

# Israel through Children's Eyes

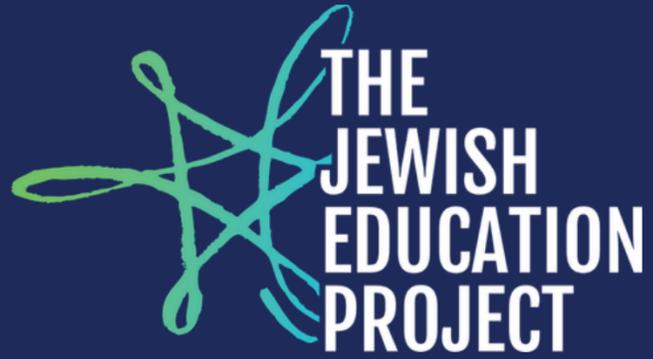
March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Congregation Rodeph Sholom



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**Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 486**

No whit less important than reckoning with the perpetuation of Jewish life and culture is it to reckon with the well-being and growth of the individual child.

The Jewish educative process must **start with the actual experiences of the child as he lives them in the present** and lead him constantly so to reorganize and reinterpret his experience that he comes to identify his own good with the good of society.

To achieve this end, the child must be given increasing control over his own experience so that he will himself be able to shape and direct it toward aims freely and intelligently chosen.

# EVENT SCHEDULE

9:00	Light Breakfast & Registration	Lobby
9:15	Israel Education Discovery Lab	Eisner
10:00	Developmental Frameworks in Theory and Practice	Auditorium
12:00	Lunch	Auditorium
12:45	Ages & Stages Deep Dive	Breakouts
2:15	Your Next Steps	Event Space
3:00	Goodbye!	

# Table Discussion



Introduce yourself!

Share one object or image from the discovery lab that stuck with you.

What about it stood out?

What thoughts or feelings did it bring up for you?



# Addressing Current Events

Share your students' solidarity letters with children in Israel



Resources for talking with children about war



# 3 Big Ideas

on designing impactful Israel education  
across developmental stages



#1

# Tune in to Curiosity

# How Children Learn



# Two Truths (and no lies)

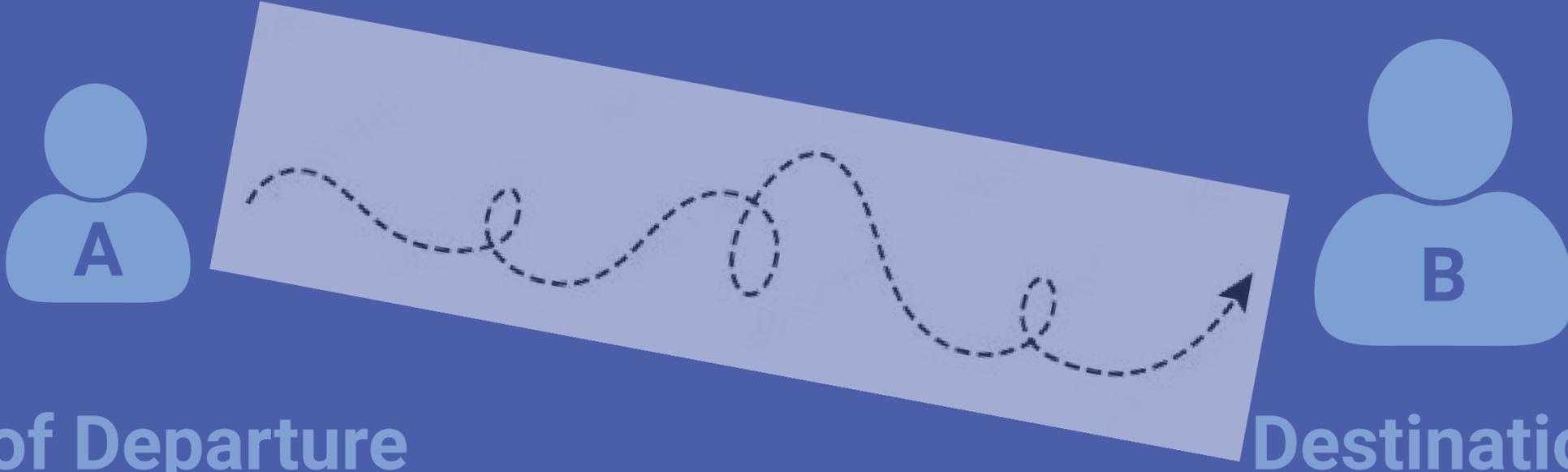
Every child  
is unique

Children develop along  
a shared trajectory



**Who our learners  
are today**

**Who our learners  
will be one day**



**Point of Departure**

**Destination**

# Tools for Tuning in to Curiosity

## **K.W.L.**

What do you **know** [about X]? What do you **wonder**? ...  
What have you **learned**?

