



from
RABBI WHITE'S
study

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Come into your sanctuary. Shake off the cold. Be warmed by our pillar of fire.

This season we read the Torah's description of the construction of our first sanctuary, the sacred space during our ancestors' desert journey, a description that anticipates the special, elevated, sacred community that gathers in our own sanctuary each Shabbat and holy day.

The Torah teaches: The cloud of the Eternal One was upon the Sanctuary by day, and a pillar of fire was on it by night. (Ex. 40:38)

Our teacher, the Arono Shel Yosef, taught that the cloud represents those influences on us that distract us from what is true and real - the quest for material wealth, our screens and addiction to social media, the pressures to succeed well beyond what is healthy. The Arono Shel Yosef teaches that these pressures, like a cloud, obscure our view. They keep us from seeing the essential goodness and holiness in our world. They keep us from opening our eyes and our hearts to each other; they blind us to how we can grant each other strength and comfort, laughter and love.

The pillar of fire, on the other hand, is the light that helps us clearly see and appreciate every person, every child as the handiwork of the Holy One, exactly as they are; to see that our gifts and even our challenges are beautiful. They are the image of God. That every single person is within our tabernacle, in the House of Israel, in God's sight along our journey in this world. We'd all be better off if we turned away from the clouds and spent more time grateful for the beauty, the light, the reflection of God's blessings inside of us, and that surround us.

When you enter our sanctuary, you will be warmed by the light of life, the beauty and blessing of diversity, the vibrant, rich, glorious people of Israel. Temple Sinai's beautiful sanctuary shines with the energy of this vital Jewish community.

February and March are busy months at your temple, granting many opportunities for you to dust off the cold and be embraced by the welcoming Jewish community in your Temple Sinai. Take a look inside this *Scribe* and join us. I want to especially encourage you to worship with us at our 6:45pm Friday night services. One hour of spiritual nourishment, joyful singing, quiet contemplation, and wise, engaging wisdom. A perfect way to remind us of what's important in our lives, a pillar of fire amidst all the chaos that fills our days and weeks.

Join us on Shabbat. Surround yourselves with your people so together, we can be grateful to be in God's temple, to reach out in our prayers and our hearts, for God's grace. To be grateful for the surrounding grace of each other, each of us a reflection of God's light, each potential blessing in our lives.

L'Shalom

Rabbi Michael A. White