

# **Prepping the S.A.T.s— Spiritually Attuned Teens:**

**Hassidic Spirituality for the Emerging Jewish  
Young Adult**

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## Table of Contents

Rationale .....	4
Letter to the Teacher.....	9
Enduring Understandings.....	11
Goals.....	11
Essential Questions.....	11
Authentic Assessment.....	12

### **Unit 1 – Facing the Spiritual Challenges of our Age..... 14**

Session 1.1 and 1.2 – Asking Mystery Questions.....	15
Session 1.3 – Hassidism: Bringing the Spirit Back to Judaism .....	18
Session 1.4 – The First Meeting .....	20
Unit 1 Appendices .....	22

### **Unit 2 – Finding Zusya: Beginning Our Spiritual Paths..... 37**

Session 2.1 – <i>Ayeka?</i> Where Have You Put Yourself? .....	39
Session 2.2 – Becoming More Like Zusya .....	41
Session 2.3 – Making a Living or Making a Life?.....	43
Session 2.4 – Class Retreat: Spirituality in Community and in the Self (Memorable Moment).....	46
Unit 2 Appendices .....	48

### **Unit 3 – Unification and Balance: The Spirituality of Joy (Scripted Unit)..... 58**

Session 3.1 – Telling Our Stories of <i>Simchah</i> .....	60
Session 3.2 – The Practice of <i>Simchah</i> .....	63
Session 3.3 – Unification and Balance: <i>Tipul Atzmi</i> and the Spirit.....	66
Session 3.4 – The Experience of the Hassidic <i>Niggun</i> (Memorable Moment) .....	69
Session 3.5 – Synthesis .....	72
Unit 3 Appendices .....	74

### **Unit 4 – Integrity: The Spirituality of Balance within the Self**

Session 4.1 – Beginning with the Self .....	100
Session 4.2 – Approaches to Conflict.....	102
Session 4.3 – Finding Values, Finding the Self .....	104
Session 4.4 – The Second Meeting.....	106
Unit 4 Appendices .....	107

## **Unit 5 – Facing Outward: Spirituality and *Tikkun*..... 118**

Session 5.1 – Begin with the Self... But Don't End with the Self.....	120
Session 5.2 – Redeeming the Sparks .....	122
Session 5.3 – <i>Tikkun Atzmi</i> Leads to <i>Tikkun Ha'Olam</i> .....	124
Session 5.4 – Finding Our Cause .....	126
Session 5.5 – Action Day: Doing the Work of <i>Tikkun</i> (Memorable Moment).....	128
Unit 5 Appendices .....	129

## **Unit 6 – Heart Searching: Responding to the Divine Call .... 142**

Session 6.1 – <i>Ayeka?</i> Where Are You Going? .....	144
Session 6.2 – Workshopping <i>Divrei Nefesh</i> .....	146
Session 6.3 – SAT Certified: Culmination for the Spiritually Attuned Teen.....	148
Unit 6 Appendices .....	150

## **Concluding Documents**

Works Cited .....	152
Annotated Bibliography .....	154

## Rationale

“We modern day Americans have a spiritual problem. There is something fundamentally wrong in our culture. We who have succeeded so brilliantly in matters of economics, science, and technology have been *less successful in matters of the heart and soul*.”<sup>1</sup>

Rachael Kessler asserts in *The Soul of Education* that this spiritual problem is responsible for much of the self-destructive or even violent behavior in our nation’s teenagers.<sup>2</sup> The problem that she diagnoses is that our youth do not have the opportunity in school, and oftentimes anywhere else, to talk about matters of the “soul.” She writes:

“The inner life of...young people is intimately bound up with matters of meaning, purpose, and connection, with creative expression and moments of joy and transcendence. All these qualities are central to both emotional intelligence and to constructively filling the spiritual void.”<sup>3</sup>

For our youth to be not only academically and physically healthy, but also emotionally and spiritually healthy, they need outlets to discuss these matters of the spirit. And if they are not finding these outlets in public school education, then it is precisely the obligation of our *shuls* to fulfill this need.

This curriculum guide on spirituality is designed for learners in late high school, preferably high school seniors, in a liberal congregational supplementary school. It is aimed for late high school because learners at this age are going through unprecedented transition in their lives—graduating high school, leaving home, going to college. It is in these moments of transition that Rachael Kessler notes a need for sacred rites of

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<sup>1</sup> Nord, W. (1995). *Religion and American Education: Rethinking a National Dilemma*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 380.

<sup>2</sup> Kessler, R. (2000). *The Soul of Education*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, xii.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., xvii.



passage, for initiation.<sup>4</sup> To that end, this curriculum makes use of Hassidic folk stories and the lessons learned therein as entry points for students to explore their souls. The course addresses the topics of defining one's *personal* path towards spirituality, but does so *within community*, accessing joy as a spiritual practice, defining one's personal integrity, and using that integrity to engage in the act of *tikkun*. Through the course, learners will engage in both text based learning as well as experiential learning through retreats, singing *niggunim*, service learning, and spiritual practice in stillness. This curriculum seeks to equip these learners with spiritual practice, self-awareness, and a personal vision of priorities and values that will help them as they venture out and discover who they are and how they want to contribute to the world.

Of course, in order for one to access a curriculum about spirituality, we have to define what exactly spirituality is. For the purposes of this curriculum guide, spirituality is the quality or state of feeling an intimate connection with God or simply with something bigger than oneself. It is an awareness of the greater picture beyond one's own perspective and a feeling of awe and wonder at that grandeur. And yet, **spirituality is a paradox. At the same time that it directs us outward beyond ourselves, it also forces us to seek inwardly.**<sup>5</sup> The spiritual person is deeply concerned with matters of personal integrity: developing a practice that can center oneself, making sure that thoughts, values, and feelings are aligned with the actions we show to the world beyond ourselves. This curriculum guide attempts to speak to all these areas of spirituality—the outward and the inward, the numinous and transcendent as well as the tangible and practical.

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<sup>4</sup> [Kessler, 136.](#)

<sup>5</sup> All bolded text in this rationale comprises the Enduring Understandings of the curriculum.

Hassidic stories at first glance might seem quaint, sentimental, or naive, but actually, they are precisely what is lacking and needed in the corpus of Reform Jewish education. It is because these stories reflect such a different and even countercultural theological grounding that they are relevant. Kids who have grown up in liberal supplementary schools have likely encountered Judaism through a rational lens. They have likely studied values, social justice, history, and prayer all through the context and grounding of the modern, post-Enlightenment framework. Torah was not written by God, but by people; we approach *mitzvot* through informed choice. These educational principles are necessary to engage our kids in liberal Jewish identity work, but a purely rational framework can also be *parve* and whitewashed of spiritual content. By exposing our kids to non-rational faith, as exemplified by the Hassidic masters, we give them the opportunity to start grappling deeply with some of the mysteries that we should be exposing them to. What does it mean to feel connected to The Sacred? And how do I create that connection?

The second answer to the question of why Hassidut is what Martin Buber describes as the core of Hassidic teaching: exalted joy.<sup>6</sup> The Hassidim, through their spiritual practice of cleaving to God, through their *niggunim*, cultivate a Jewish practice of ecstasy. They experience Judaism in a way that is hardly afforded to any Reform Jews. Their Judaism might not be scientific or modern, but it is un-self-conscious, authentic, and genuinely joyful. Our kids need to be exposed to that kind of Judaism, so they can truly experience a Judaism that not only nourishes the mind, but also nourishes the heart and the *kishkehs*.

Through the stories and the examples the Hassidim represent, our learners will

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<sup>6</sup> Buber, M. (1991). *Tales of Hasidim*. New York, Schocken Books, 4.

understand that **Hassidic literature demonstrates that the spiritual practices of character refinement and cultivating joy lead to personal fulfillment.** As they reflect on the vision they cultivate for their own lives, they will understand that **the voice of the Divine calls out *ayeka* “where are you” to everyone, and when a person can listen to that voice and respond to it, s/he will find purpose and fulfillment.** The sequence of this curriculum is a narrative one that begins with a contextual analysis of the Hassidic movement and comparisons to their contemporary context. They then begin a process of digging deeper within the self—starting with self-awareness, followed by cultivating spiritual practice, and finally doing the deep work of defining their personal integrity. Once the students have done this interior work, the guide then helps them use those skills to engage outward, find their personal calling, and do the work of *tikkun olam*.

The sequence of the units helps set up the authentic assessment for this curriculum guide, which culminates with the students producing a *davar nefesh*. This project is based on the fact that seniors have to write college essays that reflect their character, interests, and plans of study when they enter college. The focus of these essays is saying the right thing to distinguish themselves from their peers and get them into college. Unfortunately, the focus on achievement, academics, and extra-curriculars leaves little room for these seniors to reflect on matters of the soul. The *davar nefesh* is an opportunity for the learners of this course to consider the people that they want to be on the day of graduation from their college and the values, practices, and actions they want to take as adults. Each unit has a benchmark assessment which will assist the students in producing this important document, including interviews with congregants who have been on an important spiritual journey themselves, a Shabbaton retreat, and an

experience in doing the work of *tikkun*. At the end of the year, the learners will present these *divrei nefesh* to the community at a Shabbat service that would serve as a rite of passage for the graduating seniors.

Helping our students ground themselves through spirituality is not just important for them to get through their adolescence, but it is essential for their emotional health throughout their lives. When the spirit is not tended to, a person can lose himself in the muddiness of life. But if we help our learners define their integrity and values and help them see themselves as connected to something larger than themselves, we can help them on the path towards meaningful and fulfilling lives.

Dear Teacher,

I am so happy that you are considering using this curriculum, because it means that you agree that teaching our young adults social-emotional and spiritual growth has to be a priority in Jewish education. Before you dive into Hassidic stories and spiritual development, here are some pointers for how you can use this curriculum.

- **The teacher's journey:** I believe strongly that in order for this course to have the most impact on the students, the teacher must also be on a spiritual journey. If the students can see that their teacher is also wrestling with these matters of the spirit, they will feel that their teacher is genuine and can see him as a model for the work that they are going through. To that end, I highly recommend two things. Firstly, I believe that it would benefit you greatly to read one of the resources in the annotated bibliography in whole, or any other book on Jewish theology, spirituality, or mysticism. Secondly, I believe that you should write your own *davar nefesh* at the beginning of the course to model the assignment for the students and also allow the students to get to know you on a more intimate and spiritual level. The more you, as the teacher, buy into this process, the more I believe your learners will benefit from it as well.
- **Age Range:** the curriculum is written to teach a graduating high school class at a synagogue's religious school. The reasoning behind this decision was because the rites of passage for this age—going to college, leaving home, going out into the world—present a unique opportunity for reflection and the development of the self. This curriculum, however, could be adapted for use in a Confirmation class or even for students in college coming to a Hillel searching for spiritual connection.
- **Timing:** this curriculum guide consists of 25 lessons written for a 75-minute time block. The reason for 75 minutes was that a lot of the learning activities and assessments require reflection because they are experiential in nature. The timing is suggestive, of course, and the teacher should feel free to adjust according to the needs of his or her program.
- **Building Block Assessments:** in this curriculum guide are a number of building block assessments in every unit. These activities and projects provide both benchmarks for the learners to complete to show they have learned the material, and also essential artifacts that the learners will need to use to construct their final project, the *davar nefesh*. It is critical that the teacher collects the building block assessments when the students have completed them, to keep them in a portfolio for each student. These portfolios should be revisited throughout the course to edit and get feedback. At the beginning of each unit, if a benchmark assessment is double-starred, then it is suggested that that work should be collected and for the portfolios.

- Subject Matter: the important thing to realize about this curriculum is that while the content is Hassidic stories, the real subject of this curriculum is the learner. The Hassidic stories are gateways for the learners to develop self-awareness, personal spirituality, and values-based integrity. This is the objective that the teacher of this curriculum must always hold in mind and never focus too much on coverage of the material at the expense of developing the real subject matter: the students.

*B'hatzlecha!* I wish you success and, most importantly, joy as you teach this curriculum. The work of developing the spirit is never easy, but I know it is the most rewarding and important work that we can do as Jewish educators.

Benj Fried

RHSOE Class of 2016

## Enduring Understandings

1. Hassidic literature demonstrates that the spiritual practices of character refinement and cultivating joy lead to personal fulfillment.
2. Integrity requires the mastery and alignment of one's thoughts, speech and actions.
3. The voice of the Divine calls out *ayeka* "where are you" to everyone, and when a person can listen to that voice and respond to it, he will find purpose and fulfillment.
4. Hassidic spiritual practice is not just an insular, individual endeavor because it leads to connection, social action, and *tikkun olam*.

## Goals

1. To introduce the learners to Hassidic story telling and the spiritual/emotional world of Hassidism.
2. To lead learners on an individualized path of spirituality while fostering learning in a cohort group.
3. To introduce learners to the concept of integrity and encourage them to define their personal integrity through spiritual practice and defining their values.
4. To introduce the Kabbalistic concept of *tikkun* and encourage learners to define their personal mission that will contribute to repairing the world.
5. To encourage students to figure out the people they want to become and formulate a vision for how they will become their best selves through spiritual practice, adherence to values, and defining personal integrity.

## Essential Questions

1. What does it mean to connect with God?
2. What is my integrity? What do I have to do to live my life with integrity?
3. What is joy?
4. What is the role of the individual and the community in fostering spirituality?
5. What does the Divine want of us?
6. What is my response to the Divine call? What is my obligation to engage in the work of *tikkun*?

## Authentic Assessment

The authentic assessment for this curriculum, the *Davar Nefesh*, is an opportunity for the students to both synthesize the material they have learned over the course of the year as well as personalize it into a vision for how they want to live their lives. The assessment is similar to college admittance essays that require graduating seniors to speak of themselves and their unique contributions they hope to make to the community they hope to enter. Unlike the college admittance essay, however, the *Davar Nefesh* is meant for the students not to speak of their achievement or “sell themselves” but rather to do the soul-searching they need to understand what values, beliefs, and commitments are at the core of their being and what they need to do to live out those values, beliefs and commitments. The format of these *Divrei Nefesh* should resemble a *Davar Torah* of sorts, with the content being a) a teaching learned in the course, b) something the student learned of him/herself through that teaching, and c) a statement of values derived from that learning that the student intends to use to guide them through college and beyond. Excellence in this project depends on the students making it a deeply personal work, using the content of the course to derive meaning for themselves, and describing their personal values and integrity.

The experiences the students accrue over the course of the curriculum will help them formulate the content of their *Divrei Nefesh*. The first and fourth units conclude with spiritual interviews of congregants. These interviews are meant to give the students an authentic taste of what a person who is on a spiritual journey is like. From these experiences, the students should reflect and journal about the insights they gained from listening to these congregants and how they affect their own spiritual journey. Unit 2, the unit on self-awareness and delving into one’s personal journey, concludes with a *Shabbaton* retreat. The most important part of this retreat is the spiritual map that the students will create in which they portray the major events of their spiritual lives and determine what direction they wish to go during the course and beyond. Unit 3, the unit on cultivating spiritual practices of joy, concludes with the students leading a Shabbat service incorporating joyful practice. It is an opportunity for the students to put their learning to work and to reflect on what kinds of spiritual practices they want to carry with them forward. Unit 5 takes the content from Unit 4 on integrity and directs it outwards towards figuring out each student’s personal mission in the world. As such, the unit concludes with an experience in doing *tikkun olam* and then journaling about how the experience affected their spirits. It is important for the teacher to collect all the written work from these experiences to place in the students’ portfolios, so that the students can reflect on their experiences to write the final *Davar Nefesh* in the sixth and final unit.

While much of this assessment work involves introspection and journaling, the role of the community is also a prominent part of producing the *Divrei Nefesh*. The class community participates in the writing process, as one of the key steps in



the final stages of the *Davar Nefesh* is that each student will pair off with another to share his/her work with the other and receive feedback before presenting a final draft. The students will also receive feedback on their work from an adult, who could be clergy at the synagogue, an educator, the people who came in for spiritual interviews, or other prominent adults in the students' lives—teachers, coaches, etc. A protocol for briefing these adults on how to approach their role in this process can be found in Unit 6. Once the students have received feedback, they should revise their work for final presentations. The students conclude the curriculum by presenting their work to the classroom community as well as any adults the class chooses to invite to the culminating lesson and ceremony. The students also have the option of going public with their work for the community at an end of year Shabbat service honoring the graduating senior class.

## Unit 1 - Facing the Spiritual Challenges of our Age (unscripted)

### Enduring Understandings

- Hassidic literature demonstrates that the spiritual practices of character refinement and cultivating joy lead to personal fulfillment
- The voice of the Divine calls out *ayeka* “where are you” to everyone, and when a person can listen to that voice and respond to it, he will find purpose and fulfillment

### Essential Questions

- What is spiritual fulfillment?
- What do I need to be spiritually fulfilled?

### Goals

- To allow students to ask “mystery questions”—matters of the spirit
- To give students the opportunity to express their areas of spiritual dissatisfaction and introduce them to Hassidism—its context and the malaise it was responding to
- To introduce the learners to the feel of the Hassidic story
- To create a safe and supportive classroom environment that fosters students sharing vulnerability with each other
- To introduce the authentic assessment for the course

### Unit Objectives

- Learners will brainstorm the ways that the Judaism they know fulfills them and also leaves them unsatisfied
- Learners will analyze the context in which Hassidic spirituality emerged and be able to identify the spiritual need that Hassidism was filling
- Learners will compare the Hassidic context to that of the Counterculture, the emergence of New Ageism, and their own lives and be able to identify reasons for its relevance to their spiritual lives

### Authentic Assessments

- First meeting with a congregant, preferably one who went from a place of being spiritually dissatisfied to spiritually fulfilled. Learners reflect on the meeting then do a self-inventory of their own spirituality and areas they hope to grow.

### Building Block Assessments

- Giving Yourself an “A”\*\* (Double starred assessments should go into student portfolios)

### Key Terms/Concepts

- Hassidism

- *Mitnagdim*

## Session 1.1 and 1.2 - Asking Mystery Questions

### Objectives:

- Learners will be able to identify several spiritual matters that they have not had the opportunity to delve into in past educational experiences
- Learners will explain and analyze areas of spiritual fulfillment and spiritual malaise in their lives and explain the root causes of that fulfillment or dissatisfaction
- Learners will write personal goals for what they hope to garner through this curriculum

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

**\*\*Note to the teacher:** for the Council process to fully unfold, this protocol should happen over the course of two sessions. You could choose to divide the lesson in two at the point where the learners write their mystery questions, and then read the questions anonymously at the beginning of the second session.

### Council

Council is a process described in Rachael Kessler's book *The Soul of Education* whereby you invite the learners to share of themselves and begin to dig deep into what they are curious about and what they need.<sup>7</sup> It is a multi-step process and should take the vast majority of your opening two sessions. It is meant to foster meaningful conversation and begin to get the learners to open up to the process of talking about spirituality.

#### A. The Opener

This is the set induction activity which can be used in multiple ways to pique the interests of the students or simply get them talking. One idea is to pass around a *challah*, have each student break off a piece for themselves, and then go around the circle and have each student talk about what nourishes their soul and what they want to be nourished by in this class and what nourishment they hope to provide.

#### B. Setting Ground Rules

Hopefully by now the students have settled in and begun to feel comfortable with each other. Now, begin the process of setting ground rules. The process could be framed by saying: "Our curriculum comes from your issues, your questions, and your challenges as you go through

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<sup>7</sup> Kessler, R. (2000) *The Soul of Education*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 6-16.

this time of your lives. But if you're going to risk speaking about what truly matters personally, what do you need—from yourself and from others—to make it safe to do that?”<sup>8</sup>

Create a class *b'rit* with the emphasis being on creating a safe space and conveying high expectations that your learners will bring their full selves to the classroom.

### C. Games and Symbolic Expression

After ground rules have been set, this is an excellent opportunity for the learners to get to know each other on a deeper level. Any number of games could work for this part of Council, but the important thing is that each person gets an opportunity to share something important about him/herself with the group.

One possible game involves the learners being asked to bring an object that is of symbolic importance to them before the first lesson. If the learner does not have an object when they come to class, they can draw the object they have in mind when they arrive. Have the learners place the objects in the center of the circle, and invite each person to take an object that does not belong to them. Go around the circle and have each person talk about why they picked the object they took. After the taker talks about the object, the person who brought it can then talk about the object, why they brought it, and what symbolic importance it has for them. The other learners should practice respectful listening while the person talks about the object to facilitate their talking about important parts of themselves.<sup>9</sup>

### D. Mysteries Questions

This part of Council is the most important part and requires the most amount of trust. Ask the learners to write on slips of paper mystery questions. These are things that keep them up at night, things that preoccupy them during the day or during school, things they wonder about, feel curious about, feel excited about. These are questions about themselves, about other people, and about life itself.

Some examples:

- Why am I so angry?
- Why am I so alone?
- Why do I feel scared and confused about becoming an adult? What does it mean to accept that this is my life and I have responsibility for it?
- What is normal?
- What is our purpose in life?
- Why are we ruining our earth?

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

-I wonder who is God, or if there is God. If there is a God, why is there so much evil on earth?

-Where do we go when we die?

Give them five-ten minutes to write as many of these mystery questions, and as they write them, have them fold up the slips of paper and put them into a hat or some kind of bag. The facilitator should participate in this as well. When they have finished, ask each learner to take some of the slips out of the bag and go around in a circle and read the mystery questions.<sup>10</sup>

When the questions have been read, have the group reflect on the experience. How did it feel to hear these questions read out loud? Did others put in questions you are also thinking about? What patterns did you notice in the questions? When they have finished reflecting, say to the group: "Thank you all for your courageous participation in this activity. These questions you asked are so significant, and as you can see, you are asking some of the most important questions of what it means to be a person. The point of this activity is not to answer the questions, but to begin the process of thinking about the questions we have. Our curriculum this year is one that involves us looking deeply at spirituality. Some of the questions we will be dealing with are about God and connecting to God. Some of the questions are about finding our true selves, figuring out how to act with integrity, and figuring out what our mission in this world is. Some of the questions you asked just now are going to be ones we will be asking this year, and while we aren't going to come to many firm conclusions, simply asking the questions and thinking about them together might help you all answer them for yourselves."

### **Giving Yourself an "A"**

After council, have the students pick 3 or so of the questions they heard during Mysteries Questions that they found meaningful to them. Then have them compose a letter to themselves in the future after they have completed this course and gotten an "A" in it. (Convey that there are no grades in this course, simply this is an exercise of imagining that they have successfully completed this course and have gotten out of it everything they wanted.) Have them focus on the questions they picked and write the letter as though they have explored those mystery questions and found meaning in them. Collect the letters when the learners have completed them, and keep them in their portfolios until the end of the course so that you can redistribute them to their authors.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 11-13.

## Session 1.3 - Hassidism: Bringing the Spirit Back to Judaism

### Objectives:

- Through exploration of relevant Hassidic stories, learners will be able to define the terms *mitnagdim* and *hassidim*
- Learners will be able to articulate the reasons for the emergence of Hassidism and the spiritual needs the movement sought to fill
- Learners will compare and contrast the emergence of Hassidism to modern movements such as New Ageism and the 1960s Counterculture and be able to articulate the contemporary relevance that such spiritual movements have

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Rebelling Against Dead Judaism

The point of this activity is to get the learners to begin a discussion about what spiritually alive and relevant Judaism is and what spiritually dead and irrelevant Judaism looks like. Show the learners the Hebrew school scene from the movie *A Serious Man*. (The clip is 9:00-12:00 in the movie.) Begin a discussion with the following questions:

- What is happening in the class? What is the teacher doing? What are the students doing?
- Why do the students seem so disengaged? Why do you think they are zoning out?
- What kind of Judaism is the teacher presenting to the students? Why are they not reacting well to it?
- What kind of Judaism do you think would engage them more?
- If this is the Judaism these kids experience, do you think they are likely to care about Judaism when they grow up? What kind of Jews do you think they will become?
- Does this clip ring true for you ever? What are times that Judaism has made you feel disengaged? What are times when Judaism has captivated you?

When this discussion is complete, explain:

“What this clip exemplifies is a dead Judaism—a Judaism that is irrelevant, boring, fact based, and ultimately spiritually flat. Sometimes we all feel this way about the Judaism we encounter. This year we are going to be studying a group of people who rebelled against a spiritually dead Judaism—Hassidic Jews. We will be studying them through the stories that they told, because the stories reveal to us so much about their lives, beliefs and worldviews. What we hope to learn from them are ways that we can make our Jewish lives spiritually alive and joyous, which will help us become the Jews and the people we want to be.”

## **Hassidim and *Mitnagdim***

This activity is meant to give the learners a sense of the conflict that existed between the *Mitnagdim* and the Hassidim, who were starting a spiritual revolution of sorts. Pass out the Hassidic stories that reflect these tensions (see Appendix 1.3A), and divide the learners into groups, each group taking one story. Ask the groups to read the stories and to discuss amongst themselves what positions each group was taking and what innovation the Hassidim represented. Next, tell them that they will be acting out the story in two ways. First, they will dramatize the story as it is written. Secondly, they will be rewriting the story to fit into the context of a modern spiritual revolution. Assign one of the following revolutions to each group and have them research the revolution to get a sense of what it was:

- The 1960s Counterculture
- New Ageism
- Renewal Judaism
- Shlomo Carlebach

## **Comic Book History**

Pass out the comic book resource from *The Story of the Jews* (Appendix 1.3B). This is a fun and informative basic history of Hassidism. Have the students go through this resource as a class and clarify any questions they have. When they are finished reading the comic, discuss:

- What spiritual malaise were the Hassidim fighting against? Why were the innovations of the Hassidim necessary?
- What were their innovations?
- If we were to start a spiritual revolution in Judaism, what would we be fighting against? What would we change? How would we do it?



