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# Jewish Immigrant Populations in Israel:

A View into the History, Culture, and Jewish  
Practices of Ethiopian, Former Soviet Union, and  
North American Communities

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The curriculum guide begins with an interactive introduction to Israeli history, the waves of immigrations, and the three communities that will become the focus for the summer. The campers will be placed in reflection groups that will meet throughout the summer to help them process and connect with the overall themes.

### ❖ **Unit One: Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants in Israel**

1. Lesson One: History—Part I (*scripted*)
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1. Lesson One: History—Part I
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### ❖ **Unit Three: North American Jewish Immigrants in Israel**

1. Lesson One: History
2. Lesson Two: Jewish Practice—Part I
3. Lesson Three: Jewish Practice—Part II (*scripted*)
4. Lesson Four: Culture
5. Lesson Five: Unit Conclusion (*Memorable Moment*)

**Format of the Lessons:** 90 minutes

# Curriculum Guide Rationale

## *Jewish Immigrant Populations in Israel: A View into the History, Culture, and Jewish Practices of Ethiopian, FSU, and North American Communities*

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the country has experienced waves of immigration from a variety of Jewish populations throughout the world. According to Sammy Smooha in “Jewish Ethnicity in Israel: Symbolic or Real?” “The ideal was a melting pot corresponding to the official ideology of Zionism, which viewed all Jews as one people and sought to bring them back to their ancient homeland, to forge them into a modern nation, to build a Jewish state, and to create a new Jew.”<sup>1</sup> However, the current reality of Israel does not match this original ideology. Israel is not a monolithic society, but rather a country of cultural pluralism. It is crucial for students to understand this distinction when learning about the people of Israel. The immigration of Jews from around the world has led to the culturally rich and ethnically diverse Israel of today.

This curriculum guide is an interdisciplinary approach to exploring three Jewish immigrant communities in Israel. An examination of the Ethiopian, Former Soviet Union (FSU), and North American Jewish immigrant communities will provide an in-depth look at three distinct populations and the contributions that each culture makes to Israeli society. Personal narratives from each of these communities help form a genuine understanding of the actual people of Israel, including the similarities and differences among them.

Jewish summer camps often provide both campers and staff with a sense of connectedness to Israel through music, food, Hebrew, Israeli scout activities, and Israel days.

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<sup>1</sup> Sammy Smooha. “Jewish Ethnicity in Israel: Symbolic or Real?” in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, ed. Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 69.

Many also attempt to integrate elements of modern Israeli life into the daily atmosphere. Rather than only exploring popular Israeli culture, this curriculum offers the campers the opportunity to learn about and experience the cultural pluralism that is intrinsic to a country of immigrants. Through the imaginative use of physical space, time, staff members, and specialists, camp provides a setting that allows for multiple elements of each culture to be brought to life for the participants. This curriculum is designed for campers entering tenth grade. During this time of high school, students are able to engage in dialogue about the complexities of immigration and assimilation in Israel. They will be asked to consider the advantages and disadvantages that accompany immigration while discovering the strength of the message “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*: All people of Israel are responsible for one another” and their own role in bridging gaps among all Jewish people.

Using an interdisciplinary approach to teaching, campers will examine these communities through three different lenses: history, culture, and Jewish practice. The three lenses provide a basis for understanding the richness of each population. During the history rotations, the campers learn about the origins and current lifestyles of the immigrants through personal narratives, activities, and interactive simulations. The culture lessons provide a hands-on experience of the art, food, music, language, or literature of each community. The Jewish practice lens explores Jewish beliefs, rituals, and customs.

The following enduring understandings guide this curriculum:

- Jewish immigrant populations in Israel contribute to the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of the country.
- Ethiopian, North American, and FSU Jewish communities provide insights into the similarities and differences among immigrants in Israel.

- Personal narratives from Jewish immigrants in Israel may strengthen our connection to the people of Israel.
- The cultural arts and Jewish practices of immigrant communities in Israel illuminate alternative avenues of connection to our own Judaism and Jewish identities.

This curriculum will enable campers to compare different Jewish immigrant communities to one another and to achieve an understanding and empathy for other Jewish populations. Insight into the lives and Jewishness of others will allow the students to gain insights into their own Jewish identities, practices, and modes of Jewish self-expression. This curriculum will connect the campers to contemporary Israelis, to Jewish immigrants from distant parts of the world, to their fellow campers, and to themselves.

## Letter to the Counselor

Dear Counselor,

Thank you for showing an interest in this curriculum guide! This guide is designed to provide engaging learning experiences for campers entering 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Each week, a different immigrant community will be the ongoing “theme” for the week of camp and the unit rotates through three lenses: history, Jewish practice, and culture. At the end of each week, the campers will create a final project and celebration, allowing them to incorporate and share the major foci of each lesson. Prior to the first lesson, the staff will separate the campers into reflection groups. The purpose of the reflection group is to provide campers the opportunity to process the events of the day and share any thoughts. Reflections should take place separate from the curriculum lessons, after the campers have had time to process each activity. All of the lessons contain several different activities and resources and there is a CD at the back of the binder containing all of the songs within the curriculum guide. Although I wrote that the total time for every lesson is 90 minutes, this is flexible. Please shape the lessons to fit your own camp community and setting, especially if you see opportunities to incorporate your own camp traditions or teambuilding activities in ways that will make the curriculum guide more meaningful.

This curriculum guide is unlike other Israel experiences at camp. It attempts to provide campers with insights into communities in Israel that they may not otherwise experience, but it also aims to influence each camper, encouraging each one to explore his or her own Jewish identity. The immersive camp environment is the best setting to be able to achieve these goals. I wish you the best of luck and hope that you find some connection with these wonderful Jewish communities in the process!

B’hatzlacha,

Rachel Levin

## Annotated Bibliography

**Leshem, E. & Sicron, M. (2004). The Soviet immigrant community in Israel in U. Rebhun & C. Waxman (Eds.), *Jews in Israel: Contemporary social and cultural patterns* (pp. 81-117). Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press.**

Several of the articles from *Jews in Israel: Contemporary social and cultural patterns* are incorporated in both this curriculum guide and the School of Jewish Nonprofit Management Capstone written in conjunction with this Curriculum Guide, “The Experience of Absorption Among Jewish Immigrant Populations in Israel: Ethiopian, Former Soviet Union, and North American Communities.” The articles in this book really illuminate current social, cultural, religious and political trends in Israel. This specific article examines the Former Soviet Union population, immigration trends, and their absorption process in Israel.

**Levy, S., et al. (2004). The Many Faces of Jewishness in Israel in U. Rebhun & C. Waxman (Eds.), *Jews in Israel: Contemporary social and cultural patterns* (pp.265-84). Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press.**

This article can help explain significant differences between American Jewish life and Israeli Jewish life. Levy, Levinsohn, and Katz report on the 1991 and 1999 sociological studies by the Guttman Institute called “Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews” (265). Their studies offer a lens into Israeli Jewish life and how Israelis identify themselves religiously –usually as *dati* (religious) or *chiloni* (secular.). Their studies also reveal the popularity of Shabbat, kashrut, festivals and holidays, and life-cycle events even among Israelis who did not identify as religious or observant.

**Mendes-Flohr, P. & Reinhartz, J. (Eds.). (2011). *The Jew in the modern world: A documentary history*. New York: Oxford University Press.**

This book is a collection of primary sources in Jewish history from 1655-2003. Unit 2 features the Haim Bialik biographical information and poem, “City of Slaughter” from this book, but it is generally extremely useful for any primary sources.

**Naim, A. (2003). *Saving the lost tribe*. New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group.**

This is the story of Asher Naim, an Israeli diplomat, and his initial encounters with Ethiopian Jews. The story includes events prior to and post-Operation Solomon in 1991. Along with Naomi Samuel’s *The Moon is Bread*, this book provides genuine personal insights into the Beta Israel community.

**Posner, R. (1995). Russia. In *Junior Judaica: Encyclopaedia Judaica for youth*. New York: Macmillan Library Reference.**

The Encyclopaedia Judaica for Youth summarizes intricate details on complex topics, including the overview of Russian Jewish history in Unit 2, Lesson 1.

**Rass, R. & M. Brafman. (1976). *From Moscow to Jerusalem: The dramatic story of the Jewish liberation movement and its impact on Israel*. New York, NY: Shengold.**

This book tells the story of the liberation movement from the Soviet Union to Israel in the

1960s and 1970s. The primary author, Rebecca Rass, collected personal stories from many of the major Soviet Jewish activists and compiled them chronologically. The narratives illuminate the struggles of the Soviet Jews, their relationship with Judaism, Zionism, the Soviet Union, and Israel.

**Samuel, N. (1999). *The moon is bread*. New York: Gefen Books.**

Naomi Samuel, originally from England, immigrated to Israel where she met her husband, Zafan, an immigrant from Ethiopia. *The Moon is Bread* is the story of Zafan's life from childhood until his marriage to Naomi. This narrative of Zafan's life provides tremendous insight into the life of Ethiopian families in Gondar and the transition as they struggled to reach Israel and attempt to assimilate into the country.

**Smooha, S. (2004). Jewish ethnicity in Israel: Symbolic or real? in U. Rebhun & C.**

**Waxman (Eds.), *Jews in Israel: Contemporary social and cultural patterns* (pp. 47-80). Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press.**

Sammy Smooha explains Israel's immigration policies and how the changes that were made over time have impacted the immigrant populations. According to Smooha, the original Zionist ideal was to create a melting pot of Jewish people in their homeland. In the 1990s, this assimilationist policy became a policy of cultural pluralism—a policy that impacts each community and individuals in different ways. This article really helped inspire the rationale for this curriculum guide and reasons for teaching about immigrant groups in Israel, their differences and similarities, and their contributions to Israeli society.

**Tabory, E. (2004). The Israel Reform and Conservative Movements and the Market for Liberal Judaism in U. Rebhun & C. Waxman (Eds.), *Jews in Israel: Contemporary social and cultural patterns* (pp.285-314). Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2004, 285.**

This article examines the attempt to bring the Reform and Conservative movements to Israel and can help explain significant differences between American Jewish life and Israeli Jewish life. It is cited in Unit 3 for the Jewish Practice lessons.

**Zion, M. & N. Zion. (2007). *A night to remember: The haggadah of contemporary voices*. Jerusalem: Zion Holiday Publications.**

This Haggadah provides wonderful stories, songs, and poems about Ethiopian and Former Soviet Union immigrants' journeys to Israel, comparing them to the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Different elements of the Haggadah can be incorporated throughout the curriculum, but it will be especially useful for campers in the last lesson of Unit 2.

**Culture & Heritage. *Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews (IAEJ)*. Web. 13 Apr. 2012.**

<http://iaej-english.org/about-the-community/culture-heritage>

The Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews, established in 1993, advocates for Ethiopian immigrants in Israel to improve their integration. Beyond the culture and heritage articles, the overall website contains in-depth and current information on the Ethiopian Jewish community, including recent research and statistics. Other websites (including the Jewish Virtual Library) cite this source.



# Introductory Lesson—Part I

## Objectives:

- Define four phrases from Ha-Tikvah, Israel’s National Anthem, and relate them to the vision for modern-day Israel.
- Compare the conditions of the Five Aliyot (waves of immigration into Israel) prior to the creation of the State of Israel.
- Categorize the paragraphs of Israel’s Declaration of Independence into four groups: Diaspora, Exile/Galut, Israel, and World.
- Identify the three immigrant groups they will explore during the summer.

## Materials

- Rope, chalk, or cones
- Unit Resource Intro.1- 5 Signs
- Unit Resource Intro.2- Ha-Tikvah Vision study
- Unit Resource Intro.3- The Five Aliyot<sup>2</sup>
- Unit Resource Intro.4- The Declaration of Independence
- Unit Resource Intro.5- Scavenger Hunt Clues
- Unit Resource Intro.6- Israel: A Land of Jews from All Over the World (Resource for Counselors)
- Music CD

## Core Learning Experiences

### Set Induction (10 mins):

Counselors will set-up the room with 5 signs spaced out along the walls: Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Unsure. Then, they will read the statements below. After each statement, the campers will have an opportunity to explain their decisions.

1. Israel is important to me.
2. Israel is an important part of my Jewish identity.
3. Israel is really important to the communal life of the Jewish people.
4. The only way to truly support Israel is to make aliyah.
5. The Jewish people would continue to thrive even without the state of Israel.
6. I feel comforted knowing that I can live in Israel if there is hostility toward the Jewish people elsewhere.
7. I am familiar with different Jewish immigrant/ethnic communities in Israel.
8. I believe in the Jewish value, “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*: All people of Israel (or all Jewish people) are responsible for one another.”
9. I believe that Israel fulfills the value of “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*: All people of Israel (or all Jewish people) are responsible for one another.”

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<sup>2</sup> David Bianco et al. *The History of Israel*. (Los Angeles: Torah Aura, 2001).

Counselors will explain:

Throughout this summer, it will be important for each of you to recognize that you take different stances in relation to Israel and to respect one another's opinions. The focus of this summer will be on three different Jewish immigrant groups in Israel (which you will find out about shortly) and their own relationship with Israel. You will learn about their history, culture, and Jewish practices and how each immigrant population contributes to the cultural and ethnic diversity of the country. To know the actual people of Israel, we must expand our definition beyond the majority population. In a country of immigrants, we must not overlook those who found refuge or simply a home in Israel within the past few decades. This summer, we will also explore what it means to be responsible for one another and the way that Israel enacts this mitzvah.

Before we reveal these three communities, we are going to take a look at the history of Palestine, the notion of Diaspora and Galut, and immigration prior to the founding of the State.

**Activity 1: Ha-Tikvah (30 mins)—The Hope**

Counselors will play Ha-Tikvah for the group (from the CD) and ask if this is familiar to them.

Counselors will explain:

Many people immigrate(d) to Israel to fulfill the Ha-Tikvah vision, as stated in Israel's national anthem: "To be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem." But what does this mean? As a group, we will break down the words of Ha-Tikvah (The Hope) and create our own unit collage, creating images from the meaning of four words in the anthem:

- **להיות [L'hiyot]— To be**
- **עם [Am]— People**
- **חופשי [Chofshi]— Free**
- **בארצנו [B'artzeinu] – In our land**

After this activity and throughout the summer, we will see the extent to which this dream has been fulfilled among three Jewish immigrant populations in Israel.

Counselors will split the campers into four groups and distribute copies of Ha-Tikvah and the "Ha-Tikvah Vision" worksheet with questions (Unit Resource Intro.2). As a group, they should discuss the questions and then draw images of their word or create a poem on a piece of fabric. At the end of the activity, each group will connect their pieces of fabric together into a square shape and then connect their square onto the three other groups' squares to form a whole "Ha-Tikvah Vision" quilt. They should then hang this quilt in a public place to remind them of their definitions of "Ha-Tikvah" and see the extent to which they relate to the Jewish immigrant communities we will survey this summer.

Before looking at our three communities, we will learn more about the history of Israel and about immigration into Palestine prior to the creation of the State, past reasons for immigration, the conditions of the land at the time, and the ways they built it up to the Israel we know today. We will see what being "a free people in our land" meant to them and the determination they had to improve the land for themselves and their ancestors.

**Activity 2 (30 mins): The Five Aliyot, Waves of Immigration**

Counselors will create an enclosed space on the ground using rope, chalk, or cones.

Counselors will explain:

This area represents Palestine (before it became the State of Israel) and all of the campers standing around the space represent Jewish people in the Diaspora. We are about to see how quickly Jews immigrated (made *aliyah*) to Israel during the initial waves of immigration to Palestine, known as the Five Aliyot. The fast pace of mass immigration, limited amount of space, and differences between the immigrants raised many issues, leading to the need to build more communities throughout the land and find ways of living cooperatively. Even in recent times (the 1990s and 2000s) with the mass influx of Jews from Russia and Ethiopia, the Israeli government (*Ha-Knesset*) continues to struggle finding housing, proper schooling, and aid for the new immigrants.

1. Split the campers into 5 groups, each representing a different aliyah. Try to stagger the amount of people in each group to more accurately represent the size of the immigrant group during that time. Give each group a description of their aliyah (Unit Resource Intro.1) and ask them to write down answers to these four questions:

1. WHO are we? Which aliyah do we represent?
2. FROM where did we come?
3. WHY did we move to Palestine?
4. WHAT are our accomplishments?

2. Next, instruct the “First Aliyah” to explain their answers to the first 3 questions and enter the enclosed space on the ground.

Ask: What was the land like when you arrived? What did you need to do once you got there? What towns did you build?

3. Then, instruct the “Second Aliyah” to explain their answers to the first 3 questions and enter the enclosed space on the ground.

Ask (all the groups can help answer these questions): What do you think about the Jews who were already in Palestine? What do they think about you? Is there enough space for everyone? What is a kibbutz and a yishuv? What is your aim for Palestine and Jews everywhere?

4. Continue this process with the remaining three Aliyot, asking the questions below after each group enters the roped off space:

Third Aliyah: What is He-Halutz? Does it feel crowded in Palestine right now? What are you going to do to help that situation? What did the British do when they realized how many immigrants (*olim*) are entering the *yishuv*?

Counselors can extend the space in which the group is standing slightly as more immigrants come in and Palestine expands and builds itself up.

Fourth Aliyah: Where did you primarily move after entering the *yishuv*? What obstacles are happening during this time?

Fifth Aliyah: What is Youth Aliyah? What happened in 1939? What do you think about the Jews who are already in Palestine? What do they think about you?

Discussion Questions:

- How did it feel being in such a small space all together?
- What were advantages and disadvantages of immigrating for each group?
- How do you think it has been possible to build up Palestine and eventually create a State?

- What do you think we need to continue doing, even today, to strengthen the relationship between different Jewish communities living in Israel?
- How can we strengthen the relationship with Jewish communities outside of Israel? Is this important? Why or why not?

Today, immigrants are still entering the country and Israel works to integrate them. In the next activity, we will look at Israel's Declaration of Independence and its connection to Jews throughout the world. Then, in the next lesson, we will reveal which immigrant population will be our focus for this summer!

### **Activity 3 (20 mins): Israel's Declaration of Independence**

Prior to this activity, counselors will separate Israel's Declaration of Independence into separate paragraphs and create several sets for the campers to use in groups. Counselors will then split the campers into groups and distribute a set to each group.

#### Counselors will explain:

1. First, we want you to put the Declaration in what you believe to be its original order. After the groups are finished, they can compare each other's rationale. Ask, why did you arrange it this way? This is to familiarize the students with the Declaration and its content and get them to think about the order of historical events leading to the creation of Israel.
2. Second, discuss the terms "Diaspora" and "Exile/Galut" and the difference between the two. Are all people living in the Diaspora in Exile? Then, split the paragraphs up into categories according to their main subjects: "Exile," "Diaspora," "Israel," and "World" piles. Which paragraphs did you place in each pile? Why are the Jewish people living outside of Israel, whether in the "Diaspora" or "Exile/Galut," so important in the Declaration? Why is this a unique part of Israel's Declaration of Independence? How does this relate to Ha-Tikvah and to the four words:
  - **להיות [L'hiyot]– To be**
  - **עם [Am]– People**
  - **חופשי [Chofshi]– Free**
  - **בארצנו [B'artzeinu] – In our land**

The notion that Israel is a land for all Jewish people, "open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion," is central when looking at immigrant populations entering Israel in modern times—especially those we will be discussing in the next lesson who are distinct from the Jewish immigrants who arrived prior to the creation of the State of Israel and the Declaration of Independence.

## Introductory Lesson—Part II

### Scavenger Hunt (85 mins)

During this activity, the students will collect clues throughout camp, piece together different elements of the three Jewish communities, and decide which group they believe each set of clues represents.

Split the campers into groups. There should be one counselor at each station to facilitate the discussion or activity, give the groups clues, and direct them to their next station. Every group should begin at a separate station. At the stations, campers will receive a clue for each immigrant community that relates to the location of the station (i.e. if they are in the dining hall, the clue will relate to food). At the end, the group will have to assemble all the clues and figure out which Jewish immigrant communities they represent.

### Station Clues are in Unit Resource Intro.5

#### Before beginning the scavenger hunt, counselors will explain:

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the country has experienced waves of immigration from a variety of Jewish populations throughout the world. According to Sammy Smooha, “The ideal was a melting pot corresponding to the official ideology of Zionism, which viewed all Jews as one people and sought to bring them back to their ancient homeland, to forge them into a modern nation, to build a Jewish state, and to create a new Jew.”<sup>3</sup> However, the current reality of Israel does not match this original ideology. Israel is not a monolithic society, but rather a country of cultural pluralism. This is extremely important to understand when learning about the people of Israel. The immigration of Jews from around the world has led to the culturally rich and ethnically diverse Israel of today. To discover the three Jewish immigrant groups that we are going to experience this summer, you are going to go on a scavenger hunt and figure out who these communities are on your own.