## **VTS = Visual Thinking Strategies**

What do you notice? What makes you say that?  
What else do you notice?



Think–Pair–Share:

Choose an Israel learning experience that you are planning.

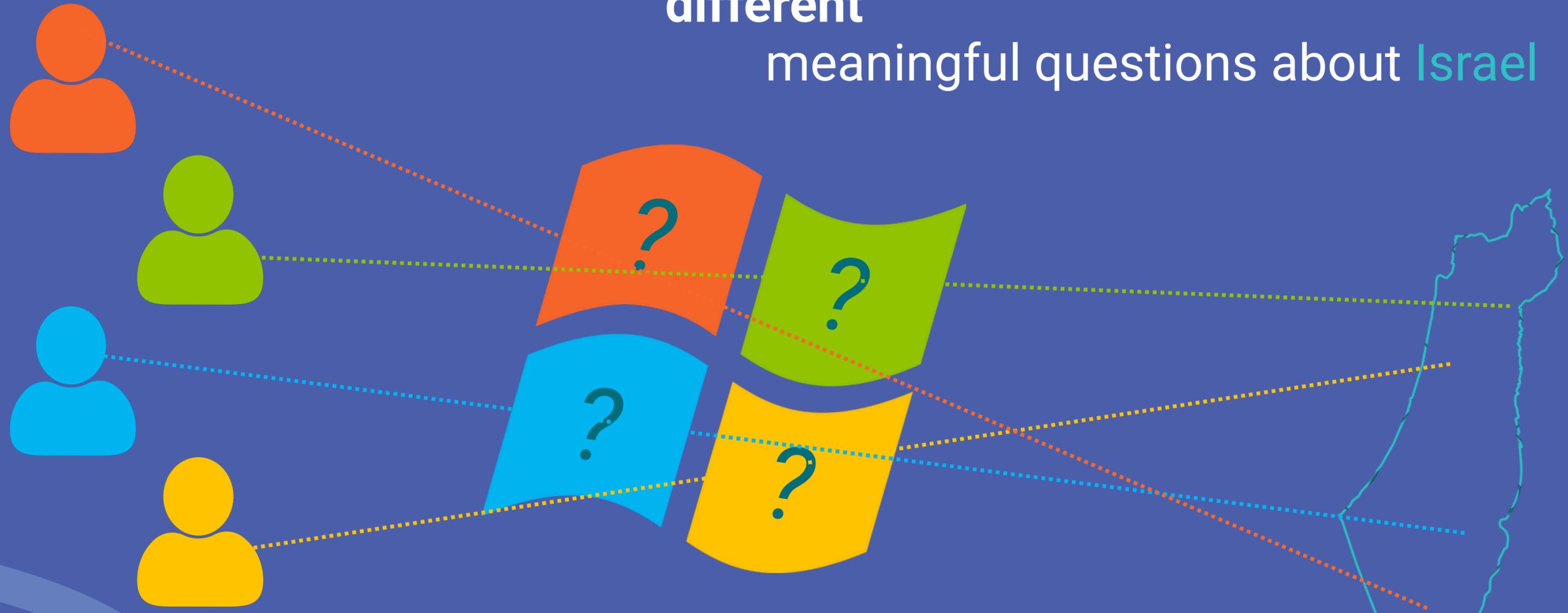
How might you prepare for this learning experience with **curiosity about your learners' point of departure?**



#2

**Pivot!**  
**Pivot!**

At each stage, learners wrestle with  
**different**  
meaningful questions about **Israel**