## Session 1.4 - The First Meeting

### Objectives/*Expressive Outcomes*:

- Learners will be able to describe the authentic assessment for the curriculum and its criteria for excellence
- *Learners will:*
  - *React the experience of a mifgash with a congregant chosen by the instructor*
  - *Learners will then reflect on the experience through facilitator led discussion and journaling*

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Introducing the Authentic Assessment

The instructor should introduce the authentic assessment of the course to the learners. First give them an overall picture of the course: they will learn about their individual path towards spirituality, fostering practices of joy, discovering their integrity, and learning about and engaging in *tikkun*. The instructor should give them a picture of each building block assessment that builds towards their final project: a *davar nefesh*. The instructor should then give the learners an idea of what excellence in this project looks like, either by sharing beautiful student work from past years and/or by sharing the rubric of the final assessment (see Appendix 1.4).

#### First Meeting

Before the class, pick a congregant to give a spiritual interview with the learners. This congregant should be someone who has gone through a spiritual journey in which they identified a spiritual lack or malaise in his/her life and followed a path of learning and spiritual practice to come to a place of fulfillment. One suggestion could be a congregant who has gone through the process of conversion to Judaism or a congregant who came back to Judaism later in life. Before the meeting you could prep the learners for the experience and have them come up with questions to ask. (See appendix 1.4B for a procedure on getting students to ask meaningful questions). Have the person speak with the learners about his/her life story, important events that led him/her on his path, what counts as spiritual practice for this person, and ways s/he finds centering or meaning in spiritual practice. Then allow the learners to ask him/her questions. When they are finished, have the learners journal the experience with these prompts:

- What is one thing about our guest's story that resonated with you? Why?
- At the beginning of the unit, you chose a mystery question that you want to explore. What was it? Do you still want to explore it?
- How might you go about exploring that question?

- What kind of learning or spiritual journey do you hope to embark on this year?

## Appendix 1.3A

### *Mitnagdim* vs. Hassidim Stories

A famous Hassid once said: “The *Mitnagdim* worship the *Shulchan Aruch* (the code of Jewish law studied in *yeshivot*), but the Hassidim worship *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, the Holy One, Blessed Be He.”

On a trip through Ruzhin, a group of *mitnagdim* thought to visit Reb Yisrael to complain about the behavior of the Hassidim.

“You call us antagonists, but at least we walk in the path of God. We study Torah at set times, we pray with a *minyan* each morning, and when we are finished with our prayers we sit in our *tallit* and *tefillin* and study *Mishnayot*. But you Hassidim, who dare to call yourselves the pious ones, pray when you feel like it, and then sit down to a glass of vodka. Why, it is outrageous to call this piety!”

The rebbe listened to their complaint quietly. When they were finished he said, “My learned guests, as you well know, the times of prayer were set to correspond to the sacrifices in the Temple, which can no longer be performed. As you also know, an improper thought in the mind can render both sacrifice and prayer unclean. So we wait to pray until our minds are clear of distractions.”

The *mitnagdim* were impressed with this answer. “And the drinking after prayer?”

“As you no doubt also know, the Evil Inclination is the source of these thoughts and has invented many strategies for distracting us. So we Hassidim have a counter-strategy. After formal prayer, we sit and wish each other ‘*L’chayyim!*’ At that moment, each of us in turn reveals to the group his most desperate need, and we respond ‘May God grant your request!’ Now the Evil Inclination is listening to all of this, but since it is said in an informal way, in our mother tongue rather than Hebrew, the Evil One assumes we are speaking idly and ignores us. Yet, Torah tells us that prayer can be in any language, so our seemingly informal talk is in fact the deepest prayer, untainted by distracting thoughts and certain to rise all the way to heaven.”

Not knowing how to respond, the *mitnagdim* nodded curtly to the rebbe and returned to their journey.<sup>11</sup>

Reb Meir was a Hassid of Reb Mordecai of Lechovitch. He was also an occasional business partner of Reb Gershon, who was a devout *mitnagged*.

Reb Meir was always inviting his partner to join him on his many visits to his rebbe, but Reb Gershon’s hatred of Hassidism was so strong that he could never consent to visiting his partner’s rebbe. Not wishing to hurt the feelings of his

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<sup>11</sup> Shapiro, R. (2011). *Hassidic Tales: Annotated and Explained*. Woodstock, Vermont, 97-99.

friend, he would find many reasons to explain why travel to Lechovitch was out of the question.

It once happened, however, that separate business matters brought both men to Lechovitch on the same day. Discovering that his friend would be in town at the same time as himself, Reb Meir once again invited Reb Gershon to visit his rebbe. Seeing no way out that would not be offensive to Reb Meir, Reb Gershom agreed. When the two men arrived at Reb Mordecai's house, they were ushered into the rebbe's dining room, where he was just beginning to eat his dinner. Reb Meir urged his partner to speak to the rebbe, to ask a question, to say something, but Reb Gershon was clearly in a state of pure ecstasy. After a few minutes they left the rebbe's house.

Reb Meir said to his friend: "What happened to you in there?"

Reb Gershon said: "I saw the rebbe eating with the holiness of the *Kohen HaGadol* (the High Priest)!"

Shocked, Reb Meir turned from his partner and ran back to the rebbe. When he arrived he said, "Rebbe, here I come to see you as often as I can, and never have I seen the way you serve the Holy One, Blessed Be He. And yet my *mitnagged* partner comes for a minute, under duress, and he sees the miracle of your eating. Is this fair?"

Reb Mordecai said, "It is not about fairness, my friend. Your partner is a *mitnagged*, he has to see the truth with his eyes. You, on the other hand, are a Hassid, you have to trust."<sup>12</sup>

A wedding party once passed by the home of Reb Zusya of Hampoli. The rebbe raced outdoors and danced before the bride and groom with joyous abandon. When he returned indoors, his family was waiting for him, scowling. "It is unseemly for the rebbe of Hanipoli to dance at some strangers' wedding," they said...

Reb Zusya said, "It is joy that reveals our true nature! So when I saw the wedding party, I remembered this teaching and raced outside to participate fully in the principle of joy!"<sup>13</sup>

The Baal Shem Tov asked Reb Wolff Kitzis, one of his senior disciples to blow the *shofar* for Rosh HaShannah. To help focus his mind during the blowing, the Baal Shem Tov suggested that Reb Wolff study the *kabbalistic kavvanot* (intentions) assigned to the *shofar*. Reb Wolff devoted himself diligently to the study and wrote notes to take with him to review before blowing the *shofar* to ensure that his mind would be directed properly.

When it came time for Reb Wolff to go to *shul* for the holy day and blow the *shofar*, he looked for his notes, but in vain. And what was worse, without his notes his mind too went blank. Not a single *kavvanah* could he recall. And so it

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 77-79.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 103.

was that when Reb Wolff stepped before the congregation to blow the *shofar* he did so with an empty mind and a broken heart.

After the *davvenen* (praying) came to a close, the Baal Shem Tov turned to Reb Wolff and cried: “*Yashar koach!* Never have I heard such powerful *shofar* blowing!”

“But master,” Reb Wolff said, “I forgot every word I studied and blew the *shofar* with no *kavvanah* except the sheer humility of one who knows nothing!”

The Baal Shem Tov smiled and said: “My dear Reb Wolff. In the palaces of earthly kings there are many rooms, each with its own particular key. But one with an ax can enter them all. If this is true of earthly kings, all the more so is it true of the King of Kings. The *kavvanot* are the key to each room, but one whose heart is humble can burst into any room!”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 145.

## Appendix 1.3B

### The History of Hassidism<sup>15</sup>

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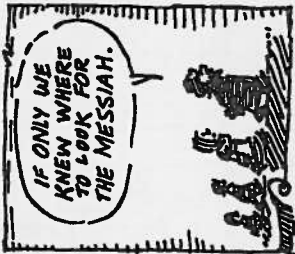
<sup>15</sup> Mack, S. (2001). *The Story of the Jews: A 4000 Year Adventure*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 145-156.

## Mystics and Messiahs

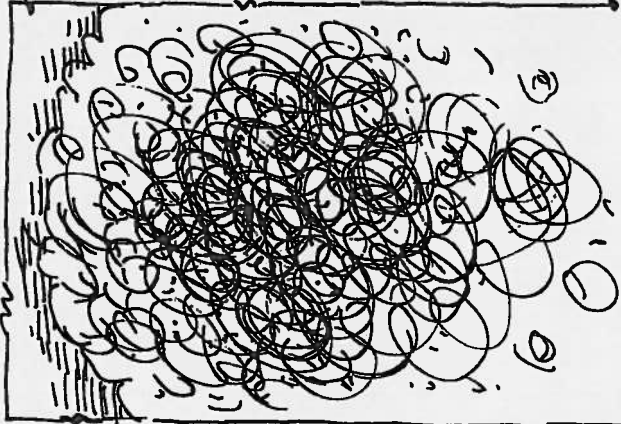
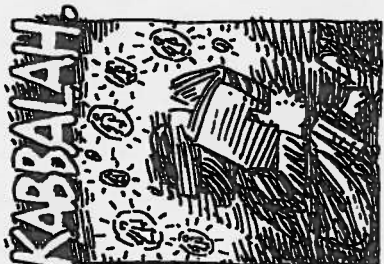
(Kabbalah-Hasidism)

1600s-1700s

THE JEWS OF THE 17TH CENTURY WERE SUFFERING A SPIRITUAL CRISIS. MANY TURNED TO THE COMFORT OF MYSTICISM COMBINED WITH THE IDEA OF A MESSIANIC DELIVERER.



THEY SEARCHED THE TEXTS OF THE JEWISH MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHY CALLED



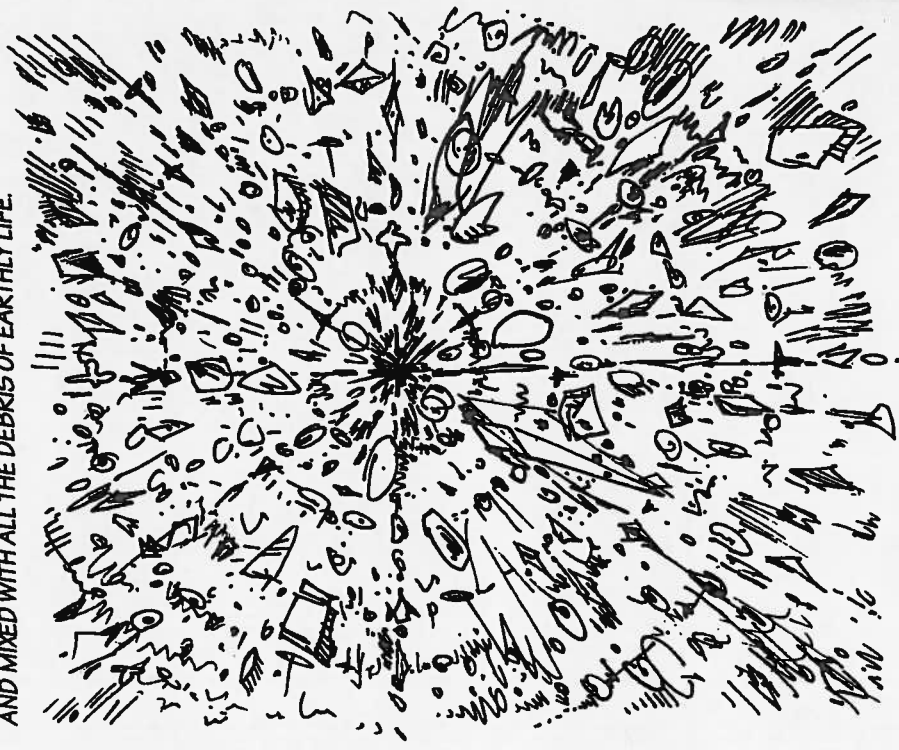
THE RABBIS, THE STUDY OF THE TALMUD, AND LOGIC HAVE NOT SAVED US FROM CALAMITY.

BUT CALAMITY CAN ALSO SIGNAL THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH.





**K**ABBALAH OFFERED THE JEWS A SOLUTION TO THEIR QUEST.  
**HERE IS AN EXTREMELY ABBREVIATED VERSION  
 OF THE KABBALISTIC THEORY OF THE UNIVERSE:**  
 THE DIVINE LIGHT OF GOD WAS CONTAINED IN VESSELS WHICH WERE  
 BROKEN DURING AN APOCALYPTIC BIG BANG. THE LIGHT SCATTERED  
 AND MIXED WITH ALL THE DEBRIS OF EARTHLY LIFE.



**F**OR HUMANITY TO ACHIEVE HEAVENLY PERFECTION, ALL THE  
**DIVINE GLITTER**  
 FROM THE DARK PARTS OF HUMAN LIFE AND RESTORED ACCORDING  
 TO GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN.

**T**O START THE  
 BALL ROLLING,  
 EACH JEW MUST  
 PERSONALLY GET  
 CLOSE TO GOD  
 THROUGH PRAYER  
 AND THE  
 OBSERVANCE OF  
 THE  
 COMMANDMENTS.  
**AFTER  
 WHICH THE  
 MESSIAH  
 WILL SHOW  
 UP.**

ALL THE BASE STUFF

TALK OF MESSIAHS MADE THE RABBINICAL AUTHORITIES NERVOUS.

MESSIAHS ARE RISKY BUSINESS.



BY THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY, KABBALISTIC PHILOSOPHY SPREAD THROUGHOUT EASTERN EUROPE, FOLLOWED BY A SERIES OF SELF-PROCLAIMED MESSIAHS.

THESE MESSIAHS CHARGED AROUND EUROPE, TOOK MEETINGS WITH KINGS AND POPES, PROCLAIMED MIRACLES, AND FADED AWAY.



WERE THEY REAL?

I DUNNO.

WHAT NEXT?



MUCH OF EUROPEAN JEWRY THOUGHT THEY'D FOUND THEIR MESSIAH IN SHABBETA ZEVI. BORN IN 1626 IN TURKEY, HE STUDIED KABBALAH AND HEARD HEAVENLY VOICES.

SHABBETA ZEVI MARRIED AN ORPHAN OF THE COSSACK MASSACRES. SARAH, AN INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN PROSTITUTE, HE ALSO FORMED A PARTNERSHIP WITH A RABBI, NATHAN OF GAZA, WHO BECAME HIS PRESS AGENT.

SHABBETA, THE MESSIAH, COME TO HELP RESTORE THE WORLD TO PERFECTION.



AMONG FOLLOWERS OF ZEVI PACKED THEIR BAGS AND GOT READY TO BE PICKED UP BY ANGELS AND TRANSPORTED TO ZION, THE PROMISED LAND.



**A** EVI WAS VERY CONVINCING. EVEN SOME RABBIS HEDGED THEIR BETS.

(PROBABLY NO.)



**W**HEN SHABBETAI WAS THROWN IN JAIL BY THE TURKISH SULTAN, WHO OFFERED HIM A CHOICE: DEATH OR CONVERSION TO ISLAM. ZEVI CHOSE CONVERSION.

**N**ATHAN DEFENDED HIM. BUT THE ANGELS NEVER SHOWED UP. IT LOOKED LIKE THE MESSIAH WOULDN'T BE COMING AT THAT TIME.

WE NEED A JUDAISM WITH REAL SOUL.



**A**ROUND 1730, THE DISCOURAGED JEWS OF EASTERN EUROPE FOUND A NEW VISION OF GOD—IN THE FORESTS OF POLAND.

# HASIDISM

**I**N THOSE DAYS, IN GERMANY AND POLAND, FAITH HEALING THRIVED. JEWISH FOLK DOCTORS TENDED THE ORDINARY PEOPLE WITH HERBS, PRAYERS, AND AMULETS. THEY WERE CALLED **BAALEI SHEM**.




I'M NOT FEELING TOO WELL. COUGH.

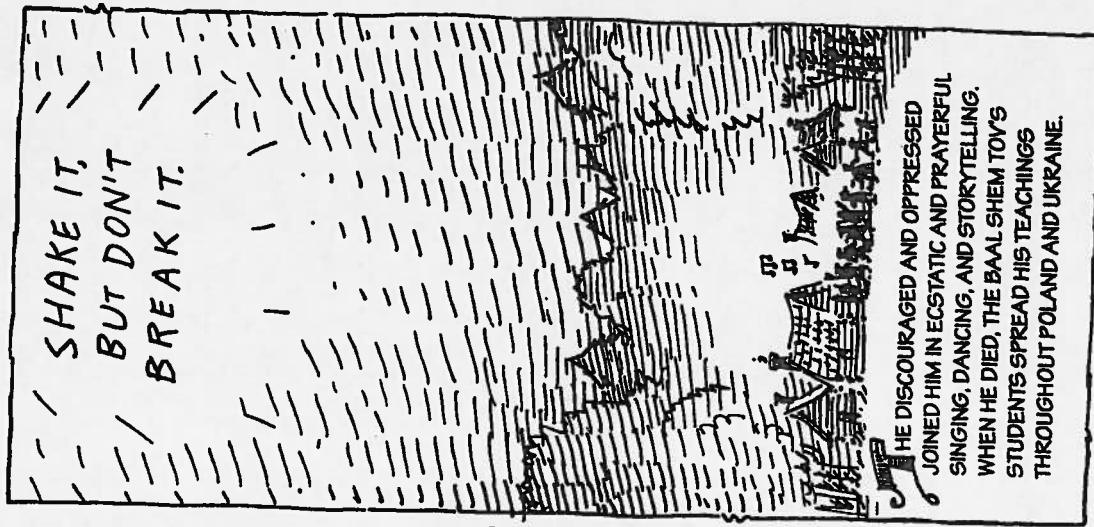
ABRACADABRA, DYBBUK! (BEGONE, YOU DEVIL!)



ONE SUCH FAITH HEALER WAS **ISRAEL BEN ELIEZER**, BORN IN 1700 IN POLAND, A PERFORMER OF MIRACLES AND A CHARISMATIC TEACHER.

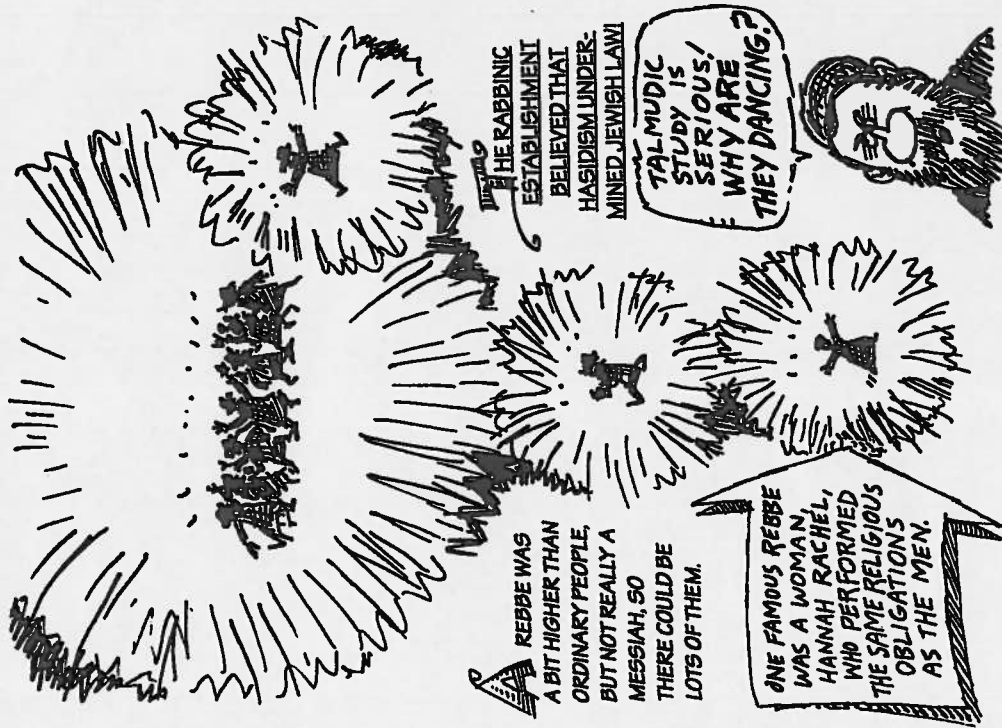

 SRAEL BEN ELIEZER, CALLED THE BAAL SHEM TOV, INTRODUCED THE DOCTRINE OF **HASIDISM**. HE PREACHED THAT THE SACRED WAS FOUND IN EVERYDAY LIFE, THAT EACH PERSON COULD FEEL GOD'S RADIANCE AND SAVE THE WORLD THROUGH HIS OR HER JOYOUS DEVOTION.

SHAKE IT,  
 BUT DON'T  
 BREAK IT.



HE DISCOURAGED AND OPPRESSED JOINED HIM IN ECSTATIC AND PRAYERFUL SINGING, DANCING, AND STORYTELLING. WHEN HE DIED, THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S STUDENTS SPREAD HIS TEACHINGS THROUGHOUT POLAND AND UKRAINE.

AT THE CENTER OF EACH NEW HASIDIC COMMUNITY WAS A BELOVED REBBE, WHO SURROUNDED HIS FOLLOWERS WITH HIS EXULTANT SPIRIT AND HELPED THEM FACE THE DANGEROUS OUTSIDE WORLD.



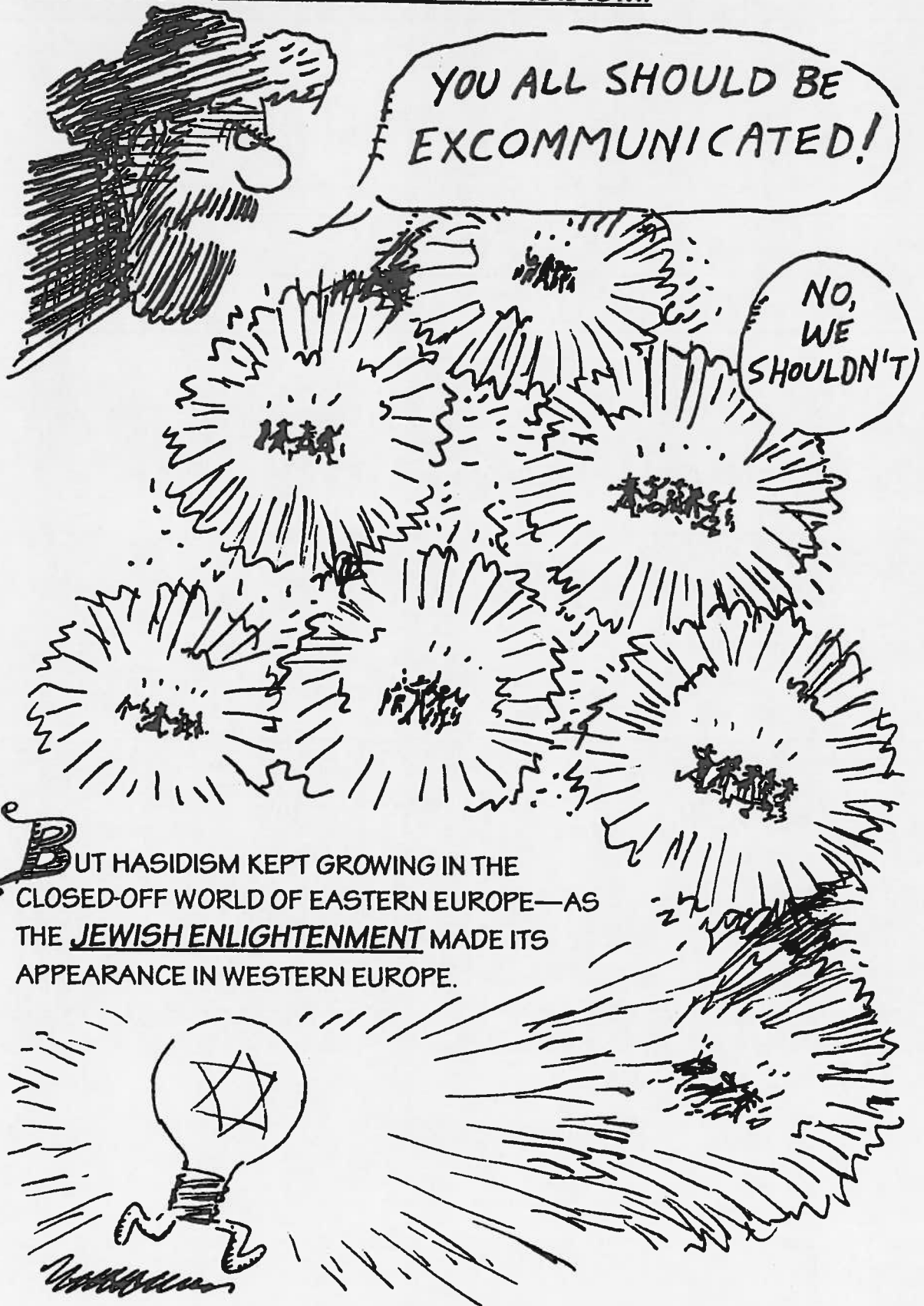
A REBBE WAS A BIT HIGHER THAN ORDINARY PEOPLE, BUT NOT REALLY A MESSIAH, SO THERE COULD BE LOTS OF THEM.