#### Rotation Clues:

Station	Clue (Given to the campers at the station on the left—in order for the rotation to be in order.)
1. Dining Hall	It’s Friday night and you’re all dressed in white. You must go here to bring in Shabbat before you can eat a bite.
2. Chapel/ Place for Tefillah	The primary colors are Red, Blue, and Yellow. Go to the place that artists go to stay mellow.

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<sup>3</sup> Sammy Smooha. “Jewish Ethnicity in Israel: Symbolic or Real?” in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, ed. Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 69.

3. Art Room	It's been a long day and you're ready for bed. But you usually stay up all night talking instead.
4. Cabin	When you got to camp, you were scared of heights but now you know it's all good cause you're strapped in so tight.
5. Ropes Course	People holding guitars always sing: "Wherever you go, there's always someone Jewish, you're never alone if say you you're a Jew. But when you're not home and you're somewhere kinda newish, the odds are, don't look far, cause they're Jewish too."
6. Music Room	You go to this place at least three times a day. Ha-Motzi and Birkat Hamazon are two of the blessings you say.

### Station 1: Dining Hall

When the campers arrive, the counselor will explain:

There are three picture clues in hidden in the room in a napkin (Afikomen style). Once you find these clues, come back to the center of the room.

**Discussion:** What foods do you usually associate with Israel? What three clues did you find? I hid these clues around the room because during this summer, there will be some descriptions of immigration (at least for two of the communities) as an "Exodus." Thinking about our story of Passover, what may an Exodus entail? (*Leaving bondage to reach freedom in Israel. Questioning the decision to leave "Egypt" or in these cases Ethiopia and the FSU.*) Now, there are many different cultures and ethnicities living in Israel and just like in America, each bring their own culinary tastes. These three clues represent a food item from each community that is currently becoming integrated into modern Israeli culture.

### Station 2: Chapel/Place for Tefilah

When the campers arrive, the counselor will explain:

Welcome to our place of prayer at camp. Israel plays a large role in our prayers even if we don't consciously realize it—especially since we pray facing East, towards Jerusalem. For centuries, many yearned to return to Israel from exile—to unite their words in prayer to their actions. However, there are others who may not have even realized they were Jewish and did not pray. In Israel, we see diverse people with different religious practices come together. Not everyone prays in the same way or even uses the same terms.

### Pictionary:

Counselors will prepare slips of paper with six words on them. Words include: Torah, Jewish star, Kippah, Tallit, mezuzah, and Hanukkah. A camper will pick from these words and will begin drawing one of the images on a piece of butcher paper while the rest of the group guesses what the picture represents.

As the campers go through each term, the counselor will explain how each immigrant community relates to the Jewish image and the campers will fill in their "clue" sheet (see below).

Answer Key:

Image	Community 1 (Ethiopia)	Community 2 (FSU)	Community 3 (N. Am.)
1. Torah	Called Orit. Written in a script called Ge'ez	Just like our Torah, but many people were not raised studying Torah. They were distant from Judaism.	Just like our Torah. Written in Hebrew.
2. Jewish Star	Jewish what? The Star of David was not a symbol for this community.	This image is known in the community. A Jew was called a <i>Jid</i> . Being associated with this was not always a good thing in their native land.	Jewish stars are popular in this community and especially in their Judaica shops.
3. Kippah	This is typically not one of their rituals, although you may see some members of this community wearing kippot in Israel today.	The kippah used to be popular among people from this community, but back in the day! After years of persecution and assimilation, this is not commonly worn.	Some people wear them, some people don't. Some of those who don't wear a kippah put one on while they are in synagogue or on special occasions.
4. Tallit	They have other ritual garb, but not the tallit. This may be changing in Israel.	Same answer as the kippah.	People get a tallit during their bar or bat mitzvah.
5. Mezuzah	This is a new concept for them.	One would think that this community would be familiar with the mezuzah, but people who visit their native land comment that mezuzot are largely absent from their communal institutes. Assimilation and oppression worked against this tradition, but Israel is helping renew it.	Most homes in their native country and in Israel have a mezuzah.
6. Hanukkah	Hanukkah is not included in their ancient texts—it's a holiday they started celebrating after	This community is familiar with Hanukkah and with having to hide their religion like our	Eight nights of gifts, hooray! This community is familiar with Hanukkah.

	mixing with Western forms of Judaism.	ancestors did under Hellenistic rule.	
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### Station 3: Art Room

When the campers arrive, the counselor will explain:

There are three pictures of art from the three communities. Look at all three and then sit down next to the one that interests you the most.

Discussion questions:

- What about this picture is interesting to you?
- What do you notice about it that is different from the others?
- What materials, shapes, and colors did the artist use?
- What values do you think are important to the artist? (*Family, music, Judaism*)
- Where do you think it is from?

When the groups leave the station, they should take the pictures with them as clues.

### Station 4: Cabin

(If the cabins for the unit are not in the same area, then pick a specific cabin to use for the activity.)

When the campers arrive, the counselor will ask them to write down all the essential parts of their home that they would not have without modern technology. (Electricity, running water, computers, phones, television, video games, etc.) Then, ask them to imagine meeting someone who was not familiar with any of these commodities. How would you teach them to use all of these different things? Where do you begin? Have they ever had to teach someone to use a new device? What was it like? Was it difficult?

Then, provide them with quotes from Jewish immigrants (in Unit Resource Intro.5) that describe the transition of each group from their home to Israel in terms of home or professional life.

### Station 5: Ropes Course

When the campers arrive, the counselor will explain: Immigrating to Israel and in general can be a very difficult process. The three groups that we are focusing on this summer all had to overcome different obstacles in order to get here. Two groups were mainly escaping oppression and seeking a better life. For the most part, members of the third group made the decision independently.

Then, ask the campers to line up in a row, all facing one direction. If the group is large, then split them into two rows. Give the person at the end of the row a slip of paper with one of these words or images: Peace sign, Jewish star, Help!, an airplane. The person at the back of the row will “draw” the image onto the person’s back directly in front of them. Campers will then pass this message all the way down the line and the person in the front will write down or draw what they believe the word or image is.

At the end, explain: The immigrants who were escaping oppression (the back of the line) fought hard to have their message heard by people in the outside community (the front of the line). Unfortunately, it took a long time for their message to get across clearly. Often, there was miscommunication along the way.



Before sending the campers to their next rotation, give them their clues and ask them to discuss them as they walk to the next station (in Unit Resource Intro.5).

**Station 6: Music Room/Place where Israeli dance or song session takes place**

When the campers arrive, the counselor will ask: What type of music do you usually associate with Israel? Today, the different cultures of Israel bring their own flavor. The counselor will play parts of three different songs (Available on CD), during which the campers will fill out the clue sheet, guessing which community each of these songs represent. Inform them that not all of these musicians are *from* the country about which we will be learning but they are heavily influenced by the musical style of that country.

Songs include: “Habayta (Home)” 2011 by Idan Raichel and Cabra Casay (look in Unit 2, Lesson 5 for more information), “Sher” by Oy Division (an Israeli Klezmer group), and “HaFinali” or “Bounce” by Subliminal (an Israeli hip hop artist).

**Conclusion (5 mins):** Bring the campers back together to review the clues that they collected during the activity. Ask if they figured out who the three communities are and can describe some qualities of those communities through the clues.

Lastly, divide the campers into reflection groups that will meet throughout the summer to help them process and connect with the overall themes.

Agree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Not Sure

Unit Resource Intro.2  
**The Hatikvah Vision<sup>4</sup>**

**Hatikvah**

As long as Jewish spirit Yearns deep in the heart, With eyes turned East, Looking towards Zion.	<i>Kol od baleivav penimah Nefesh yehudi homiyah, Ulfa'atey mizrah kadimah Ayin letsiyon tsofiyah.</i>	כל עוד בלבב פנימה נפש יהודי הומיה ולפאתי מזרח קדימה עין לציון צופיה
Our hope is not yet lost, The hope of two millennia, To be a free people in our land, The land of Zion and Jerusalem.	<i>Od lo avdah tikvateinu, Hatikvah bat shenot al payim, Lihyot am hofshi be'artzeinu, Eretz tziyon ve'yerushalayim.</i>	עוד לא אבדה תקותנו התקווה בת שנות אלפים להיות עם חפקשי בארצנו ארץ ציון וירושלים.

**To be a free people in our land**

We would suggest that a framing understanding of what Israel means to the Jewish People, boils down to four values as expressed in the penultimate line of Israel's National Anthem. An exploration of the four elements might be at the heart of every Israel Engagement curriculum, the theme of Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations, and the basis on which a 'broad tent' of Israel advocacy might be built.

**להיות [L'hiyot]– To be**

The way in which the creation of the State of Israel served and serves the survival of the Jewish people. To be in the sense of 'exist'. It would likewise explore the idea of 'normality' that Israel was expected to engender. To be in the sense of 'let it be'...

**עם [Am]– People**

The way in which Israel is connected to the Jewish people culturally, historically, religiously. Where Israel expresses its connection to the Jewish world and its meaning. At the same time this sub-theme would address the nature of Jewish collectivity.

**שיחופ [Chofshi]– Free**

The nature of freedom as embodied in the creation of the State. Not simply the freedom of Pesach, which celebrates a freedom from suffering and persecution, but also the very particular form of freedom that Statehood has brought: the freedom to take responsibility for oneself, the freedom to grant or refuse freedoms to others. Freedom would also refer to the freedom to create, to innovate, and to renew.

**בארצנו [B'artzeinu] – In our land**

The specificity of Israel as a geographical, political, and historical entity with deep significance to the Jewish People. This sub-theme would also address the question of ownership: the proof of ownership and the expectations and responsibility of 'owners'.

<sup>4</sup> Makom Israel. "The Hatikvah Mission," 2011. Web. 14 Apr. 2012.  
 <<http://makomisrael.org/conceptual-frames/am-chofshi-bartzenu/>>

### **Questions for each group:**

#### **Everyone:**

“As Spiderman is famous for saying, ‘With great power must also come great responsibility.’ When the Israeli national anthem declares its hope that Israel will give rise to an ‘Am Chofshi B’Artzeinu’ or ‘A free people in our land’, the question of what that actually means is asked everyday in the modern state of Israel. How these aspirational words play out on the street, in the political arena, and within society is hotly debated.”<sup>5</sup> **What do you think it means to be “a free people in our land?”**

#### **להיות [L’hiyot]– To be**

What does the phrase להיות [L’hiyot] mean to you? In terms of the “normality” Israel was supposed to engender, what may be good about not being “normal”—by being diverse, pluralistic, or unique? How does Israel engender these qualities?

#### **עם [Am]– People**

What does the word עם [Am] mean in relation to the Jewish people culturally, historically, and religiously? How may this connect to a hope for the State of Israel?

#### **חופשי [Chofshi]– Free**

What does it mean to be “free?” What type of responsibility and power does this bring? What comes with the power to act autonomously? How do we prevent abuse of this power?

#### **בארצנו [B’artzeinu] – In our land**

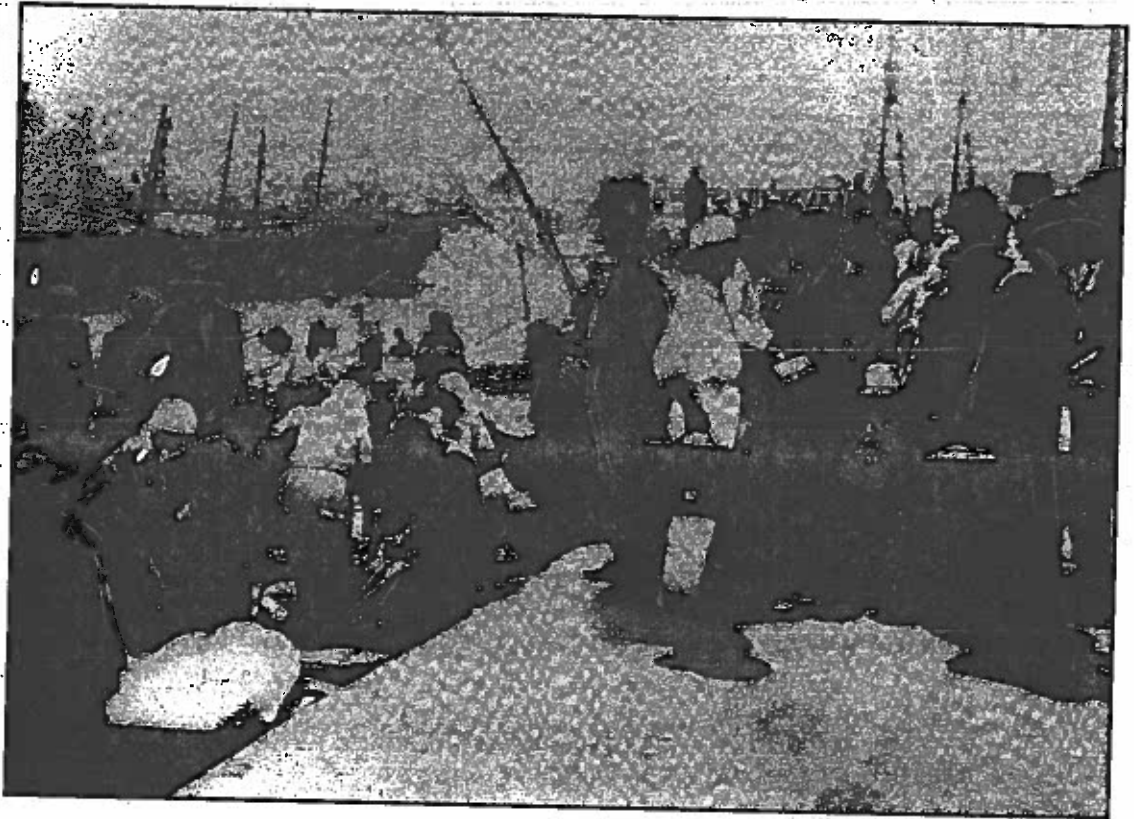
What does it mean for the Jewish people to have a land? How does this land connect to us as Jews? Is the land intrinsically holy or do we somehow make it holy? What does the land, the physical place and its history, mean to you?

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<sup>5</sup> Makom Israel. “Am Chofshi B’Artzeinu: Case Studies,” 2011. Web. 14 Apr. 2012. <<http://makomisrael.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/done-am-chofshi-bartzenu-case-studies12.pdf>>



# The Five Aliyot



Haifa, Palestine: A boat load of Jewish immigrants arriving at Haifa. UPI/CORBIS-BETTMAN

## Introduction

Think back to the first time you left home. Maybe it was going to camp, or on a trip. You had to leave familiar sights, people and routines and replace them with new ones.

But when someone leaves a country permanently for a new one, those experiences are multiplied many times over. Immigrants must say goodbye—permanently—to their old modes of living, from the money they use to the very language they speak. Between 1881 and 1939, more than 350,000 European Jews left their homes in places like Russia, Poland, and Germany and moved to join the growing *yishuv* (settlement) in Palestine.

This process, moving to the Land of Israel, is known as *aliyah*, or “going up.” Why do you think Jews used this term to describe this kind of migration?

The people who made *עלייה* *aliyah*, known as *עולים* *olim*, moved for many different reasons, with many different ideas about what the *yishuv* should be like. But the men and women who made *aliyah* around the same time tended to have a lot in common, and therefore history has remembered the different groups who moved to Israel at different times by giving them names like the First Aliyah, the Second Aliyah, the Third Aliyah, the Fourth Aliyah, and (see a pattern?) the Fifth Aliyah.

This instant lesson will examine the history of the five aliyot described above, exploring who moved to Palestine in the seventy-five years before it became the State of Israel and why. You will then have an opportunity to use the playing cards in the center of this lesson to make match up the characteristics of five people or families who made *aliyah* in this period.

# First Aliyah

The First Aliyah started in 1881, when the situation for the Jews in the Russian Empire dramatically worsened. The czar of Russia was murdered, and many Russians blamed his death on the Jews. Many laws were passed restricting Jewish rights, and a series of vicious attacks on Jewish communities, known as pogroms, made many Jews fear for their lives.

At the same time, a new set of ideas began circulating; ideas that rejected earlier notions that Russian Jews should work to be more accepted as Russians. Instead, these ideas, which became known as Zionism, emphasized that the true place for Jews was their ancient homeland in the Land of Israel.

Inspired by Zionism, a small but growing number of Russian Jews decided to put their ideas into actions and took the long journey to Palestine. But their dreams of a peaceful life picking fruit from the trees in the land of their ancestors were not to be fulfilled.

Instead, they found a land with malaria-infected swamps and an impoverished, pious Jewish population that was suspicious of the newcomers. Many individuals from this first wave of *olim* soon sunk into poverty and despair. Some even returned to Russia.

Rescue quickly followed, though, in the form of assistance from Baron Edmond de Rothschild, one of the wealthiest Jews in the world. Rothschild was a French Jew who was not a Zionist, but nonetheless cared about Jews in poverty, wherever they lived. With the aid of Rothschild money, the Jews of the First Aliyah no longer had to fear poverty, and some of the Jews in these settlements stopped working hard and instead hired Arabs to do agricultural work for them.

Nonetheless, the Jews of Palestine were able to build up the towns they founded, such as Petah Tikvah and Rishon L'Tzion, as well as about twenty agricultural settlements.

Much of the First Aliyah centered in the return to agriculture. It started with Mikveh Yisrael, an agricultural school opened in 1870. Petah Tikvah and Rishon L'Tzion followed as agricultural settlements. The BILU associations (named for the Hebrew of "House of Jacob...") took the lead in bringing Jews back to the land. In this photo we see a young Zionist woman learning to farm. UPI/CORBIS-BETTMAN





## Second Aliyah

The next wave of immigration to Palestine also came after a wave of pogroms, this time in the years 1903-1905. These attacks on Jews in Russia spread the ideas of the Zionists and convinced a new group of Jews to decide to move to Israel.

But the attitudes and ideas of the Jews of the Second Aliyah were different than those of the first. A new kind of Zionism, called Labor Zionism, emphasized the idea that working the land was essential to creating a “new Jew”—tanned, brave, and muscular as opposed to what they considered to be the pale, weak, cowardly Jews back in Russia. Labor Zionism was influenced by the ideas of socialism—an important set of ideas that emphasized the rights of workers and the establishment of a society in which everyone was equal and free.

The Jews of the Second Aliyah were mostly young and single, with big ideas for making Palestine the permanent homeland for Jews everywhere. They founded new cities, such as Tel Aviv, and new kinds of communities, such as the kibbutz, or collective settlement. The first קיבוץ *kibbutz*, Deganiah, was established in 1909. Its members shared all property and land together, and divided up the work and the profits. Deganiah was a perfect example of the ideas of the Second Aliyah. Unlike earlier *olim*, these Jews refused to allow Arabs to do agricultural work for them. They believed that by working hard in a cooperative fashion, they were changing the course of Jewish history by establishing a יישוב *yishuv*, settlement in Palestine that was fair and equal.

One of the leaders of the Second Aliyah was A.D. Gordon. He created “labor Zionism,” which taught that the work of building and rebuilding the land was renewing to the people who did it and to the Jewish People. Kibbutzim, where men and women shared in all the work, emerged at this moment.

UPI/CORBIS-BETTMAN

# Third Aliyah



Jewish workers singing on their way to construct Jerusalem's defenses against the marauding Arabs of Palestine. The Third Aliyah brought a huge influx of new workers, including David Ben-Gurion. In 1918, 80% of Palestinian Jews belonged to the Labor Party. UPI/CORBIS-BETTMAN

The Jews of the Third Aliyah had a lot in common with the Jews of the previous wave of immigrants. Like in the Second Aliyah, many of them were young, idealistic Russian Jews who were influenced by socialism. Although Russia's czar was overthrown in 1917 and replaced by a government whose leaders agreed with socialist ideals, in practice the new Soviet Union was not able to satisfy the desires of many Jewish socialists. The leaders of the Soviet Union promised a better life for Jews, but passed many laws that restricted the rights of Jews to behave as a national group within the broader society.

For Jewish socialists, these laws were unacceptable. They founded an organization, known as **החלוץ** He-Halutz, to prepare Russian Jews for *aliyah*. He-Halutz, which means The Pioneer, trained Russian Jews in agriculture and Hebrew. When they arrived in Palestine, many immigrants of the Third Aliyah joined **קיבוצים** *kibbutzim* or founded new ones.

