Israel's energy profile is thankfully moving from dirty coal to natural gas, with some reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. But when it comes to green energy, the Jewish state's modest goals essentially removes it from the club of enlightened Western countries. Today, only 3% of Israel's energy comes from the sun, when it could account for 100% of the day-time usage. This will soon be the case for the Arava, from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, so we know it is technically possible and economically worthwhile. World Jewry should demand greater accountability from Israel when it comes to its climate and energy policies, which are essentially stuck in the 20th century.

Yet the world Jewish community is no better. Our holy synagogues are fueled by dirty power instead of God's light; our rabbis drive combustion engine cars, which should be considered a hilul hashem, a desecration of God's name. The endowments of all the Israeli universities, Jewish federations and foundations are more invested in oil and other fossil fuels than they are in green energy, carrying a moral stain blindly in an age of potential enlightenment.

While the rapid deployment of renewables and the switch to electric cars are drivers of the green economy of the future, and part of the solution to climate change, the most effective way to stop climate change is not dependent upon the Paris Agreement, the US Congress or administration or the Israel Electric Corporation. Rather, it is the hands of each and every Jew and person of faith: a day of rest.

If we consciously scale back our consumption, our driving, our materialism, our work with a true day of rest, and if every faith community in the world followed suit, we could reduce by 1/7th greenhouse gas emissions – enough to bring the earth back into balance. In Israel, our greenhouse gas emissions are nearly nonexistent on Yom Kippur and there is a 30% reduction on Shabbat. Spreading the practice of a true day of rest every week could be the most powerful market force on the planet.

So marching as a Jew on Shabbat in climate marches around the world fulfills the mitzva of pikuah nefesh, and reminds us and the world that the solution is truly in our hands. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said during the US civil rights movement, by marching for a good cause, his “feet were praying.”

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