THE RABBINIC ESTABLISHMENT BELIEVED THAT HASIDISM UNDERMINED JEWISH LAW!

TALMUDIC STUDY IS SERIOUS! WHY ARE THEY DANCING?

ONE FAMOUS REBBE WAS A WOMAN, HANNAH RACHEL, WHO PERFORMED THE SAME RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS AS THE MEN.

THE GREAT TALMUDIC SCHOLAR, THE GAON OF  
VILNA, LITHUANIA, CONDEMNED HASIDISM.



**B**UT HASIDISM KEPT GROWING IN THE  
CLOSED-OFF WORLD OF EASTERN EUROPE—AS  
THE JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT MADE ITS  
APPEARANCE IN WESTERN EUROPE.



### Appendix 1.4A

#### Rubric for *Davar Nefesh* Assessment

	Emerging	Improving	Advanced
Touches on the personal	The student's work does not touch on his/her interiority. Any self-reference is vague or very general, and it is unclear what soul-searching has been accomplished.	The student's work begins to delve into his interiority, though it may be a bit vague or detached. Some personal work has been demonstrated.	The student's work is deeply personal, using specific anecdotes or practices that the student intends to use for future growth. The work shows that the student has engaged in personal work or soul-searching.
Uses Jewish learning	The student's work has little Jewish content, or the Jewish content cited is disconnected from his/her overall message.	The student's work cites general principles that can be found in the textual content of the course.	The student's work cites specific Jewish content—Hassidic tales, teachings, theology—learned in the course and folds it into his/her overall message seamlessly.
Values	The student's work is vague on Jewish values, or it is unclear what his/her personal integrity is grounded in.	The student's work identifies 1 value that will guide his future actions.	The student's work identifies 2-3 values that will guide his actions in the future.
Integrity	Student does not mention integrity, or does so in a vague and generalized way.	Student demonstrates general knowledge of what integrity is, though s/he may not have personalized the concept for	Student articulates clearly what it means for him/her to live out his values with personal alignment.

		him/herself.	
Vision	Student does not articulate a vision for who s/he wants to become, or his/her work is very present tense oriented.	Student gives a general sense of the person s/he wants to be in the future, but may not have a direct plan for how to become that person.	Student articulates clearly the person s/he wants to be in the future and has a clear plan for how s/he will go about living out that vision.

## Appendix 1.4B Levels of Questions<sup>16</sup>

### Rationale

This teaching strategy helps students comprehend and interpret text by requiring them to answer three types of questions about the text: factual, inferential, and universal. This scaffolded approach provides an opportunity for students to master the basic ideas of a text so that they can apply this understanding and “evidence” to conversations about deeper abstract concepts or complex historical events. “Levels of Questions” provides a way to meet the needs of different learners because you can focus students’ attention on the level of question most appropriate to their reading ability. This strategy can be used to prepare students for a class discussion or activity, and it could also be used as an assessment tool.

### Procedure

#### Step One: Preparation

This strategy can be used with any text – historical documents, literature, newspaper articles, films, artwork, photographs, etc. Prepare questions that students will answer. I suggest writing 2-3 categories in each of the following categories:

- Factual questions (level one) can be answered explicitly by facts contained in the text
- Inferential questions (level two) can be answered through analysis and interpretation of specific parts of the text
- Universal questions (level three) are open-ended questions that are raised by ideas in the text. They are intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue.

You may want to prepare a “Levels of Questions” worksheet to guide students through this process. Click here for an example you can adapt for your own students.

#### Step Two: Active reading

Have students watch or read the text silently or aloud. As they read (or watch), ask students to underline or record key words and phrases.

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<sup>16</sup> *Levels of Questions*. Facing History and Ourselves. Ret. 2/14/16.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/teaching-strategies/levels-questions>



**Step Three: Respond to questions**

Students can answer the questions individually or in small groups.

**Step Four: Review and discuss**

Review responses to level one and level two questions to make sure everyone understands the text. As you go over level two questions, encourage students to share different interpretations of the text and use evidence to explain their answers. The universal questions make effective prompts for a large class discussion.

**Variations**

- **Student-generated questions:** After using this strategy a few times, have students generate their own questions in each of the categories. In small groups, they can write questions. Then, groups can trade questions and respond to these as a way to assess their understanding of the text.
- **For heterogeneous classrooms:** You can have struggling readers focus on level one questions, average readers focus on level one and two questions and advanced readers responsible for addressing all three levels of questions. As a student's reading ability improves, they can be asked to address the next level of question.

## Unit 2 - Finding Zusya: Beginning on Our Spiritual Paths

(unscripted)

### Enduring Understandings

- Hassidic literature demonstrates that the spiritual practices of character refinement and cultivating joy lead to personal fulfillment.
- The voice of the Divine calls out *ayeka* “where are you” to everyone, and when a person can listen to that voice and respond to it, he will find purpose and fulfillment.

### Essential Questions

- What is the role of the individual and the community in fostering spirituality?
- What does the divine want of us?
- What are my priorities?
- How do I become the person I want to be?
- Who am I?

### Goals

- Help the learners define their identity by analyzing their “core mission” in life
- To demonstrate to the learners the dangers of losing one’s identity
- Help the learners develop self-awareness and the capacity for introspection
- Facilitate the classroom community “gelling” so that spirituality can be seen as both an introspective activity and as a communal endeavor

### Unit Objectives

- Learners will be able to list ways that they can lose track of themselves (goals, values, identity) and
- Create practice to re-center themselves in their core identity and mission
- Learners will begin to define what their spiritual path looks like through self-assessment of strengths and growing edges of their interpersonal and spiritual character
- Learners will assess their priorities and plan ways that they can incorporate non-urgent but important practices into their lives
- Learners will analyze the tension between creating community practice and authenticity to the self
- Learners will define spirituality as both an individual and communal path

### Authentic Assessments

- A class *Shabbaton* retreat in which the learners can engage in team work and community building activities as well as personal introspection and

journaling time. Through this retreat, the learners will experience both the spiritual qualities of being in community in their cohort as well as having alone time for self-reflection.

**Building Block Assessments**

- *Ayeka Mezuzah*
- Self-Awareness Quiz\*\*
- Decorated Mirrors
- Covey Quadrant Chart\*\*
- Spiritual Map\*\*

**Key Terms/Concepts**

- *Ayeka*
- Being More Like Zusya
- Burnout

## Session 2.1 - *Ayeka*? Where Have You Put Yourself?

### Objectives:

- Through analysis of relevant Hassidic stories, learners will be able to identify times or patterns for when they have metaphorically “lost themselves”
- Learners will be able to define the term *ayeka* (where are you?), relate it to the call from God to be our best selves, and apply this term to their lives by defining what “call” they feel within themselves
- Learners will create a craft they can use to remind themselves of the call of *ayeka*

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Responding to the Call

Divide the class in partner groups. One of the partners will be blindfolded and the other will be their guide. Set up an obstacle course that the blindfolded person has to go through. The partner who can see is not allowed to touch the blindfolded partner but can guide his partner with his voice. Switch partners to allow both to go through the obstacle course.

#### Reflect:

- What did it feel like to go through the obstacle course blindfolded?
- How were you able to navigate it? What senses were you able to use instead of seeing?
- What was it like to have your partner leading you? Was s/he helpful?

Tell the learners that this activity is actually a metaphor for our lives. Sometimes we have trouble navigating the way or knowing what we are meant to do or what decision to make. In those times, we have to get help from other sources to help us find the way. Ask:

- In what ways are we blind in our lives? Who or what calls to us to help us navigate our lives?

#### Introducing the Concept of *Ayeka*

The concept of *Ayeka* is one of the enduring understandings of this curriculum and comprises a central theme of this unit. *Ayeka* is the Hebrew word meaning “where are you,” and it appears prominently in the Garden of Eden story, when God asks Adam and Eve where they are after they have eaten of the Tree of Knowledge and hidden themselves. The lesson we learn from this story is that there is a voice calling to every person, asking, “What are you doing?” “Where have you gone?” “How have you gotten so far away from me?” It is the question that asks us to start becoming the person we are meant to be. It reminds us of

who we truly are deep down and it asks us to go back to our essence, stop doing things that distract us from our true mission in life, and recommit ourselves to our values.

Introduce this concept to the learners with the *Ayeka* text study (see Appendix 2.1A). Make sure at the end to sum up the ideas of *Ayeka* for the learners with the content in the previous paragraph.

## **Losing Oneself**

Continuing this theme of asking where we are, share with the learners very real and painful stories of when people “lose themselves” to convey to them the stakes of the content in this lesson. In Appendix 2.1B, you will find 3 resources for stories of people who have lost part of their identities as well as question sequences for each one. Choose 1-2 of these resources to start a conversation about what happens when we “lose ourselves.”

## ***Ayeka Mezuzah***

This art project concludes our lesson on *Ayeka*. A traditional *mezuzah* is placed on a door with the text of the *Shema* inside it to remind people of God and the teachings of the *Shema* when they leave and go forth. This project is similar, but it is meant to serve as a reminder of the message of *Ayeka*. Have the learners decorate their *mezuzot*. Some suggested media for this might be paper Mache, acrylic paint, mosaic, or painted glass. Next, have the learners fill out a personalized *Ayeka* message to themselves to put in the *mezuzah* instead of the text of the *Shema*. Encourage them to update the message every few months. The prompt for this message could go along the lines of:

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My loved ones are \_\_\_\_\_.
- My passions are \_\_\_\_\_.
- My core beliefs are \_\_\_\_\_.
- My core values include \_\_\_\_\_.
- In my life, I feel called to \_\_\_\_\_.
- In the future, I imagine that I will be/do \_\_\_\_\_.

## Session 2.2 - Becoming More Like Zusya

### Objectives:

- Learners will be able to describe authenticity to the self as a major task of spiritual development
- Learners will self-assess their strengths and growing edges
- By writing each other notes learners will show appreciation for the uniqueness of their classmates
- From these appreciations and self-assessments, learners will map out a spiritual path for themselves

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Hassidic Stories on Authenticity

To start this lesson, tell the Nachman story of the Turkey Prince (See Appendix 2.2). Act this story out for the learners and really ham it up—turkey noises and everything! Then ask the following questions:

- Why was the sage able to help the prince but the doctors were not?
- What do we have to do to honor the individuality of each other? Ourselves?

After they have answered the questions, share with them the Zusya story (Also 2.2). This story is the main content of this lesson. Reflect with these questions:

- Why did Zusya cry? Why was he nervous that the angels would ask him why he wasn't himself?
- Why do you think that being authentic to yourself is a way of coming closer to God? Is self-authenticity a spiritual practice?

#### Assessing Ourselves

In order to be more “like Zusya,” we have to develop self-awareness of both our strengths and weaknesses. Have your learners either do a self-assessment quiz (for a detailed one, you can go to this site: <http://talmudictreasures.blogspot.com/2012/12/be-true-to-yourself-ask-susiyas-question.html>). When the quizzes have been completed, have the learners who are comfortable with sharing one strength that they have and one thing that is a growing edge.

#### Showing Appreciation

Oftentimes, we can be our own biggest critic. It can be hard for us to be more “like Zusya” if we do not see the good things about ourselves. Have the learners on strips of paper write everyone in the class a note on which they write one thing that they appreciate about their classmate. Have the classmates exchange their notes so that they build self-awareness of how others see them and what others appreciate in them.

### **Mirror Decoration**

Now that the learners have done some self-assessment and heard from their classmates about what others appreciate in them, have the learners represent themselves through art. Give the learners a small mirror, and have them decorate it with Sharpie markers. They can decorate it with words or pictures that represent who they are, who they aspire to be, what they like about themselves, what it means for them to be authentically them. The point is that they can look in the mirror when they finish it, see themselves, and all the symbolism of what they truly are. If there is time at the end, have the learners share their mirrors.

## Session 2.3 - Making a Living or Making a Life?

### Objectives:

- Learners will be able to identify the ways that the noise of life can distract from spiritual awareness and/or a person's core identity and mission
- Learners will apply this lesson to their lives and define the things that distract them from their core identity and mission
- Learners will create a Four Quadrant chart of the priorities in their lives and use it to identify non-urgent but important priorities
- Learners will use this information to make a plan for incorporating non-urgent but important priorities in their lives

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Stone, Sand, Pebbles, Water<sup>17</sup>

This is a set induction that is meant to get the learners thinking about how they prioritize their lives and what things get in the way of what they truly need to do. Take a glass jar and in front of the learners fill it with large stones. Ask the learners if the jar is full. When they say yes, continue filling the jar with small pebbles until full. Ask the learners if the jar is full yet. After they have answered, continue filling the jar, this time with sand until it is full. Ask the learners if the jar is full. Finally, complete filling the jar with water.

- Ask the learners why we were able to continue filling the jar, even when we thought we had already filled it. (Because the smaller things can fill in the spaces left over from the big objects)
- Ask the learners what would happen if we filled in the jar in the opposite order: water, sand, pebbles, rocks. (It wouldn't work because the jar would overflow immediately)

Then explain that this activity is a metaphor for their lives. There are an infinite number of things that we can spend our time and fill our lives with. Some of them are of supreme importance, and some of them are not important. The problem is if we do not prioritize things correctly, our lives overflow, just like the jar that was filled in the wrong order.

- Ask the learners: what things in your lives are the big rocks? (Family, high school sports, major class projects, etc.)
- What things in your life are the pebbles? (Daily homework assignments, chores around the house)
- What things are the sand? (Texts from friends, emails, social media)

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<sup>17</sup> The Wexner Foundation. *Wexner Graduate Fellowship Call with Naomi Korb Weiss*. 3/2015, ret. 2/22/16, <https://vimeo.com/123431798>



Explain to the learners that it isn't that we ignore the sand. The sand is necessary to deal with. But if we prioritize the sand first, we will never get around to the rocks.

## Hassidic Stories

Now show the learners two Hassidic stories that touch on themes of prioritizing (see Appendix 2.3A). Divide the class into *chevruta*, have the learners read each story and discuss the following questions.

- What are the apparent priorities of the businessman, and the man who goes to see the *Chozeh*?
- What do the rebbes say to these men? How do they see their priorities as unbalanced?
- What might these men do to rebalance their priorities? If you were their life coach, what would you tell them to do?
- Has there ever been a time where you got stressed and because of that stress you lost track of your priorities? How did you deal with that?

After they have discussed these stories thoroughly, it is important to discuss why this is important for their lives. To this end, you might share a story of someone who has experienced burnout in college or in their career. You might like this story: <http://www.thejdnation.com/burnout-story/>, or you might share some clips from this NPR interview:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6560431>

After you have introduced burnout to the learners, ask them to strategize ways that they might avoid burnout in their lives.

## Covey Quadrants

One way that we can prioritize our lives well, make sure that our actions are consistent with our values, and make sure we avoid burnout is to plan our time using the Covey Quadrant.<sup>18</sup> Pass out a print out of Appendix 2.3B, and explain the quadrant system as divided between urgent and non-urgent as well as important and unimportant. Important and urgent things are the things that take up most of our time and energy. These are the crises, the projects with deadlines, and any pressing issues. While these are clearly important, they also do not feed our soul or help us grow as people. Those kinds of activities are quadrant II—the non-urgent but important priorities. These kinds of activities include relationship building, self-care, exercise, planning, taking stock of values and principles, etc. These things are critical to our emotional, social, and spiritual health, but they are so easy to de-prioritize.

When you have explained the Covey Quadrant, have the learners in their *chevruta* fill out the chart for one of the people in the Hassidic stories from

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<sup>18</sup> Covey, S. (1989). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 149-156.

earlier in the lesson or the story of burnout. When they have done that, have each person fill out a quadrant chart for their own lives. When they have placed the priorities in their lives into the quadrants, have them strategize concrete and actionable ways that they can fit quadrant II activities into their schedules.

### **Spirituality and Stress Management**

End the class by explaining that stress is one of the most significant things that prevents us from being able to engage in quadrant II. Spiritual practice is one of the best ways of combating stress. Have the learners do a short spiritual practice to conclude the class and help them feel calm and serene. You could lead them in a silent 5-minute meditation or a brief guided meditation. (Here is a resource for some guided meditations. The Gratitude Meditation might be of particular interest: <http://www.chopra.com/ccl/guided-meditations>)

## Session 2.4 - Class Retreat: Spirituality in Community and in the Self

### Objectives/*Expressive Outcomes*:

- Learners will analyze the tension between creating community practice and authenticity to the self
- Learners will define spirituality as both an individual and communal path
- *Learners will:*
  - *React to the experience of group bonding/cohesion/team building activities*
  - *They will then reflect on the spiritual community they have built through discussion*
- Learners will be able to tell their spiritual stories by constructing a timeline of their lives

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Note About Planning

This lesson is meant to be a class Shabbaton retreat. Leading it as a retreat is a good way of building group cohesion in the class as well as giving the learners a different space and time to engage in this spiritual work. While the teacher should take the lead in planning the retreat, it is encouraged that the teacher involves the students in planning as much as possible. Giving musical students ownership of song leading, *Havdallah*, or Torah reading is encouraged. Others can lead *Motzi* or *Birkat HaMazon*.

#### Individual vs. the Community

One of the dangers of doing such an intense spiritual curriculum is that it can lead to self-absorption. The tension with spirituality is that while it is a deeply self-reflective activity, spirituality also exists in community.

Engage the learners in a conversation about finding spirituality through both self-reflection and through community. Some questions to start the conversation could be:

- Have you ever had a spiritual moment all by yourself? What was it?
- What about in a community? What was that moment like?
- Is it easier for you to find spirituality by yourself or in community? What are the pros and cons of each?
- Are there times when your desire for an individual experience of spirituality and your ties to community clash? Perhaps a group prayer experience that you would have done differently?
- How do you navigate that tension?

## Team-Building Exercises

An essential part of the retreat is that the learners engage in fun and meaningful team building exercises. One way to do this is to take the learners to a local organization that does high or low ropes course activities. Alternatively, you could run team-building activities yourself. Here is a resource with some ideas: <http://www.allaboutteambuilding.com/team-building-activities-for-teens/>

After the learners have completed the team-building exercises, have them journal about the experience, about the friends they made, and how they feel a part of the class community they have created.

## Spiritual Mapping

Give the learners each a big piece of paper. Tell them that they are making a map of their lives through a variety of lenses. They must map out their lives according to these criteria

- A. Major life events
- B. Major world events that happened in their lives
- C. Their Jewish journey
- D. Their spiritual journey\*\*

\*\*This one might cause the learners to be confused or even defensive or resistant. Help them complete this activity by expanding the definition of “spiritual” for them. By spiritual one could mean any time they felt connected to something greater to themselves, anytime they connected deeply to their Judaism, anytime they connected to a friend in an intimate way, anytime they connected to nature, anytime they felt a deep sense of self-awareness or understanding, or anytime they engaged with the world in an act of *tikkun olam*.

Once they have mapped out the content of their journeys, tell them to represent these maps in a creative way. Provide them with magazines to do collages, paint, pastilles, glue, anything that they could use to create this map. When they are finished, have each person talk about their spiritual map, why they chose to represent their journey the way they did, and what it means to them.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> With gratitude to Lily Gottlieb who wrote this program.

## Appendix 2.1A

### *Ayeka* Text Study

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

Genesis 3:1-10

- Why do you think Adam and Eve hid in the bushes? Why were they ashamed?
- When have you “hidden” yourself? When have you felt shame?
- If we assume that God knows everything, why do you think God asks Adam and Eve where they are?
- What other meanings might the question have?
- If we assume the meaning of the question is actually “what are you doing?” “Why have you lost your way?” “Why are you not living up to your potential or living up to your values?” what does the question of “*Ayeka*” mean to you?

- What are you called to do or be? When was there a time when someone had to ask you “*Ayeka*” because you were hiding from that call?

### **Where Have I Put Myself?<sup>20</sup>**

Reb Chanoch Henich of Alexander told this story:

“There was once a fellow who was very forgetful. Indeed, his memory was so short that when he awoke each morning he could not remember where he had laid his clothes the night before. Things got so bad for him that he could not fall asleep, so great was his nervousness about finding his things upon waking.

“One evening, however, he hit on a great idea. Taking pencil and paper, he wrote down exactly where he had placed each item of clothing. Placing his notes on the nightstand, by his bed, he quickly fell asleep, confident that he would find everything just perfectly in the morning.

“And indeed he did. He woke up, took the notes from his nightstand, and read off each item in turn: ‘Pants—on chair back’; and there they were. He put them on. ‘Shirt—on bed post’; and there it was. He put it on. ‘Hat—on desk’; and there it sat. He placed it on his head. In a few minutes the fellow was completely dressed. But suddenly a great dread came upon him.

“‘Yes, yes,’ he said aloud. ‘Here are my pants, my shirt, and my cap, but where am I?’”

“He looked and looked and looked, but he could find himself nowhere.”

Reb Chanoch Henich paused for a moment and then concluded, “And that is how it is with each of us as well.”

- What does the man do to be less forgetful? How is his strategy successful?
- Where does this strategy fall short? What does it mean to not know where one is?
- We often have a lot of things to remember in the hustle and bustle of life. What can we do to remind ourselves where we are?

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<sup>20</sup> Shapiro, 191.

## Appendix 2.1B

### Losing Ourselves Resources

#### 1. Girls Leaving Science

Watch the following commercial with your learners:

<http://thinkprogress.org/culture/2014/06/25/3452972/new-commercial-exposes-sneaky-ways-we-discourage-girls-from-science/>

- What was the girl interested at the beginning of the commercial? What was she interested in at the end?
- What messages was she receiving from her parents and teachers?
- Why do you think her priorities changed? Did she lose herself?

#### 2. Businessmen who lose themselves personally and ethically<sup>21</sup>

“On the last day of the course that I teach at Harvard Business School, I typically start by telling my students what I observed among my own business school classmates after we graduated. Just like every other school, our reunions every five years provided a series of fascinating snapshots... My own fifth-year reunion... had a big turnout. Looking around, everyone seemed so polished and prosperous—we couldn’t help but feel that we really were part of something special.

We clearly had much to celebrate. My classmates seemed to be doing extremely well; they had great jobs, some were working in exotic locations, and most had managed to marry spouses much better looking than they were. Their lives seemed destined to be fantastic on every level.

But by our tenth reunion, things that we had never expected became increasingly common. A number of my classmates whom I had been looking forward to seeing didn’t come back, and I had no idea why. Gradually, by calling them or asking other friends, I put the pieces together. Among my classmates were executives at renowned consulting and finance firms... others were on their way to top spots at Fortune 500 companies; some were already successful entrepreneurs, and a few were earning enormous, life-changing amounts of money.

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<sup>21</sup> Christensen, C. et. al. (2012). *How Will You Measure Your Life*. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1-4.

Despite such professional accomplishments, however, many of them were clearly unhappy.

Behind the façade of professional success there were many who did not enjoy what they were doing for a living. There were, also, numerous stories of divorces or unhappy marriages. I remember one classmate who hadn't talked to his children in years, who was now living on the opposite coast from them. Another was on her third marriage since we'd graduated.

My classmates were not only some of the brightest people I've known, but some of the most decent people, too. At graduation they had plans and visions for what they would accomplish, not just in their careers, but in their personal lives as well. Yet something had gone wrong for some of them along the way: their personal relationships had begun to deteriorate, even as their professional prospects blossomed. I sensed that they felt embarrassed to explain to their friends the contrast in the trajectories of their personal and professional lives.

At the time, I assumed it was a blip; a kind of midlife crisis. But at our twenty-five- and thirty-year reunions, the problems were worse. One of our classmates—Jeffrey Skilling—had landed in jail for his role in the Enron scandal.

The Jeffrey Skilling I knew from our years at HBS was a good man. He was smart, he worked hard, he loved his family. He had been one of the youngest partners in McKinsey & Co.'s history and later went on to earn more than \$100 million in a single year as Enron's CEO. But simultaneously, his private life was not as successful: his first marriage ended in divorce. I certainly didn't recognize the finance shark depicted in the media as he became increasingly prominent. And yet when his entire career unraveled with his conviction on multiple federal felony charges relating to Enron's financial collapse, it not only shocked me that he had gone wrong, but how spectacularly he had done so. Something had clearly sent him off in the wrong direction...

I know for sure that none [of the people I graduated with had] a deliberate strategy to get divorced or lose touch with their children—much less to end up in jail. Yet this is the exact strategy that too many ended up implementing.”



- What were the intentions and visions of Christensen's friends when they graduated from college? What personal problems did many of them encounter several years down the road?
- Why do you think these people "lost themselves" even in the midst of spectacularly successful careers?
- What are the tragic effects of losing oneself in this way?
- What kinds of strategies do you think might help someone avoid such a fate?

### 3. Stories of young women losing their identity

The book *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* has many stories of young women who go through identity crises or lose their identities because of peer pressure or other issues. Here is one such example.