At the time of the Third Aliyah, Palestine had come under the leadership of Great Britain, a period known as the British Mandate. The Third Aliyah was so rapid (as many as 1,000 *olim* a month in 1920), that the British became concerned that too many Jewish newcomers would upset the Arab inhabitants of Palestine and create social and economic chaos. Therefore, they instituted rules restricting the number of Jews that could enter Palestine.



# Fourth Aliyah

In the mid-1920s, Palestine experienced a wave of Jewish immigration that differed from the earlier three aliyot in several ways. For the most part, the Jews of the Fourth Aliyah were not socialist pioneers who wanted to settle on kibbutzim. Instead, they were middle-class city dwellers, who settled in the growing urban areas of the Land of Israel.

Who were these Jews, and where did they come from? In the 1920s, the government of Poland passed a series of laws that put Jewish shopkeepers out of business. With their livelihoods wiped out, many of these Jews and their families moved to Palestine, and often opened up similar businesses to the ones they had run back in Poland.

Unfortunately, the late 1920s was a time of extreme hardship for the *yishuv*. An economic depression caused the failure of many businesses, including many of those that had been set up by Fourth Aliyah immigrants just a few years earlier. To make matters worse, Palestine's Arab population was becoming increasingly restless about the growing Jewish population in the Land of Israel. In 1929, dozens of Jews were killed or wounded while trying to pray at Jewish holy sites.

Nonetheless, the Jews of the Fourth Aliyah played a key role in the expansion of Palestine's economy. The 1920s saw the founding of dozens of new factories and industries, and the rapid growth of Palestine's urban areas.

This photograph shows students of the school and kindergarten out for a stroll with their teachers on the sacred soil of Jerusalem. After the massacre at Tel Hai and the riots in Jerusalem in 1920, the *yishuv* set up the Haganah, a Jewish Defense Force. *UPI/CORBIS-BETTMAN*



# Fifth Aliyah

The Fifth Aliyah took place under the most dire conditions of all: the rise of the Nazi party in Germany and its anti-Semitic measures that foreshadowed the destruction of much of Europe's Jewish community. Between 1933 and 1939, the *yishuv* grew by more than 30 percent.

About 40 percent of the approximately 165,000 Jews who made *Aliyah* in this period came from Germany and Austria, where the Nazis and their leader Adolf Hitler passed a series of laws that stripped Jews of their citizenship and severely restricted their participation in society. Jews were forced to wear yellow stars identifying them as Jews in public and more and more Jews were sent to concentration camps, where many died.

These anti-Semitic measures convinced many German Jews that their only hope for survival was by leaving the country altogether. Since the world was then experiencing the Great Depression, few countries were willing to accept Jewish immigrants, and Palestine seemed like one of the best options. Unfortunately, Britain continued to restrict the number of *olim* out of fear of angering the Arabs of Palestine.

The Jews of the Fifth Aliyah—which included many Polish Jews as well—tended to be more Westernized, more middle-class, and less hard-core believers in Zionism than the previous *olim*. Many of these Jews were doctors and scientists who would have been happy to stay in Europe had their lives not been in danger. With thousands of new doctors, researchers, and businessmen, the Fifth Aliyah rapidly expanded the *yishuv*, providing it for the first time with an abundance of Jews with professional skills and technical know-how.

While some of these *olim* came as whole families, others were Jewish children and teenagers who left Europe without their families. This movement, known as Youth Aliyah, brought 50,000 children from Europe, saving them from the Holocaust and teaching them Hebrew and skills to adjust to life in the Land of Israel.

In 1939, Great Britain announced the White Paper, which rejected the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine and severely limited further immigration, bringing the Fifth Aliyah to an end.



Typical Colonists of the American-Jewish settlement, Ein Hashofet, in the Arab-infested hills sixteen miles southeast of Haifa. Left to right are Harry Hubberman of Montreal; Joseph Eisenberg of Montreal; Ada Stollman of Montreal; and Shamay Schiff of Brooklyn, NY.  
UPI/CORBIS-BETTMAN

## Questions and Activities:

- 1) Cut out the cards provided on pages 4-5 of this lesson, and divide them into five stacks, creating a brief "history" for the five individuals or families who made aliyah before the establishment of the State of Israel. Each stack should include one card from each category: WHO, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY.
- 2) Choose one of the stacks, and write a diary entry OR a skit in which you present that individual or family's ideas and attitudes about making aliyah. What are the advantages and disadvantages of moving to Palestine at that time?
- 3) What do you think the Jews who remained in Russia, Poland, or Germany thought about the Jews from each Aliyah? What do you think the Jews already in the *yishuv* thought about the new immigrants in each wave?

## Israel's Declaration of Independence



ERETZ-ISRAEL [(Hebrew) - the Land of Israel, Palestine] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, ma'pilim [(Hebrew) - immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people – the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe – was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations.

Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers,

and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

WE DECLARE that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel".

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL – in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months – to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream – the redemption of Israel.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE “ROCK OF ISRAEL”, WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION AT THIS SESSION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE, ON THE SOIL OF THE HOMELAND, IN THE CITY OF TEL-AVIV, ON THIS SABBATH EVE, THE 5TH DAY OF IYAR, 5708 (14TH MAY, 1948).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Translation from Makom Israel. “Israel’s Declaration of Independence.” 2011. Web. 2 May 2012. < <http://makomisrael.org/conceptual-frames/declaration/>>

Unit Resource Intro.5  
**Scavenger Hunt Clues**

**Station 1: Dining Hall**





**Station 2: Chapel/Place for Tefilah**

Image	Community 1	Community 2	Community 3
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			



Station 3: Art Room<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Art 1: "Almaz." *Almaz*. Web. 14 Apr. 2012.

<[http://www.almaz.co.il/site/index.asp?depart\\_id=171556&lat=en](http://www.almaz.co.il/site/index.asp?depart_id=171556&lat=en)>

Art 2: Marc Chagall, "Moses Receiving the 10 Commandments"

Art 3: Tanya Fredman. Web. 14 Apr. 2011. <http://tanyafredman.com/home.html>. Tanya is from St. Louis, Missouri and currently lives in Kibbutz Sde Boker, Israel.





#### Station 4: Cabin<sup>8</sup>

*Community One:* “It is difficult to start over at older age (my father was 52 when we immigrated, he is now almost 79)-to learn a new language and culture that is so different and progressive than ours (we lived in villages so we didn't have electricity for example)- despite all that, we thank G-D for fulfilling our dream to raise our kids, live and be buried in JERUSALM- the promise land.<sup>9</sup>”

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<sup>8</sup> Pseudonyms are used for all immigrants who were interviewed for this Curriculum Guide. The pseudonyms correspond to those in the School of Jewish Nonprofit Management Capstone written in conjunction with this Curriculum Guide: “The Experience of Absorption Among Jewish Immigrant Populations in Israel: Ethiopian, Former Soviet Union, and North American Communities.”

<sup>9</sup> Tamar. Personal communication. November 2, 2011.

*Community Two:* “I like Israel. I like the country, people living there, my friends, my job. I like that my parents became doctors here (there are very difficult exams for medics from \_\_\_\_\_). I like that I can travel and see the world. I like that everything that I get, is because of my hard work and not because of the name of my parents, as it could be in \_\_\_\_\_. I like the change that I made in my character. The immigration process was hard but as all of us knows, no pain – no gain. So today, I'm really happy.<sup>10</sup>”

*Community Three:* “One of the biggest challenges is finding a job/making a good living in Israel to support you. Depending on your field some jobs are easier to acquire then others. Also the language barrier can be extremely challenging-not everywhere are there people that are bilingual so simply getting around can be hard.<sup>11</sup>”

**Station 5: Ropes Course**

Questions to consider about obstacles for each community:

*Community One:* What is a refugee camp? What may it be like to wait for freedom and not know if people in a different part of the world can hear your plea for help?

*Community Two:* In the past, we had to obtain exit visas before leaving the country, but the government could not understand why we would want to leave and would refuse out requests. We tried to get Israel and the rest of the Jewish world to hear our message, but never knew if they could. What may it feel like to be imprisoned by your own country?

*Community Three:* Immigration is mostly voluntary and not to escape persecution, but there are still obstacles. For many, this includes the language barrier in Israel.

**Station 6: Music Room/Place where Israeli dance or song session takes place**

Song	Community (Note the different elements of the music, including the language, lyrics, and musical instruments.)

<sup>10</sup> Matthew. Personal Communication. November 17, 2011

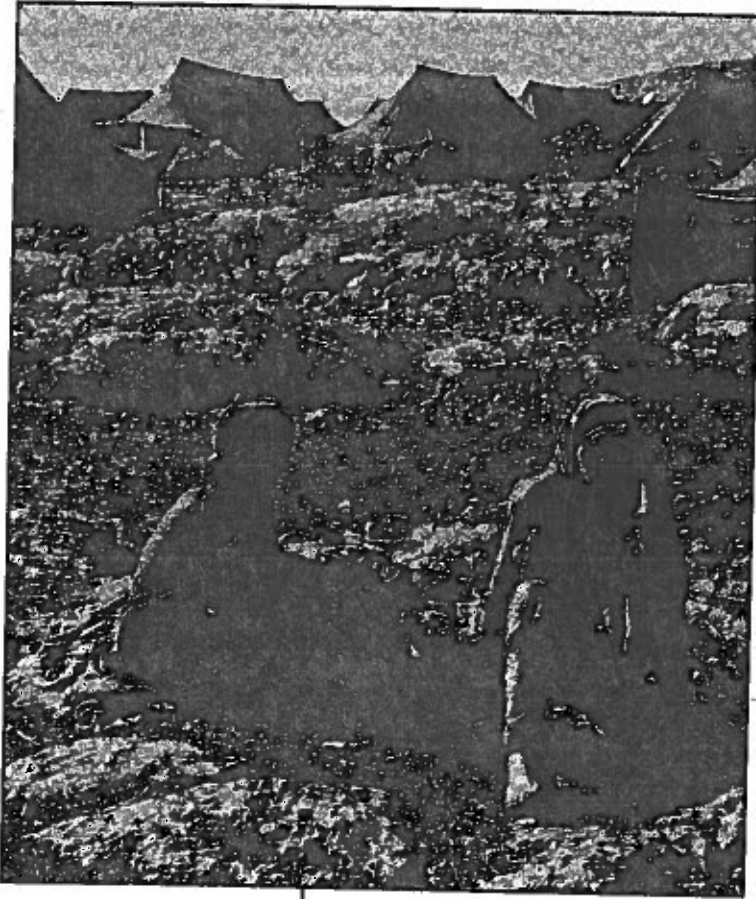
<sup>11</sup> Talia. Personal Communication. November 27, 2011.



# Israel: A Land of Jews from All Over the World

## Introduction

**THE LAW OF RETURN:** On July 5, 1950, the Knesset (Israel's legislature) made a momentous decision. It passed the Law of Return, which stated simply, "Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an עולה *oleh*," or immigrant. Whereas most countries have complicated naturalization laws that involve waiting periods and citizenship tests, the first government of the State of Israel announced to the world, "If you're a Jew and wish to live here, we'll make you a citizen immediately."



What makes the Law of Return even more remarkable is the fact that it was passed at a time when Israel was already bursting at the seams, doubling in population in just three years. Such a rate of increase would have caused citizens in most other countries to demand that immigration be cut back, but Israel flung open its doors to all Jews who wished to enter. Why?

**History.** The Jews who created the State of Israel knew that Jewish history is filled with episodes in which Jews flee persecution, but that sometimes no country would come forward as a refuge for the Jews—the Holocaust being the prime example. Just five years after the Holocaust ended, the Law of Return promised that Jews would never again be stuck without a place to go.

**Politics.** While at least some Jews have lived in *Eretz Yisrael* continuously since Biblical times, modern Zionism involved establishing a Jewish homeland in a region that was overwhelmingly Arab. Given high Arab birthrates and frequent Middle East wars, Israel's leaders have often seen Jewish immigration as a way to secure the Jewish claim to *Eretz Yisrael*.

Do you think the reasons for the Law of Return are still valid today?  
Jot down your thoughts here:

**Religion.** Perhaps most important, however, is the fact that modern Zionists see settling in Israel as a modern mitzvah. Israel is called "the Promised Land" because the Torah describes God's pledge to Abraham that his descendants will be like the stars in the sky and inherit the Land of Israel. Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, and modern Zionism was repeating that story, bringing a scattered and oft-despised people from the corners of the earth to the place God promised them. In addition to fulfilling the promises of the Bible, by settling in Israel Jews were obeying God's command and restoring balance to the Jewish universe. Keeping these ideas in mind, this instant lesson will explore the motivations and experiences of the Jews who have come to Israel under the Law of Return.

# Muslim Lands

The creation of the State of Israel was a turning point for Jews in Muslim and Arab lands for two main reasons. First, many of these Jewish communities—from Morocco and Libya in North Africa to Syria and Iraq in the Middle East to Yemen on the southern tip of Arabia—were traditionally religious and saw Israel's birth as a sign of Messianic times. Second, the successes of the Jews in establishing and defending their own state caused the leaders of many Arab states to turn against the local Jews. For example, hundreds of Jews in Baghdad, Iraq, were fired from their jobs and imprisoned. In Libya more than a thousand Jewish homes were destroyed in rioting. Faced with threats to their economic and physical security—and inspired by the “ingathering of the exiles” as Jews from around the world settled in Palestine—Jews from Muslim lands headed for Israel by the thousands.



April, 1988, Golan Heights. A group of children take a break on the playground of their settlement. The children are Falashas, a Jewish group originally from Ethiopia who immigrated en masse to Israel in the 1970s and 1980s.  
[www.corbis.com/](http://www.corbis.com/)  
Paul A. Souders

**YEMIN:** Some of these migrations made for high drama. For example, 45,000 Jews from Yemen made aliyah in what became known as “Operation Magic Carpet.” Because Yemeni Jews were unfamiliar with modern science and technology, their airlift to Israel struck them as nothing short of miraculous—an echo of the way the Bible described the Jews fleeing Egypt as being carried “on eagles’ wings.”

But upon arriving in Israel the immigrants from Muslim lands still faced hard lives. Because permanent housing was scarce, many of these *olim* settled

in tents or in villages made of temporary structures known as *ma'abarot*. Jobs were scarce, school facilities were substandard, and shelter from the elements was marginal. Despite their status as emergency measures, the *ma'abarot* frequently housed new *olim* for two years or more.

**THE WADI SALIB RIOTS:** As *olim* from North Africa and other parts of the Muslim world moved out of temporary housing and into development towns, collective settlements, and cities, a basic social fact remained apparent—that Israel had become a somewhat segregated society with less opportunity, wealth, and power for Jews from the Middle East than for Jews from Europe. It seemed to many *olim* from Muslim lands that the European Jews who had immigrated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had rigged Israeli society in a way that was unfair to them.

Such feelings were particularly acute among North African *olim*, who found the transition to Israeli life more difficult than had the immigrants from Yemen or Iran. In 1959 riots broke out in Wadi Salib, a poor section of Haifa whose North African residents were furious with the discrimination and poverty they faced in Israeli society.

By the early 1960s the leadership of Israel, most of whom were of European Jewish descent, recognized the disparity in treatment that each group of Jews received. The government of Israel has made many strides in making sure that all Israeli citizens are treated equally and fairly, although some Israelis believe that more still needs to be done.

## Ethiopia

Another important group of post-1948 *olim* has been the Jews of Ethiopia. This community had practiced Judaism in isolation from the rest of world Jewry for centuries, but beginning in the 1970s they faced increased persecution from the communist government of Ethiopia. The “Falasha” Jews, as they were sometimes called, were barred from practicing their religion, and many began to leave the country for refugee camps in neighboring Sudan.

For nearly a decade following 1975 thousands of Ethiopian Jews were secretly airlifted to Israel a handful at a time. But by 1984 the situation had worsened as persecution increased and famine spread. For three months beginning in November, 1984, thousands of Ethiopian Jews were flown from Sudan to Israel in secret. Once the press published accounts of this remarkable immigration, however, "Operation Moses" had to shut down. In 1991 most of the rest of this community came to Israel in a rapid series of flights dubbed "Operation Solomon" that brought 14,000 more Ethiopian Jews to Israel in barely more than a single day.

Like Jews from Muslim lands, Ethiopian Jews in Israel have been concerned about discrimination. In particular, many Ethiopian Jews have objected that Israel's religious leaders required them to "renew the covenant" by officially converting to Judaism, even though they felt 100% Jewish already.

## Soviet Union

Throughout most of Israel's history the largest Jewish community not free to immigrate has been the Jews of the Soviet Union. Under the communist government of the USSR Jews faced discrimination and religious persecution. Soviet hostility to Judaism was even more extreme when it came to support for Israel, particularly after the 1967 and 1973 wars in which the USSR supported the Arab countries in their struggle to destroy the Jewish State. Soviet Jews were in danger of being arrested as "Zionist conspirators," and those who requested a visa to leave the country were often denied and sometimes jailed. The plight of those who were denied (the "refuseniks") and those who were jailed (the "Prisoners of Zion") garnered enormous sympathy and activism on behalf of Soviet Jewry by American, Canadian, and Israeli Jews.

In the late 1970s restrictions on emigration loosened somewhat, and Israel welcomed tens of thousands of Soviet Jews. But the door slammed shut in the early 1980s, and the call around the world to "Let My People Go" became louder. Finally, in the late

1980s, as the Soviet Union broke apart and communist rule ended, Soviet Jews were able to leave the country. At first many headed for the United States, but after 1990 it became harder for Russian Jews to claim refugee status in America and easier for them to fly directly to Israel. Nearly 200,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union came to Israel in 1990, and hundreds of thousands more in the following several years.

Once again Israel was faced with a housing and jobs crisis—this time with a twist, as many of the new immigrants were doctors, lawyers, or musicians who now had to take jobs as more menial laborers. Still, the arrival of so many long-persecuted Jews was thrilling for many Israelis, who elected the most famous refusenik, Natan (Anatoly) Sharansky, to the Knesset in 1996.

## North America

Unlike Jews from Iraq, Ethiopia, or the USSR whose aliyah was a way to flee persecution, *olim* from the United States and Canada came for different reasons. Some simply felt more comfortable in Israel, finding that an all-Jewish environment made them feel more "at home" than they ever could be in Detroit or Montreal. Others fell in love with the land itself, or with Israel's language or its people. But others were motivated by ideology—a set of beliefs that convinced them that Jews belong in Israel, no matter how pleasant Jewish life in the United States or Canada may have seemed. One such *oleh*, ex-New Yorker Hillel Halkin, explained his Zionist ideology in his "Letters to an American Jewish Friend" as follows:



1972: Russian Immigrants to Israel. A Russian mother with her two children. David Rubinger/Corbis

What do you think of Halkin's ideology? Jot down your thoughts here:

- 1) It is natural for a Jew who is committed to his Jewishness to seek to perpetuate Jewish life in himself and in his people.
- 2) For objective historical reasons, Jewish life in the Diaspora is doomed; and conversely, such life has a possible future only in an autonomous or politically sovereign Jewish community living in its own land, that is, in the State of Israel.
- 3) Therefore, it is natural for a Jew who is committed to his Jewishness to desire to live only in Israel."

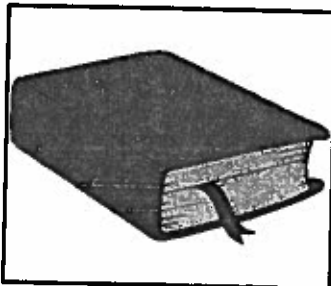
North American Jewish aliyah, while considerably smaller than the immigration from places like North

Africa or Russia, has still had an important impact on the State of Israel. Many North American *olim* have set up companies that have helped Israel's economy and connected it further with the countries from which they came. In addition, the ideological nature of much of North American aliyah (remember, these Jews came because they wanted to and not because they had to) has meant that many of these *olim* have had stronger views in favor of Jewish settlement of the West Bank and other territories conquered by Israel in 1967. Many (but not most) of the Jews living in settlements in these territories are immigrants from North America, Western Europe, and South Africa.

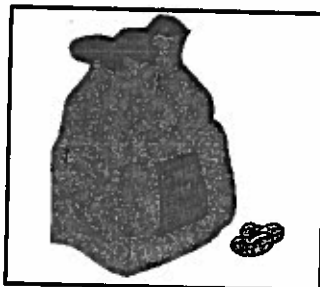
## Activity

Imagine you are an Israeli customs officer about to retire after fifty years of doing your job. You've seen a lot of tourists come through Ben-Gurion Airport (you remember when it used to be called "Lod Airport"). You've also had the pleasure of saying "Heiveinu Shalom Aleikhem"—we bring you greetings of peace—to thousands of *olim*.