# Four Pivots:

The **P**lace Pivot

The **I**nformation Pivot

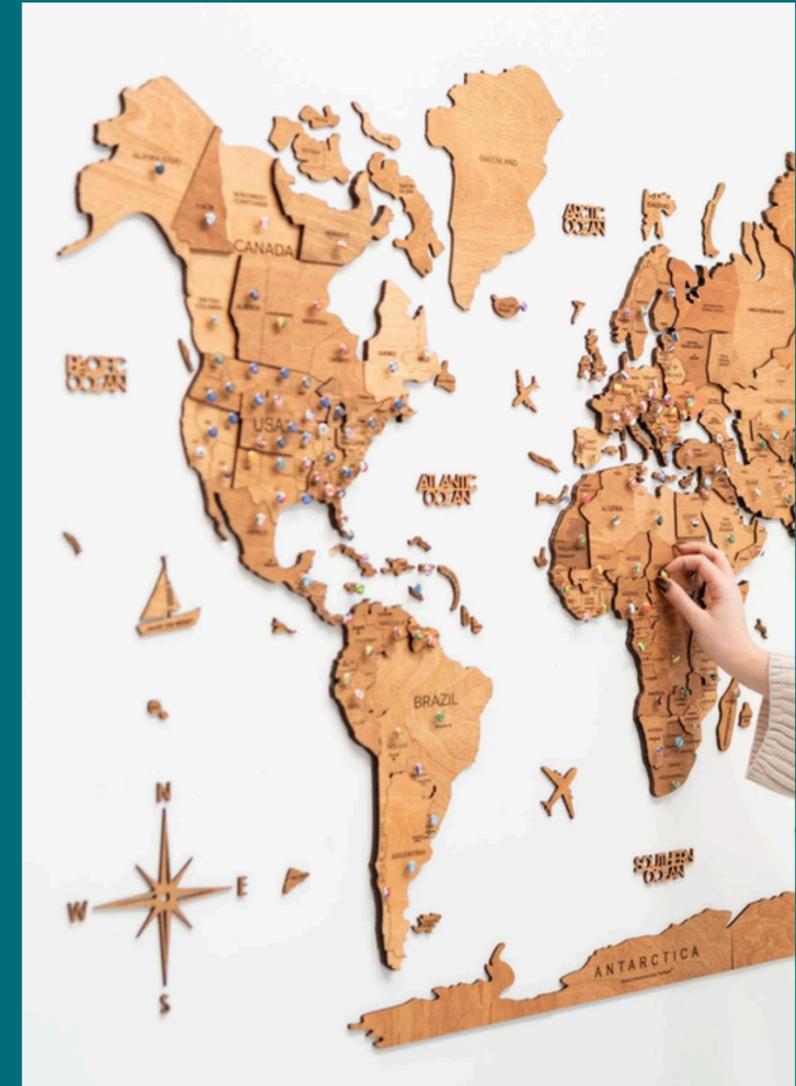
The **P**olitics Pivot

The **S**ocial Pivot

# The **P**lace Pivot:

around age 4

from places  
to countries



# The **I**nformation

## Pivot:

2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> grade

from learning to read  
to reading to learn



# The **P**olitics

# Pivot:

around 4<sup>th</sup> grade

from civic awareness  
to political awareness



Politics in  
about  
surrounding Israel

# The **S**ocial Pivot:

around 8<sup>th</sup> grade

from personal politics  
to interpersonal politics





For which ages might it be appropriate to introduce these materials? **Why?**



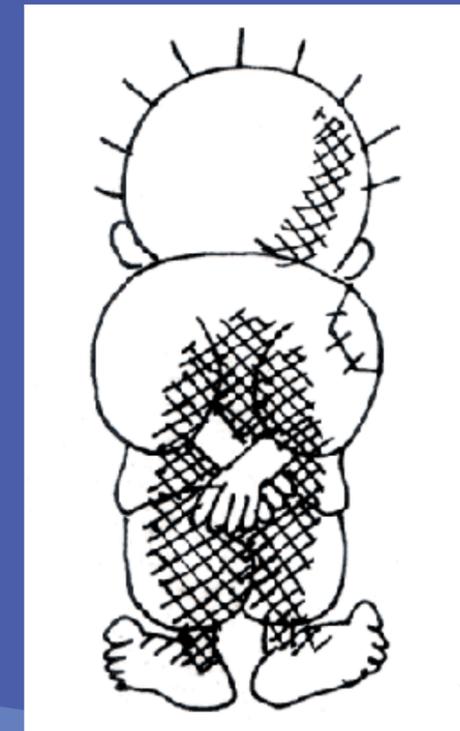
Map of Israel

Israeli Children on Tiyul



A Tale of Five Ballons

Handala





For which ages might it be appropriate to introduce these materials? **Why?**



Map of Israel

4th / 5th grade



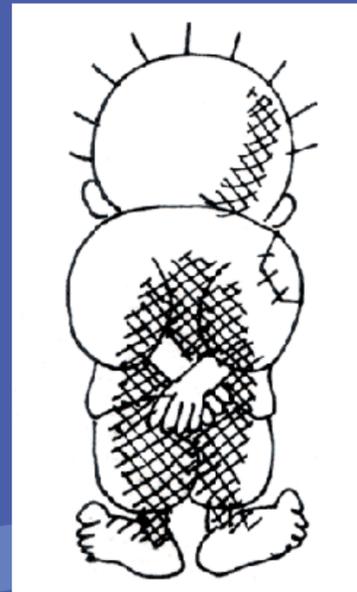
Israeli Children on Tiyul

Early childhood



A Tale of Five Balloons

1st / 2nd grade



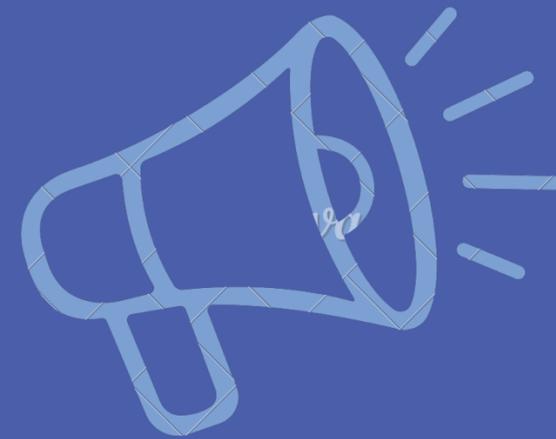
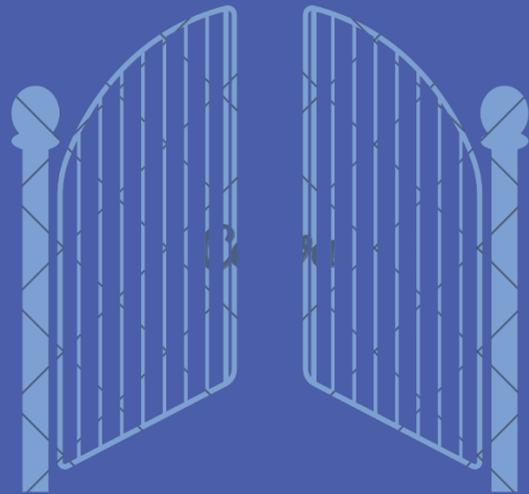
Handala

8th / 9th grade



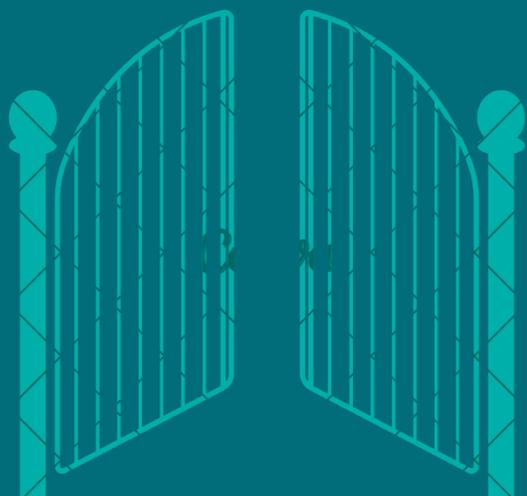
# #3 Cultivate Learner Agency

At every age, learners need **agency** over their own learning.



# Gateway Agency

from their earliest learning experiences



Learners choose...  
which media and materials to explore

# Brightness Agency

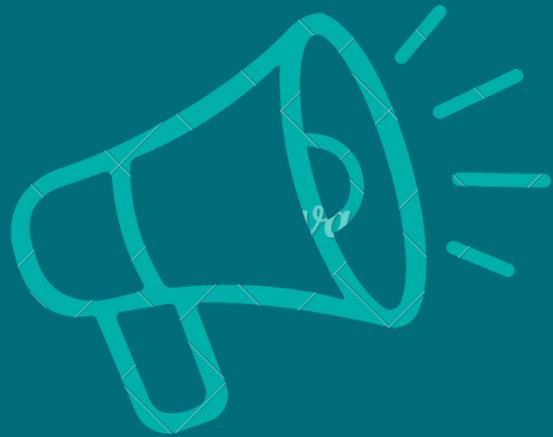
from around 3<sup>rd</sup> grade



Learners choose...  
when to engage in “darker” conversations