"When my cousin Polly was a girl, she was energy in motion. She danced, did cartwheels and splits, played football, basketball and baseball with the neighborhood boys, wrestled with my brothers, biked, climbed trees and rode horses. She was as lithe and as resilient as a willow branch and as unrestrained as a lion cub. Polly talked as much as she moved. She yelled out orders and advice, shrieked for joy when she won a bet or heard a good joke, laughed with her mouth wide open, argued with kids and grown-ups and insulted her foes in the language of a construction worker.

We formed the Marauders, a secret club that met over her garage. Polly was the Tom Sawyer of the club. She planned the initiations, led the spying expeditions and hikes to haunted houses. She showed us the rituals to become blood 'brothers' and taught us card tricks and how to smoke.

Then Polly had her first period and started junior high. She tried to keep up her old ways, but she was called a tomboy and chided for not acting more ladylike. She was excluded by her boy pals and by the girls, who were moving into makeup and romances.

This left Polly confused and shaky. She had temper tantrums and withdrew from both the boys' and girls' groups. Later she quieted down and reentered as Becky Thatcher. She wore stylish clothes and watched from the sidelines as the boys acted and spoke. Once again she was accepted and popular. She glided smoothly through our small society. No

one spoke of the changes or mourned the loss of our town's most dynamic citizen. I was the only one who felt that a tragedy had transpired."<sup>22</sup>

- What was Polly like at the beginning of the story? What changed in her?
- What is the "tragedy" that Pipher is talking about here?
- Have you ever changed your personality to fit in? What part of yourself did you lose in the process?

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<sup>22</sup> Pipher, M. (1994). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group, 17-18.

## Appendix 2.2

### Hassidic Stories on Honoring Individuality

#### **The Turkey Prince<sup>23</sup>**

A prince once became mad and thought that he was a turkey. He felt compelled to sit naked under the table, pecking at bones and pieces of bread, like a turkey. All the royal physicians gave up hope of curing him of this madness. The king grieved tremendously.

A sage arrived and said, "I will undertake to cure him." The sage undressed and sat naked under the table, next to the prince, picking crumbs and bones. "Who are you?" asked the prince. "What are you doing here?" "And you?" replied the sage. "What are you doing here?"

"I am a turkey," said the prince. "I'm also a turkey," answered the sage.

They sat together like this for some time, until they became good friends. One day, the sage signaled the king's servants to throw him shirts. He said to the prince, "What makes you think that a turkey can't wear a shirt? You can wear a shirt and still be a turkey." With that, the two of them put on shirts.

After a while, the sage again signaled and they threw him pants. As before, he asked, "What makes you think that you can't be a turkey if you wear pants?"

The sage continued in this manner until they were both completely dressed. Then he signaled for regular food, from the table. The sage then asked the prince, "What makes you think that you will stop being a turkey if you eat good food? You can eat whatever you want and still be a turkey!" They both ate the food. Finally, the sage said, "What makes you think a turkey must sit under the table? Even a turkey can sit at the table." The sage continued in this manner until the prince was completely cured.

#### **Zusya<sup>24</sup>**

Once, the Hassidic rabbi Zusya came to his followers with tears in his eyes.

They asked him: □ □ "Zusya, what's the matter?" □ □

And he told them about his vision; "I learned the question that the angels will one day ask me about my life." □ □

The followers were puzzled. "Zusya, you are pious. You are scholarly and humble. You have helped so many of us. What question about your life could be so terrifying that you would be frightened to answer it?" □ □

Zusya replied; "I have learned that the angels will not ask me, 'Why weren't you a Moses, leading your people out of slavery?' and that the angels will not ask me,

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<sup>23</sup> "Rebbe Nachman's Story—The Turkey Prince." Breslov.org. Ret. 2/25/16.

<http://www.breslov.org/rebbe-nachmans-story-the-turkey-prince/>

<sup>24</sup> Zelazo, Z. "Be True to Yourself—Ask Zusya's Question," Talmud Treasures. 12/10/2012. Ret. 2/25/16. <http://talmudictreasures.blogspot.com/2012/12/be-true-to-yourself-ask-susiyas-question.html>

'Why weren't you a Joshua, leading your people into the promised land?'"□  
Zusya sighed; "They will say to me, 'Zusya, why weren't you Zusya?'"

## Appendix 2.3A

### Hassidic Tales on Priorities

#### **Livelihood<sup>25</sup>**

On his way to the *beit midrash*, Reb Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev saw a man racing across the market square. He ran so fast that his coattails and *tzitzit* flapped behind him. In one hand he clutched a tattered briefcase, the other hand was clamped on top of his hat to keep it from flying off his head. As the man ran past, Reb Levi Yitzhak called to him. The man stopped for a moment in deference to the rebbe, and greeted him between gulps of air.

“Where are you running to so swiftly?” the rebbe asked.

“What do you mean, Rebbe?” the man said sharply, making no attempt to hide his displeasure at having to make the detour. “I am earning my living, running after my livelihood. There are opportunities for success ahead of me, and if I don’t race after them they will escape me.”

“And how do you know,” the rebbe asked, “that these opportunities lie before you? Perhaps you are racing right by them? Or even worse, perhaps they are behind you and you are running away from them?”

The man simply stared at the rebbe uncomprehendingly.

“Listen, my friend,” Reb Levi Yitzhak said, “I am not saying you should not earn a living. I am only worried that in your obsession with earning you are missing out on the living.”

#### **Alien Invaders<sup>26</sup>**

A Hassid once visited the *Chozeh* of Lublin, Reb Yaakov Yitzhak, to complain of alien thoughts that would invade his mind and make prayer impossible for him.

“And what thoughts trouble you?” the Seer asked.

The man then went on to catalog a great list of thoughts: His business was not as good as it could be, his customers owed him too much, his competitors were undermining his profits, his wife was not satisfied with their livelihood, his daughters needed dowries, his son was not the *talmid chacham* (wise student) he had prayed for, and on and on.

When he had finished, the *Chozeh* said, “Alien thoughts? My dear friend, these are not alien thoughts at all. Why, they are clearly thoughts that are quite at home in your mind.”

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<sup>25</sup> Shapiro, 129.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 101.

## Appendix 2.3B Covey's Quadrant

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<b>I</b>  <b>(MANAGE)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis</li> <li>• Medical emergencies</li> <li>• Pressing problems</li> <li>• Deadline-driven projects</li> <li>• Last-minute preparations for scheduled activities</li> </ul>	<b>II</b>  <b>(FOCUS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation/planning</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Values clarification</li> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Relationship-building</li> <li>• True recreation/relaxation</li> </ul>
	<b>Quadrant of Necessity</b>	<b>Quadrant of Quality &amp; Personal Leadership</b>
Not Important	<b>III</b>  <b>(AVOID)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interruptions, some calls</li> <li>• Some mail &amp; reports</li> <li>• Some meetings</li> <li>• Many "pressing" matters</li> <li>• Many popular activities</li> </ul>	<b>IV</b>  <b>(AVOID)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trivia, busywork</li> <li>• Junk mail</li> <li>• Some phone messages/email</li> <li>• Time wasters</li> <li>• Escape activities</li> <li>• Viewing mindless TV shows</li> </ul>
	<b>Quadrant of Deception</b>	<b>Quadrant of Waste</b>

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<sup>27</sup> "Covey's Quadrant," *A Moment Please*. Ret. 2/23/16,  
<http://vyanks.blogspot.com/2010/05/coveys-quadrant.html>

## Unit 3 - Unification and Balance: the Spirituality of Joy

(Scripted)

### Enduring Understandings:

- Hassidic literature demonstrates that the spiritual practices of character refinement and cultivating joy lead to personal fulfillment.

### Essential Questions:

- What does it mean to connect with God or the Divine?
- What is *simchah* (joy)?
- What are my practices of joy?

### Goals

- Acquaint learners with Hassidic stories that demonstrate *simchah*
- Expose learners to experience both Hassidic practices of joy and determine what brings them joy
- Introduce the concept of self-care and link it to spiritual health

### Unit Objectives/*Expressive Outcomes*:

- Through text study, dramatic performance, and personalization of relevant stories, learners will analyze the tension between asceticism and joy
- Learners will assess the spiritual opportunities that joy grants by experiences in nature, analyzing art, singing, and dancing
- Learners will brainstorm ways of cultivating a practice of joy
- Learners will develop a spiritual self-care plan, with the aim of maintaining balance and unity within themselves
- *Learners will:*
  - *Have the opportunity to react to the experience joyful worship through niggunim*
  - *Afterwards, they will reflect on the experience through journaling and group discussion*

### Authentic Assessment

- Learners will work in teams to construct a Shabbat service that is themed around *simchah*. Each team will take a different part of the service—music, service rubrics, *iiyunim*, etc., plan it, and then together they will lead a Kabbalat Shabbat service for the congregation

### Building Block Assessments

- Photo essay of joy
- Self-care plan\*\*
- *Niggunim* Reflection\*\*

### Key Terms/Concepts

- *Simchah* or joy
- *Tipul Atzmi* or Self-Care
- *Niggun*



## Session 3.1 - Telling Our Stories of *Simchah*

### Content/Goals

- To explore the way Hassidic stories portray joy as a spiritual practice
- To think of the ways joy is connected to the spirit
- To connect these stories of *simchah* to the stories of the learners

### Essential Questions

- Where is joy found?
- Where does joy fit in my life and my story?

### Objectives

- Learners will analyze Hassidic stories of joy through text study and dramatic performance
- Learners will assess the spiritual value of joyful practice through discussion and comparison with how they experience contemporary Judaism
- Learners will represent their own stories of joy through visual artistic or written means

### Timeline

00-10 Set Induction: Hassidic *Simchah* Video  
 10-30 Acting Out Hassidic Stories of *Simchah*  
 30-50 Introducing the Concept of Hassidic *Simchah*  
 50-73 Representing Joy in Our Stories  
 73-75 Educational Closure  
 Assessment Project: Photo Essay

### Activity Description

#### 00-10 Set Induction

Gather the learners together, and show them a brief video of Hassidic people dancing and celebrating. An example of a good video might be of a wedding dance, a Simchat Torah celebration, or of people singing songs. An example of a video that might work can be found at this URL:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piEKgE-Y\\_BQ&index=9&list=PLPD7BLf7QvBQW8kzRykpefXS8MTESpgKg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piEKgE-Y_BQ&index=9&list=PLPD7BLf7QvBQW8kzRykpefXS8MTESpgKg)

After the learners have watched the video ask them:

- What did you see?
- What kinds of emotions did the people have?
- Were they behaving the way you would expect them to? Why or why not?

Explain: “In the next few lessons we are going to think about *simchah* or joy. Joy is a very important part of our lives, as I’m sure you all know. But joy is not just about happiness. Joy is a very important part of spirituality and living emotionally balanced and healthy lives. It helps connect us to things bigger than ourselves, and it also helps us connect to the best in ourselves. So as we think about joy, we are going to be asking what it is, where we find it, and how we can live it out in our lives.”

### **10-30 Acting Out Hassidic Stories of *Simchah***

Divide the learners into three groups. Pass out a story of joy to each group (see Appendix 3.1A), and instruct them that in their groups, they will be acting out the story and presenting their skits to each other. One of the group members will be tasked at the end of the skit with answering the question of how joy factored into the story, and how they would define joy based on the story.

### **30-50 Introducing the Concept of Hassidic *Simchah***

Protocol for Discussion:

- Have the learners brainstorm ideas about what the stories had in common. What did the Hassidic people in these stories seem to think about joy, and how did they define joy?  
*Joy was connected to magic or miracles. Joy was not just being happy; it was connected to spirituality. Joy was connected to practice or an act.*
- Have the learners brainstorm ways in which joy is manifest in our tradition. *Holidays, Shabbat, weddings, b’nai mitzvah, birth, dancing, food, culture, singing*
- Introduce the idea that joy was a central principle of Hassidism. In contrast to the more traditional Jews of the time when Hassidism became a phenomenon, the Hassidim were famous for their joy. They decried a Judaism that was too studious, that took itself too seriously, and did not take seriously the fact that joy is an important expression of what it means to be Jewish. They introduced joy into the tradition through dancing, song, and a general aura of celebration. They seemed to be mad to the Jews of their time, but they introduced an important element into Judaism.
- Hassidim believed that joy was a key towards connection to God
  - How might joy allow us to connect to God?  
*God might feel closer to those who are joyful. The ecstasy of joy allows people to access different parts of their minds. Joy makes us feel more connected to others and the world.*
  - What does joy unlock in us that might make us feel more spiritual or connected?  
*Deep connection, a different understanding of ourselves, a feeling of deep fulfillment*
  - Why joy, and not any other emotion?

*When we are sad, we are more self-involved. Joy causes us to connect outward. Joy is a very different state than we normally are. It is a more spiritual state.*

- **KEY QUESTION:** Is joy as much a priority in the Judaism we practice?  
*Sometimes yes... we sing in services and care about music.*  
*Sometimes no. Our Judaism focuses a lot on social justice, but sometimes we don't emphasize joy much, or we make our Judaism very rational but not joyful.*

### **50-73 Representing Joy**

Explain: "Finding joy in our lives is just as important for us in our spiritual journeys towards becoming emotionally whole human beings. We heard some stories from the Hassidim about how joy factored into their lives. Now it's time for us to think about how joy factors into our lives."

Explain that the task is for them to think of a story or construct a narrative about joy in their lives. They can use the models of the stories shared at the beginning of class. Instead of expressing their story through words, they will express it through art. They can draw, paint, do torn paper *midrash*, whatever medium seems appropriate to the instructor. After they have created their story art, they will share with the class their story of joy.

### **73-75 Educational Closure**

Ask: Name one way that our Judaism could be more joyous than it is now.

### **Assessment Project: Photo Essay**

Explain: "In an effort to help us find joy in our lives as well as define what joy is and what it means to us, we are going to be looking for joy as we go through this unit. As you go about your lives, look for joy, wherever it appears, and when you find it, take an actual picture to record it on your phone. At the end of the unit, we are all going to present presentations of the joy we found, either through a Powerpoint or a photo essay." For a potential protocol for this assignment see Appendix 3.1B.

### **Materials**

- Print outs of the Hassidic tales
- Computer
- Projector
- Dongle
- Art supplies (up to instructor to choose the project and medium)

## Session 3.2 - The Practice of *Simchah*

### Content/Goals

- To explore joy through various modalities: art, music, celebration, nature
- To connect these experiences of *simchah* to spirituality and spiritual practice
- To find amongst these practices something that the learners connect to in particular

### Essential Questions

- What does *simchah* feel like?
- How do I react to joyful experiences? What is my interiority during these experiences?

### Expressive Outcomes

- *Learners will:*
  - *React to the experience of looking at nature, recording that experience*
  - *Then they will reflect on that experience through the lens of radical amazement, seeking to connect time spent in nature with connection to something bigger than themselves*
- *Learners will:*
  - *React to the experience of seeing, analyzing, and interpreting the art of Marc Chagall*
  - *They will then reflect on the joy the paintings express as well as their emotional reactions to the paintings*

### Timeline

00-10 Set Induction: Nature Looking  
 10-35 Introducing Radical Amazement  
 35-60 *Simchah* in the Art of Marc Chagall  
 60-75 Reflecting on the Experience  
 Field Trip: Shabbat at a Chabad House

### Activity Description

#### 00-10 Set Induction

Take the learners outside into nature. They could be in a park or a garden, as long as they are outside and sitting in a natural environment. Give the students a paper and pen, and have them spread out, so that they all have a place to reflect without interruption or noise from each other. Give them five minutes to sit in silence, and have them write down anything they observe. After five minutes, have them come back into the group.

In group, ask each learner to share one thing that they observed that was particularly noteworthy for them. Then ask how the activity felt, and whether they observed things they would normally not see.

### 10-35 Introducing Radical Amazement

Ask: “Think back to when you were a small kid, maybe four or five. Think back about how so many things in the world seemed strange and amazing to you. Did you ever think: how is it that airplanes can fly? Did you ever wonder at the amazing colors in the sunset and wonder why it was so? Now think about now. You’re older now, and things don’t seem so amazing and strange.

- Do we lose our ability to wonder?  
*Not always, but sometimes when we know how something works, the magic of it goes away. It’s hard to be amazed by everything like a little kid.*
- What do we lose when we lose our childlike wonder at the world?  
*A certain magic disappears when we stop wondering. Everything becomes ordinary and dull. Life is less fun.*
- How might we go back to that childlike view of the world?  
*Stay enthusiastic. Don’t take things for granted. Always keep an open mind and always keep learning.*

Pass out the text sheet (Appendix 3.2A) for Radical Amazement. Have the learners read aloud. Then ask:

- How does Heschel define radical amazement?  
*Radical amazement is the practice of getting out of seeing the world as mundane or ordinary. It is seeing everything as spectacular, new, novel, and exciting.*
- What problem is he trying to solve?  
*As society advances its capacity for wonder diminishes. It also becomes harder to find God or the sacred. Heschel is trying to train the minds of people to find that spark of wonder.*
- How does radical amazement, in your opinion relate to joy?  
*A person who has made joy a practice will inevitably feel radical amazement. Joy is also a way of transcending the ordinary.*
- Have you felt radical amazement in your life? What was that experience like?  
*I felt connected to something greater than myself. I felt the power of the beauty of the universe, and I felt awe and wonder.*

### 35-60 Simchah in the Art of Marc Chagall

Print out the pictures of Chagall’s paintings (see Appendix 3.2B), and tape them up around the classroom to create a “gallery” of sorts. Have the learners walk around the gallery with paper and pen, and have them respond to these questions for each painting.

- What do you see?
- What surprises you? What intrigues you?

- What is joyful about this piece?

Give the learners 20 minutes to walk around the gallery. Gather them back and ask them to reflect:

- What is one image or piece of an image that was particularly joyful? How did it make you feel?
- How did the experience of seeing these paintings relate to what Heschel was talking about with radical amazement? Do you ever feel that wonder with art?

*The feeling of awe and wonder and deep connection is present in how we view art. The sacred can be found in the beautiful, and the experience is certainly joyful.*

### **60-75 Reflection (and Educational Closure)**

Begin the reflection by showing the learners a video of Hassidim dancing at a wedding. Make sure this video is extra joyful, even ecstatic. Then reflect on the whole lesson with these questions:

Reflect on the experience with these questions:

- We've done a few things today involving joyful practice: we have been out in nature, we've observed art, and we've watched Hassidic dancing. Are any of these practices important to you?  
*Spending time in nature, feeling connected, etc. are important to me.*
- Do you see value in these joyful practices beyond simply creating mirth? What other effects do they have on you? Emotionally? Spiritually?  
*Joy is important for spiritual connection. It is how I feel the presence of God in the world. It is how I connect to the best within myself.*

### **Field Trip: Shabbat at a Chabad House**

In an effort to continue exploring practices of joy, have your class go to a nearby Chabad house for a Shabbat dinner, if you can arrange it and if it is plausible. The point of this is for the learners to experience the joy that can come from a traditional meal with good food, good company, and an atmosphere of celebration. After they have gone to the Shabbat, have them write a journal entry about what they experienced, what surprised them, and what they will take with them from the experience. If a trip to a Chabad house is implausible, you might have your community create an authentic Shabbat experience for the learners, complete with a festive meal, singing of *z'mirot* (Shabbat songs), and lots of *simchah*.

### **Materials**

- Paper
- Pens, pencils
- Radical Amazement Text Sheet copies for class
- Print outs of Chagall paintings

- Computer, speakers

## Session 3.3 - Unification and Balance: *Tipul Atzmi* and the Spirit

### Content/Goals

- To teach the concepts of asceticism and spiritual unification
- To link joy and spiritual unification with emotional and spiritual health
- To introduce the concept of *tipul atzmi* or self-care, and get the students to create self-care plans

### Essential Questions

- How can I care for myself in a way that maintains my spiritual and emotional health?

### Objectives

- Learners will be able to define asceticism and articulate ways that it can lead to division of the soul
- Through study of Jewish texts on self-care learners will be able to articulate aspects of their lives that cause their souls to be unified or divided
- Learners will create a self-care plan with the goal of maintaining unification within themselves

### Timeline

00-05 Set Induction: *Oy!*  
 05-30 Story and Reflection  
 30-55 Text Study  
 55-73 Self-Care Plans  
 73-75 Closure

### Activity Description

#### 00-05 Set Induction

Gather the learners in a circle. Have them say the word “Oy!” Have them do it a few times, then ask them to do it like they really mean it. Then ask them to stop, and think about some longing they have in their lives: something that has been bugging them, some struggle they have, or something they did recently that they were not proud of. Have them imagine this struggle, then have them let it out with a big “OY!” Ask:

- Why did we do this?  
*See paragraph below for explanation.*
- How did it feel to say *Oy*?  
*It felt cathartic in a way.*



“This exercise was an act of *teshuvah*. When we say *oy*, we connect ourselves and our bodies to our inner desires and struggles. The *oy* is our desire to do better, and our desire to connect to God. This lesson is all about our struggles, and the way that we are going to go about finding balance within ourselves.”

### 05-30 Story and Reflection

Pass out the Tale of the Rabbi of Lublin (see Appendix 3.3A). Read the story together and ask these reflection questions:

- What struggle was the hassid facing?  
*He was having a crisis of faith. He wanted to complete this fast to disconnect himself from his desires. However, he realized that doing so would make him prideful, yet another sin.*
- Why do you think the hassid was fasting? What was his motivation?  
*The hassid wanted to achieve connection to God. He was fasting to remove all desire from his soul so that he could focus entirely on God.*
- Why do you think the Rabbi of Lublin was not pleased with his student's efforts?  
*The rabbi was not pleased with his student's efforts because in his attempt to deprive himself and not give into his desires, he was, effectively, dividing his soul. In essence, his work to connect him with God was achieving the exact opposite result.*

Explain: “The story shows us a struggle that we often have as we try to live our lives and serve God. The Hassid thought that he was serving God by doing this supreme act of asceticism, that is, depriving himself of food and other comforts. The reality, though, was that he was not connecting with God because he was creating division within himself. His service was doing harm to his health and preventing him from true spiritual connection. This story teaches us that as we go about our lives and seek to live spiritually, the way to do this is by achieving balance within our souls. We have been talking about joy this unit, and that is one way to go about achieving this balance. But today we are going to be thinking more broadly about what we need to do in order to take care of ourselves.”

### 30-55 Text Study

Divide the learners into *chevruta*, and assign each *chevruta* two texts from the text sheet on self-care (see Appendix 3.3B). Have the groups answer these questions for the texts they are studying.

- What does the text mean?
- What value underlies the text?
- What are ways that the values in the text apply to your life?
- What are ways that you embody that value well in your life? In what ways do you not embody that value well?

Have the groups share what they answered with the larger group.

### **55-75 Self-Care Plans**

Have the learners fill out the self-care plan worksheet (see Appendix 3.3C) in private. Give them roughly 15 minutes.

### **Educational Closure**

Have the learners go around the circle and share one insight they gained from developing their self-care plan, and one new thing they plan to do going forward.

### **Materials**

- Print outs: Rabbi of Lublin story, text study, and self care worksheet

## Session 3.4 - The Experience of the Hassidic *Niggun*

### Content/Goals

- To teach the concept of *d'veikut* and relate it to *niggunim*
- To foster the experience of Hassidic *niggunim*
- To make a connection between *niggunim* and ecstatic, spiritual joy

### Essential Questions

- How do we connect to God?
- What is the experience of the ineffable?
- How does the experience of being in community relate to my personal spirituality?

### Objectives/Expressive Outcomes

- Through the experience of singing and text study learners will assess the potential of a *niggun* to be a pure means of connecting to God
- *Learners will have:*
  - *The opportunity to react to a singing session of Hassidic niggunim led by a song leader in the community familiar with such tunes*
  - *Learners will reflect on the experience of singing these niggunim, first on the emotional/spiritual connection or emotion the experience evoked for them, and secondly, how the experience of singing in community affected them spiritually/emotionally through journaling and group discussion*

### Timeline

00-05 Set Induction: Singing *Hava Nagilah*

05-25 *Niggunim* Text Study

25-55 Singing *Niggunim*

55-75 Reflecting on the Experience

### Activity Description

#### 00-05 Set Induction

Gather. Ask the learners if they know the tune to *Hava Nagilah*. If they don't, then sing it for them briefly or play for them a rousing version from a CD or mp3. Then have the kids sing *Hava Nagilah*, with no words, only *lai lai lais*, and have them sing it very slowly. Let the *niggun* go for a solid three minutes, and if the joy in the room builds enough, let the words to the song naturally come in. Invite a guitarist or song leader to do this if possible.

Reflection Protocol:

- What was it like for you to sing this song together?  
*It felt cool to be singing all together. We felt very connected, and there was a lot of spirit and energy.*

- How did the fact that we didn't use the words change it for you?  
*It changed the feeling entirely. It slowed the song down, and we really felt the music more.*
- Why do you think someone might want to not use words to a song?  
*They like to express themselves without words. Perhaps the words get in the way of the pure feeling they want to get across.*

### 05-25 *Niggunim* Text Study

Explain: "Today, we are going to continue our exploration of spirituality through joy by thinking about and experiencing the *niggun*. These are some of the most joyful songs that Hassidic Jews in particular love and find connection to God through singing them. Before we sing them ourselves and experience them, we are going to think about why these wordless songs are so important."