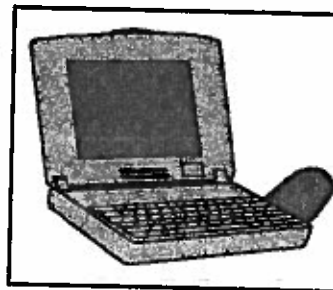
Below are four pictures of objects you've seen in the baggage of the *olim* you've met. Match the objects to the city the person probably came from, and then answer the questions about each object.



A tattered prayer book



A bag of beans



A laptop computer



An Arab dress

Toronto, Canada

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Moscow, the Soviet Union

Fez, Morocco

For each object, answer each of the following questions:

1. What significance do you think it had for the person who brought it to Israel?
2. Where do you think the object was five years after the person made aliyah?



# Birth of Israel



A demonstration on the occasion of the anniversary of the 1943 British White Paper that banned immigration of Jews into Palestine. UPI/Corbis-Bettmann

Do you think the fact that the Holocaust occurred in and of itself made the creation of the State of Israel necessary and justified?

*Jot down your thoughts here:*

## Introduction

In 1945 the Jewish people seemed to have hit rock bottom. Six million Jews had been killed by Nazi Germany in the Holocaust, during which country after country refused to offer refuge from persecution. Hundreds of thousands of European Jews who had survived could not go home again, as much of the continent was destroyed by war and the specter of past and present antisemitism was ever-present.

But three years later Jews around the world celebrated the establishment of an independent state of Israel whose very existence was threatened within hours of its creation. The late 1940s, then, were something of a roller-coaster for the Jewish people, with tragedy and struggle; delight and danger; fear and victory. This instant lesson uncovers the fascinating history of this emotional time for the Jewish people.

By 1945 modern Zionists had been struggling for a Jewish state for more than sixty years. But the Holocaust made the need for a Jewish homeland more obvious than ever before, in two ways. First, the Jews who survived the ghettos and the camps needed a place to settle. More importantly, the Holocaust was allowed to happen precisely because there was no refuge for millions of persecuted Jews.

Still, the task of creating of a Jewish state faced two huge obstacles. First, Palestine was then controlled by Britain, which had severely limited Jewish immigration since the late 1930s. Second, Palestine was surrounded by Arab countries hostile to the idea of a non-Arab, non-Muslim state in their midst.



7/21/1947-Haifa, Palestine: Innocent victims of Britain's refusal to allow Jewish immigration into Palestine, these Jewish children seem unaware of the seriousness of the tragic plight facing their elders after leaving the illegal immigrant ship, *Exodus of 1947*, at Haifa. The ship, jammed with 4,700 homeless Jews, seeking a new life in Palestine, was seized by British naval units after a battle off the Palestine coast. UPI/Corbis-Bettmann

## 1945-1947

The campaign for a Jewish state took place on several fronts. The combination of illegal immigration, underground activity, and diplomacy made the State of Israel a reality.

### Illegal Immigration

**DPs:** The Zionists of Palestine placed a high priority on bringing the quarter million Jews known as “displaced persons” or DPs from Europe to *Eretz Yisrael*. This was important because a larger Jewish population in Palestine made a stronger case for a Jewish state, and because life for these Jews was quite hard, living in “DP camps” without permanent homes or jobs or communities.

The DP problem was distressing to the United States as well, and President Harry S Truman urged the British to allow 100,000 Jews to enter Palestine. The British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was reluctant to do anything that would antagonize the Arab population of Palestine, but he did agree to an Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry in which a group of six Americans and six British would explore various options for solving the refugee problem. On May 1, 1946, the committee unanimously proposed that 100,000 Jews be allowed into Palestine. Since this was contrary to Bevin's preferences, the proposal was dead on arrival.

The members of the Irgun and the Stern Gang have been called terrorists. Is that a fair description for them? How do you feel about Jewish terrorists? Jot down your thoughts here:

**ALIYAH BET:** Since the British and Americans were unable to arrange for legal immigration of the displaced persons, the leadership of the *yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine) turned to illegal immigration. The official quasi-government of the *yishuv* (the Jewish Agency) and its main military arm (the Haganah) worked together to smuggle Jews out of the DP camps, onto trucks, and then onto boats to take them to Palestine.

Because of its “alternative” status this approach was known as “*Aliyah Bet*.” In 1946 more than one thousand refugees a month were smuggled into Palestine. When the British became aware of the operation they blockaded the Palestine coast and put the would-be immigrants into camps in Cyprus, in the Mediterranean Sea. The inability of shiploads of Holocaust survivors to reach their homeland (most famously those on the ship *The Exodus*) was terrible PR for the British, who looked harsh and cruel in the eyes of much of the world. The ensuing sympathy for the Jewish plight was, of course, exactly what the Jewish Agency wanted.

### Underground Activity

Illegal immigration was hardly the only way the Jews of the *yishuv* resisted British rule in Palestine. Several underground Jewish movements sought to make Palestine ungovernable and therefore to force the British to make way for a Jewish state.

For example, in June, 1946, the Haganah blew up almost every bridge connecting Palestine with surrounding nations, which paralyzed British transportation and communication needs. Most of the Haganah's energy, however, was focused on arranging for illegal immigration.

That wasn't true of other, smaller, more extreme groups within Palestine. The Stern Gang assassinated dozens of important British diplomats and soldiers in the late 1940s, and the Irgun, under its leader Menachem Begin, set off a bomb in the British headquarters in Jerusalem's King David Hotel, killing ninety-one people. These groups also attacked British vehicles, blew up railroad tracks, and broke their fellow activists out of British prisons.

## Diplomacy

**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMISSION ON PALESTINE:** While much of the *yishuv* focused on resisting and subverting British rule, some of its top leadership hoped for a peaceful diplomatic solution. This option appeared more realistic when in February, 1947, the British decided to turn the fate of Palestine over to the new United Nations.

When the UN first discussed the question of Palestine in April, 1947, they decided to appoint a Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP) made up of eleven neutral nations such as Canada, India, Peru, and Sweden to investigate the situation and propose solutions.

The Jewish Agency met with UNSCOP and asked for a Jewish state from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea. The Arabs of Palestine, however, boycotted the UNSCOP and insisted that no Jewish state was acceptable.

**THE PARTITION PLAN:** In August, 1947, UNSCOP unanimously recommended that Palestine become independent of Britain. A majority of the commission also proposed that Palestine be partitioned, or divided, into an Arab state and a Jewish state, with Jerusalem to remain internationalized.

Although the Jewish state suggested by this partition plan was significantly less than the Jewish Agency wanted (it denied them cities such as Akko, Beersheva, Hebron, and, of course, Jerusalem), and although the proposed borders hardly seemed secure, the Jewish Agency welcomed UNSCOP's report and its support of Jewish independence and continued immigration. The Arabs, however, rejected the report completely.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly, in which every country has one seat, voted 33-13 (with ten abstentions) to support the partition of Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state.

## 1948-1949

**THE BRITISH MANDATE:** The decision by the United Nations to create a Jewish state began the first phase of Israel's War of Independence. Palestinian Arabs attacked Jewish settlements throughout Palestine, and over the next six months Palestinian Jews and Palestinian Arabs fought a civil war. In this conflict the British (still technically in power) consistently took actions that favored the Arab side. The weapons of the Haganah were confiscated while Britain sold arms to the Arabs.

Because the Jewish State faced such threats even before it was created, the leaders of the *yishuv* stepped up their efforts to organize politically, economically, and militarily. The head of the Jewish Agency, David Ben-Gurion, flew to the United States to raise money for the effort. In addition, every effort was made to continue helping Jewish refugees from Europe to enter Palestine by any means necessary.

**THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE:** On May 14, 1948, the British completed their withdrawal from Palestine, and Ben-Gurion proclaimed the State of Israel in a Tel Aviv museum while standing under a portrait of Theodor Herzl, who had written of his dreams of such a day a half-century earlier.

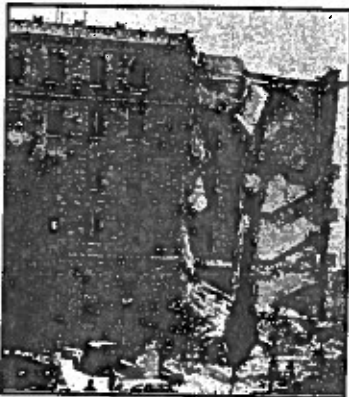
The next day five Arab armies invaded the infant state—Egypt from the west, Lebanon and Syria from the north, Jordan and Iraq from the east.

1948- Jaffa, Israel: He used to be No. 80620 in the notorious Auschwitz concentration camp. The number is indelibly stamped in his forearm for the world to see. But now he is a free man, and he has a gun to defend his freedom. He is Aaron Stern, fighter with Israel's Haganah, who is shown on guard at Jaffa's Manshiem Quarter. Hundreds of other ex-numbers fight in Haganah for the precious thing whose value they learned behind barbed wire.  
UPI/Corbis-Bettman



The heart of the war was the battle for Jerusalem. The Arab countries wanted Jerusalem because after Mecca and Medina it is the third holiest city in Islam. For the Jews, of course, Jerusalem has had a special status going back to the days of King David. In addition, Jerusalem's strategic location in the hills above the coastal plain where much of the Jewish population lived gave a decisive advantage to the side that could capture and defend the Holy City.

Despite heavy fighting, Israel was unable to win the battle for Jerusalem's Old City. Still, when fighting ceased at the end of 1948, Israel controlled the newer areas outside the Old City as well as much of the Galilee and the Negev. Despite being outnumbered, Israel's armies were better trained, equipped, and commanded. Israel's borders at the end of the War for Independence were much more secure than those proposed by UNSCOP. While Israel celebrated its military victories, it mourned the loss of the six thousand Jews who were killed during the war and agonized over its inability to unify the city to which the Jewish people felt the most attached.



7/28/1946- Jerusalem, Palestine: A view of the King David Hotel after it had been partially destroyed by a bomb blast July 22nd. Two huge explosions from mines planted in the basement by terrorists demolished the whole west wing of the hotel with a death toll of 80. UPI/Corbis-Bettmann

## Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel

*Eretz Yisrael* was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom....

[The] recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable. This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

Accordingly, we, members of the people's council, representatives of the Jewish community of *Eretz Yisrael* and of the Zionist movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over *Eretz Yisrael* and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in *Eretz Yisrael*, to be known as the State of Israel....

The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations....

We appeal to the Jewish people throughout the diaspora to rally round the Jews of *Eretz Yisrael* in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream—the redemption of Israel.

Imagine you were one of the people who heard David Ben-Gurion read the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. Decide whether you are:

- a. A Holocaust survivor who entered Palestine just six months earlier after years in DP camps;
- b. A sabra (Jew born in *Eretz Yisrael*) who grew up on a kibbutz and serves in the Haganah;
- c. An American Jewish Zionist traveling in Palestine to help the cause of a Jewish state; or
- d. A Jewish teacher born in Russia who has two sons fighting for the Jewish State—one in the Haganah and the other in the Irgun.

Then read the following excerpt from the Declaration of Independence and write a diary entry from the night of May 14, 1948, about how you feel about what you heard.

Start your diary entry here:

# Unit One: Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants in Israel

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# Unit One: Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants in Israel

## Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Ethiopian Jewish immigrants add to the multiple narratives, perspectives, and voices present among contemporary Israelis.
- Personal narratives from Ethiopian Jewish immigrants in Israel strengthen our connection to the people of Israel.
- Ethiopian immigrants' creation of new Jewish rituals and adoption of Israeli Jewish customs illustrates a desire to integrate into Israeli culture, society, and memory.
- The Ethiopian Jewish immigrant experience reveals multiple insights into the experience of transitions and entering a new place physically, intellectually, and emotionally.

## Unit Goals:

- To engage in new understandings of the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Israeli society.
- To survey the greatest rewards and challenges of Ethiopian immigration to Israel.
- To explore multiple understandings of Jewishness and Judaism and their relation to the students' own Jewish identities.
- To examine ways in which religious and ethnic minorities maintain their identities in a diverse society.

## Unit Objectives:

By the end of the unit, campers should be able to:

- Analyze the role that isolation from the global Jewish community played in the Jewish identity formation of the Ethiopian Jewish community, including their determination to reach Jerusalem.
- Create a philosophy statement that addresses the decision to be Jewish and remain Jewish in the face of adversity.
- Determine the greatest rewards and challenges of Ethiopian immigration to Israel.
- Compare and contrast Ethiopian Jewish practices, rituals, symbols, holidays, and texts with Ashkenazic and Sephardic customs and with one's own Jewish practices.
- Re-assess what is "common" Jewish practice through comparing and contrasting how they practice Judaism with a completely different Jewish community.
- Evaluate the experience of being a Jewish minority in relation to the larger American society and relate it to the Ethiopian Jewish experience of being a minority.
- Interpret the rituals involved in the holiday Sigd and their meanings for the Ethiopian Jewish community.
- Illustrate ways in which Ethiopian Jewish immigrants contribute to the multiple narratives, perspectives, and voices present among contemporary Israelis.
- Demonstrate the shifting nature of culture through the influence of an immigrant community's culture on the culture of a country, and vice versa.
- Coordinate a Sigd ceremony that demonstrates knowledge of the Ethiopian community, the immigrant experience, and their influence on Israeli culture.

**Evidence of Learning:**

- Campers will make important decisions throughout the unit's simulation from Ethiopia to Israel.
- Campers will create their own philosophy statement on Jewish perseverance through adversity.
- Campers will create their own definition of what it means to be Jewish.
- Campers will organize a celebration of the Ethiopian holiday, Sigd and teach the journey and religious practices of Ethiopian immigrants to the entire camp.

**Reflection Groups:** The reflection groups for the first week will be conducted in the same way as the daily Ethiopian coffee ceremony. Participants will gather toward the end of the day and drink three small cups of the beverage of their choice (water, lemonade, hot chocolate, etc.) together as they reflect on the activities of the day. Questions will be provided at the end of each lesson to help guide the conversation for that day. These questions are not mandatory if the campers want to lead the discussion based on their own observations or interests.

# Lesson One

## History—Part I

### Objectives:

- Analyze the role that isolation from the global Jewish community played in the Jewish identity formation of the Ethiopian Jewish community, including their determination to reach Jerusalem.
- Create a philosophy statement that addresses the decision to be Jewish and remain Jewish in the face of adversity.

### Materials:

- White clothing for opening skit
- Unit Resource 1.1A- Dictionary of Amharic terms, Map of Ethiopia, Family Tree
- Tarps or blankets for Group Bonding Activity
- Paper and pens/pencils

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (5 mins):

The campers will enter a room to find two or more counselors dressed in traditional Ethiopian garb (in this case, all white clothing), sitting on the floor, waiting for the campers to arrive.

#### One or more counselors may alternate acting out the script:

*Unquandena gebachu:* Blessed be those who have entered. Please sit down and make yourselves comfortable in our home. We have been waiting here for you for centuries! Welcome to Ethiopia. It is now the 17th century CE and we are in the Kino Village in the mountains of Gondar, which sits at the border of Sudan. The Christians exiled our people to this land in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE because we are Jews. When we refused to change our ways and convert to Christianity, they sent us away. If my predictions are correct (which they are), we will remain here, in the mountains of Gondar, for another 2,000 years. We believe that we are the last of the Jewish people and are determined to fight to continue our tradition. The language that we are speaking is Amharic, but when we write, our script is called Ge'ez, from the extinct Ge'ez language.

We pray for the day when we can enter the Promised Land again and truly be a free people. This is why we have called you here today. You and your friends are going to help us reach the land of Israel—the land of our ancestors. It may take some time traveling, but at camp, anything is possible. We are going to travel from the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Ethiopia to modern day Israel in the span of a week. Along the way, you are going to discover the wonders of Ethiopian Jewish life and make difficult and exciting decisions leading up to your immigration to Israel.



Now, it's time to begin your journey. *Gzavier Mesgen*—God be Blessed and we'll see you again soon.<sup>1</sup>

### **Activity 1 (15 mins): The Family Tree**

Divide the campers into groups (up to 8 campers each). Each group should receive a dictionary of Amharic terms, a map of Ethiopia, and a family tree that will determine their group name (Refer to Unit Resource 1.1A).

#### Counselors will explain:

In order to take this journey, you will need to know your family tree and learn some Amharic. Each group has 15 minutes to fill out their family tree, study the map of Ethiopia, and test each other on the Amharic terms. As groups, you will work together at each station throughout the week. Try to learn some of the Amharic phrases because we will use them throughout the journey and you will be expected to say them in conversation. Look to see if any of the words look familiar or if you have questions about their meanings.

### **Activity 2 (35 mins): Camp Family Bonding Exercises**

#### Counselors will explain:

Ethiopian families are extremely close-knit. Extended family members treat one another as siblings, often spending large amounts of time in one another's homes. At camp, we are all like family members. Before we continue with our journey to Israel, we are going to see how well you can communicate and cooperate as a camp family.

1. Ask each group to stand on a separate tarp or blanket. The entire group must be on the tarp completely. Once everyone is settled, tell the group that they must flip the carpet over while standing on it, working together. (To make it harder: tell the group that they are only allowed to refer to one another using their respect names or else they have to start over.)
2. Ask each group to move as a monster from point A to B (one side of the field to the other). Each person must be connected to the monster, but they are only allowed half the number of hands and feet touching the ground (an eight person group would be allowed 8 hands and 8 feet touching the ground). To make it more challenging, decrease the number of allowed limbs on the ground.

#### Possible Follow-up Questions:

1. How well did your group communicate during this activity? (*Really well—we worked together like a real family. We argued a lot at first. We designated a leader, which really helped. Poorly—we could do better next time. We really wanted to finish first, so we knew that we had to listen to each other.*)
2. How much time did your group spend planning your strategy vs. actually attempting to complete the goal? (*We didn't strategize at all—we just started going. We created*

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<sup>1</sup> Historical dates and information from: "Culture & Heritage." *Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews (IAEJ)*. Web. 13 Apr. 2012. <<http://iaej-english.org/about-the-community/culture-heritage>>

- a plan and then started. It was chaos because there were too many ideas. Everyone's voices were heard, so it worked really well.)*
3. Was there too much planning? Not enough? *(There was the perfect amount of planning. We're like family already! We could have planned more, but we're happy cause we completed the task.)*

### **Activity 3 (30 mins): Family Consensus**

Counselors will explain (in their roles from the set induction):

Now that we know you can work well with your camp family, we think you are ready to handle larger issues of concern in Ethiopia. As we explained before, we are now in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the region of Gondar. The Axum Dynasty exiled us here in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century when we refused to convert to Christianity. Times weren't always terrible though. During the 9<sup>th</sup> Century, Queen Judith led a revolt that overthrew the Axum Dynasty and a new royal dynasty allowed us to have some power for about 350 years. Unfortunately, the Axum Dynasty took over again in 1270, leading to 400 years of war (can you imagine, 400 years!). The war ended in 1624, along with our freedom. When the Ethiopian King Sosenius took over in 1632, we became known as Falashas, meaning "outsiders" or "strangers." But we have always preferred the name Beta Yisrael—House of Israel.

Many of our people were forced to convert or were sold into slavery. Our land was taken away, our books and sacred texts were destroyed and we were forbidden from practicing the Jewish religion. Still, we persisted, as you can see today. We have persisted and still dream of reaching Jerusalem—the Promised Land.

Campers will divide into groups and answer the discussion questions together.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think the Jews of Ethiopia persisted, continuing to practice Judaism when the ruling powers (the Axum Dynasty) wanted to convert them?
  - *(They wanted to carry the traditions on to their children and grandchildren. They couldn't change their beliefs. They didn't want to pretend to be someone they are not or to believe something they don't. I'm not sure—it would be hard when you know that if you just change religions, you might be more accepted. They knew that one day they would be free. If they persisted long enough, they would reach Jerusalem.)*
- In what other situations have the Jewish people persisted and refused to give up their religion?
  - *(During the Crusades. In Europe, for many years. In Tsarist Russia and in the Soviet Union. In Persia—during the Purim story.)*
- If faced with this situation, do you think you would make the same decision?
  - *(It would be a hard decision. I would persist—I love being Jewish. Being Jewish is such an important part of me, how could I just give it up? I may pretend to be another religion and do what the Jews did during the time of the Maccabees by hiding that I am Jewish.)*
- Could you see yourself taking a different path?