# Ideological Agency

from around 7<sup>th</sup> grade



Learners choose...  
whether and how to live out political beliefs

# The Ideological Concrete





## Think–Pair–Share:

Choose an Israel learning experience that you plan to deliver soon.

How might you build in an appropriate (but ambitious) level of **learner agency** into this learning experience?

# 3 Big Ideas

1. Lean in to Curiosity
2. Pivot! Pivot!
3. Cultivate Learner Agency



# Q & A

*What questions do you have?*



# Discuss



If we were to take these three big ideas seriously, what might look different about the way your school/program teaches Israel?

# Journal



What is one thing so far today you have  
learned | unlearned | relearned?

What are two questions  
you are sitting with?

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Congregation Rodeph Sholom

# Your Next Steps



## Think–Pair–Share:

As a result of our learning today,  
what is **one small but meaningful shift** you want to make in your  
Israel education practice?

Learning unit

Provocation

Question

Resource structure

Listening change

Pacing shift

...or anything else!

VERY short  
feedback survey



Scan me!

Thank you!



Thank you for learning with us!  
Join us again soon!

**Youth Centered Mental Wellness  
for Today's Jewish World**  
March 15-16, Manhattan

**Yamim 2026: Visions and Values**  
March 19, Westchester  
March 20, Long Island



**YAMIM 2026:  
VISIONS & VALUES**

TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR  
YOM HAZIKARON AND YOM HAATZMAUT

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