Pass out the *Niggunim* Text Sheets (see Appendix 3.4). Read the text aloud as a group.

#### Reflection Protocol:

- Why do you think the text describes *neginah*, or melodic singing, as a palace? What does that metaphor mean to you?  
*Perhaps it's a palace because singing niggunim transports us to a special place. Going to a palace means your going to visit the king and entering a place of grandeur.*
- What is *teshuvah* in this piece, and what is the connection between *teshuvah* and the *niggun*? Why do the *sh'lichei tzibbur* who love the sound of their own voice fail to do the work of *teshuvah*?  
*Teshuvah is the process of return to God. There is a connection between teshuvah and niggun because the niggun is the thing that transports the singer to a place of closeness to God. This is why the cantors get in the way. But singing too much or loving the sound of their own voice too much, they detract from the true work that should be happening with the niggun.*
- How does the text connect joy and *teshuvah*?  
*The process of teshuvah is a joyful one. It is wondrous and joyful to feel that connection with God, and joy is really the mediator of the final step of teshuvah.*
- Have you ever felt the joy and *teshuvah* that the text is speaking about? Did it happen through song? Some other activity?

### 25-55 Singing *Niggunim*

This is the meat of this lesson: the experience of singing *niggunim*. This part requires a cantor or someone who can song lead and has familiarity with a number of *niggunim*. See Appendix 3.4B for the music to some possible *niggunim*, or check out the music of Joey Weisenberg for some ideas of *niggunim* that could be used for this. (Here is a particularly good one:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DahnzUV1OUU>). For a solid 30 minutes,

the learners should be led in singing *niggunim*. This should mean roughly 3-4 *niggunim* are taught, and each one is focused on for roughly 7-10 minutes. To begin the session, gather the learners in a circle, so that they are all facing each other, and allow for calm and silence to come over the group. Start each *niggun* slowly so that the learners can catch on through osmosis. Let the *niggun* build in strength and energy, and vary the speed and loudness. Only when it feels that a *niggun* has truly touched the participants and they are done with it should a *niggun* end, but it is important not to rush through them, so that a *niggun* can really have its full impact. After a *niggun* is completed, allow for a pregnant pause/wait time in silence afterwards to let the experience sink in.

### **55-73 Reflection**

After the experience, pass out paper, and have the learners journal about the experience for five minutes or so guided by these questions:

- What about this experience felt new or different? What felt comfortable or familiar?
- Did the experience cause you to feel a particular emotion?
- How did the experience of singing wordless melodies differ from how you normally sing or pray?
- Did you feel a spiritual connection? Can you describe it?

In *chevruta*, share your reflections, and also describe what the experience of singing in the group felt like.

Wrap Up. Say something along the lines of: “Thank you for your participation today. I know this might have felt like a new experience, but I appreciate your openness to trying it. Singing these *niggunim* can be a powerful way to center yourself at the very least and perhaps even create an opening in you for a spiritual connection with God. I hope that you will continue to explore these ways of singing and praying and reflecting in the future.”

### **73-75 Educational Closure**

Do a whip around the room, and have the learners each share one word that is on their minds after the lesson.

### **Materials**

- *Niggunim* Text Sheet copies for all participants
- Paper, pens

## Session 3.5 – Synthesis

### Content/Goals

- Learners will present their photo essays of joy
- Learners will divide into groups and prepare a Shabbat service with the theme of spiritual practices of joy

### Timeline

00-40 Photo Essays

40-75 Service Group Work

### Activity Description

#### 00-40 Photo Essays

Each student will have compiled a Powerpoint or some kind of presentation of the photographs of joy they have taken over the course of the unit. (See Appendix 3.1B for the Protocol for the assignment). They will present this work to the class, and during the presentation, ask the audience members to write down what definition of joy they sensed from the photo essay:

- Ask the audience members to share what they wrote down, either verbally, or projected on a screen through digital means.
- Ask the author of the photo essay to share what their definition of joy was that they were going for.
- Ask the author to comment on any similarities or disparities between what was reflected back to them and what they were going for.

#### 40-75 Service Group Work

This is the authentic assessment of the unit. The students will use the skills, music, and insights they have learned to create a joyful worship experience for a Kabbalat Shabbat service, to take place at a later date. You might even challenge the students to use part of their photo essays in the service. This time is spent preparing for that service. To do so, the students should be divided into groups with each group taking responsibility for some aspect of the service. The divisions could be done a number of ways. The students could be divided such that each group takes responsibility for one rubric of the service (*Kabbalat Shabbat*, *Ma'ariv*, *Amidah*, conclusion, etc.). They could also be divided such that each group takes ownership of one aspect of the service (music, *d'var Torah*, *ityyunim*, *shaliach tzibbur*, etc.). Before the groups get to the planning stage of the service, have each person fill out the brainstorm sheet (see Appendix 3.5). Then, in their groups, have them share their brainstorms and see what common ground they have on which they can form the basis for their contribution to the service.

**Materials Needed**

- Projector
- Computer
- Dongle
- Screen
- Service Leading Brainstorm Sheet copies for all participants
- Pens, pencils

## Appendix 3.1A

### Hassidic Stories of Joy<sup>28</sup>

On Simchat Torah [the Festival of Rejoicing in the Pentateuch, which marks the conclusion of one lectionary calendar with the end of Deuteronomy and the start of the next lectionary year with the beginning of Genesis], the disciples of the founder of Hasidism, the Ba'al Shem Tov, celebrated and made merry at his house. They danced and drank and had more and more wine brought up from the cellar. A number of hours later, the Ba'al Shem Tov's wife went to his room and said, "If they don't stop drinking, we won't have any wine left for the *Kiddush* and *Havdallah* [the rites that begin and end the Sabbath with candles and wine]. He laughed and answered, "You are right. So go and tell them to stop." When she opened the door to the large room where the students were celebrating, this is what she saw: the disciples were dancing around in a circle, and around the dancing circle twined a blazing ring of blue fire. Then she took a jug in each hand and, motioning the servant away, went into the cellar. Soon after she returned with vessels filled to the brim.

Once a simple man came to the *maggid* [storyteller and preacher] of Koznitz with his wife and said that he wanted to divorce her. "Why do you want a divorce?" asked the *maggid*. "I work very hard all week," said the man, "and on the Sabbath I want to have some pleasure. At the Sabbath meal, my wife first serves the fish, and then the onions and the heavy main dish, and by the time she puts the pudding on the table, I have eaten all I want and have no appetite for it. All week I work for this pudding, but by the time it comes I cannot even taste it, so all my labor was for nothing! Time after time, I have asked my wife to put the pudding on the table right after the *Kiddush* [blessing over the wine to sanctify the Sabbath day], but no! She says that the way she does it, is according to custom." The *maggid* turned to the woman. "From now on," he said, "make two puddings. Serve one right after the *Kiddush* and the other after the main dish, as before." Both husband and wife agreed to this and went away well pleased. On the same day, the *maggid* said to his wife: "From now on, make two puddings on Friday. Serve one right after the *Kiddush* and the other after the main dish, as you have been doing." From that time on, this was the custom in the *maggid's* home and in the homes of his children and grandchildren. The second pudding was called the *Shalom Bayit* (Peace in the Home) pudding.

A Hasid told the rabbi of Lublin that he was tormented with evil desires and had become despondent over it. The rabbi said to him, "Guard yourself from despondency above all, for it is worse and more harmful than sin. When the Inclination to Do Evil awakens desires in a person, it is not concerned with plunging him into sin, but into despondency by way of his sinning."

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<sup>28</sup> *Hassidic Stories of Joy*. Ret. 2/13/16, <http://www.rabbidebra.com/tales-of-joy.html>



## Appendix 3.1B

### Protocol for Photo Essay

During our unit of joy, it is essential for you to consider the ways you find joy in your day-to-day life. In order to build awareness of where you find joy and to turn your radar onto joy, your assignment over the course of this unit is to record joy whenever you see it. When you see joy in your life, be it randomly on the street, with friends or family, or you experiencing it yourself, take out your phone and take a picture of it. At the end of the unit, you will be presenting a photo essay of your joy pictures.

As you assemble this essay, consider the following questions:

1. Why did I take this picture? What did I find joyful about it?
2. How does this instance of joy relate to other pictures I took?
3. What patterns or themes do I see in my pictures?
4. What is the overall definition of joy my pictures tell?

When you have answered these questions assemble your presentation with the following criteria in mind:

1. Themes or motifs come out in the presentation
2. Essay has one or more elements that are surprising or require some explanation
3. Elements of the photo essay uncover something I didn't know about joy before
4. Photo essay concludes with my personal definition of joy

## Appendix 3.2A

### Radical Amazement

The surest way to suppress our ability to understand the meaning of God and the importance of worship is to take things for granted. Indifference to the sublime wonder of living is the root of sin. Wonder or radical amazement is the chief characteristic of the religious man's attitude toward history and nature. One attitude is alien to his spirit: taking things for granted, regarding events as a natural course of things. To find an approximate cause of a phenomenon is no answer to his ultimate wonder. He knows that there are laws that regulate the course of natural processes; he is aware of the regularity and pattern of things. However, such knowledge fails to mitigate his sense of perpetual surprise at the fact that there are facts at all. [...]

As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder. Awareness of the divine begins with wonder. It is the result of what man does with his higher incomprehension. The greatest hindrance to such awareness is our adjustment to conventional notions, to mental clichés.

Wonder or radical amazement, the state of maladjustment to words and notions, is therefore a prerequisite for an authentic awareness of that which is. Radical amazement has a wider scope than any other act of man. While any act of perception or cognition has as its object a selected segment of reality, radical amazement refers to all of reality; not only to what we see, but also to the very act of seeing as well as to our own selves, to the selves that see and are amazed at their ability to see. The grandeur or mystery of being is not a particular puzzle to the mind, as, for example, the cause of volcanic eruptions.

We do not have to go to the end of reasoning to encounter it. Grandeur or mystery is something with which we are confronted everywhere and at all times. Even the very act of thinking baffles our thinking, just as every intelligible fact is, by virtue of its being a fact, drunk with baffling aloofness. Does not mystery reign within reasoning, within perception, within explanation? What formula could explain and solve the enigma of the very fact of thinking?<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Heschel, A. J. (1976). *God In Search of Man*, 43.

### Appendix 3.2B Marc Chagall Paintings



Chagall, M. (1939). *The Bridal Pair with the Eiffel Tower*. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Ret. 2/13/16, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/marc-chagall-the-couple-of-the-eiffel-tower-bride-and-groom-of-the-eiffel-tower>





Chagall, M. (1913). *The Fiddler*. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. *Totally History*, "The Fiddler," Ret. 2/13/16, <http://totallyhistory.com/the-fiddler/>

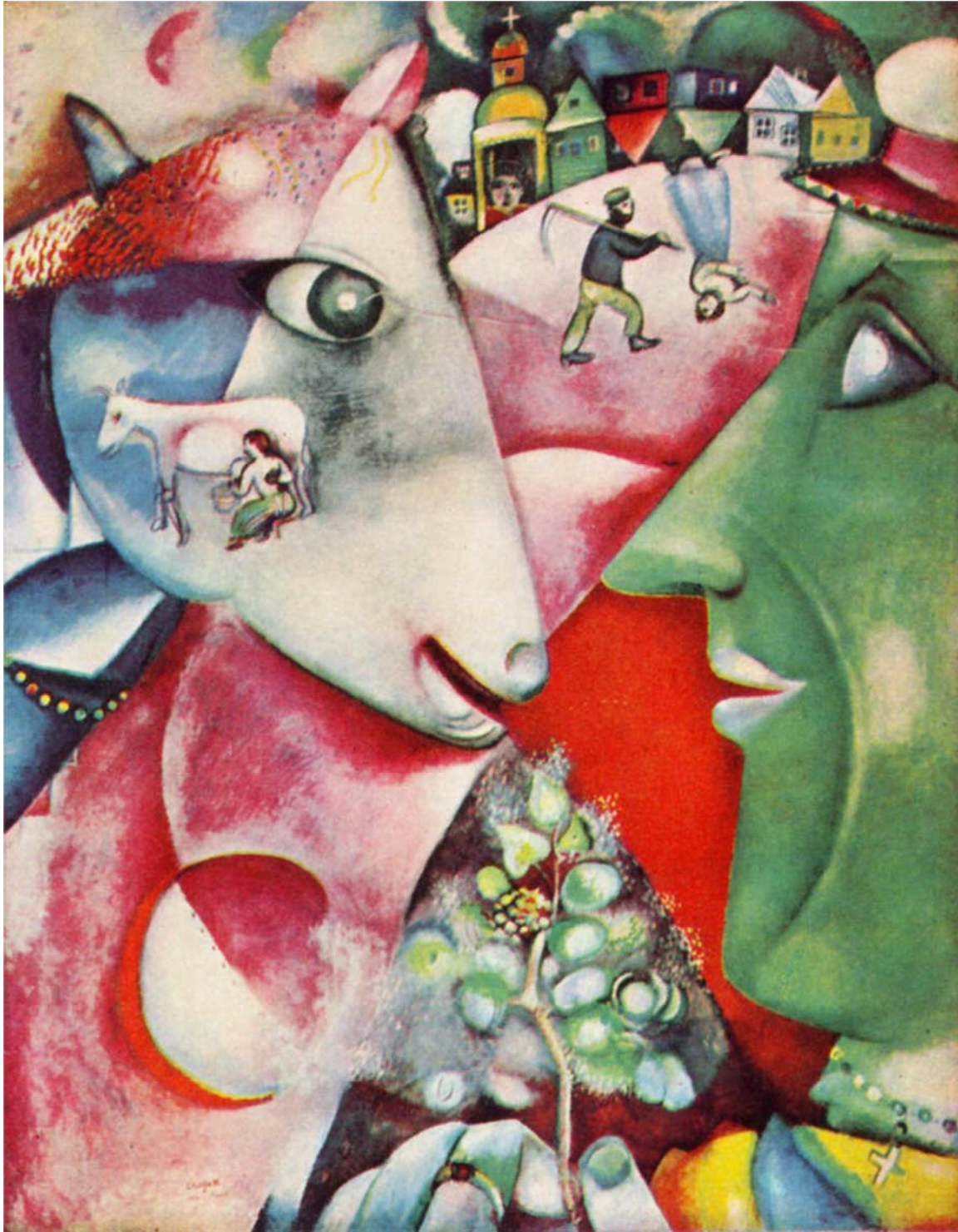


Chagall, M. (1915). *Birthday*. Modern Art Museum (MoMA), New York, New York. Ret. 2/13/16, <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/79360>





Chagall, M. (1957). *The Concert*. Private Collection. *Marc Chagall*. Ret. 2/13/16, <http://www.marcchagallart.net/chagall-167.php>



Chagall, M. (1913). *I and the Village*. Modern Art Museum (MoMA), New York, New York. Ret. 2/13/16, <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/78984>

### Appendix 3.3A

#### The Tale of the Rabbi of Lublin<sup>30</sup>

A hassid of the Rabbi of Lublin once fasted from one Sabbath to the next. On Friday afternoon he began to suffer such cruel thirst that he thought he would die. He saw a well, went up to it, and prepared to drink. But instantly he realized that because of the one brief hour he had still to endure, he was about to destroy the work of the entire week. He did not drink and went away from the well. Then he was touched by a feeling of pride for having passed this difficult test. When he became aware of it, he said to himself, 'better I go and drink than let my heart fall prey to pride.' He went back to the well, but just as he was going to bend down to draw water, he noticed that his thirst had disappeared. When the Sabbath had begun, he entered his teacher's house. 'Patchwork!' the rabbi called to him, as he crossed the threshold.

Buber's commentary:

What the master—apparently after watching the progress of the venture with true understanding—says to the disciple, means undoubtedly: "This is not the proper manner to attain a higher rung.' He warns the disciple of something that perforce hinders him from achieving his purpose...The object of the reproof is the advance and subsequent retreat; it is the wavering, shilly-shallying character of the man's doing that makes it questionable. The opposite of patchwork is work of all of a piece. Now how does one achieve work 'all of a piece?' Only with a united soul.

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<sup>30</sup> Buber, M. (1964). *The Way of Man According to Hassidism*. New York: Citadel Press, 21-22.



### Appendix 3.3B Self Care Text Study<sup>31</sup>

- A. Eight things are harmful in large quantities but beneficial in small ones: travel and sexual intercourse, riches and trade, wine and sleep, hot baths and bloodletting.  
(*Gittin* 70a, translation from *Teaching Jewish Values*, pg. 272)
- B. Once when the sage Hillel had finished a lesson with his pupils, he proceeded to walk along with them.  
“Master,” they asked, “where are you going?”  
“To perform a religious duty” he answered.  
“Which duty is that?”  
“To bathe in a bathhouse.”  
“Is that a religious duty?” they asked.  
“Yes! Somebody, appointed to scour and wash the statues of the king that stand in the theaters and circuses, is paid for the work, and even associated with the nobility,” he answered. “Since that is done, how much more should I, who am created in the image and likeness of God, scour and wash myself? As it is written, ‘in the image of God did God make mankind.’”  
(*Leviticus Rabbah* 34:4, translation from *Teaching Jewish Values*, p. 272)
- C. The whole world is a very narrow bridge, and the most important part is not to be afraid.  
(Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav)
- D. Don’t seek greatness for yourself, and don’t lust after honor. Do more than study. Don’t lust to sit at the tables of the mighty, for your [study] table is more significant than theirs, and your crown is greater than theirs. And the One for whom you work is totally trustworthy and may be counted on to give you your proper recompense.  
(*Sefer Hasidim*, 6.5, as translated in *The Jewish Moral Virtues*, Borowitz and Schwartz, p. 163)
- E. When people have envy in their heart, their bones rot, but when they have no envy in their heart, their bones do not rot.  
(Shabbat 152b on Proverbs 14:30, translation from *Teaching Jewish Values*, p. 214)
- F. Although Shofar blowing on Rosh HaShannah is a divine decree, there is a hidden message of the Shofar. The message is for those who are spiritually asleep to awaken, carefully examine their behavior, perform *teshuvah*, and

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<sup>31</sup> Klass, D. *How I Met Your Middot: Jewish Virtues in American Pop Culture*. Unpublished, 26, 28-29.

remember our Creator. Those who forget the truth in the course of daily routines and devote all of their time to temporal matters that have no lasting impact should ponder their souls, improve their actions and thoughts. Everyone should abandon his evil actions and thoughts.  
(Maimonides *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah*, 3:4)

## Appendix 3.3C

### Self Care Plan Worksheet

1. When I get stressed, I need... This is how I will fulfill this need....
2. These things bring me joy... This is how I will cultivate joy...
3. I need this many hours of sleep... This is how I will get that...
4. To cope with emotions, I usually do this...
5. This fulfills my spirit...
6. To make my body feel healthy, I need to do this... This is how I will fulfill this need...
7. These relationships are important to me... This is how I will foster those relationships...
8. This kind of work makes me feel fulfilled... This is how I will pursue that work...
9. This makes me feel spiritually fulfilled... This is how I will do that more often...

## Appendix 3.4A

### Niggunim Text Sheet

A *niggun* is a wordless prayer, a melody that a Hassid sings to get closer to God. In the Old Country, if a *chazan* [cantor] was too much in love with the sound of his own voice, they would say, “That *chazan* is a fool. He frequents the palace of *neginah* [melody, the word is derived from *niggun*], which is right next door to the palace of *teshuvah* [repentance, return to God]—but he never goes in!”

At Chabad we had a saying: “Every locksmith has a master key with which he can open many doors. *Neginah* is such a key, for it can unlock all doors.” Why? Because a *niggun* sung in the proper way is like doing *teshuvah*, like a moment of true repentance and turning to God. The wellsprings of *niggun* and *teshuvah* are the simple yearnings of the heart that we all share. Not long ago, I was teaching at a Reform synagogue in Calgary on Shabbos morning. “Tell me,” I began, “do you sometimes have a feeling that you ought to be better? The wish that you could be different, higher, wise? Closer to God?”

People nodded.

“Let’s take a moment to get in touch with that feeling.” I said. “Now, I’d like you to say, ‘Oy.’ Just like that, from that place of aspiration: ‘Oy. Oy. Oy.’ So the people did that, and there were some heartfelt Oy’s! Then I said, ‘You know what? We just have done a little *teshuvah*.’”

Because that’s what it is. The sense of longing, that sense that “Oy, if only I were better, if only I could be in a greater place!”—not from some crippling sense of guilt, like Woody Allen, but because we love God, we want to be closer to God—that’s *teshuvah*. At that point, because the palace of *neginah* and the palace of *teshuvah* are side-by-side, we are ready to sing.

Even the simplest *niggun* can serve as prayer if sung with the right *kavannah*. The other day, I was doing a guest lecture by Skype to a group of people in Berkeley that is reading *Jewish with Feeling*... Before we started, though, I said to the people, “What I need to share with you, I can’t do it cold. So I want you to sing ‘*Hava Nagilah*’ with me. Everyone knows the tune, yes? But I want us to sing it without words, and slow, really slow. Let’s do it as a prayer. And please, ask in this prayer that something should come to you in this sharing that we are doing, something that your soul needs at this time.”

That’s how “*Hava Nagila*” started: the words came later, but the tune was a Sadigura *niggun*, from a Hassidic lineage founded by one of the six sons of the great Reb Yisroel of Rishin. The Hassidim would sing it very slowly, and as the melody rose heavenward—DI DI YA MAM, DI YAI YAI YAI YAI—oy, you would close your eyes, and pinch your face, and make the kind of gesture that wants to storm the gates of heaven! So we sang together on Skype, and we were able to speak of things that otherwise would not have been said.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Shachter-Shalomi, Z. (2012). *Davening—A Guide to Meaningful Jewish Prayer*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 29-30.

## Appendix 3.4B Niggunim Sheet Music<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Niggun* selections arranged by Cantor David Berger.

# Nigun No. 1

Vishnitz

DELIBERATELY

Chords: Fm, Bbm, Fm, C7, Fm, Eb7, Ab, Ab, Fm, Bbm, Bbm, C7, 1. Fm, 2. Fm, Eb, Bbm, Fm, Eb, Bbm, C7, Fm.

# Nigun No. 2

JOYOUSLY

Chords: Gm, Cm, D7, Gm, Cm, Bb, Fm, Gm, F7, Bb, Cm, Gm, Cm, D7, Gm, Cm, Bb, Fm, Gm.

# Nigun No.12

RHYTHMICALLY

Fm

C7 Fm Bbm Fm

Bbm Fm Fm Cm Fm

Cm G 1.C 2.Fm

# Nigun No. 13

JOYOUSLY

Belz

Dm Gm Dm

Gm A7 Dm Dm Gm Dm Gm Dm

Dm Gm Dm 1. C7 F 2. Dm A7 Dm

# Nigun No. 22

Besht, Maggid, Shneur Zalman

ADAGIO MOLTO RELIGIOSO

Musical score for Nigun No. 22, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked "ADAGIO MOLTO RELIGIOSO". The score consists of four staves. The first staff contains a single melodic line. The second staff includes a section labeled "Maggid" - Adagio Molto, with a key signature change to two flats (B-flat, E-flat). The third staff continues the melody. The fourth staff is labeled "Shneur Zalman" and includes a key signature change to one flat (B-flat, E-flat). Chord symbols are placed above the notes: C, Fm, Bbm, Fm, Bbm, Fm, Bbm, Fm, C, Fm, Cm, G, Cm.

# Nigun No. 23

Rizhin

LENTO RELIGIOSO

Musical score for Nigun No. 23, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat, E-flat). The tempo is marked "LENTO RELIGIOSO". The score consists of two staves. The first staff includes a key signature change to one flat (B-flat, E-flat) and a time signature change to 3/4. The second staff continues the melody. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: Cm, Gm, Cm, Gm, Cm, D, Gm, Gm, Cm, A, D, Gm, Cm, D, D, Cm, D, D7, Gm.



# Nigun No. 29

## The Nigun of Four Sections

LENTO RELIGIOSO

Lubavitch

① E Am E Am E Dm E Dm

② E Am E Dm Am

E Dm E Dm Am E Dm E Dm

E Dm E Dm

③ Dm

E Am E Dm E Am E

④ Am C Dm

Dm G Am Am E Dm

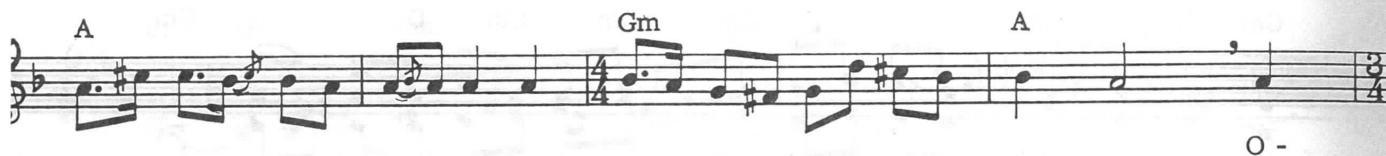
Dm A Dm E Am E

1. Am E 2. Am E

# Ovinu Malkénu

Lubavitch

WITH FEELING



אָבינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֲלֵא אַתָּה.