- *(I think it would depend on what my family and friends decide to do. If everyone is converting, then who else is there to be Jewish with? I would definitely continue being Jewish—there is no way I would convert. I would consider taking a different path. I haven't been faced with this situation, so I'm not actually sure.)*
- What role may one's family or community play in the decision you would make?
  - *(My family and community would play a large role. It would be scary being Jewish without them. I think I would be Jewish anyway—it's more about what I believe and who I am than about them. I would try to convince them to stay Jewish too.)*
- Why do you think Jerusalem was important to the Ethiopian Jewish community in Gondar who remained Jewish?
  - *(Jerusalem was holy for them. It was something they had to look forward to—it provided hope. They made Jerusalem seem better than it actually probably is, but it helped them envision their future away from persecution.)*
- What kind of hope do you think Jerusalem may have provided?
  - *(It was their only hope. It got them to think about a place where they could be free and they were determined to reach it.)*

Counselors will explain:

Write a philosophy statement that addresses the decision to be Jewish and remain Jewish in the face of adversity. Recall other instances in Jewish history in which the decision to remain Jewish was made—eventually leading to our own Jewish existence today. Take a few minutes and think: If you were faced with a similar situation and were pressured to convert, what are reasons that would encourage you to persevere and continue being Jewish?

Directions for writing a philosophy statement:

A philosophy statement explains why you do what you do. This philosophy statement should contain 5 sections:

1. **Determine your reasons for being Jewish.** This can include, but is not limited to, reasons related to God, Torah, traditions, holidays, rituals, culture, Israel, family, community, and values.
2. **Define your role within the Jewish community.** Think about the types of activities in which you engage, including going to camp.
3. **Define your role as a Jew within the larger community.** How/Do do you contribute to the world in a Jewish way? What Jewish values may guide your actions in the world?
4. **Write an inspirational message.** Write a message that would inspire and motivate yourself and others to choose Judaism and identifying as a Jew, even during difficult times.
5. **Advice for future generations.** Finish your philosophy statement with final words for future generations. What would you want to tell your descendants about being Jewish and fighting for your rights as a Jew?

**Conclusion (5 mins):**

Share your philosophy statement with the rest of the group.

**Reflection Group Questions (20 mins—later in the day with their reflection group):**

1. Did you know anything about the Ethiopian Jewish community before today?  
*(No, not a thing. Yes, I have been to Israel and volunteered in an absorption center. Only a little.)*
2. What did you learn that you found most interesting?  
*(I didn't know that they spoke Amharic or that their script is called Ge'ez. I didn't know that they had been isolated from everyone else for so long. I found it really interesting that their other name is Beta Yisrael—House of Israel, but they lived in Ethiopia. Their family structure and names are interesting.)*
3. What did you find challenging about today's activities?  
*(It was difficult to think about what I would do if I were being pressured to convert. I found it challenging to do the teambuilding activities. There was nothing that challenging—just interesting. It was difficult to think about how I contribute to the Jewish community.)*
4. What are you looking forward to learning more about?  
*(I want to know more about their form of Judaism. I want to learn about what happens next—how do they get to Israel? I want to know what their life is like now.)*

Unit Resource 1.1A  
**Dictionary of Amharic Terms<sup>2</sup>**

*Ame-segi-na-lew*: Thank you

*Amharic*: Ethiopian national language

*Awo*: Yes

*Aye*: No

*Ciao*: Bye, So long

*Ge'ez*: The written script of Amharic

*Bal-injera*: friend (literally owners of *injera*)

Beta Israel: name for Ethiopian Jew

*Couta*: hand-woven cloth worn by women

*Dena*: well

*Dehna Hun* (masc.), *Dehna Hungi* (fem.), *Dehna Hunu* (plural): Goodbye

*Denanech*: Are you well?

*Erat*: Dinner

*Falasha*: Amharic term for Ethiopian Jew, meaning the “stranger.” Often considered to be derogatory.

*Fassika*: Passover

*Gabbi*: hand woven cotton garment worn by men

*Gzavier*: God

*Gzavier Mesgen*: God be Blessed

*Ine*: I

*Inga*: We

*Injera* (pictured below with traditional Ethiopian food on top): traditional bread; resembles a large, spongy pancake; made of teff flour and water

*Kes*: priest or rabbi (plural-kesouch)

*Megib*: Food

*Orit*: Torah

*Qoors*: Breakfast

*Selam*: Hello

*Sanbat Selam*: Shabbat Shalom

*Tiru*: Good

*Undemenech* (masc.); *Undemenesh* (fem.): How are you?

*Unquandena metachu*: Blessed be the arrivals

*Unquandena gebachu*: Blessed be those who have entered

*Undetaderk* (masc.); *Undetaderesh* (fem.): Good evening

*Yikerta*: Excuse Me

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<sup>2</sup> Naomi Samuel. *The Moon is Bread*. (New York: Gefen Books, 1999), glossary.

**Days of the Week:**

Sunday: *Ihud*  
Monday: *Segno*  
Tuesday: *Maksegno*  
Wednesday: *Erob*  
Thursday: *Hamus*  
Friday: *Arb*  
Saturday: *Kidame*

**Numbers:**

One: And	Eleven: Asra-and
Two: Hulet	Twelve: Asra-hulet
Three: Sost	Thirteen: Asra-sost, etc.
Four: Arat	Twenty: Haya
Five: Amist	Twenty-one: Haya-and, etc.
Six: Sidist	Thirty: Selasa
Seven: Sebat	Forty: Arba
Eight: Semmint	Fifty: Amsa
Nine: Zetegn	One Hundred: And meto
Ten: Asser	One Thousand: And shi

***Injera*—The Traditional Ethiopian Bread**

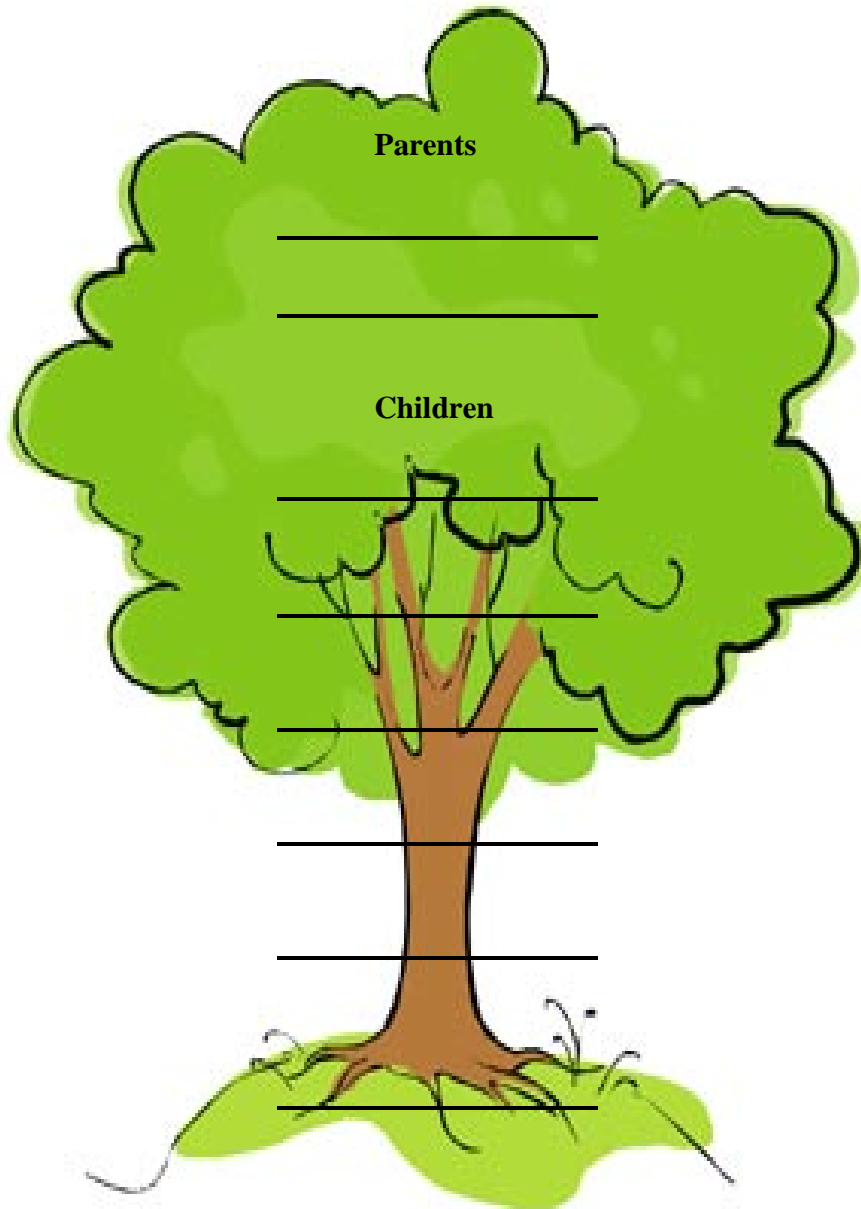
The way that Ethiopian families and friends share food is an expression of their culture. Has anyone ever eaten Ethiopian food? It's served on top of a large piece of traditional Ethiopian bread, called *injera*, which looks like a spongy pancake. The *injera* soaks up the juices from the food, which are eaten with another piece of *injera* (used as an eating utensil instead of a fork). The name for a friend in Amharic is *bal-injera*, literally "owner of *injera*." A friend is literally someone with whom you share *injera*.

## Map of Ethiopia



**Current Location:** Gondar  
**Desired Location:** Jerusalem, Israel

# The \_\_\_\_\_ Family Tree



## Directions:

1. Choose two group leaders and write their names in the "Parents" section of the tree.
2. List everyone else in the group as "children" according to their order of birth.
3. In the traditional Ethiopian family, people do not use family names. They use their first name and then their father's first name. Choose who the "father" of the group will be and fill that name in where it reads, "The \_\_\_\_\_ Family Tree." This is your group's new name.
4. Each person in an Ethiopian family has an informal name that everyone uses and a more formal, respect name that may be used by younger people. Next to your normal name on the tree, write your new "respect name" that may be used by members of your group.



# Lesson Two

## History—Part II

### Objectives:

- Determine the greatest rewards and challenges of Ethiopian immigration to Israel.

### Materials:

- White clothing for opening skit
- Cardboard for “Crossing into Jerusalem” Activity
- Unit Resource 1.2A- “Crossing into Jerusalem” Questions
- Unit Resource 1.2B- Operation Sheet and Questions
- Israeli flags, welcome signs, music, and snacks
- Unit Resource 1.2C- Ethiopian Jewish Immigrant Quotes

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (5 mins):

(Ethiopian Simulation continued)

The campers will enter a room to find two or more counselors dressed in traditional Ethiopian garb (in this case, all white clothing), sitting on the floor, waiting for the campers to arrive.

One or more counselors may alternate acting out the script:

*Unquandena gebachu:* Blessed be those who have entered. Last time we met, it was the 17<sup>th</sup> century and I was telling you the story of the Beta Israel and our fight to stay Jewish throughout the centuries, especially after King Sosenius took the throne in 1632. It’s been many years since then. It is now the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and we are in a Refugee camp, awaiting rescue from Israel’s military...but I will fill you in on the story from then until now.

For many, many years we refused to convert to Christianity and continued living in Gondar, still thinking that we were the only Jews living on earth. And no one knew we were here for centuries! We were in complete isolation. Finally, in 1654, the Chief Rabbi of Egypt, Rabbi David ben Solomon ibn Avi Zimra visited. Don’t worry—you can call him by his nickname, Radbaz. So Radbaz visited and declared to the world that even though our Jewish practices are different from other Jews around the world, we are indeed Jews! (As if WE didn’t already know.) The word began to spread about the Beta Israel community and more explorers came to Gondar.

Two explorers are extremely important in our history. In 1876, Professor Joseph HaLevi visited us and when he returned to Europe, he started really fighting for our cause. He created an organization called “Kol Yisroel Chaverim” meaning “All Israel are Friends” and taught the Ethiopian languages, Amharic and Tigrinia, at a University in Paris. One of his students, Jaques Faitlovitch visited back and forth from Europe beginning in 1904. He established the first of many schools to help educate our people in Hebrew and Judaic studies and named us the “Lost Tribe”—showing that we were once a part of the entire Jewish community but eventually wandered off to Ethiopia. He introduced many new Jewish traditions and symbols—such as the Star of David, Hanukkah, and lighting Shabbat candles.

We are fortunate to have received help from people in Europe and Israel. The Jewish Agency established more schools here after Israel became a State. But the situation was still terrible for us. In the 70's and 80's, we were still struggling and began fleeing to refugee camps, traveling by foot for long periods of time. Some fled to Sudan and others to Addis Ababa, the capital city. We were all afraid of being caught by the police or attacked by thieves in the desert. Although these travels were extremely dangerous and some of our family members were too old or sick to make it all the way, we are blessed to have made it this far—to these refugee camps.

But do you remember where we really dream of going? Yes, you're right. We wait here, hoping that help will arrive to bring us to **Jerusalem**—the home of our ancestors. And that is why you are here today. We need your help once again. This time, you are going to help us cross into Jerusalem.

### **Activity 1 (40 mins): Crossing into Jerusalem**

#### Counselors will explain:

The end goal is for the entire group to travel from the “Refugee camp” on one side of the field to Jerusalem on the other side of the field. Our aim is to be in Jerusalem and to live in our homeland with other Jews.

Stepping on cardboard activity:

1. The group will receive small cardboard pieces (a little more than half the amount of people, i.e. if there are 20 people, they should receive about 12 pieces of cardboard). The goal is to get everyone across to the other end using the cardboard as stepping boards across the field. The pieces can be sent backward in the line. If a board is left untouched, the counselors can remove it from the field. If someone is caught with their foot somewhat off the board, they will have to answer a question (Unit Resource 1.2 A). If they answer incorrectly, they will be sent back to the beginning (or alternatively, be blindfolded).
2. Once everyone is across, each family tree group will meet and counselors will give every group a card stating the rescue mission that brought them to Israel. (Unit Resource 1.2 B) (Operation Moses, Operation Joshua/Sheba, or Operation Solomon.)
3. Each group will answer the questions on the card together.
4. After they are finished discussing, the groups will share the details of the Operation that brought them into Israel and their answers with the other groups.

### **Activity 2: Welcome to Israel (10 mins)**

Set up a room with Israeli flags, decorations, music, snacks, etc.

#### One or more counselors may alternate acting out the script:

*Bruchim Habaim L'Yisrael*—Welcome to Israel. Toda Rabah for all your help along this journey to Israel. We are finally in the Promised Land after centuries of praying for this day. The feeling is one of relief, gratitude, and thanksgiving. But there is still so much to do before we can settle. Unlike the simplicity of Ethiopian society, we now have to learn about Israel's laws, policies, housing, banking, and all the technology that we did not have in Gondar. We will each receive a Hebrew name and will have to decide which name to use in our everyday lives—

our Amharic name or our Hebrew name. Since we lived in villages, we didn't even have electricity. This process is quite overwhelming—especially because we still have to learn Hebrew! Most of us will move into absorption centers for a few years before getting an apartment of our own. We will have to decide where our children are going to attend school and see them enter the army when they're eighteen. All of these transitions—from the simple life to the bureaucracy of Israel—will all be difficult to maneuver. But I'm sure you understand in some way.

Possible Discussion Questions:

Has there ever been a time when you've moved somewhere new—a new country, city, school, religious school, or camp? Did you have to learn a new language or slang for the place? Did you have to catch onto a new culture? What was it like being in this new environment? How long did it take you to adjust? How do you make the new place comfortable? Is it possible to make the new place feel like home?

### **Activity 3: Ethiopian Jewish Quotes (35 mins)**

Set-up the room with quotes from Ethiopian Jewish immigrants (Unit Resource 1.2C).

Counselors will explain:

Now we are going to look at perspectives from actual immigrants. Around the room are quotes from Ethiopian Jewish immigrants—expressing their own experiences of immigration. Take a few minutes to go around and read the quotes.

Quotes Activity:

Counselors will explain which quote the campers should stand in front of and then ask the corresponding questions.

1. Stand in front of the quote that inspires you the most.
  - a. Why does this quote inspire you?
  - b. How does this quote impact your understanding of Israel?
2. Stand in front of the quote that concerns you the most.
  - a. Why is this so?
  - b. How does this quote impact your understanding of Israel?
3. Stand in front of the quote that resembles your idea of Israel the most.
  - a. Why did you choose this quote? What does Israel represent for you?
  - b. If you chose not to stand in front of a quote, why? What is your idea of Israel?

Wrap-Up:

- According to these quotes, what do you think are the greatest rewards of being in Israel for Ethiopian Jews?
- On the other hand, what do you think are the greatest obstacles of being in Israel for Ethiopian Jews?
- According to these quotes, do you think Israel is a “melting pot” or a “salad bowl?”
- How do you think these things will change over time?
- Do you think Ethiopian Jews will still be able to maintain a connection to their heritage?
  - Is this important?

- Should Israel be a “melting pot” of cultures, ethnicities, and identities or a “salad bowl” where everyone can live together but as individuals?

**Reflection Group Questions:**

1. What did you learn about the immigration from Ethiopia that you didn't know before?  
Anything surprise you?
2. During the quote activity, which quotes resonated most with you?
  - a. Which ones will you remember? Why?
3. Where do you see Israel during this whole process? (Both symbolically for the Ethiopian Jewish community and practically?) What was/is Israel's role now?
4. What do you think happens when an immigrant comes into contact with a place that they dreamed so long to see? What do you think this has been like for Ethiopian Jews?

Unit Resource 1.2 A  
**Crossing into Jerusalem Questions w/ Answers**

1. What Dynasty tried to force the Jews of Ethiopia to convert to Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century? (The Axum Dynasty)
2. What is the language that Ethiopian Jews speak? (Amharic)
3. What is the script called that Ethiopian Jews use to write? (Ge'ez)
4. What is another name for an Ethiopian Jew? (Beta Israel/Yisrael or the more negative term, Falasha).
5. What does the phrase Beta Israel mean? (House of Israel)
6. What does the term Falasha mean? (Stranger, Foreign One)
7. Where did the Axum Dynasty exile the Jews in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century? (Gondar)
8. What is the Torah called in Amharic? (Orit)
9. Who labeled the Beta Israel as “The Lost Tribe” and tried to teach them Jewish customs from outside of their community? (Jaques Faitlovitch)
10. What is your Ethiopian name and why? How are children named in Ethiopia? (The parents give each child a name and then add on the father’s first name.)
11. How do you say, “Excuse Me” in Amharic? (Yikerta)

Unit Resource 1.2B  
**Operation Sheet and Questions**

**Welcome to Israel! Operation Moses** was the first secret airlift bringing the Beta Israel from refugee camps in Sudan to Israel. This occurred between November 1984 and January 1985, transporting a total of 6,700 Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

**Questions:**

- What may it feel like knowing you still have family members and friends in Ethiopia (especially not knowing if there will be more airlifts to Israel)?
- What would you want to tell the people who are still in Ethiopia?

**Welcome to Israel! Operation Joshua/Sheba** occurred in 1985 and was the second airlift transporting the Beta Israel from refugee camps in Sudan to Israel. This was the smallest of the Operation missions, bringing 494 Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

**Questions:**

- What may it feel like knowing you still have family members and friends in Ethiopia?
- What would you want to tell the people who are still in Ethiopia?
- How does it feel being reunited with some of your family and friends in Israel?

**Welcome to Israel! Operation Solomon** took place from May 24 -May 25, 1991 and was the third and final mission bringing the Beta Israel from refugee camps in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital city, to Israel. This Operation was brief (less than 24 hours long) but was the most successful, transporting 14,400 Ethiopian Jews to Israel—compared to 6,700 during Operation Moses in 1984-1985 and 494 during Operation Joshua/Sheba in 1985.

**Questions:**

- Since you were the last group who made it into Israel, what do you think it was like being in Ethiopia without all your friends and family?
- How does it feel being reunited with family and friends in Israel?

Unit Resource 1.2 C  
**Ethiopian Jewish Immigrant Quotes**

“To experience the sense of being free as a Jew, I feel as the happiest person there is for being able to achieve what my ancestor dreamt on- to live in the land of Israel as well as being free. On this land I raise my kids and try to do as much as I can for my beloved country. Even if sometimes we have worries and fears what overcome them all is the joy of fulfilling my biggest dream.”<sup>3</sup>

“One of the biggest mistakes in the integration of the Ethiopian Jews was that no room was left to express our culture. Often we have felt that the culture that we brought is something we should get rid of it. Due to this [feeling] many of the youngsters from the immigrations of the 80’s and ‘91 has chosen to disguise their identities such as: changing our names into Hebrew names, stop speaking Amharic, we were embarrassed to bring our parents to school and of course our main interest was to become a strong Israeli with no other culture involved.”<sup>4</sup>

“The things I love about Israel are: the warmth of the people, the free[dom] to be a Jew with no need to apologize, everything is open and I can achieve every dream I have. As an immigrant and as a Jew, I have many other Jews around the world who care for me. I’ve completed Bachelor and master degree and all the people who believe in me are part of my success.”<sup>5</sup>

“People understand the need for culture oriented absorption so there is more awareness and willingness to learn about the others' culture and implement it in the community rather than forcing the dominant culture on the new immigrant.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rifka. Personal communication. October 31, 2011. (Pseudonyms are used for all immigrants who were interviewed for this Curriculum Guide. The pseudonyms correspond to those in the School of Jewish Nonprofit Management Capstone written in conjunction with this Curriculum Guide: “The Experience of Absorption Among Jewish Immigrant Populations in Israel: Ethiopian, Former Soviet Union, and North American Communities.”)

<sup>4</sup> Rifka. Personal communication. October 31, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Rifka. Personal communication. October 31, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Tamar. Personal communication. November 2, 2011.

“What do I most enjoy about living in Israel? The feeling that I belonged here even before I came to this country. Feeling of knowing who am I as part of the Jewish world and that I'm equal and belong.”<sup>7</sup>

“My integration process went through several stages: at the beginning I stayed away from anything connected to the culture I came from, I wanted to become a “normal” kid with no Ethiopian characters... Today I'm very much Israeli Ethiopian Jewish, very much connected to my roots.”<sup>8</sup>

“In my dream [our village] still rests peacefully in between the eucalyptus trees, and the Gorezen River flows gently by. There is the smell of freshly ground coffee roasting in the open fire, and the sound of children laughing as they play in the grass. The cattle are browsing on the hillside, and in the distance the white peaks of the Rasdejen Mountains touch the sky. There is a rich feeling of comfort in my dreams, which melts as I wake and, opening my eyes, I remember that it is all gone.”<sup>9</sup>

“Israelis often refer to the immigrant generation as ‘the desert generation,’ it is somehow assumed that their children will not have the problems they had: that having been born here they will automatically belong and feel Israeli. I think that it is time for this society to accept itself as a wonderfully rich mosaic of different cultures. All the children here are to some extent **rainbow children**, in the sense that it is perfectly legitimate for each and every one of them to combine in their own unique personal identity the special and varied cultural heritage that is their birthright.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Tamar. Personal communication. November 2, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Rifka. Personal communication. October 31, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Naomi Samuel. *The Moon is Bread*. (New York: Gefen Books, 1999), 8. Naomi Samuel, originally from England, immigrated to Israel where she met her husband, Zafan, an immigrant from Ethiopia. *The Moon is Bread* is the story of Zafan's life until his marriage to Naomi.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 190.



“The Falashmura [Jewish converts to Christianity] converted because they wanted to enjoy the benefit that comes with being Christian in a Christian country—education, ownership of land, and government jobs...But now that the Jews are being redeemed by Israel, it suddenly pays to be Jewish. The Falashmura want to return to the faith and are willing to reconvert, even in the most rigid orthodox way.”<sup>11</sup>

“After sixteen days of walking during the night and hiding during the days (which was challenging since most of it is desert), facing death of relatives who couldn't walk anymore, we arrived to refugee camps in Sudan and stayed there, hiding our Jewish identity for a year and a half (some stayed longer) until the Israeli government sent airplanes and brought us to the promise land in [an] operation known as ‘Operation Moses.’”<sup>12</sup>

“It was shocking for us to come to Israel and see Jews of different color as we always believed all Jews look like us—dark skinned. My brothers and I were easily assimilated in the country; we learned the language and culture very quickly but for my parents, culture differences were challenging.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Asher Naim. *Saving the Lost Tribe*. (New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 2003), 255-56.

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication. November 2, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Personal communication. November 2, 2011.

# Lesson Three

## Jewish Practice—Part I

### Objectives:

- Compare and contrast Ethiopian Jewish practices, rituals, symbols, holidays, and texts with Ashkenazic and Sephardic customs and with one's own Jewish practices.
- Re-assess what is “common” Jewish practice through comparing and contrasting how they practice Judaism with a completely different Jewish community.

### Materials:

- Slips of paper and pens/pencils
- Unit Resource 1.3A- Excerpts
- Unit Resource 1.3B- Charts
- Unit Resource 1.3C- Flashcards

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (15 mins):

Campers should sit in a circle, ready for the activity with a pencil and a slip of paper.

#### Counselors will explain:

Today, we are going to do a “snowball.” This is an anonymous way to hear everyone's response. Take a few minutes to fill in the following statement, “*Being Jewish means...*”

After you are finished writing your answer, crumble up your slip of paper and throw it in the middle of the group. After everyone is done writing, take one slip of paper from the center. If it is your own paper, do not say anything! We will go around the group and read the answers aloud that you wrote.

We all have our own definitions of “What it means to be Jewish.” Today, we are going to learn about Ethiopian Jewish traditions, holidays, and texts. We will explore ways in which isolation impacted the practices of the Beta Israel and ways in which breaking down the barriers have influenced their current practices in Israel.

#### Activity 1 (20 mins): Being Jewish the Traditional Ethiopian Way

#### Counselors Explain:

Read the excerpts from *Saving the Lost Tribe* by Asher Naim and *Rescue: The Exodus of Ethiopian Jews* by Ruth Gruber. These readings delve into two important questions: How are Ethiopian Jewish practices different from “common” Jewish practices (i.e. Ashkenazic and Sephardic)? And from where did the Ethiopian Jewish community originate? (See Unit Resource 1.3A) As you read, fill out the charts provided (Unit Resource 1.3B). This may be done in *chevruta* (with a partner).

Possible Discussion Questions:

- In what ways is Ethiopian Judaism similar or different from communities outside of Ethiopia (meaning the Ashkenazic and Sephardic traditions)—both in terms of their practices and origin?
- How did being an isolated Jewish community impact their Judaism? (They did not have the Talmud, Mishnah, or other rabbinical literature. They did not have printing presses or our prayer books, like the Mishkan Tefilah!)
- How does *your* Jewish practice differ from the other columns on your chart? How does NOT being in isolation impact your Judaism?
- What issues do you think arose when Ethiopians began immigrating to Israel? (Questions about their Jewish identity according to *halakhah*, Jewish law). Some were forced to “convert” halakhically since they did not have the same laws.)
- How do you think Ethiopians reacted to these issues, especially after years of perseverance?
- Have people ever questioned your Judaism? What did/would you tell people who question your Judaism?

**Activity 2 (40 mins): Group competition**

Counselors Explain:

In the next activity, we will introduce more of the unique traditions from the Ethiopian community and you will be asked to perform a number of tasks in your groups.

1. Separating the paths of Judaism: On one side of the field, place the cards with Ethiopian rituals, holidays, symbols, and texts and on the other side of the field, place the cards with “common” rituals, holidays, symbols, and texts. (i.e. Ashkenazic/Sephardic and others that are more familiar to you and to the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox movements. If you are having trouble making the distinction—ask for help or use the worksheet from the previous exercise). In the middle of the field, place the cards that both share in common. See Unit Resource 1.3C.
  - a. Counselors check to make sure the piles are correct before continuing the activities. Have the campers read each pile aloud.
2. Now that the cards are in separate piles, separate the Ethiopian pile into categories (i.e. rituals, holidays, symbols, and texts).
3. Compete with the other groups to put the holiday and text cards in order (holidays in the order that they are celebrated from the beginning to the end of the year and texts in chronological order).
4. Once these are in order, bring the “common” practices pile over and try to place the cards parallel to the Ethiopian cards (i.e. the holidays along the same timeline from beginning of the year until end of the year; match the texts as closely as possible; lastly, match as many rituals/symbols as possible).
5. Lastly, place the cards that both share in common along this timeline.
6. Each group should present their timelines to one another once they are finished.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the most interesting difference or similarities that you noticed during this activity?
- As you notice, there are a lot of differences between Ethiopian Judaism and our own. However, as the Ethiopian Jews came into contact with the Western world and immigrated to Israel, they learned our traditions while we were not, for the most part, expected to learn theirs. How do you think Ethiopian Jewish practice has changed in Israel?
- Do you remember learning about new Jewish holidays, symbols, and rituals that you didn't know about before? What was it like practicing something for the first time?
- Are there any Jewish traditions you learned about as you grew up? Did you decide to start practicing them? How did it feel to take on a new Jewish practice?
- As we talked about before, is there ever a time when you felt people didn't really think you were Jewish? Or that you weren't Jewish "enough?" How did this feel? How did you respond? If this ever happens, how may you respond?

### **Activity 3 (15 mins): Reexamining Jewishness**

Counselors will explain:

Now that we have explored the similarities and differences between Ethiopian Judaism and our own, we want you to think about this situation. Think back to our opening "snowball" activity and definition of "Being Jewish:"

- What are some of the assumptions that you had about being Jewish prior to learning about the Ethiopian experience?
- What did you learn that might be surprising?
- Did you discover any preconceived notions of Judaism? Especially in relation to Jewish texts, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and holidays?
- How may this impact your overall view of Judaism?

### **Reflection Group Questions:**

1. Is trying to define Judaism difficult for you?
2. How do you identify Jewishly or denominationally?
3. How have these past few days influenced the way you define being Jewish?
4. If one day you were told that your Judaism wasn't the "real" Judaism, would you be open or closed to learning new holidays and ceremonies?
5. How do you think belief—in God and in following specific laws for Shabbat, rituals, and holidays—has impacted Ethiopian practice in Israel?

Unit Resource 1.3A  
Excerpts

*Saving the Lost Tribe*<sup>14</sup>

I asked the *kes* [the rabbi] how Beta Israel’s Judaism differed from that in the rest of the Jewish world.

“Have you heard about our Jewish customs?” he asked.

“I have heard a little bit, but I would be honored if you would tell me more.”

The *kes* bent forward, counting with his fingers. “We believe in the God of Israel, the absolute oneness of God, and that the Jews are God’s chosen people on the basis of the law given on Mount Sinai. We believe in reward and punishment, the afterworld, heaven and hell, resurrection of the dead, and the coming of the Messiah—in our case, he is known as Teodros—the return to Zion, and the ingathering of the exiles.”

He had counted ten fingers for the ten points he had made.

I could see Zimna was following the *kes*’s story with reverence. Mrs. Hadana appeared with bananas and apples. I took a banana. The *kes* continued. “There are differences in our Judaism from other Jews. The Mishnah, Talmud, and other rabbinical literature never reached us. We were isolated. The Jewish world outside Ethiopia didn’t know we existed. And we were not aware of the existence of other Jews.”

Zimna was looking at me closely to read how the *kes*’s words affected me.

“What about these difference?” I asked. “What are they?”

“There are things you do that we don’t do and vice versa,” said the *kes*. “We don’t do *mitzvoth* [commandments] such as *tzizit*, *tefilin*, *kippa* [the covering of the head in the synagogue in particular], and the hanging of the *mazuza* at the doors. We don’t celebrate bar mitzvah. We fast and have *ta’anit Ester* [the fast that precedes Purim], but we do not celebrate Purim or Hanukkah or the other holidays instituted after the destruction of the Temple.”

His voice sounded almost sheepish, as though he was telling me not to blame him for those omissions.

“Please tell him I understand perfectly and not to be reserved.” I said to Zimna.

“On the other hand,” the *kes* continued, “we do observe the holidays prescribed in the Torah, although our calendar is often different from the rabbinical calendar. We celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the New Year. We call it *Berhan Saraka*—the rising light. On Yom Kippur, we fast. Succoth is called *Balala Masalat*—festival of the shade. It is an eight-day harvest festival, and a portion of the crop is offered to the *kessim*. We don’t build a *sukkah* [hut]. On Passover, we fast the first day and in the evening we sacrifice. The following day is a holiday, followed by seven days of eating unleavened bread.”

I was deeply moved. “It’s amazing to me,” I said, “that you have kept all this alive through the centuries!”

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<sup>14</sup> Excerpt from Asher Naim. *Saving the Lost Tribe*. (New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 2003), 105-107.

“Thank you, Asher,” said Zimna. “I want to add that throughout our history we were under pressure or threat to convert to Christianity, sometimes under penalty of death. But there were also conversions of Christians to Judaism.” Zimna leaned forward and his eyes were on me. “And this, Asher, I’m sure will be of particular interest to you. In the fifteenth century, Abba Sabrah—a Christian aristocrat who converted to Judaism—began the practice of Nazarenes, or Jewish monks. The monks lived in isolated *tukuls* for many years, praying and studying the holy writing and making sure to avoid any contact with people or unclean animals, which would cause ritual impurity. These monks were considered saints.”

The *kes* nodded. “It is total devotion to God,” he said.

“Jewish monks,” I said. “You’re kidding me! I’ve never heard of such a thing.”

“Well,” said Zimna, pleased, “now you have.”

“Can I meet one?”

“Perhaps,” said the *kes*.

### *Rescue: The Exodus of the Ethiopian Jews*<sup>15</sup>

Centuries ago, the Jews had fled to these nearly inaccessible mountains, sometimes the better to fight their enemies, other times to escape persecution from Christian rulers who demanded, “Convert or die.” Their history was shrouded in a mist of exotic tales. How did they come to this corner of a black African country whose name, given it by the ancient Greeks, meant “the land of the burnt faces”? Were they really descendants of the famous night of love between the beautiful Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, the wise king who reigned over Israel from about 961 to 922 B.C. and who had amassed a thousand wives and concubines?

Historians, anthropologists, social scientists, rabbis had their own theories.

In 1973, the Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel, Ovadia Yosef, concluded that the Jews of Ethiopia were descendants of the Lost Tribe of Dan.

Others claimed they were converts, brought into Judaism by Yemenite Jews who traveled to Ethiopia across the Red Sea.

Some believed they were led here by Moses, who had married an Ethiopian woman when he was sent by Pharaoh to conquer Ethiopia.

Still others were sure they were descendants of Jews who fled from Israel after the destruction of the First Temple, settled in a community called Elephantine in Upper Egypt, and then migrated to Ethiopia, where they established a Jewish kingdom with Jewish kings and queens.

In Ethiopia itself, the romantic story of King Solomon and the Queen was the national legend. Did not Haile Selassie, who called himself the Lion of Judah, claim he was a direct descendant of King Solomon? Proof, the Ethiopians said, was in the Bible, in the First Book of Kings...

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<sup>15</sup> Excerpt from Ruth Gruber. *Rescue: The Exodus of the Ethiopian Jews*. (New York: Atheneum, 1987), 41-42.

Unit Resource 1.3B

**Charts**

Exercise 1:

**Fill in the chart using the excerpt from *Saving the Lost Tribe* by Asher Naim**

1. In the first column, write the Jewish practices, rituals, symbols, holidays, and texts that were unique to the Beta Israel.
2. In the third column, write the Jewish practices, rituals, symbols, holidays, and texts that were unique to outside communities (i.e. Ashkenazic and Sephardic).
3. In the second column (between Beta Israel and “common” practices), write similarities between the two.
4. The fourth column represents Jewish practices, rituals, symbols, holidays, and texts that are connected to your Judaism. Be sure to write the commonalities that you have with any of the other columns.

<b>Beta Israel</b>	<b>Similarities</b>	<b>“Common” Practices</b>	<b>My Judaism</b>
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Exercise 2:

**Fill in the chart using the excerpt from *Rescue: The Exodus of Ethiopian Jews* by Ruth Gruber.**

Write examples of ways in which the Beta Israel may have found their way to Ethiopia.

1.
2.



3.
4.
5.

Unit Resource 1.3C

**Flashcards**

Flashcards can also be used to play games such as taboo, catch phrase, charades, and Around the World.

<b>Mishnah</b>	“Oral Torah.” First major work of Rabbinic Judaism. Compiled around 220 CE.
<b>Talmud</b>	Central text of mainstream Judaism. Contains two main components: Mishnah (from 200CE) and Gemara (from

	500CE).
<b>Torah</b>	5 Books of Moses, written in Hebrew
<b>Hanukkah</b>	Festival of Lights
<b>Mitzvoth</b>	Commandments
<b>Tzizit</b>	Ritual fringes on the tallit
<b>Tefilin</b>	Small leather black boxes containing scrolls of parchment with the four passages from the Torah that mentions tefilin. Used during prayer, except for Shabbat.
<b>Kippa</b>	Head covering
<b>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	Coming of Age Ceremony
<b>Rabbi</b>	Teacher of Torah
<b>Mezuzah</b>	“Doorpost.” Piece of parchment containing biblical

	verses from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. Fixed to the doorposts of homes, rooms, and gates.
<b>Purim</b>	“Lots.” Celebration of Queen Esther and Mordechai defeating Haman
<b>Rosh Hashanah</b>	“Head of the Year”-the New Year
<b>Sukkah</b>	“Booth” built during Sukkot
<b>Orit</b>	Torah, written in Ge’ez
<b>Kes</b>	Ethiopian Rabbi
<b>Berhan Saraka</b>	“Rising Light”-the New Year
<b>Ba’ala Masalat</b>	“Festival of the Shade”- Eight day harvest festival. Sukkot.

<b>Sigd</b>	“Prostration”- Ceremony for the Acceptance of the Torah; also called Mehlella or Amata Saww
<b>Pesach</b>	Passover. Celebrates the Exodus from Egypt.
<b>Fasika</b>	Celebrates the Exodus from Egypt.
<b>Ta’anit Purim</b>	Fast of Purim
<b>Shabbat</b>	Day of Rest
<b>Yom Kippur</b>	Day of Atonement
<b>Ba’ala Astasreyo</b>	Day of Atonement
<b>God</b>	Monotheistic belief in the Oneness of God

<b>Ba'ala Maerrar</b>	The Festival of the Grain Harvest
<b>Yacaraqa ba'al</b>	New moon festival on the first of every month
<b>Rosh Chodesh</b>	New month celebration
<b>Sanbat</b>	Day of Rest
<b>Hebrew</b>	The holy tongue. The language of Torah.
<b>Ge'ez</b>	The script of Amharic and the Orit.
<b>Amharic</b>	Ethiopian language
<b>Kebra</b>	“Book of the Glory of Kings.” Relates Ethiopians to Menelik, supposedly the son of King Solomon and the Queen of

<b>Negast</b>	Sheba.
<b>Te'ezaza Sanbat</b>	Precepts of the Sabbath
<b>Sefer Kahen</b>	Book of Priests
<b>Brit Milah</b>	“Covenant of circumcision”
<b>Mikva</b>	Purity bath

## Lesson Four

### Jewish Practice—Part II

**Objectives:**

- Evaluate the experience of being a Jewish minority in relation to the larger American society and relate it to the Ethiopian Jewish experience of being a minority.
- Interpret the rituals involved in the holiday Sigd and their meanings for the Ethiopian Jewish community.

**Materials:**

- Unit Resource 1.4A- Text Study

**Core Learning Experiences:**

### Set Induction (15 mins):

Cross-the-line activity:

The campers will begin by standing in a long line, shoulder-to-shoulder (along a piece of masking tape or a long crack in the ground). A counselor will ask the questions below. Each time the camper answers “yes,” they should cross the line. If they answer “no,” they should remain in the same place.

1. Do you go to school on Rosh Hashanah?
2. Do you go to school on Yom Kippur?
3. Does your school permit you to miss these days of school?
4. Is your school in session on these days?
5. Do you think that public (non-Jewish) schools should have days off for the high holidays?
6. Do you think that private Jewish schools should have days off for the high holidays?
7. Does it ever bother you that Christian and American holidays factor into the national calendar for days off, but not Jewish holidays or holidays of other religions?

Discussion:

Living in America, we often discuss the dilemma of whether we should celebrate Jewish holidays, choose to go to school, or fulfill other commitments (sports, dance, drama, etc.). In Israel, during holidays, most people are on the same schedule and do not have to make that decision—schools, offices, stores, and restaurants are closed for the day.

- What do you think it would be like if more Jewish holidays were considered national holidays and everyone got off of school and work like in Israel? (Side note: in Israel, Yom Kippur is treated like Shabbat and the roads, stores, and buses close down.)

However, when Ethiopian Jews arrived in Israel, they celebrated many different holidays that did not correspond with Israel’s national calendar.

- What kind of dilemmas do you think this created for them?
- Do you think Ethiopian immigrants had to face some of the same questions as we do in America?

As the Ethiopian community integrates more into Israeli society, their practices may become more of a fabric of Israeli life.

For example, **the Ethiopian Jewish holiday that we will be learning about this week, Sigd** became a national holiday in 2008. Member of Knesset Uri Ariel submitted legislation to the Knesset in February 2008 and in July 2008, the Knesset officially added Sigd to the list of State holidays. In addition to this triumph, “The law states that in addition to being a state holiday, the Sigd would also be marked in a special assembly organized by the Ministry of Education. The holiday's history, traditions and ceremonies will be included in the educational system's curriculum and going to work during the holiday will be optional.<sup>16</sup>” Thus, for at least one extremely important holiday, Ethiopian Jews in Israel will not have to decide between celebrating Sigd and going to school or work. The holiday will be recognized nationally and taught in schools, hopefully marking the beginning of a new type of integration of Ethiopian Jewry into Israeli society.