Our Father, our King, we have no King except You.

# Al Hasela Hoch

Lubavitch

**ALLEGRO** Gm Eb D

Al ha-se-la hoch hoch al ha-se-la hoch hoch hoch al ha-se-la hoch hoch

1. Cm D 2. Cm D7 Gm Fine Gm

va - yé-tzu ma-yim va - yé-tzu ma-yim ah ha ha hai hai hai hai

Gm Cm Gm Cm Gm D Gm

1. Gm 2. Gm D7 Gm Bb

Bb > > >

D.C. al Fine

1. Bb Gm 2. Bb F7 Bb D7

F Bb

על הסלע הך ויצאו מים

The rock was hit and water came forth.



# צמחה לך נפש



*Andante*

קד - ל כוה - ק נשי - גפ - קד - ל אה - צק  
 ק - בלי יק - ע - ! - קד - א - קד - רי - ש - ק  
 ים  
 קד - ל - ת - י - י - דש - ק - קן  
 קד - אות - לך קד - ב - ו - ו - קד - ע  
 קד - אות - לך קד - י - י - דש - ק - קן  
 קד - ב - ו - קד  
*rit.*

# Rachamana

Chabad (SN #247)  
Arr. David Berger

E Dm E Dm Am Dm 1. E 2. E

Ra-cha-ma-na d' - a-nei d' - a-nei la-a-ni-yei, a - nei - na. na.

6 E Am E Dm

Ra - cha - ma - na d' - a - nei lit - vi - rei

11 E E Dm E E Dm E

li - ba a - nei - na a - nei - na.

Merciful One, who answers the poor, answer us.  
Merciful One, who answers the broken hearted, answer us.

# Han'shamah Yoredet L'toch Haguf

Chabad

Sefer Nigunim V1, #107

*Freely*

Ha - n' - sha - mah yo - re - det l' - toch ha - guf,

3  
ach tzo - e - ket\_\_ vai\_\_ vai, ach tzo - e - ket\_\_ vai vai vai, y' -

7  
ri - dah zu tzo - rech a - li - yah, ad she - kol zeh hu k' - dai, y' -

11  
ri - dah zu tzo - rech a - li - yah, ad she - kol zeh hu k' - dai

הַנְּשָׁמָה יוֹרֶדֶת לְתוֹךְ הַגּוּף  
אֶךְ צוֹעֲקֵת וַיּוֹי  
אֶךְ צוֹעֲקֵת וַיּוֹי וַיּוֹי  
יְרִידָה זוֹ צוֹרֵךְ עֲלֶיהָ  
עַד שֶׁכָּל זֶה הוּא כְּדַאי

The soul descends into the body  
Crying out "Vai, vai"  
Crying out, "Vai, vai, vai"  
This descent is necessary for an ascent  
Until all of this is worthy.

## Service Leading Brainstorm Sheet

1. Given what you learned and experienced this unit, how do you define joy?
2. Where do you find joy? What are those experiences like?
3. Is there a spiritual aspect of joy for you? How would you describe it?
4. What part of the Shabbat service do you find joyful? How might you highlight the joy in the service?

## Unit 4 - Integrity: The Spirituality of Balance Within the Self

*(unscripted)*

### Enduring Understandings

- Hassidic literature demonstrates that the spiritual practices of character refinement and cultivating joy lead to personal fulfillment
- The voice of the Divine calls out *ayeka* “where are you” to everyone, and when a person can listen to that voice and respond to it, he will find purpose and fulfillment
- Spirituality is a paradox. At the same time that it directs us outward beyond ourselves, it also forces us to seek inwardly
- Integrity requires the mastery and alignment of one’s thoughts, speech and actions.

### Essential Questions

- What is my integrity? What does it mean for me to live a life of integrity?
- What are my essential values?

### Goals

- To show students how to find integrity by aligning thoughts with speech and action
- To show students that the self is the only thing that they have complete control and influence over
- To make relevant the Hassidic stories that demonstrate the spiritual qualities of integrity
- To help students find their integrity by defining their values
- To show that conflict can be avoided or minimized when people hold onto integrity

### Unit Objectives

- Learners will define their circle of influence and classify things as either within or outside that area of influence
- Learners will apply this understanding to the way that they encounter conflict
- Learners will define spiritual health as creating alignment between thoughts, speech, and actions
- Through engaging in this practice, students will develop self-awareness and define their personal essential values

### Authentic Assessments

- Second meeting and interview with a congregant, a good example might be someone who is in recovery who has used spirituality to find integrity within him/herself. Learners will write a reflection on the experience and define their integrity and essential values.



**Building Block Assessments**

- Public and Private Venn Diagram\*\*
- Conflict *Heshbon Ha-Nefesh*\*\*
- Spiritual Conflict Diffusion Tool Kit\*\*
- Personal integrity *middah* list and map\*\*
- Values Ranking Worksheet\*\*

**Key Terms/Concepts**

- Public Self and Private Self
- Integrity
- Values
- Alignment
- *Middot*

## Session 4.1 - Beginning with the Self

### Objectives:

- Learners will define integrity as when a person's insides match their outsides
- Through metaphor learners will be able to articulate the connectedness between the outer world and the universe within themselves
- Learners will be able to list out ways that the internal emotional or cognitive state of a person expresses itself in external situations they find themselves in

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Public and Private

The first task of this lesson is for the learners to come up with a working definition of what integrity is. In order to do so, either pass out or read two very brief overviews of biographies of people—one of a person of high integrity and another of a person who lacks in integrity. For example, one could use Nelson Mandela as an exemplar of integrity and Lance Armstrong as someone lacking in integrity.

Once the students have read or heard each person's biography, write each person's name on the board and create a Venn Diagram for each, with one hoop labeled "Public Self" and the other labeled "Private Self." Under the "Public Self" category, have the students say how these people present themselves to the public, and on the "Private Self" category, have the students say how these people actually are. If the Private and Public Self overlap, have the students put those actions or characteristics in the center overlap. When the students have filled in the Venn Diagram for both the person with and the person without integrity, reflect with the following questions:

- What do you notice about the Venn Diagrams?
- Which Venn Diagram had more overlap between Public and Private, and which had less? (*As the instructor, it is important that you directed the conversation such that the person with integrity has more overlap between Public and Private than the person without integrity*) Why do you think that is?

When this reflection is complete, tell the students that in this unit, they will be studying integrity. **The working definition we will use for integrity is that a person with integrity makes sure that their insides match their**

**outsides. That is to say, the self they portray to the world is well aligned with their true self.**

Of course, perfect alignment between public and private self is impossible, so be sure to emphasize that perfection is not the goal—simply that they be self-aware of times when they aren't aligned.

To conclude the activity, have the students fill out the same Venn Diagram for themselves.

## **Fractals**

Fractals are special phenomena in nature. They are dimensionless, which means that it does not matter what scale you look at them at, whether it is microscopic or with the naked eye, because at all scales they will look exactly the same. For example, a tree branch will look similar whether you are looking at the way the twigs bifurcate or at the large bifurcations in the trunk. Similarly, blood vessels can be large, or microscopic, but they will look the same. See appendix 4.1 for examples. For this activity show the learners examples of fractals and explain to them what they are and where they are found in nature. Then transition the conversation to talk about emotional fractals: when our interiority influences the world around us. Ask students when their interior world has an effect on the way they interact exteriorly with the world (perhaps a bad mood they have can create a bad mood in those around them). Then introduce the new unit as a unit on integrity. Integrity for this unit means that our inner thoughts and feelings are aligned with the words we say and the actions we do. This is essential to living a spiritual life, because interior thoughts and feelings are just a fractal: there is a continuity between the inner world and the outer world, and if we do not have integrity and try to separate inner and outer, we will not live peaceful, spiritual, or harmonious lives.

## **Emotional Fractals in a Hassidic Story**

Lead the students in a text study of the Rabbi Yitzhak story (see Appendix 4.1B). This is the central Hassidic story of this unit. From this story, the students should come away with the understanding that integrity, according to the Hassidim, is when our thoughts, words, and actions are all in alignment. This is the way that we achieve alignment between our inner world and the way that we interact with the world, and this is the path towards a spiritually fulfilled life. This activity can be done in *chevruta*, in a more frontal way, through drama and interaction, or any other modality deemed appropriate by the instructor.

## Session 4.2 - Approaches to Conflict

### Objectives:

- Students will be able to articulate the ways that internal state can negatively impact situations involving conflict
- Students will be able to define the Covey “Sphere of Influence” and articulate ways that they do and do not incorporate its philosophy in their lives
- Students will be able to list of their emotional triggers or influences that increased conflict that they were in
- Students will create a spiritual tool kit to help themselves become centered so that they can diffuse conflict in the future

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Reimagining Conflict

This lesson carries over the understandings from the last lesson: in order to master our lives, we have to look within and start with ourselves. Furthermore, the alignment of thoughts, words, and actions is essential to finding our integrity. In this lesson, we use these understandings to rethink how we approach conflict. In this first activity, find a clip from a popular movie or television show that portrays conflict. It is essential that the clip come from a show that the learners will know so that they will know the characters. After watching the moment of conflict, ask the learners what internal strife, baggage, or conflict is going on in each of the characters that amplifies or worsens the outward conflict on screen. Have the learners re-imagine the conflict between the two characters as though the characters had eliminated or somehow mastered the inner conflict before speaking with the other individual. Have the learners act out this new scenario. Then have the learners reflect on the difference and on the effect that inner conflict has on worsening conflict with others. Some clips that might work well for this activity include the conflict between Marlon and Nemo in *Finding Nemo* in which Marlon fights with Nemo because he is overprotective of his son because of the baggage he carries from losing his wife and other children at the beginning of the movie. Another clip that could be useful comes from the “Never Been Kissed” episode of *Glee*, in which David Karofski bullies Kurt Hummel for being gay, precisely because of his own self-hatred over his homosexuality.

#### Circle of Influence and Circle of Concern

Stephen Covey in the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* defines a concept called the circle of influence and the circle of concern (see Appendix 4.2).<sup>34</sup> In the

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<sup>34</sup> Covey, S. (1989). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 81-86.

circle of influence are the things that you have control over, whereas the circle of concern is the circle of things you care about but over which you have little control. In the previous lessons in this unit, we introduced the idea of integrity and the concept that living a life of integrity and minimizing conflict in our lives means that we have to begin with the self. This means that we have to realize that we cannot control the way other people react. We only have control over ourselves. Introduce the Circle of Influence concept to the learners and have them brainstorm things in their lives that fit into their Circle of Influence and their Circle of Concern. Then have them think of a time when they were frustrated by trying to exert control over something in their Circle of Concern. Ask them to consider ways they could have approached the problem differently with this concept in mind.

### ***Heshbon Ha-Nefesh* and Conflict**

Have the learners think back to the last time they had a conflict with a person. Preferably this would be a person of significance in their lives: a parent, a sibling, a good friend. Have the students do a *heshbon ha-nefesh* of that conflict. In this *heshbon ha-nefesh*, have the students list all the emotional baggage, insecurities, prior anxieties, or shame that they had going into the conflict that might have increased the conflict or made it more difficult than it had to be. It might be useful for the instructor to demonstrate this before the learners do it so that they know what kinds of things to look for. Have the students re-imagine how the conflict would have been different had those items on the *heshbon ha-nefesh* not been in play, and from that have them list strategies for how they could approach this person in the future.

### **Spiritual Tool Kit for Conflict**

At the end of the lesson, have the learners come up with a tool kit that can help center themselves before conflict so that the conflict might be minimized or averted. Things that might be in this toolkit are pieces of music that center them, breathing techniques, meditative exercises, exercise or running, etc. Have them share their tool kits with each other and describe why the things in their toolkit help them minimize conflict.

## Session 4.3 - Finding Values, Finding the Self

### Objectives:

- Learners will be able to define *middot* and talk about how virtues shape their identity
- Learners will classify and prioritize various values based on their prominence in their lives
- Learners will create a list of values that they use to define their personal integrity

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### #Virtue Activity<sup>35</sup>

To understand what virtue is as the basis of finding the learners' values and integrity, it is important to define it. Divide the learners into groups and hand each group an envelop with cut outs of tweets with the hashtag #virtue in them (See appendix 4.3A). Ask the group to read each tweet, consider how the word virtue is being used and then classify the tweets into categories of their own making and choosing. Ask the groups to come back together and share the categories they came up with. Finally have the learners come up with a definition for virtue based on the conversations they have had.

#### *Middot* Map

Hand them a list of *middot* (see appendix 4.3B). The learners should pick out ones on the list that are of significance to them, and then write them on a sticky note. Then have the learners put the sticky note on the part of their body that they associate with the *middah* (for instance, *chesed* might go to the heart, humility might go to their feet, patience to their hands, etc.). When they have put the stickies all over their body, have them walk around the room in silence so that each person can see what the other students did on themselves. Then have them reconvene and discuss patterns they noticed about where people put their *middot*. Then have them explain why they put the *middot* at the particular part of their body. At the end of the activity, have them pick three of the *middot* that are of the utmost importance to them and explain that these are the *middot* that comprise their personal integrity, meaning that as they go about their lives, these are the *middot* that they seek to align thoughts, speech, and action around.

### Values Worksheet

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<sup>35</sup> Klass, D. *How I Met Your Middot: Jewish Virtues in American Pop Culture*. Unpublished, 26, 28-29.

Alternatively have the learners fill out the values worksheet (see appendix 4.3C). After they are done, have each one share their top five priorities, and then have them journal about what these priorities map onto values or virtues that they discussed in the first part of the lesson. Explain that these priorities are the *middot* that they will use to orient themselves to align thoughts, speech and action.

## Session 4.4 - The Second Meeting

### ***Expressive Outcome:***

- *Learners will:*
  - *engage in a spiritual interview of a congregant chosen by the instructor*
  - *Learners will then reflect on the experience through facilitator led discussion and journaling*

### **Suggested Activities / Assessments:**

#### **Second Meeting**

Before the class, pick a congregant to give a spiritual interview with the learners. This congregant should be someone whose story reflects the themes of this curriculum: personal integrity, finding alignment with values and actions, finding positive ways of reducing or diffusing conflict in life. One suggestion could be a congregant who is in recovery and found their integrity through spiritual practice, but anyone whose story is in alignment with this unit would be a good candidate for the interview. Have the person speak with the learners about his life story, important events that led him on his path, and ways he finds centering or meaning in spiritual practice. Then allow the learners to ask him/her questions. When they are finished with the interview, have the learners journal the experience with these questions or similar ones:

- What is one thing about our guest's story that resonated with you?
- What did you learn from this story that you will carry with you?
- Based on this unit, what does integrity mean to you?
- What values do you prioritize? How do they relate to your personal integrity?

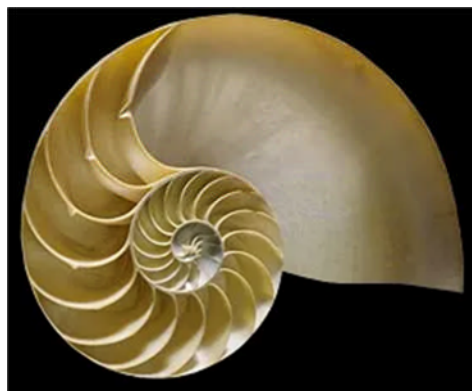


## Appendix 4.1A

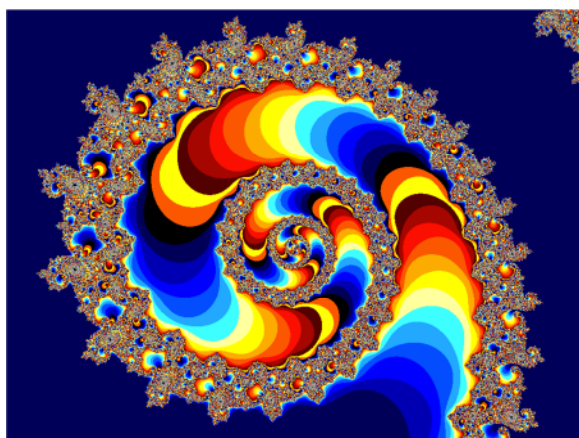
### Fractals



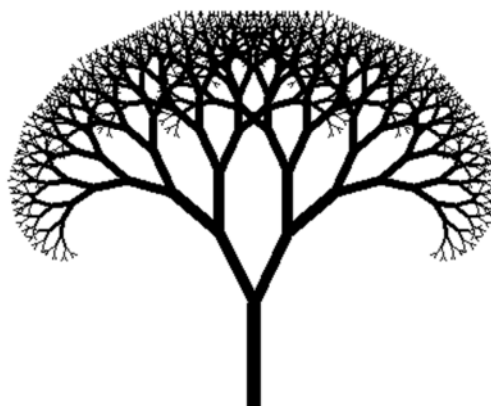
36



37



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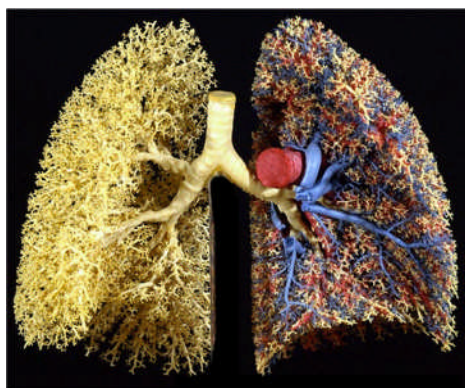
39

<sup>36</sup> Fractal pattern of *Romanesco broccoli*, a variant form of cauliflower.  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cauliflower>

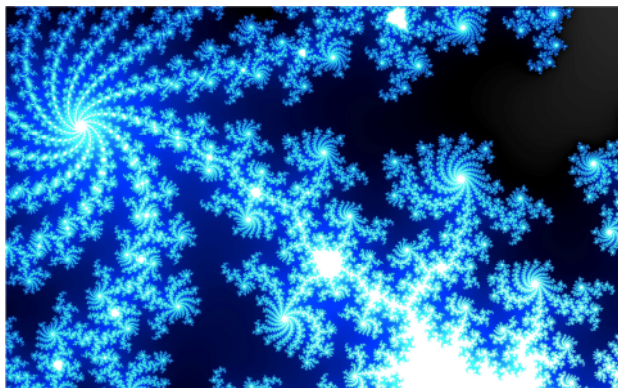
<sup>37</sup> <https://www.quora.com/Why-do-fractals-appear-in-nature>

<sup>38</sup> Phoenix Galactic Ammonite. <http://www.wussu.com/fractals/>

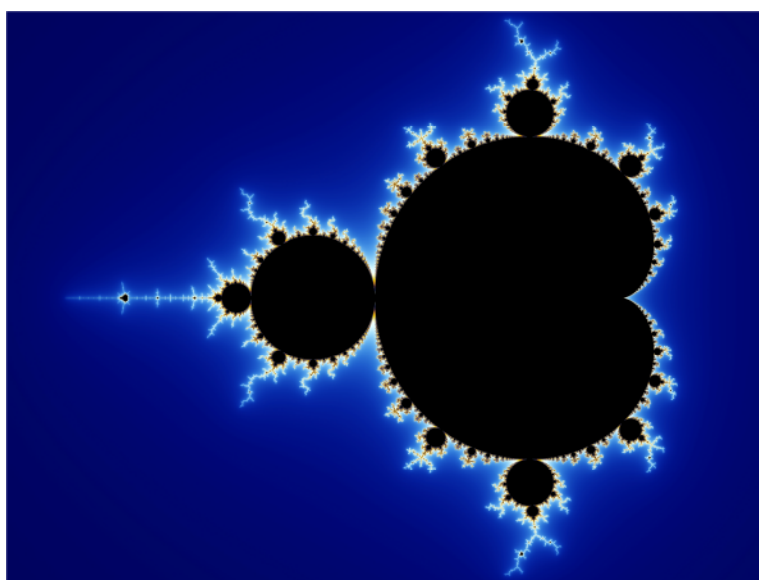
<sup>39</sup> Fractal Tree. [http://www.rosettacode.org/wiki/Fractal\\_tree](http://www.rosettacode.org/wiki/Fractal_tree)



40



41



42

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<sup>40</sup> Lungs. Not only are fractals in the world all around us - they are even inside us! Many of our internal organs and structures display fractal properties.

<http://www.highintelligenceoffice.com/blogs/news/9931446-fractals-in-nature>

<sup>41</sup> Mandelbrot fractal rendered in Paint.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mandelbrot\\_fractal\\_rendered\\_in\\_Paint.NET.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mandelbrot_fractal_rendered_in_Paint.NET.jpg)

<sup>42</sup> Mandelbrot Set. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandelbrot\\_set](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandelbrot_set)

## Appendix 4.1B

Once when Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorki was playing host to certain prominent men of Israel, they discussed the value to a household of an honest and efficient servant. They said that a good servant made for good management and cited Joseph at whose hands everything prospered. Rabbi Yitzchak objected. “I once thought that too,” he said. “But then my teacher showed me that everything depends on the master of the house.”<sup>43</sup> When Rabbi Yitzhak of Vorki was a new husband, his wife complained about him every chance she got. Reb Yitzchak chose to endure her insults in silence. When he saw that she treated the servants in the same manner, he went to his rebbe, Reb David of Lelov, for advice.

The rebbe listened and said, “Why are you asking me? Ask yourself!” Reb Yitzchak was confused by his teacher’s response. He knew his teacher was trying to teach him something, but he was unsure as to what it was. Then he recalled a teaching of the Baal Shem Tov.

“If you suffer from the anguish of servants, it is due to your own error in action. If your spouse curses you it is because you have failed to master your tongue. If your children trouble you, it is due to your obsession with errant thoughts. If you align these three (action, speech, and thought) with godliness—if your thought, word, and deed are holy and hallowing—then all this distress turns to joy.

Suddenly Reb Yitzchak understood what his teacher was saying. If he wanted to improve the situation of others he must begin with himself.<sup>44</sup>

### Discussion

- This story starts with two points of view: that running an effective household requires a good servant or a good master. Which does the story come down on and what is the reason?
- How does each position map onto to how we interact with the world? Are external factors more important, or is it more important to achieve mastery of the self?
- Why does the rabbi tell Rabbi Yitzhak to look within himself if his wife is mistreating the servants? Brainstorm some ideas of how Rabbi Yitzhak’s internal thoughts and feelings might have actually affected his wife to make her behave negatively.
- What is the definition of integrity according to this story? Do you agree with it? What do we have to do to align and master our thoughts, feelings, and actions?

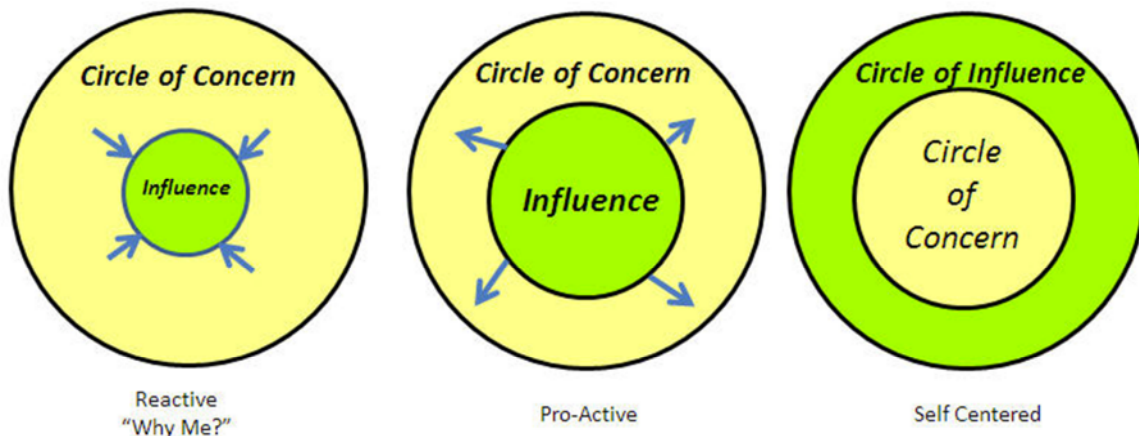
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<sup>43</sup> Buber, M. (1964). *The Way of Man According to Hassidism*. New York: Citadel Press, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Shapiro, R. (2011). *Hassidic Tales: Annotated and Explained*. Woodstock, Vermont, 91.

## Appendix 4.2

### The Circle of Influence and the Circle of Concern



45




46


<sup>45</sup> Circle of Influence vs. Circle of Concern. 2013. <http://franklio.weebly.com/blog/getting-unstuck-your-circle-of-influence>


<sup>46</sup> What's In Your Circle of Control. 2015. [http://www.mindfulness123.com/2015\\_05\\_01\\_archive.html](http://www.mindfulness123.com/2015_05_01_archive.html)


## Appendix 4.3A


### #Virtue<sup>47</sup>



**IMTS 2014** @IMTS\_2014 4 Jun  
 #Patience is a #virtue. 5 great tips for leaders to use the powers of patience. [onforb.es/14beuPY](http://onforb.es/14beuPY)  
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**Susie Bright** @susiebright 19 Apr  
 Why does feminine #virtue rest on high maintenance appearances? #FullExposure - [ow.ly/k5EXQ](http://ow.ly/k5EXQ)  
[View summary](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)


**Dara Feldman** @Heart\_of\_Ed 12 May  
 Happy Mother's Day! Today's #virtue is #love. Retweet if you want to show someone you love them on this special day! [pic.twitter.com/BJRSyzldLR](http://pic.twitter.com/BJRSyzldLR)  
[View photo](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)


**Rob Peters** @StandardofTrust 24 Mar  
 Trustworthiness: The personal state or quality of being trustworthy or reliable. #virtue #socialbusiness [ow.ly/i/1qcru](http://ow.ly/i/1qcru)  
[View photo](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)


**Trusting In God** @Trusting\_In\_God 6 Aug  
 Tonight, offer up a prayer for a loved one who tests your patience. #powerofprayer #virtue  
 Expand [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)


**ウィル** @WiIEtheridge 30 Dec  
 People will always disappoint you, to remain happy you must learn how to forgive, forget and move on  
 #virtue [pic.twitter.com/Aix6astl](http://pic.twitter.com/Aix6astl)  
[View photo](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)


**Life Facts** @sogirlslove 17 Nov 12  
 Integrity: the #virtue of doing #good without being watched.  
 Expand [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)





**Curiosityville** @Curiosityville

25 Nov 12

"A **#thankful** heart is not only the greatest **#virtue**, but the parent of all the other virtues." - Cicero [ow.ly/i/1810X](http://ow.ly/i/1810X)

[View summary](#)

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**George Arden** @GeorgeArden

21 Mar

"That's what virtue is: it's the ability and inclination to act beautifully, to make good choices" **#virtue** [pinterest.com/pin/1669850986...](http://pinterest.com/pin/1669850986...)  
[@pinterest](#)

[Collapse](#)

[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)



**Sean McCauley** @BroMacDoe

19 Oct 12

Yeah people. I did just give up my seat for the pregnant woman on the train. I'm a **#sigep** **#virtue**

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**Generation Change** @Genchangeteam

14 Sep 12

Want to be successful in all areas of life? "Conquer yourself rather than the world." -Descartes **#selfcontrol** **#virtue**

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**The truth is ...** @LibertySeeds

4 Dec

Declaration: We hold this truth to be self-evident - that our unalienable rights include Life, Liberty and the pursuit of wisdom and **#virtue**

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**Grace Mayele** @MsMayele

3 Dec

The quicker you absorb that the easier it is to A) let things go and B) take nothing personally... **#VIRTUE**

[Expand](#)

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**H&H Color Lab** @HHCOLORLAB

21h

Incredible Disintegrating Car Composites that Took Two Months to Create **#patience** **#virtue** [ow.ly/rwzQW](http://ow.ly/rwzQW)

[Expand](#)

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**Vince** @VinnyVinn10

7 Nov

If you're a female and are worried about finding a man to take care of you; you aren't worth being taken care of. [#independence](#) is [#virtue](#)

Expand

[↩ Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#) [⋮ More](#)



**Secret Diary** @SecretDiary

4 Nov

"[#Courage](#) is the greatest virtue; b/cos, unless a man has courage, he has no security for preserving any other [#virtue](#)." - Samuel Johnson.

Expand

[↩ Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#) [⋮ More](#)



**Keep Calm Tweets** @KeepCalmTweets

3 Nov

Few people have  
the [#virtue](#)  
to withstand  
the highest bidder.  
-George Washington

More [#FamousQuotes](#) at [Vuable.com](#)

## Appendix 4.3B

### List of *Middot*<sup>48</sup>

**Humility:** the ability to occupy the proper amount of space, not too much or too little, in life. The arrogant person occupies too much space, whereas the too humble person occupies too little.

**Patience:** the capacity to accept delay, trouble, or the shortcomings of others or oneself.

**Gratitude:** the quality of thankfulness and readiness to show appreciation and return kindnesses rendered unto oneself.

**Compassion:** the ability to empathize, show concern, and act on behalf of others in times of need or suffering.

**Order:** the capacity to keep one's life, engagements, living space, and schedule under control and ordered.

**Equanimity:** the capacity to encounter hardship or change with grace and even-headedness.

**Honor:** the quality of treating others with dignity, respect, and reverence. The honorable person always remembers that every person is created *b'tzelem Elohim*.

**Simplicity:** the quality of being honest, sincere, free of guile, and forthright.

**Enthusiasm:** the capacity to live life with a certain amount of gusto. The enthusiastic person does not procrastinate or act with laziness but puts just enough urgency in the way he lives to get things accomplished.

**Silence:** the capacity to withdraw from others and be alone with oneself. The person who works at this virtue builds self-awareness and inner strength.

**Generosity:** the quality of giving of oneself, whether it be time, resources, money, or emotional support.

**Truth:** living out the virtue of honesty. The truthful person is not deceitful but also does not hurt others unnecessarily with blunt truths, acknowledging that what is true for him is not necessarily true for everyone.

**Moderation:** the quality of avoiding excesses and extremes in behavior.

***Chesed*:** the attribute of grace, kindness, and abundant compassion. The person embodying *chesed* acts with lovingkindness not out of obligation but out of purely benevolent motivations.

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<sup>48</sup> List of middot derived from Morinis, A. (2007). *Everyday Holiness*. Boston: Trumpeter Books.



Responsibility: the quality of fulfilling one's obligations and duty and taking ownership of the things one has control over

Trust: the quality of placing hope and faith in others or God

Faith: the capacity for having confidence in God or another

Awe: the quality of feeling wonder at God, the universe or nature

## Appendix 4.3C Values Worksheet<sup>49</sup>

What do you value most in life? There are 21 values listed below. Place a check mark in the column across from each value that *best* represents you.

Value	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
<b>WISDOM</b> Having mature understanding, insight, good sense, and good judgment			
<b>WEALTH</b> Having many possessions and plenty of money for the things one wants			
<b>TRUSTWORTHINESS</b> Being honest, straightforward, and caring			
<b>SKILL</b> Being able to use knowledge effectively; being good at doing something important for you and others			
<b>RELIGIOUS FAITH</b> Having a religious belief			
<b>RECOGNITION</b> Being important, well-liked, and accepted			
<b>POWER</b> Possession of control, authority, or influence over others			
<b>PLEASURE</b> Satisfaction, gratification, fun, joy			
<b>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE</b> Concern for being attractive, being neat, clean, and well groomed			
<b>MORALITY</b> Believing in and keeping ethical standards, personal honor, and integrity			
<b>LOYALTY</b> Maintaining allegiance to a person, group, or institution			
<b>LOVE</b> Warmth, caring, unselfish devotion			
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> Seeking truth, information, or principles for satisfaction or curiosity			

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<sup>49</sup> Stevens, S. (2/2/2012). *Teen Living Day 13: Mattie's Smile & Values Inventory*. 2/13/16, <http://blog.wsd.net/shstevens/teen-living-day-13-matties-smile-values-inventory/>

<b>JUSTICE</b> Treating others fairly or impartially, conforming to truth, fact, or reason			
<b>JOB</b> One's lifelong work			
<b>HONESTY</b> Being frank and genuine with everyone			
<b>HEALTH</b> Being sound of body			
<b>FAMILY</b> One's present family and future family			
<b>EDUCATION</b> School, college			
<b>CREATIVITY</b> The creation of new ideas and designs, being innovative			
<b>ACHIEVEMENT</b> Accomplishments, results brought about by resolve, persistence, or endeavor			

#### LIST TOP FIVE VALUES IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Unit 5 - Facing Outward: Spirituality and *Tikkun* (unscripted)

### Enduring Understandings

- Hassidic literature demonstrates that the spiritual practices of character refinement and cultivating joy lead to personal fulfillment
- The voice of the Divine calls out *ayeka* “where are you” to everyone, and when a person can listen to that voice and respond to it, he will find purpose and fulfillment
- Spirituality is a paradox. At the same time that it directs us outward beyond ourselves, it also forces us to seek inwardly
- Integrity requires the mastery and alignment of one’s thoughts, speech and actions.

### Essential Questions

- What is my integrity? What does it mean for me to live a life of integrity?
- How can I translate my personal integrity into outward actions?
- What does God want of us?
- What is my response to the Divine call?
- What is my obligation to engage in the work of *tikkun*?

### Goals

- To introduce students to the Lurianic mythology of cosmic catastrophe and *tikkun*
- To continue the themes of personal integrity from Unit 4 and extend the concept of personal values towards outward actions
- To allow the students to engage in *tikkun* through an action day

### Unit Objectives

- Learners will define integrity as a means, and not an end, to greater engagement in the world
- Through text study, experience of an action day, and reflection, learners will assess the connection between spirituality and the Kabbalistic concept of *tikkun*
- Learners will formulate their personal mission statement for engaging with the world and decide on a cause of concern that they will prioritize in their lives
- In reading the selected Hassidic stories of this unit, learners will draw the connection between *tikkun atzmi* and *tikkun olam* and describe ways that this concept applies to themselves

### Authentic Assessments

- Learners will engage in a service activity and then reflect on the spiritual aspects of the experience, and from this experience

formulate a mission statement for how their integrity will lead them to engage in *tikkun* in the world

### **Building Block Assessments**

- *Teshuvah* Worksheet\*\*
- Social Action Mission Statement\*\*

### **Key Terms/Concepts**

- Integrity
- Redeeming the Spark
- *Tikkun*
- *Tikkun Atzmi*
- *Tikkun Olam*
- *Sh'virat HaKelim*
- *Tzim-tzum*
- *Teshuvah*

## Session 5.1 - Begin with the Self... But Don't End with the Self

### Objectives:

- Through study of relevant Hassidic stories, learners will be able to articulate 2-3 limitations of *teshuvah*/self-reflection done for its own sake
- By analyzing the laws of *Teshuvah*, learners will be able define what the repentant person must do and articulate several qualities of spiritually sound and authentic repentance
- Using these qualities of spiritually sound *teshuvah*, learners will create an individualized “*Teshuvah* Action List” that they can use in their lives outside class

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Hassidic Story Hook

Two suggested Hassidic stories (see Appendix 5.1A) form the opening activity and set the tone for the entire unit. Appendix 5.1A provides a suggested question sequence. The mode of presentation of the stories is up to you: it can be a text study, it can be told as a story, it can be presented dramatically. The important piece is that the message the stories convey gets across: self-reflection and repentance are good things, but if one dwells on them too much, that is not good. Self-reflection and repentance must be done for a reason, because the journey inward must lead one outward: towards engagement with the world and towards *tikkun olam*.

#### *Teshuvah* Text Study

This activity is meant to give learners a background to *teshuvah*, its purpose and its meaning. One way of doing this is to allow them to do a text study of *Hilchot Teshuvah* from the *Mishneh Torah*. Chapter 2 has the most relevant material (a good place to find a translation is Chabad.org:

[http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/911891/jewish/Teshuvah-Chapter-Two.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/911891/jewish/Teshuvah-Chapter-Two.htm)). Have the learners study this chapter with the objective of them determining:

1. What the requirements of *teshuvah* are
2. How one knows when it has been completed
3. What the steps are to go about the process of *teshuvah*

When they have completed the text study, frame the activity by harkening back to the understandings garnered from the stories earlier in the lesson: *teshuvah* is not simply done for self-reflection—it requires us to turn that self-reflection into action and engage with the world with the set purpose of repairing it.

#### *Teshuvah* Group

Divide the students into small groups (maybe 5-6 in each, and each group has a facilitator). Explain to the groups the concept of a *chet* (sin). In Judaism, we imagine a *chet*, or sin, as when one plays archery and they miss the target. We do not view people as inherently sinful, just that sometimes they do well and hit the target, and sometimes they miss the target and do wrong. The point of *teshuvah* (repentance) is not to dwell on the sin, but rather to form a plan for making amends and improving one's character. There must always be an external action that comes from the inner rumination.

After explaining, pass out the Bulls Eye/Missed the Mark worksheet (see Appendix 5.1B). Give the learners a good amount of time to fill out the worksheet (15 minutes or so). Encourage them to fill in multiple things on both sides of the sheet. Go around and help them brainstorm for boxes they aren't sure of or need some guidance on.

After the learners have filled out the sheet, each person in the group shares one item on the list (it can be either a time they hit the mark, or missed it), and they go across the whole sheet through each step. The other members of the group are not allowed to comment, though the facilitator can help the presenter with processing, clarifying, giving positive reinforcement, etc.)

## **Mad Lib**

Because of the heaviness of the subject of *teshuvah*, ending the lesson with a mad lib is a good way of lightening the mood. Write a mad lib where the kids can fill in the blanks of a story in which someone makes a mistake by blanking and is doing blank to make it better.

## Session 5.2 - Redeeming the Sparks

### Objectives/Expressive Outcomes:

- Learners will be able to define and describe the meaning of the major events of the Lurianic Kabbalistic mythology: *Ein Sof*, *Tzim-Tzum*, *Sh'virat Ha-Kelim*, and *Tikkun*
- Learners will:
  - react to the experience of a room in chaos in which they are tasked with finding “sparks” to free from “chaos.”
  - After the experience, they will reflect on the experience through discussion and describe concrete ways that “sparks” are released when they do mitzvot
- Learners will be able to articulate the connection between turning their internal self-reflection and character refinement outwards and *tikkun olam*

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Hidden Sparks Activity

Before the learners arrive, take the room that they normally meet in and make it into a chaotic mess. Flip chairs and tables over, spread papers all over the floor, just turn the room into chaos. In the midst of the mess, hide glow sticks (these will be the hidden sparks of Lurianic Kabbalistic mythology). When the learners arrive, inform them that their task when they enter the room is to find as many things that glow as possible, but that in order to look for the glow sticks, they have to organize or help clean up the mess. The student who finds the most “sparks” wins. This activity could also be done as an obstacle course if the teacher prefers.

When the activity is over, reflect on it with these questions:

- What did the room look like when you entered it? What made it hard to find the “sparks”?
- What did you have to do to find the “sparks”?
- In this activity, in order to find the “sparks” you had to enter into the chaos and do some digging in the mess. When thinking about the world, do you ever find “sparks” in the muck of the world? How do you find them and release them from the muck?
- What, then, is this activity a metaphor for?

Conclude the activity by telling the learners that the activity they just did, finding the “sparks” in the chaotic mess is a metaphor for a Kabbalistic teaching that is central to Hassidism. The Hassidim viewed the world as broken, and that the task of the Jew is to work in the brokenness of the world to release the divine



“sparks”—the aspects of Godliness that exist in the imperfections of the world. Our task, then, is to repair the world by encountering the brokenness and seeking out the good within it.

### **Luria Jig Saw**

Divide the learners into three groups. Each group will be tasked with presenting a part of the Lurianic story of creation. They will be given a basic fact sheet about that part of creation (see Appendix 5.2A). From that fact sheet, each group should go through an exercise in Synectics to come up with a metaphor for that part of the creation story.

To lead them through the Synectics activity go through these steps:

1. Have learners come up with a description of their step in the creation story
2. Have students come up with direct analogies for that step of creation (X is like \_\_\_\_\_)
3. Have the groups pick one of the analogies they came up with and have them describe the thing they are comparing the Luria story part with
4. Have the groups sort the descriptions they came up with in step 2 into pairs that have a tension between them (big and small, hard and soft, etc.)
5. Have the groups make an analogy based on the conflict developed in step 4
6. Have the students come up with their final metaphor using all the steps so far (X is like \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_)

Have each group present their step in the Luria story, both with the facts and the metaphor they came up with.

Conclude the activity by helping the learners draw the connection between Lurianic *Tikkun* theology and the lessons from the previous lesson: self-reflection and *teshuvah* are a good start, but they are not ends unto themselves. Our reflection must lead us outwards, so that we can use our unique gifts to redeem the sparks and repair the world. The Lurianic myth is a motivating force, then, for engagement with the world and the Jewish value of making the world a better place.

## Session 5.3 - *Tikkun Atzmi* Leads to *Tikkun Ha'Olam*

### Objectives:

- Through the story of Rabbi Mark Borovitz, learners will be able to articulate the understanding that *tikkun atzmi* (repair of the self/finding one's integrity) enables one to engage in broader *tikkun ha'olam* (repair of the world)
- Learners will psychologize the Jacob story and through this process will apply the lessons gained in the story to key moments in their own lives
- Learners will create an action plan and list of items to work on to engage in *tikkun atzmi*

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### A Portrait of a Holy Thief

In this unit, we have been talking about the connection between inward refinement and the development of personal integrity and the outward concept of *tikkun olam*. In this lesson, we explore further the concept that repair of the self leads to repair of the world through stories. The first person your learners can learn from is Rabbi Mark Borovitz. Rabbi Borovitz was an alcoholic and a con artist who spent time in prison for his criminal behavior. But when he got out, he turned his life around and eventually became a rabbi and founding member of Beit Teshuvah, a Jewish spiritual community that treats people in recovery from addiction. His is a true story of how inner redemption has led this man to the sacred work of *tikkun* by helping save hundreds of souls from the death of addiction.

Show the learners this video about Rabbi Borovitz:

A Portrait of a Holy Thief: The Story of Rabbi Mark Borovitz

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxy\\_SosV7mc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxy_SosV7mc)

Ask some of these reflective questions after viewing:

- What were some of the things that Rabbi Borovitz did in his youth that were dishonest or criminal?
- What were some of the ways that he felt broken in his youth? What was the connection between his brokenness and his criminal behavior?
- What were some of the beliefs he held when he was young that led him to "con himself"?
- Who did his actions hurt? How did they hurt others?
- What was the moment of transformation in him? What do you think inspired it?
- What was the effect of the rabbi telling Rabbi Borovitz that because he was a Jew, he would never cut him loose?
- What gave Rabbi Borovitz hope?
- What is the effect of Rabbi Borovitz's work with Beit Teshuvah on others?

- How did Rabbi Borovitz doing the work of *tikkun atzmi* lead him to *tikkun olam*?

### **Psychologizing the Jacob Story**

The next part of the lesson is meant to help the learners go through a reflective piece in which they can move through the process of *tikkun atzmi* to help them gain insight into how they can do *tikkun olam*. To do this, they will do a text study of the Biblical character Jacob, a deeply flawed individual whose journey is both geographical and intrapersonal. You can find a suggested text study with reflective questions in Appendix 5.3. This activity can be done as a whole class with the students reflecting on the questions with themselves. It can be done in *chevruta* with the students sharing their insights and self-understanding with each other. Whatever modality the teacher deems most effective.

## Session 5.4 - Finding Our Cause

### Objectives:

- Through introspective work, learners will be able to articulate both what issues in the world keep them up at night as well as the unique gifts they possess to deal with the issues of the world
- Learners will analyze the work organizations do based on mission statement, values, and vision and decide an organization to do a group project for
- Learners will create their own mission, vision, and values statements in the model of non-profit organizations to reflect their own *tikkun olam* profile

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### What Keeps You Up at Night?

In the past lessons of this unit, we've been talking about the ways that introspection and working out our own issues can lead us to be more effective agents in doing *tikkun olam*. In this lesson, we will begin to think about what our unique gifts are that we can harness to repair our broken world. This lesson leads into the next lesson in which the learners will team up and perform an action day project that engages them in the work of *tikkun olam*.

This first activity will model for the class a house meeting—a tactic commonly used in community organizing to gather like-minded people and get them to think about the issues that exist in their community and galvanize them to figure out actions they can take on those issues. It is really important to set up a safe space for this meeting so that people will feel comfortable sharing feelings, vulnerabilities, and deeply personal beliefs.

Gather the class in a circle and allow the facilitator to open the conversation by saying that this is a meeting in which the class is going to talk about the issues that keep them up at night. The facilitator begins by sharing something that is very personal to him or her by describing what the issue is and why it personally affects her. The meeting then opens up in which the learners can respond to the facilitator's issue or speak about what brokenness in the world they see. The point of this meeting is not necessarily to come to any conclusions or solve any of these problems (as if that were possible). It is merely meant to get people talking about what they worry about, what motivates them, what keeps them up at night.

At the end of the meeting, the facilitator will thank the learners for their openness, and then he will share observations that he has about themes and commonalities that popped up in the meeting.

## Finding My Cause

In this activity, the learners will accomplish two tasks. The first task for them to complete is for them to figure out a non-profit, mission-based organization that they believe in and want to support. They will accomplish this by reading through a list of organizations and reading their mission, vision, and values statements. They will also research those organizations' websites when they have narrowed down their organization selection to 2-3. They will then select one and present to the class why they chose the organization and what appealed to them about it. For an example of a text sheet of organizations a teacher could present to their learners, see Appendix 5.4.

The second task they will do is to come up with their own personal mission, vision, and values statements for what their engagement with the world (and *tikkun olam* work) looks like. First, the facilitator must define for them mission, vision, and values for the learners:

Mission: a statement of the work that we do. A mission must answer: a. what we do, b. how we do it, c. who we do it for, and d. what value we are bringing.

Values: the guiding principles that we use as we go about fulfilling our mission.

Vision: what change we bring to the world when we have fulfilled our mission.

## Session 5.5 - Action Day: Doing the Work of *Tikkun*

### **Expressive Outcome:**

- *Learners will:*
  - *React to the experience of dividing into teams to do an action day for the cause of their choosing.*
  - *After the experience, they will reflect through blog posts and social media on their spiritual reaction of their Tikkun Day.*

### **Suggested Activities / Assessments:**

#### **Action Day**

The learners will divide into teams of 3-4 based on affinity groups of the personal social justice cause they decided on in lesson 5.4. This lesson will comprise the action day that these groups plan together, and therefore, will be off-site. The action day can be a variety of things. The kids could do a project to raise money for an organization of their choosing. They can get in contact with an organization and do a day of service (a clean up day at a nature reserve, volunteer work at a soup kitchen, etc.) As they do the service project, the task for the kids is to take pictures and make documentation of the day and to post those pictures on a class social media site (Instagram, Twitter, etc.) The final assessment piece of this action day is for them to create a blog post to share with the whole class, which touches on the following questions:

- What did your group do? How did your group choose its organization?
- How did what your group did engage you in the work of *tikkun*?
- How did your action day engage your spiritual life?
- What did you learn about your personal integrity from engaging in *tikkun olam*?
- What kinds of action/engagement with the world do you want to prioritize in your life going forward?

## Appendix 5.1A

### Hassidic Story Hook

In a sermon on the Day of Atonement, the Rabbi of Ger warned against self-torture:

“He who has done ill and talks about it and thinks about it all the time does not cast the base thing he did out of his thoughts, and whatever one thinks, therein one is, one’s soul is wholly and utterly in what one thinks, and so he dwells in baseness. He will certainly not be able to turn, for his spirit will grow coarse and his heart stubborn, and in addition to this he may be overcome by gloom. What would you? Rake the muck this way, rake the muck that way—it will always be muck. Have I sinned, or have I not sinned—what does Heaven get out of it? IN the time I am brooding over it I could be stringing pearls for the delight of Heaven. That is why it is written: “Depart from evil and do good”—turn wholly away from evil, do not dwell upon it, and do good. You have done wrong? Then counteract it by doing right.”<sup>50</sup>

- According to this story, what is wrong with dwelling on sin?
- What does the image of raking muck this way and that mean?
- Does this mean we shouldn’t reflect on sins at all? What is the difference between self-reflection and overly dwelling on sin?
- What are we supposed to do instead of dwell in sin? What does it mean to “string pearls for the delight of Heaven?”

Rabbi Hayyim of Zans had married his son to the daughter of Rabbi Eliezer. The day after the wedding he visited the father of the bride and said: “Now that we are related I feel close to you and can tell you what is eating at my heart. Look! My hair and beard have grown white, and I have not yet atoned!”

“O my friend,” replied Rabbi Eliezer, “you are thinking only of yourself. How about forgetting yourself and thinking of the world?”<sup>51</sup>

- What is disturbing Rabbi Hayyim of Zans? What does he think he needs to do?
- What does Rabbi Eliezer suggest? Why do you think he suggests this?
- What does it mean to think of the world instead of oneself?
- This story does not suggest we abandon the process of atonement, but what does it suggest about the reason for atoning? If it’s not for ourselves, what should the reason for atoning be?

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<sup>50</sup> Buber, M. (1964). *The Way of Man According to Hassidism*. New York: Citadel Press, 33.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 31.

## Appendix 5.1B

### *Cheshbon HaNefesh* Worksheet<sup>52</sup>



#### MISSING THE MARK

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
When and how did I miss the mark?	What made it okay in my mind? (How did I justify it?)	Who was involved?	How were they affected by what you did?	What was learned?	What's the plan? How will you change to not repeat the mistake again?

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<sup>52</sup> Worksheets and activity are based on *Teshuvah* Circles that operate in Beit Teshuvah, a spiritual Jewish community in Los Angeles that treats people in recovery from addiction



**BULLSEYE!****Step 1**

When and  
how did I  
do well?

**Step 2**

What made  
it okay in  
my mind?  
(How did I  
justify it?)

**Step 3**

Who was  
involved?

**Step 4**

How were  
they  
affected by  
what I did?

**Step 5**

What was  
learned?

**Step 6**

What's the  
plan? For  
growing,  
enhancing  
your life,  
changing  
for the  
better, etc.?