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<sup>16</sup> “Sigd.” *Jewish Virtual Library*. Web. 13 Apr. 2012  
<<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/sigd.html>>

## Activity 1 (15 mins): Sigd, the National Holiday

### Counselors will explain:

During previous activities, we explored ways in which Ethiopian Judaism is similar and different from our own. Today, we are going to look specifically at the celebration of Sigd and the significance of this holiday for Ethiopian Jews, especially as it's celebrated today in Israel.

Information for the counselors: The following paragraphs provide a short description of Sigd. For more information, check the references below.<sup>17</sup> If the campers have computer access, they should be encouraged to research the holiday in pairs or groups. If counselors have Internet access, the video link below displays Sigd in Israel and is a good visual resource for this lesson.

The word Sigd is Amharic, meaning “prostration” or “worship.” The holiday is celebrated on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the Hebrew month of Cheshvan, 50 days after Yom Kippur. According to the Beta Israel’s tradition, this is the day that God first revealed God’s self to Moses.

Traditionally, the holiday began with fasting. In the morning, members of the community would walk to the highest point of the mountain to pray. The *kessim* walked with the *Orit* (Torah), and they would recite passages from the *Orit* on top of the mountain, including parts of the Book of Nehemiah. Thus, the holiday symbolizes two central events: 1. The first is from Exodus 19 when Moses and the Israelites accept the covenant (*brit*) from God at Sinai. This encounter is central to the entire Torah for it represents the acceptance of the Torah. 2. The second event is from the Book of Nehemiah, which illustrates Ezra the Scribe’s *reacceptance* of the Torah after it had been lost to the Jewish people when they were in Babylonian exile.

Community members also recited Psalms and remembered their desire to return to Jerusalem. In the afternoon, everyone would descend the mountain to break the fast, dance, and celebrate.

### Discussion Questions:

- This is a description of Sigd as celebrated in Ethiopia, how do you think the holiday has changed since the Ethiopian Jews have been in Israel?
- What holiday does this parallel for us? (Shavuot, which symbolizes Moses accepting of the Torah and the covenant at Sinai.)
- What new elements may be added to the celebration now that the Beta Israel are *in* Israel?

Currently in Israel, the Ethiopian community and the *Kessim* gather from cities around the country to celebrate Sigd in Jerusalem—forming a procession from Mt. Zion to the Kotel. Recently, the community has also celebrated Sigd in the Armon Hanatziv Promenade in Jerusalem. The fact that Sigd is now a national holiday adds even more meaning and symbolism to the celebration.

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<sup>17</sup> The summary can be elaborated upon by referencing the following websites:

“Sigd.” *Jewish Virtual Library*. Web. 13 Apr. 2012

<<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/sigd.html>> “Sigd.” *Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 13 Apr. 2012 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigd>> Or by accessing this

video: Sara Sorcer. “Ethiopian Sigd part of national heritage [video]” 2010.

<<http://www.israel21c.org/culture/ethiopian-sigd-part-of-national-heritage-video>>



### **Activity 2 (35 mins): Acceptance of the Torah**

Sigd celebrates two central events in biblical Judaism: The receiving of the covenant (*brit*) at Sinai and the reacceptance of the Torah by Ezra the Scribe. The following texts illustrate both of these pivotal moments. The first text is from the Book of Exodus (the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 5 Books of Moses) and the second text is from the Book of Nehemiah (from *Ketuvim*, the Book of Writings). (Refer to Unit Resource 1:4A)

Information for the Counselors:

A central part of this text study is for the campers to uncover the way in which Ezra the Scribe empowers the Israelites to translate the Torah and interpret the texts independently. Ezra made the Torah accessible to the people—he gave them the tools to be active interpreters rather than passive listeners. This empowerment or accessibility is largely absent in the first text during the encounter between God, Moses, and the Israelites.

The three sections of Nehemiah below show Ezra gradually distancing himself from the role of primary Torah reader and interpreter. Eventually the people themselves are able to discover the meaning of the text without Ezra. The campers are going to be asked to play the role of Ezra at camp by teaching the story of the Ethiopian Jews to the rest of camp and preparing their own celebration of Sigd. Their job will be to make the story of the Ethiopians accessible to the camp—through interactive activities, music, literature, etc.

#### Counselors will explain:

Now, we ask you: How do you make the story of the Ethiopian immigrants accessible to the rest of camp? How can you play the role of Ezra the Scribe and help others to interpret and understand the journey of the Beta Israel?

As explained before, the Ministry of Education in Israel is including Sigd in the school curriculum—making the holiday accessible to the rest of Israel:

“The law states that in addition to being a state holiday, the Sigd would also be marked in a special assembly organized by the Ministry of Education. The holiday's history, traditions and ceremonies will be included in the educational system's curriculum and going to work during the holiday will be optional.”<sup>18</sup>

We want you to create your own celebration, in the spirit of the holiday Sigd that will accomplish this task of teaching the holiday's history, traditions, and ceremonies.

### **Activity 3 (25 mins): Creative Thinking Time**

Note to Counselors:

Although the last lesson of the unit will focus exclusively on creating the Sigd ceremony, the students should begin preparing now and discuss ideas with their groups for the remainder of the week.

\*\*Look to lesson 6 for the way that groups should be separated.

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<sup>18</sup> “Sigd.” Jewish Virtual Library. Web. 13 Apr. 2012.  
<<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/sigd.html>>

Discuss ideas as a whole group and then separate the campers into groups according to their interests. Counselors should help the groups, especially in areas of their own interest.

**Guiding questions:**

What do you want the rest of camp to know about Ethiopian Jewish immigrants? What can we learn most about ourselves as Jews through their story? What kind of inspiration could they provide any human being? How can we relay these ideas?

**Reflection Group Questions:**

1. We discussed this somewhat today, but what do you think the establishment of Sigd as a national holiday in Israel means for the Ethiopian Jewish community?
2. If you could choose a Jewish holiday to be recognized in America and taught in history books, what would it be? Why?
3. What is so significant about Sigd for it to be *the* holiday that Ethiopians would want to be nationally recognized?

Unit Resource 1.4A  
**Text Study**

**Exodus 19-20 and Nehemiah 8-9<sup>19</sup>**

**Exodus 19-20**

19:3 and Moses went up to God. Adonai<sup>20</sup> called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel: 19:4 ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Me. 19:5 Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among

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<sup>19</sup> JPS *Hebrew-English Tanakh* Second Edition. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999.

<sup>20</sup> JPS translates יהוה as “LORD” but I translate it as “Adonai” to avoid masculine language.

all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, 19:6 but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

19:7 Moses came and summoned the elders of the people and put before them all that Adonai has commanded him. 19:8 All the people answered as one, saying, “All that Adonai has spoken we will do!” And Moses brought back the people’s words to Adonai.

19:9 And Adonai said to Moses, “I will come to you in a thick cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you after.” Then Moses reported the people’s words to Adonai... 20:1 God spoke all these words, saying: 20:2 I, Adonai, am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: 20:3 You shall have no other gods besides Me.

20:7 You shall not swear falsely by the name of Adonai your God; for Adonai will not clear one who swears falsely by His name. 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

20:9 Six days you shall labor and do all you work, 20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Adonai your God: you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. 20:11 For in six days Adonai made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore Adonai blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that you may long endure on the land that Adonai your God is assigning you.

20:13 You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

### Questions:

1. How are the commandments presented to the Israelites?
2. What is the role of God in this passage?
3. What is the role of Moses?
4. What is the role of the Israelites?

### Nehemiah 8-9

8:1 When the seventh month arrived—the Israelites being [settled] in their towns—the entire people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the scroll of the Teaching of Moses<sup>21</sup> with which Adonai had charged Israel. 8:2 On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought the Teaching before the congregation, men and women and all who could listen with understanding. 8:3 He read from it, facing the square before the Water Gate, from the first light until midday, to the men and the women and those who could understand; the ears of all the people were given to the scroll of the Teaching.

8:5 Ezra opened the scroll in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people; as he opened it, all the people stood up. 8:6 Ezra blessed Adonai, the great God, and all the people

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<sup>21</sup> The Hebrew literally reads, *Sefer Torah*, “book of Torah.” JPS translates Torah as “Teaching.”

answered, “Amen, Amen.” With hands upraised. Then they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before Adonai with their faces to the ground. 8:7 Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites explained the Teaching to the people, while the people stood in their places.

8:8 They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating it and giving it sense so they understood the reading...

8:13 On the second day, the heads of the clans of all the people and the priests and Levites gathered to Ezra the scribe to study the words of the Teaching. 8:14 They found written in the Teaching that Adonai had commanded Moses that the Israelites must dwell in booths during the festival of the seventh month...

9:1 On the twenty-fourth day of this month, the Israelites assembled, fasting, in sackcloth, and with earth upon them. 9:2 Those of the stock of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. 9:3 Standing in their places, they read from the scroll of the Teaching of Adonai their God for one-fourth of the day, and for another fourth they confessed and prostrated themselves before Adonai their God.

### Questions:

1. How are the Teachings presented to the Israelites?
2. What is Ezra’s role in this passage?
3. What is the role of the heads of the clans, priests, and Levites?
4. What is the role of the Israelites?
5. How do these roles differ from the passage from Exodus 19?
6. Nehemiah 8:8 states, “They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating it and giving it sense so they understood the reading.”
  - a. What does this mean?
  - b. Why is this a significant aim?
  - c. Is this idea of “giving it sense so [we] understand the reading” something that is achieved or achievable today?
7. What should the role of a leader, teacher, rabbi, or educator entail?
8. Why is Ezra absent at the end of the passage? What happened to his role?

## Lesson Five

### Culture

### Objectives:

- Illustrate ways in which Ethiopian Jewish immigrants contribute to the multiple narratives, perspectives, and voices present among contemporary Israelis.
- Demonstrate the shifting nature of culture through the influence of an immigrant community’s culture on the culture of a country, and vice versa.

### Materials:

- Ipods, Computer to play Youtube videos or CD player to play CD (located in the back of the binder)
- Unit Resource 1.5A- Song Lyrics
- Unit Resource 1.5B- Injera, Traditional Ethiopian Bread Recipe and Ingredients

Core Learning Experiences:

**Set Induction (15 mins):**

Counselors will play an American song that contains different cultural elements—different languages, instruments, or rhythms. If counselors do not have a song of their own to provide, one is available on the CD in the back of this folder: Enrique Iglesias, “I Like It” (featuring Pit Bull).

1. What different cultural elements did we hear in the song?
2. Were there any languages, musical instruments, or styles from other cultures?
3. What may this song signify about American culture and the integration or segregation of different ethnicities, cultures, or religions?

Counselors will explain:

As we see often in America, cultures influence one another in many ways. From the food we eat to the music we listen to, America would not be the same without the various different ethnicities that influence one another and the overall feeling of American culture.

This type of influence also arises in Israel and can be seen through the music of Israeli musicians.

**Activity 1 (45 mins): Music and the Mixing of Cultures in Israel**

Song 1: Idan Raichel, Boee (Come to Me)

Fold a piece of paper in half. On one side of the paper, write down elements of the song that sound familiar and on the other side of the paper, write down elements that sound unfamiliar. (This can include musical elements, instruments, language, words, etc.)

After the song plays, discuss the elements that are familiar or unfamiliar. For example, familiar elements may include: The keyboard, drum machine, Hebrew, certain words in Hebrew (*yad*—hand or *bayit*—home). Unfamiliar elements may include: instruments such as the *masanko* (Ethiopian violin) and the Amharic language.

Counselors will explain:

“**The Idan Raichel Project** burst onto Israel’s music scene in 2002, changing the face of Israeli popular music and offering a message of love and tolerance that resonated strongly in a region of the world where headlines are too often dominated by conflict. With an enchanting blend of African, Latin American, Caribbean and Middle Eastern sounds coupled with sophisticated production techniques and a spectacular live show, the Idan Raichel Project has become one of the most unexpected success stories in Israeli music history.

The architect of this unique recording project is keyboardist, producer and composer **Idan Raichel**. Originally from *Kfar Saba, Israel, a small city near his current home of Tel Aviv, Idan was born in 1977 to a family with Eastern European roots*, and although music was an important part of his upbringing, his parents did not place much emphasis on performing music from his particular cultural background. “I think the fact that I didn’t have strong family musical roots is what made me be very open to music from all over the world,” says Idan. He started playing the

accordion at the age of nine, and even at this young age was attracted to the exotic sounds of Gypsy music and tango. As a teenager, Idan began playing keyboards, and studied jazz in high school, honing his skills at improvisation and working with other musicians. In Israel, military service is mandatory for all young men and women, and at 18 Idan was conscripted into the Israeli army. Rather than heading to the front lines in this volatile region, Idan joined the Army rock band and toured military bases performing covers of Israeli and European pop hits. As the musical director of the group, he became adept at arrangements and producing live shows, making his Army experience productive and positive.

After completing his service, Idan started working as a counselor at a boarding school for immigrants and troubled youth. Notably, the school was filled with young people from Ethiopia who were part of Israel's growing community of Ethiopian Jews. Idan developed friendships with members of the Ethiopian community and began to explore Ethiopian music and culture. He started going to Ethiopian bars and clubs and soon was invited to Ethiopian synagogues, weddings and ceremonies. Meanwhile, Idan had become a successful backup musician and recording session player for some of Israel's most popular musicians. He decided it was time to pursue a project that reflected his musical ideals, and began working on a demo recording in a small studio he set up in the basement of his parent's home. Idan invited over 70 of his friends and colleagues from Israel's diverse music scene to participate in the recordings. He never expected his musical experiments to turn him into Israel's biggest musical phenomenon in recent memory."<sup>22</sup>

Questions:

- Why do you think Raichel stands out for mixing cultural elements in his music?
- What may this say about Israel or Israeli culture?

### Song 2: Idan Raichel and Cabra Casay, Habayta (Home)

*Cabra Casay is an Ethiopian woman who was born in a refugee camp in Sudan. She met Idan Raichel when they were both serving in the IDF.*

Questions:

Look at the words of the song, along with the music video:

- What do you think the song means?
- Where is Cabra Casay's home?
- Is it possible to have more than one home?
- How may the symbolism of having more than one home relate to other immigrants or cultures?
- Could you view Israel as one of your homes?
- Do you view Israel as one of your homes now?

### Song 3: Shlomo Gronich and the Sheba Choir, Shir Israeli (Israeli song)

*Shlomo Gronich, born on January 20, 1949, is an Israeli composer, singer, songwriter, arranger, and choir conductor. He composes classical music, pop, jazz, world music, and music*

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<sup>22</sup> "Biography." The Idan Raichel Project. Web. 13 Apr. 2012.  
<<http://www.idanraichelproject.com/en/biography>>

for cinema, theater, and dance. This song is performed with the Sheba Choir, an Ethiopian youth choir in Israel.

Questions:

- How does this song relate to what you know about the Ethiopian Journey?
- What is the significance of the name of the song?
- How may this song be meaningful for the members of the Sheba choir?
- How may this song be significant for other immigrants in Israel and their children?

Final Discussion Questions:

- Which song did you enjoy the most? Which do you think connected you most to what you've learned so far about the Ethiopian Jewish community?
- What do you think this music means in terms of the Ethiopian absorption process?
- How may Ethiopian's view ideas of Zionism, home, language, nationality, and belonging according to this music?
- Considering that Israel is a young country, do you think this may impact the music and the words of the songs? Do you think this may change over time?

### **Activity 2 (30 mins):**

Along with musical influences, the Ethiopian Jewish community brought their food to Israel as well. Although they may alter some of their cooking to please the larger Israeli public, some elements are still the same. Today, we are going to taste one of the staples in the Ethiopian diet by making *injera*, traditional Ethiopian bread. Ethiopian food is typically served on top of the *injera* and eaten with another piece of *injera* (used as an eating utensil instead of a fork). The bread soaks up the juices from the food, which often consist of a lot of stews. The name for a friend in Amharic is *bal-injera*, literally "owner of *injera*." A friend is literally someone with whom you share *injera*.

Prior to this activity, counselors and/or camper should prepare the batter and allow it to sit for at least 3 hours. (Refer to Unit Resource 1.5B).

Campers can truly mix Ethiopian and Israeli culture by eating the *injera* with Israeli chocolate spread.

Closing discussion while eating:

Ethiopian food is usually served on a large plate or basket with *injera* at the bottom. If you've ever been to an Ethiopian restaurant, you'll see that you share this plate with those around you—eating communally from the same dishes.

- How is this different from how you are used to eating and from how other people in Israel may eat?
- What may this sharing of food represent for Ethiopian Jews?
- How do you think Israeli culture impacts this Ethiopian custom?

### **Reflection Group Questions:**

1. What are your understandings of Zionism? What is Zionism?
2. Do you consider yourself a Zionist? What does it even mean to be a Zionist?
3. What are qualities of a home? Are there any places that are not your actual home that you

- call home? Why?
4. What do you think about the notion that Israel is the true Jewish home? How could this idea be to our advantage or disadvantage?

Unit Resource 1.5A  
**Song Lyrics**

Boee (Come) 2006  
Idan Raichel

Come. Give me your hand and we'll walk  
Don't ask me where  
Don't ask me about happiness  
Maybe it will come  
When it comes—it will come down on us like rain

Come. We'll hug, and we'll walk  
Don't ask me when



Don't ask me about home  
Don't ask me for more time  
Time doesn't wait, doesn't stop, doesn't stay

Habayta (Home) 2011<sup>23</sup>  
Idan Raichel &Cabra Casay

You see how it feels at home  
You think that I don't  
But inside sometimes you remember  
That I'm also from here.

I see how you are flourishing  
You think that I'm not  
But I also have another set of roots  
And I am also from here

Now we're going home, round trip  
Now we're stopping on the way, now it's possible to choose  
To ask about the end, about the beginning  
About what will be and what was  
About how I was able to be and also you

You see how it feels at home  
You think that I don't  
But inside sometimes you remember  
That I'm also from here.

Now we're going home....

שיר ישראלי<sup>24</sup>  
ISRAELI SONG  
Shlomo Gronich and the Sheba Choir  
1993

Your snow and my rainfall,  
Your wadi and my river  
Finally meet on an Israeli beach.

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<sup>23</sup> Video Available: Jacobbogie. "Idan Raichel Project: Habayta." *YouTube*. 2007. Web. 13 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnGHZM-Yclw>>

<sup>24</sup> Video available:  
Letzshmo. "Shlomo Gronich-Shir Israeli (w/ English subtitles)." *YouTube*. 2011. Web. 13 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e zvz6CNQr94>>

Chorus:

With all the dreams and the longings,  
With all the memories, good and bad,  
In a new/old song,  
that celebrates the wonders,  
How good it is, and how pleasant.

With a Greek step and a Polish accent,  
With a Yemenite twirl and a Roman violin,

Who am I? Who am I? Yes, me!  
My God, Dear God - an Israeli song.

Your valley and my mountain,  
Your forest and my desert,  
Finally meet in an Israeli landscape.

Chorus:

With all the dreams and the longings....

My "lamed" and your "chet",  
My "ayin" and your "reish"  
Finally meet with an Israeli drum beat.

Chorus:

With all the dreams and the longings....

Unit Resource 1.5B  
**Injera Recipe-Traditional Ethiopian Bread<sup>25</sup>**

**Ingredients**

- ✓ 3 cups self-rising flour
- ✓ ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ✓ ½ cup cornmeal
- ✓ 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- ✓ 3 ½ cups warm water

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<sup>25</sup> "Injera Recipe Traditional Ethiopian Bread." *Food*. 2006. Web. 13 Apr. 2012.  
<<http://www.food.com/recipefullpage.do?rid=184017>.>

**Directions:**

1. Mix everything together to form a batter.
2. Let set in large bowl, covered, an hour or longer, until batter rises and becomes stretchy.
3. It can sit as long as 3-6 hours.
4. When ready, stir batter if liquid has settled on bottom.
5. Then whip in blender, 2 cups of batter at a time, thinning it with 1/2 - 3/4 cup water.
6. Batter will be quite thin.
7. Cook in non-stick frypan **WITHOUT OIL** over medium or medium-high heat.
8. Use 1/2 cup batter per injera for a 12-inch pan or 1/3 cup batter for a 10-inch pan.
9. Pour batter in heated pan and quickly swirl pan to spread batter as thin as possible.
10. Batter should be no thicker than 1/8-inch.
11. Do not turn over.
12. Injera does not easily stick or burn.
13. It is cooked through when bubbles appear all over the top.
14. Lay each injera on a clean towel for a minute or two, then stack in covered dish to keep warm.
15. Finished injera will be thicker than a crepe, but thinner than a pancake.