## Appendix 5.2

### Luria Jig-Saw

#### 1. Contraction of *Ein Sof*

Prior to creation, there was only the infinite God (*Ein Sof*—that which is without end) filling all existence. There arose in God the desire to create the universe, but there was a problem: because God filled all of existence with God's presence, there was no place to create. In order to enable creation, then, God had to contract Godself and form a space that was empty void in a process called *Tzim-Tzum*. When God contracted, God created this empty space, this void, and there, God was able to create. But there was a tension here, because suddenly there was a space that had no Godliness in it, which is inherently unstable.

#### 2. Breaking of the Vessels

When God began to create, God poured God's light into the empty space that God had created. The light of God is called God's emanation, because it emanated out of the Infinite God into the finite world. God poured God's light into empty vessels that would allow the light to trickle down, like a water fountain, into the physical world. Everything was going all right for a second, but suddenly there was a terrible catastrophe. The vessels that God's light was going into were unable to contain God's light, because the light of God was simply too intense. As a result, the vessels shattered into millions of pieces. The pieces of the vessels fell to the earth, and as a result of the broken shards of glass, there is imperfection and suffering in the world, because its initial perfection was destroyed.

#### 3. Redeeming the Sparks

After the vessels of creation broke, causing a primordial catastrophe and imperfections spreading all across the universe, God tried once again to create the world. This time it worked; however, the broken shards of the shattered vessels from the prior attempt of creation still existed. It is these shards that create imperfection and suffering in the world. However, the light of the Infinite God fell to the earth as the vessels broke. This light, though hidden in the muck of the shards of the vessels, can be redeemed and released back into the world and into God. The way to do this is to do acts of *tikkun olam*, repair of the world, and *mitzvot*, or commandments. When one does a *mitzvah* or helps repair the world, one clears away some of the shards and finds the spark of the divine light. When someone finds the spark of the divine, that spark is released from the imperfect earth back to God. It is the on-going task of humanity to work towards finding sparks of the divine in people and the world, and it redeem those sparks by doing *mitzvot* and actions that make the broken world a better place.

## Appendix 5.3

### Jacob Text Study

When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob...

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" ...

Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright.

Genesis 25:24-34 (All texts come from the NIV Translation)

- Can you relate to the sibling rivalry and family dynamics in this passage?
- How do they play out in your family? How do they make you feel?
- Have you ever taken advantage of someone else in his/her moment of need, the way Jacob takes advantage of Esau? What happened? How did you justify it?
- How do you feel about it now?

When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.”

“Here I am,” he answered.

Isaac said, “I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death. Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.”

Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau... Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, ‘Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.’ Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies”...

So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made.

He went to his father and said, “My father.”

“Yes, my son,” he answered. “Who is it?”

Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing”... Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him...

Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come here, my son, and kiss me.”

So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said,

“Ah, the smell of my son  
is like the smell of a field  
that the LORD has blessed.

May God give you heaven’s dew  
and earth’s richness—  
an abundance of grain and new wine.

May nations serve you  
and peoples bow down to you.

Be lord over your brothers,  
 and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.  
 May those who curse you be cursed  
 and those who bless you be blessed.”

After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father’s presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, “My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?”

“I am your son,” he answered, “your firstborn, Esau.”

Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!”

When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me—me too, my father!”

But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”

Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?”

Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?”

Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau wept aloud...

Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

## Genesis 27

- Our tradition often portrays Jacob in a positive light as one of the founding ancestors of Judaism. Given this text, how would you characterize Jacob?
- Have you ever tricked or deceived to get something you wanted? How did you justify it? How do you feel about it now?
- Have you ever pretended to be someone you aren’t (not just in a literal way, but even in saying or acting in ways that are disingenuous to who you are)? Why did you do it? Was it worth it?
- Thinking about times when you tricked or acted in ways that were disingenuous, would you do things differently? How so?

That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

Jacob said, "Please tell me your name."

But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

#### Genesis 32:22-32

- Who do you think Jacob wrestled with? God? An angel? Esau? Himself?
- What do you wrestle with? Parents? Friends? Your own flaws? God?
- What does that wrestling mean to you?
- In the story, Jacob's identity is transformed through the wrestling. How are we transformed from our wrestling with our flaws or our demons?
- In what ways does our wrestling lead us to *tikkun atzmi* and towards becoming better people?

Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.

#### Genesis 33:1-4

- At this point in the story, Jacob confronts his biggest fear: the one whom he has harmed the most in the past. What are you afraid to face? What makes you afraid of it? Who have you harmed in the past?
- We see here that confronting his fear led to a moment of reconciliation and forgiveness. What grudges are you holding onto? How might you get to a place where you can let them go? Is reconciliation with those who have caused you difficulty a possibility?
- In this story, we see that Jacob's internal struggles led him both to *tikkun atzmi* (through wrestling with the angel and himself) and to *tikkun olam* (through reconciliation with Esau. In what ways can your work on yourself lead you towards repair of the world?

## Appendix 5.4

### Non-Profit Organizations Mission, Vision, and Values Statements

#### **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger**

Founded by Leonard Fein (z"l) in 1985, on the heels of the famine in Ethiopia. Mr. Fein created MAZON to be a bridge between the relative abundance of the American Jewish community and the desperate need felt by millions of hungry people around the world.

MAZON began soliciting donations by encouraging American Jews to donate a portion of the cost of life-cycle celebrations (weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs, anniversaries, and other joyous occasions), a modern interpretation of the ancient rabbinical tradition of not allowing a celebration to begin until the community's poor and hungry were seated and fed. Rabbis at synagogues all across the country responded to our call to action and encouraged their congregants to support MAZON.

Today, MAZON is blessed to have an extended family of nearly 1,000 synagogues and tens of thousands of individual donors, all of whom share our commitment to ending hunger once and for all.<sup>53</sup>

#### **COEJL**

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) deepens the Jewish community's commitment to the stewardship of creation and mobilizes the resources of Jewish life and learning to protect the Earth and all its inhabitants. To advance our mission, COEJL:

- partners with the full spectrum of national Jewish organizations to integrate Jewish values of environmental stewardship into Jewish life;
- works with synagogues and other local Jewish organizations to bring Jewish environmental education, ecologically-conscious Jewish observance, and opportunities for environmental action to Jewish families and individuals;
- supports rabbis, educators, and Jewish scholars to develop and distribute materials that express diverse Jewish perspectives on environmental issues;
- brings a Jewish vision and voice to issues of environmental justice and sustainability, and advocates on behalf of the Jewish community;
- activates Jewish institutions, local COEJL programs, and individuals (both affiliated with organized Judaism and unaffiliated) in support of environmental protection efforts; and,
- participates in inter-religious and civic coalitions to protect the environment, public health, and our common future.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> <http://mazon.org/history/>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.coejl.org/aboutus/>



## **Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles**

The Mission of Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles (JBBBSLA) is to assist children and young adults in achieving their full potential through innovative, impactful programs that facilitate lasting mentoring relationships and support positive development. JBBBSLA runs community-based mentoring programs, offers college scholarships, and owns and operates Camp Bob Waldorf on the Max Straus Campus, a 112-acre residential camp and retreat center in the Verdugo Hills of Glendale.<sup>55</sup>

## **The Jewish Free Loan Association of Los Angeles**

The Jewish Free Loan Association of Los Angeles offers interest-free loans on a non-sectarian basis to individuals and families whose needs are urgent and who may not qualify through normal financial resources. Interest-free loans instead of charity fill an important gap in our social system by promoting self-sufficiency with dignity.

JFLA affirms the ancient biblical requirement for interest-free lending by offering assistance to people in need with the goal of helping them to lead more rewarding and responsible lives.<sup>56</sup>

## **American Jewish World Service**

We combine the power of our grants to human rights advocates in developing countries with our efforts to persuade the United States government to adopt laws and policies that benefit people in the developing world.

Through our grants, AJWS provides financial support to more than 500 local advocacy organizations in 19 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean that are working to end poverty and advance the rights of some of the poorest and most oppressed people in the world. Unlike most funders, AJWS recognizes the central role of local people in solving the problems they experience. We trust local advocates to develop and carry out their own solutions to build more just societies.

In the United States, AJWS mobilizes its supporters to persuade the United States Congress and the President of the United States to adopt policies and laws that improve the lives of people in the developing world.<sup>57</sup>

## **American Cancer Society**

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<sup>55</sup> <https://jbbbsla.org/mission/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.jfla.org/about-jfla/our-mission/>

<sup>57</sup> <https://ajws.org/who-we-are/our-story/>

For over 100 years, the American Cancer Society (ACS) has worked relentlessly to save lives and create a world with less cancer. Together with millions of our supporters worldwide, we help people stay well and get well, find cures, and fight back against cancer.<sup>58</sup>

### **Doctors Without Borders**

We help people worldwide where the need is greatest, delivering emergency medical aid to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters, or exclusion from health care.<sup>59</sup>

### **The Sierra Club**

Founded by legendary conservationist John Muir in 1892, the Sierra Club is now the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization -- with more than two million members and supporters. Our successes range from protecting millions of acres of wilderness to helping pass the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act. More recently, we've made history by leading the charge to move away from the dirty fossil fuels that cause climate disruption and toward a clean energy economy.<sup>60</sup>

### **The Human Rights Campaign**

The Human Rights Campaign represents a force of more than 1.5 million members and supporters nationwide. As the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, HRC envisions an America where LGBT people are ensured of their basic equal rights, and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Wounded Warrior Project**

Mission

To honor and empower wounded warriors

Vision

To foster the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded service members in our nation's history.

Purpose

- To raise awareness and enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members.
- To help injured service members aid and assist each other.

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.cancer.org/aboutus/index>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/about-us/?ref=nav-footer>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.sierraclub.org/about>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.hrc.org/hrc-story/about-us>

- To provide unique, direct programs and services to meet the needs of injured service members.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Israeli Movement for Progressive Judaism**

The Israel Movement for Reform & Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) is the umbrella organization of all the Reform communities and institutions in Israel. □ We seek to integrate Jewish tradition with the realities of modern life, and believe in the right of each individual to shape their own Jewish way of life through a process of study and reflection. The Reform movement emphasizes the commandments concerning relations between humans, religious tolerance, and full equality between women and men in the synagogue and in all walks of life.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs.aspx>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.reform.org.il/eng/>

## Unit 6 - Heart Searching: Responding to the Divine Call

(unscripted)

### Enduring Understandings

- Hassidic literature demonstrates that the spiritual practices of character refinement and cultivating joy lead to personal fulfillment.
- Integrity requires the mastery and alignment of one's thoughts, speech and actions.
- The voice of the Divine calls out *ayeka* "where are you" to everyone, and when a person can listen to that voice and respond to it, he will find purpose and fulfillment.
- Hassidic spiritual practice is not just an insular, individual endeavor because it leads to connection, social action, and *tikkun olam*.

### Essential Questions

- What does the divine want of us?
- What is my response to the divine call?
- What is my vision for my life? How can I go about fulfilling that vision?

### Goals

- The *Ayeka* story will be reintroduced to the learners, but this time with the intention of getting the learners to use the divine call as an entry way to creating a life vision and mission statement
- To create a safe and supportive classroom environment so that the learners can appreciate and critique each others' work
- To prepare the learners for their culminating authentic assessment

### Unit Objectives

- Learners will interpret the *midrash* story of "ayeka" as a universal motivating call from the divine
- Learners will consider ways that they can invite that divine call into their hearts
- Learners will create a vision for their lives, considering their personal integrity, their personal mission, and the way they want to relate to others

### Authentic Assessments

- Learners will write, edit, and present their *divrei nefesh* to their classroom community and, if they choose, to the congregation at large at an end of the year culminating Shabbat service.

### Building Block Assessments

- Three Paths of *Ayeka* Free-Write

**Key Terms/Concepts**

- *Ayeka*
- Feedback

## Session 6.1 - *Ayeka*? Where Are You Going?

### Objectives:

- Learners will be able to list the three ways that Arthur Green says that the *Ayeka* message manifests itself
- Learners will create 3-5 personal goals for themselves that embody the three paths of *Ayeka*: stretching the mind, stretching the heart, and stretching the hand and foot
- Learners will be able to use this self-reflection, as well as the other benchmark assessments to begin constructing their *Divrei Nefesh*

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### Portfolios

Start this final unit by handing back to the learners the spiritual maps they made in session 2.4, as well as the letters they wrote to themselves in session 1.2. Ask them to consider the following questions:

- How were your expectations met or not met over the course of this year?
- What does it feel like to look at your work now, at the end of the year?
- Most importantly: how do you want your spiritual journey to continue beyond this class?

When they have had time to process revisiting these artifacts that they created, invite them to come back together as a group and share their feelings.

#### The Three Paths of *Ayeka*

The first thing to do is to review the content from session 2.1 about *Ayeka*. Remember that the concept comes from Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve hide in the bushes and God asks them where they are. In lesson 2.2, we discussed the way that this question of “where are you” can be a reminder to ourselves to make sure that we hold onto our identities, even when we feel lost.

In this lesson, the message of *Ayeka* is now projected into the future. The question is not just “Where are you?” but also “Where are you going?” How are you going to contribute to the unfolding of God’s creation in a way that amplifies that creation, instead of just acting like a by-stander in life?

Pass out Appendix 6.1, which is a selection from Art Green’s book *Radical Judaism*, which frames very well the questions that we should be asking as we think of *Ayeka* in terms of how we can contribute to the world. Read this selection very slowly with your learners, making sure they fully understand every piece of it. In the reading, Green points out three ways that we can think of this

question of *Ayeka*: how are you going to grow intellectually, how are you going to expand your heart, and how are you going to engage with the world and be a part of fixing it?

When you have finished reading the selection, tell the learners that over the course of this year, we have been talking about ways that they can be engaged spiritually with themselves and the world. We've talked about ways of developing self-authenticity, partaking in a practice of joy, finding our integrity, and doing the work of *tikkun*. The final task of this curriculum is to take all these tools that we've learned about and to form a vision of what the learner's life will look like in college and after college.

To that end, have the learners do a free write in which they answer the questions that Green raises:

- How will I do the work of expanding my mind?
- How will I do the work of expanding my heart?
- How will I do the work of repairing the world?

When the learners have finished their free-write, ask the class to come up with goals they have for themselves going forward. Write those goals on the board under the categories of mind, heart, and hands. Finally, when all the goals have been collected on the board, ask one final question: how can we help each other in the coming years to achieve these goals. The point of this is to get the learners not only to think of how they want to interact with the world in the future, but also how they can be part of the classroom community and help keep each other accountable.

### **Next Steps**

Tell the learners that for the next lesson, they will have to bring in a rough draft of their *Davar Nefesh*. Give them a copy of the rubric for their work (Appendix 1.3A) and any examples of past work that might be helpful. In order for them to complete this assignment, give the students their portfolio of all the work you have been collecting for them over the course of the year. Tell them that as they think about a vision for their lives, that it will be helpful for them to look at what they have done over the year and that they are encouraged to use pieces from their benchmark assessments in completing the *Davar Nefesh*.

## Session 6.2 - Workshopping *Divrei Nefesh*

### Objectives:

- Learners will work in *chevruta*, with the instructor, and with community members to edit and refine drafts of their *Divrei Nefesh*
- Learners will be able to give constructive feedback to each other

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

#### How to Give Feedback

The ability to give useful feedback is a very important skill for the learners to garner. They have to learn to walk the tight rope between giving too much praise, which does not help the person being critiqued grow, and being too harsh, which will cause the other person to become defensive.

In order to teach the process of giving feedback, model it by using the three-statement protocol:

I appreciate...

I notice...

I wonder...

In this paradigm, “I appreciate” is a mode for the person giving feedback to offer praise. “I notice” is a tool for the learner to offer feedback, by showing the author how his work was perceived by someone else. The “I wonder” statement can be a guidance statement by which the person can offer a suggestion for the other to consider.

Introduce this feedback model to the learners, demonstrate it for them, and then have them practice.

#### Workshop

Make sure that the learners bring in a rough draft of the *Davar Nefesh* that they are working on for the end of the course. Divide the class into *chevruta*, and have each person present his work to his partner. Make sure to pass out a copy of the *Davar Nefesh* Rubric (see Appendix 1.4A). The partner should then give feedback on the work, using the feedback paradigm from the previous activity. Criteria for feedback should be:

- Clarity—is the writing clear and the message coherent to the listener?
- Content—is the connection to the Hassidic and spiritual material in the course apparent?
- Vision—does the learner articulate a values-based vision for what their college and post-college life looks like?



- Reception—how did the work make the listener feel? Feel curious about?

In addition to the peer feedback that the learners receive, they should also have a conference with an adult about their work. These adults can be the teacher or facilitator, member of the clergy, or, ideally, the community members who came to speak to the class earlier in the course. Optimally, the teacher can invite college counselors, or other adults who read a lot of college essays from the community to come in to give feedback to the students. Before the adult comes into the classroom community, make sure to give him/her a detailed description of the *Davar Nefesh* assignment as well as a general overview of the work the students have done in this curriculum as a whole. Make sure that the adults have a copy of the rubric for the *Davar Nefesh* and have had any questions they might have answered. When the adults come in, introduce them to the students and break the students up into groups with 2-3 kids in a group with an adult. Have the students each present their work to the adult orally. The adult should then give the students feedback on general patterns of what they observed from the experience of hearing the *Divrei Nefesh*. The adult should then give each student individualized feedback in the group. Ask the students questions about their work, suggest areas that they might delve deeper, and ask clarifying questions of anything that is unclear. Also help the learners with their presentation style with tips on enunciation, articulation, and dynamics. When the feedback session is complete, have each student echo back to their adult one or two things he/she will work on for the final draft.

After this class is over, the students will revise their work for final presentation at the next class session.

## Session 6.3 - SAT Certified: Culmination for the Spiritually Attuned Teen

### Objectives:

- Learners will present their *Davar Nefesh* to their classmates
- Learners will participate in a meaningful closing ceremony for the course

### Suggested Activities / Assessments:

**\*\*A Note on Implementing this Lesson:** As this lesson is really a culminating ceremony in which the students share their work and go through an initiation ritual, you may consider inviting the students' families to attend the lesson and witness these important moments.

### Student Presentations

Each member of the classroom community should share their *Davar Nefesh* with the class. In order to create an atmosphere of support and safety, have the students share appreciations with the presenter after s/he has read his work. When the presentations are complete, have the students decide if they would like to present their work to the community at an end of the year Shabbat service honoring graduating seniors.

### Culmination Ceremony

The most important thing to do in the final session with your learners is a rite of passage ceremony. This is essential to highlight the liminal place that your learners are in their lives and to drive home the transitions that they are about to go through. While the exact details of this ceremony are up to the facilitator to decide, here are some pointers.

- To highlight the significance of the moment, it could be meaningful to do this in your temple's sanctuary and passing the Torah to each kid to carry can be a symbolic gesture of their upcoming transition
- The theme of the rite of passage ceremony should center on the fact that these kids are graduating from high school. Many will go to college, but all are going through changes in their lives. Up until graduation, your learners have had much of their paths chosen for them—what they study, where they live, what they do. Now that they are graduating, they are becoming the masters of their destinies. Impress on your learners the sacredness of this transition, and also impress on them that as they are becoming the masters of their lives, it is up to them to make them sacred, spiritual and holy through their choices. You could cite the passages from Deuteronomy 30 about how God places life and death, blessing and curse in front of everyone, and that it is up to us to always choose life.

- Touch on the themes of the curriculum—knowing where we are, cultivating a practice of joy, holding onto our integrity, and reaching out—as ways that they can be empowered to choose life and live a life of the spirit.

### **After the Year Ends**

Be sure the get a copy of the final *Davar Nefesh* from every student who completes this course. After a considerable amount of time, perhaps after the students' first year of college, or maybe even right before they graduate from college, mail the students a copy of the *Davar Nefesh* you saved them, and invite them to get in contact with you to discuss where they are on their journey and how they feel the process of striving towards their vision for themselves is going.

## Appendix 6.1

### The Three Paths of *Ayeka*

Because we humans represent a new and important step in [the journey of the evolution of the universe], the One manifest within us calls out to us in a particular human way. It addresses each of us with something more than the cry “Survive!” that is its instinct-borne call to every creature. We children of Adam... are addressed with the word the God of Genesis used to call out to the first human: ‘*Ayeka?*’ – ‘Where are you?’ The indwelling One asks this of every person, of every human embodiment of its own single Self. This question means “Where are you in helping Me to carry this project forward?” Are you extending My work of self-manifestation, participating as you should in the ongoing evolutionary process, the external reaching toward knowing and fulfilling the One that is all life’s goal? That is why you are here, tumbling and stumbling forward from one generation to the next. ***What are you doing about it?***

“Where are you?” calls out to us in three distinctly human dimensions. The first of these is mental or intellectual: “**Are you stretching your mind to move forward**, to carry on the evolutionary process in the realm of understanding, as we think in ever more sophisticated and refined ways about the nature of existence and unity?”... The imperative to stretch the mind includes scientific thought, the ongoing attempt to understand and unpack the mysteries of our universe. But it also embraces the humanities and the arts, the expanding of human consciousness in more subtle ways... “Where are you?” Are you stretching your mind to its fullest to know the One?

The second way in which this “Where are you?” calls out to us involves a **stretching of the human heart to become more open, more aware...** [Our] job is not only an intellectual one; it involves the heart as well as the mind. God is everywhere, but we build walls around ourselves, emotional walls, barricades of defensiveness, because we are too threatened by the oneness of Being to let ourselves be open to it. “Where are you?” demands of us a greater openness to our own vulnerability and dependence on forces beyond ourselves that our frail ego is willing to accept... The spiritual work that each of us has to do consists primarily of letting go, allowing [God’s] presence to enter our consciousness and transform us. In the course of this process we enable ourselves to become *givers* or [fountains] of blessing in the grand economy of existence, rather than *consumers* who simply take all for ourselves without giving back to life. “Where are you?” Are you stretching your heart to open as widely as it can?

The third area in which “Where are you?” calls upon us is that of the human deed. It is not enough to reach forth with mind and heart; these alone will not transform the world. *Every* human being is the image of God. Every creature and every life form is a garbing of divine presence. The way in which we treat them and relate to them is the ultimate testing ground of our own religious consciousness... A person cannot be expected to discover the image of God within himself as long as he or she is hungry, or as long as he or she is homeless or degraded by poverty, addictions, or the

seemingly overwhelming burdens of everyday life. **Our task has to be to lessen and lighten those burdens as ways of helping all to see the radiant presence that surrounds us and fills us in each moment.**

[Thus we see] the first teaching [of *Pirke Avot*] is stated: “The world stands upon three things: on Torah (teaching, wisdom, the cultivation of awareness), on Worship (the struggle to open the heart), and on Deeds of Kindness (the active transformation of the world; the bringing about of ‘God’s kingdom’).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Green, A. (2010). *Radical Judaism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 27-30.

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## Annotated Bibliography

**Buber, M. (1991). *Tales of Hasidim*. New York, Schocken Books.**

This book is an encyclopedic compilation of Hassidic stories and is the source material for stories found throughout the curriculum guide. Buber provides a thorough introduction both to the theology and mode of Hassidic story telling as well as the lives and orientations of each of the Hassidic masters. The stories are organized by their author, with the story titles indicating major content within them. Because the book is so voluminous, it is not an ideal source for locating a specific story, but it can be a useful source to simply read and go fishing for stories.

**Buber, M. (1964). *The Way of Man According to Hassidism*. New York: Citadel Press.**

This very slender volume takes a small number of the most well known Hassidic tales and engages in a theological exploration of the Hassidic way through them. While its stories provide content throughout the curriculum guide, the structure that Buber uses in this book closely mirrors the thematic categories of the curriculum guide. This source is both accessible and short enough to be useful, and it is highly recommended to those who would like further explanation of many of the stories in the curriculum guide.

**Covey, S. (1989). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon and Schuster.**

This book contains the four-quadrant time management chart in session 2.3 as well as the sphere of influence concept in session 4.2. Though not a book on Hassidism or spirituality, Covey's leadership model is a compelling one that undergirds much of the introspection and self-awareness in this curriculum. Covey's hypothesis, that principled leadership is more effective than personality leadership, resonates with this curriculum in its emphasis on doing the deep internal work as a precursor to public victories. This resource is recommended for those looking for very practical ways that the work of introspection can pay dividends in people's lives and real-world skills that can supplement the spiritual content of the curriculum.

**Green, A. (2010). *Radical Judaism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.**

This book is the source material for the theological discourse on *Ayeka* found in session 6.1. While this book does not focus on Hassidut, it is a particularly compelling statement of theology of a contemporary Jewish thinker with a mystical, Kabbalistic orientation. Green's theology is both poetic and accessible, as someone who loves science and desires to incorporate the vocabulary and



perspective of science into theology. This book is recommended for those who would like to see how a modern, cogent, and mystical theology looks.

**Kessler, R. (2000) *The Soul of Education*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.**

This source provided the framework for the activities in sessions 1.1 and 2. Kessler's book is a tour-de-force for activities, modalities, and philosophy behind spiritual and social-emotional learning. In this book, Kessler makes the case for the necessity for teachers to honor students' voices and give them the outlets they need to explore the deep questions of life. The book is organized by mode of spiritual engagement, whether it be deep connection, creativity, stillness, etc. This source is recommended for the teacher looking for different kinds of activities or ways of teaching to the spirit.