## Lesson Six

### Unit Conclusion

**Objectives:**

- Coordinate a Sigd ceremony that demonstrates knowledge of the Ethiopian community, the immigrant experience, and their influence on Israeli culture.

**Materials:**

- Depends on each station and the interests of the campers.

**Core Learning Experiences:****Activity 1: Prepare the Sigd Celebration (75 minutes)**

Counselors will prepare different stations from which the campers can choose. A counselor should be available at each station—preferably helping in an area of his or her own interest. Each station centers on a specific question. The campers should organize activities that will help answer these questions. The first station will organize an introduction for the Sigd ceremony and the last station will organize a closing for the ceremony. Thus, the beginning and end of the ceremony should include the entire camp. The middle stations may be set up as rotations for each unit at camp or experienced together with the whole camp.

**Station 1: Introduction of the Ethiopian Jewish community**

What brings us together today? What is unique about the Ethiopian Jewish community? Why is this community important for our understanding of Israel?

Ideas to answer these questions:

- Create an opening ceremony for the day
- Music, song, dance
- Tefilah

**Station 2:**

What does the holiday Sigd celebrate? Why is this holiday particularly significant in Israel today?

Ideas to answer these questions:

- Introduce Sigd with a hike
- Torah ceremony
- Tefilah

**Station 3:**

What biblical texts does Sigd celebrate? What do these represent?

Ideas to answer these questions:

- Text study
- Torah reading
- Dramatic readings/skits of the text

**Station 4:**

What is the history of Ethiopian Jewry from the 4<sup>th</sup> century until today?

Ideas to answer this question:

- Interactive activities using any of the materials from the week
- Skits/Plays

**Station 5:**

How do Ethiopians influence Israeli culture?

Ideas to answer this question:

- Music Writing
- Dance
- Art
- Cooking

**Station 6:**

How does Ethiopian Jewish life expand our understanding of what it means to be Jewish?

Ideas to answer this question:

- Interactive activities using any of the materials from the week
- Art
- Discussion
- Text Study

**Station 7: Conclusion**

What do you want the entire camp to know about the Ethiopian Jewish experience and your week? What do you want them to walk away with?

Ideas to answer these questions:

- Presentation
- Dance
- Food
- Tefillah
- Closing songs

**Closing (15 minutes):**

Campers will join back together to share their ideas for the ceremony and coordinate with other groups.

Closing questions:

- What do you want to share with the rest of the group about this week? What did you learn that is going to stick with you?

Continue answering these questions with the individual reflection groups.

**Reflection Group Questions:**

1. What did you learn this week that is going to stick with you?
2. If you could ask an Ethiopian Jewish immigrant in Israel any question, what would it be?
3. In what way has this week impacted your view of Israel?

## Unit Two: Former Soviet Union Immigrants in Israel

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# Unit Two: Former Soviet Union Immigrants in Israel

## Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Former Soviet Union (FSU) Jewish immigrants add to the multiple narratives, perspectives, and voices present among contemporary Israelis.
- Personal narratives from FSU Jewish immigrants in Israel strengthen our connection to the people of Israel.
- The mass immigration of FSU Jews to Israel exposes the social and political environment from which they immigrated.
- FSU immigrants' adoption of Jewish and Israeli customs illustrates a desire to reconnect to their Jewish heritage and integrate into Israeli culture, society, and memory.

## Unit Goals:

- To analyze the influence of the czarist, communist, and Nazi eras upon Soviet Jewry.
- To survey the greatest rewards and challenges of FSU immigration to Israel.
- To engage in new understandings of the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Israeli society.
- To examine the role of Jewish religion and culture in the lives of Soviet Jewish immigrants.

## Unit Objectives:

By the end of the unit, campers should be able to:

- Identify connections between people at camp and ancestors from the Soviet Union.
- Evaluate ways in which the czarist, communist, Nazi, and modern eras influenced Soviet Jewry and immigration.
- Explain obstacles that many FSU Jews overcame in order to receive permission to leave the country and immigrate to Israel during the 1960s and 1970s.
- Assess the greatest rewards and challenges of FSU immigration to Israel.
- Discuss what it would be like to discover you are Jewish for the first time.
- Analyze the influence of government policies and practices on Jewish life and liberty in the FSU.
- Evaluate the Jewish value "*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la'zeh*; All people of Israel is responsible for one another," and apply this value to the actions of Soviet Jewish activists, to our own responsibilities, and to those of the state of Israel.
- Articulate the current influence of FSU literature, music, and theater on culture in Israel and Israel's influence on FSU culture.
- Discuss the influence of FSU Jewish art and food on Jewish culture and communities in the past and present.
- Integrate the important themes and messages of the week about FSU Jewry and their relationship with Israel.

## Evidence of Learning:

- Campers will create a map displaying the geographical connection between people at camp and their ancestors from the Soviet Union.

- Campers will participate in discussions and activities about Soviet Jewry, Zionism, Israel, Jewish identity and culture, and their connection to these topics.
- Campers will write and present a czarist, communist, or modern-day manifesto on the FSU government's position toward the Jewish people during that era.
- Campers will create and present a newspaper article or radio broadcast exploring Soviet Jewish life in Israel today.
- Campers will make a Jewish culinary dish, artwork, or skit that combines FSU and Israeli styles or themes.
- Campers will create a unit celebration and Pecha Kucha that integrates important themes and messages of the week about the FSU Jewish community and their relationship with Israel.

**Reflection Groups:** Everyday in their reflection groups, the students will write a question they have about FSU Jewry and the activity for the day on a piece of paper. A couple of campers a day will then pick a question, read it to the group, and ask the group to attempt to answer it. These questions may be as broad or narrow as they choose, but they must focus on the topics of FSU Jewry and immigrants in Israel.



# Lesson One

## History—Part I

### Objectives:

- Identify connections between people at camp and ancestors from the Soviet Union.
- Evaluate ways in which the czarist, communist, Nazi, and modern eras influenced Soviet Jewry and immigration.

### Materials:

- Unit Resource 2.1A- Maps of the Soviet Union, America, and Israel
- Pens, Pencils, Colored Pencils, Crayons, and Markers
- Large pieces of butcher paper to make maps of the Soviet Union, America, and Israel
- Unit Resource 2.1B- History of Soviet Jewry
- Unit Resource 2.1C- History Questions
- Post-Its

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (5 mins):

Counselors will divide the campers into small groups. Every group will receive a puzzle of the Soviet Union, America, or Israel. (Counselors can create puzzles using Unit Resource 2.1A).

#### Counselors will explain:

Each group has 3 minutes to piece together your puzzle. When you are finished, find the other groups with the same puzzle piece.

#### Activity 1 (20 mins): Maps

##### Counselors will explain:

Together, draw a large image of your country on the butcher paper. Include as many details as you are able to in 5 minutes. When the maps are complete, they should be posted on the wall. (Note: These maps should be in a place where they can remain up for the whole day or preferably, the week).

Next, each group should present their map to the rest of the group. The group with the map of the FSU will be asked to present their map more thoroughly and list the different countries in the region.

Lastly, using a red marker, place a dot in the place you currently live. Using a blue marker put a dot in the place(s) your parent(s)/guardian(s) are from. Using a green marker put a dot in the place(s) your grandparents are from. Using a yellow marker put a dot in the places your great-grandparents are from. (Note: Counselors should participate in this part of the set induction and place their dots on the maps as well.)

If you or your ancestors are from other countries that are not on this map, write down where they are from on a separate piece of butcher paper that is next to the maps on the wall. Campers who

share some of the same places can place a check mark next to the same country name. If you are not sure where they are from, then ask when you get home from camp!

Discussion Questions:

- What trends do we see on this map?
- What countries are within the borders of the FSU?
- Does anyone who has family from the FSU know when or why they immigrated?
- Does anyone have stories to share about their family's immigration experience?

Many people in Israel and America may have connections to the area that we now call the Former Soviet Union. This region used to contain the largest Jewish population in the world, but what happened over the years?

In order to understand FSU Jewish immigrants in Israel, we must first examine FSU history and the impact of ruling governments on the Jewish community, Jewish identity, and immigration in the past and present.

### **Activity 2 (30 mins): Timeline of Soviet Jewish History**

As a group, watch the YouTube Video that provides an overview of Soviet Jewish history and nationality:

Boris Kievsky. "Don't Call Me Russian: The History of a Nationality."<sup>1</sup>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkQCQvMTFiY>

Ask the campers to return to their original small groups. Provide each group with the overview of Soviet Jewish history (Unit Resource 2.1B).

Counselors will explain:

Using the YouTube video and the brief history of Jews from the FSU (Unit Resource 2.1B), create a timeline of major events from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until today. If part of your family is from the FSU and you know about parts of their lives that may fit on the timeline, then write this down on the post-its and place them in the correct time period along the timeline. Each group should walk around and look at other groups' timelines.

Discussion Questions:

- What events seem to be on each timeline? What stood out to you?
- What was already familiar to you? What did you learn?
- Do any of you know if/where your family fits on this timeline? During which time period may they have immigrated?

### **Activity 3 (35 mins): Manifestos**

Counselors should assign each group of three a time period to represent: either czarist, communist, or modern-day.

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<sup>1</sup> Boris Kievsky. "Don't Call Me Russian: The History of a Nationality." *YouTube*. 2011. Web. 13 Apr. 2012. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkQCQvMTFiY>

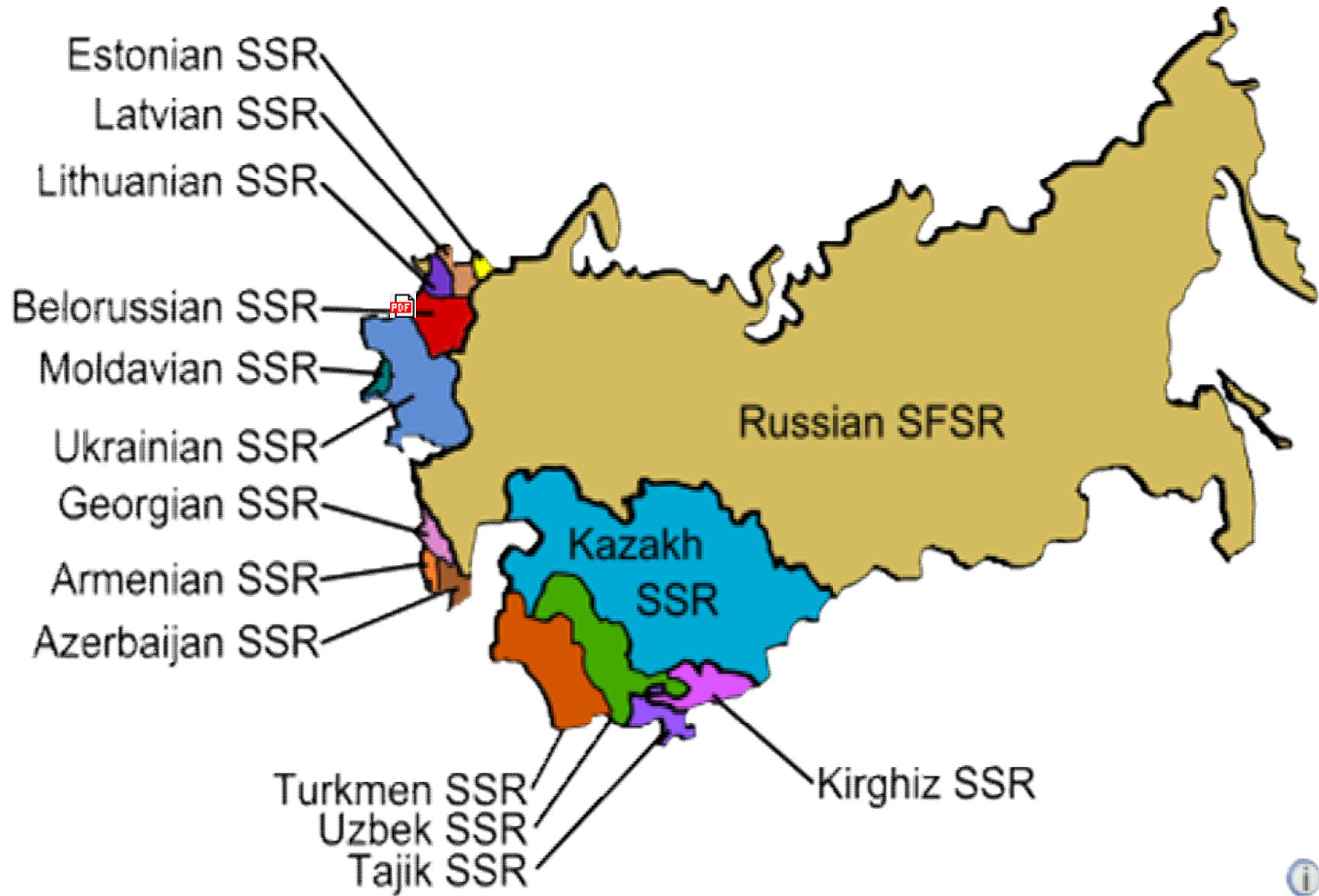
Counselors will explain:

As a small group, you will write and present a czarist, communist, or modern-day manifesto on the FSU government's position toward the Jewish people during that era. Students should use the History Questions (Unit Resource 2.1C) to help guide their manifesto and figure out the important issues for each era. The manifesto may include (not in any specific order):

1. Description of the ruling party
2. Laws, restrictions, prohibitions, and consequences for the Jewish people
3. Military requirements
4. Locational restraints: the places in which the Jewish people are allowed to live
5. General sentiments about the Jewish residents and their actions

After each group creates a manifesto, they should present them to the rest of the group and answer any questions that other groups may have.

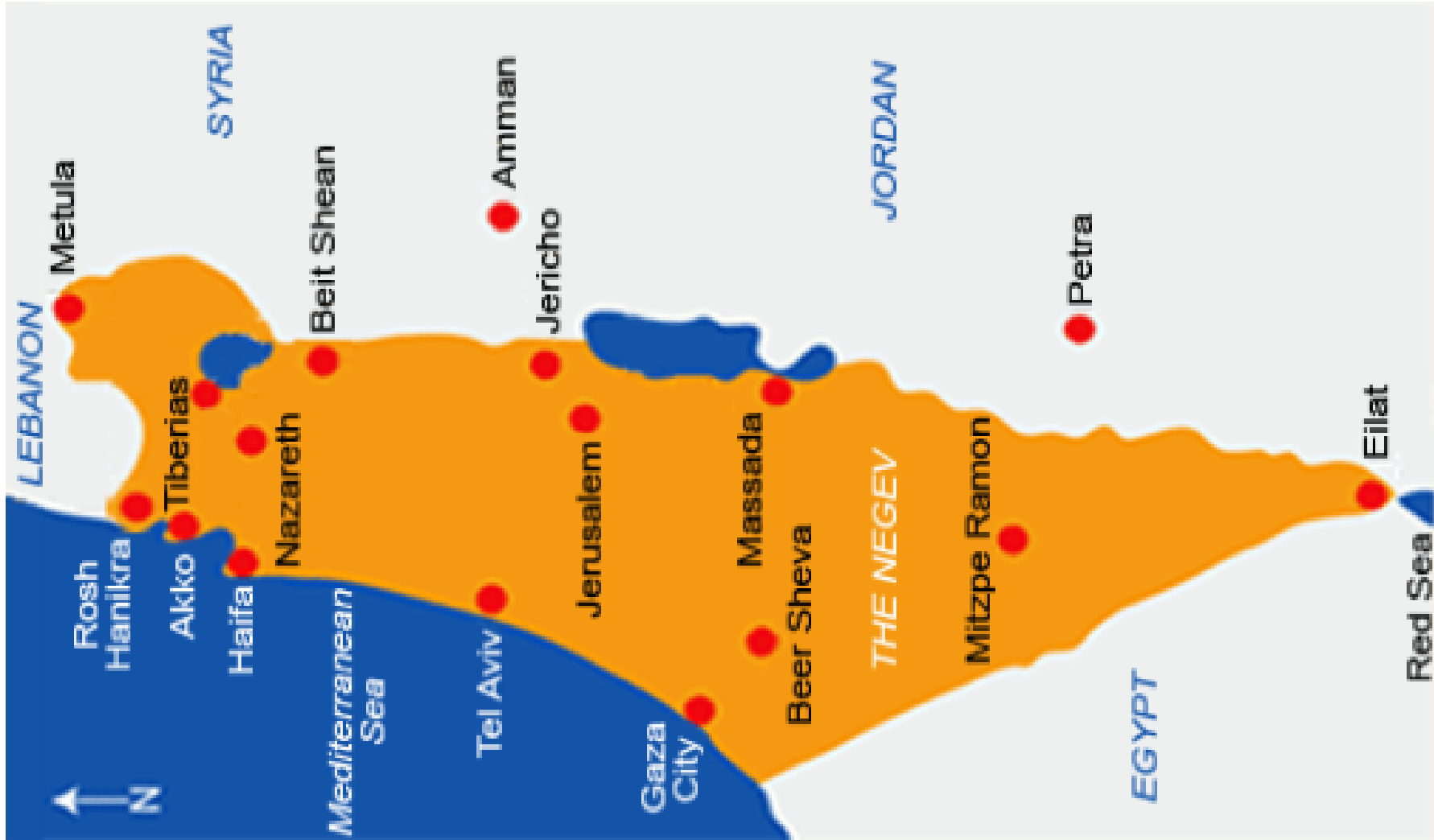
Unit Resource 2.1A  
Maps



Unit Resource 2.1A  
Maps



Unit Resource 2.1A  
Maps



Unit Resource 2.1B  
**History of Soviet Jewry**

**RUSSIA**<sup>2</sup> former empire in Eastern Europe, now an independent republic in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Until 1991, territorially the USSR was the largest country in the world. It is therefore no wonder that the history of millions of Jews was linked with that of that enormous world power.

In early times, the territory of Russia was inhabited by isolated communities, each with its own ruler and having little contact with each other. But these principalities were eventually united under a single monarch to form the state of Russia, which in turn expanded to include surrounding territories, thus forming the present-day Soviet Union.

**Early History.**

According to legend, Jews first set foot on Russian soil after the Babylonian exile from Erez Israel, almost 3,000 years ago. The Jews of Georgia even claim to be descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

The first written record of Jewish settlement there dates from the Hellenistic period, and during the next few centuries Jewish communities were established along the shores of the Black Sea and in the mountainous Caucasian region (see Mountain Jews).

The influence of the Jews must have been great in this period for in the eighth century almost the entire population of the Khazar region converted to Judaism and their kingdom became known as the “Land of the Jews.” There must also have been a large Jewish settlement in Kiev, because ancient Russian sources mention the “Gate of the Jews” there.

During the Middle Ages, the rulers of the individual principalities often banned Jews from entering their territory, or persecuted them in other ways.

**The Russian Empire.**

By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Muscovites had gained control over most of the other regions and began forming a unified Russian state. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century it had developed into a vast empire ruled by autocratic Czars who invariably proved to be hostile to Jewish settlement.

The end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century marked a turning point in the history of Russian Jewry. Between 1772 and 1795 the neighboring territory of Poland was partitioned three times and as a result large portions of Poland, Lithuania, and the Ukraine, containing hundreds of thousands of Jews, was annexed by Russia. For more than a century thereafter, the great majority of world Jewry remained under the reactionary rule of Czars.

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<sup>2</sup> Raphael Posner. “Russia.” In *Junior Judaica: Encyclopaedia Judaica for Youth*. (New York: Macmillan Library Reference, 1995).

The Russian government set about solving its new “Jewish problem” by restricting Jewish settlement to certain limited areas. This was the beginning of the glorified Russian ghetto known as the Pale of Settlement, covering an area of 286,000 square miles.

The Czars treated the Jews cruelly. Alexander I (1801-1825) ordered the conscription of Jewish youths from 12 to 15 years old into the army (see Cantonists). Alexander II (1855-1881) tried a more subtle approach. He attempted to assimilate the Jews, encouraging them to enter Russian schools and join “useful” professions. This helped to bring about the Russian Haskalah movement in which Jews strove to excel in secular rather than strictly Jewish fields. They attained important positions in Russian journalism, law, theater and the arts.

But this period of relative tolerance ended in disaster when, in 1881, a group of revolutionaries assassinated the Czar, leaving the country in turmoil and the Jews at the mercy of the mobs. Vicious pogroms erupted all over the country, encouraged by the new government.

Anti-Semitism continued into the next century. Nicholas II sponsored pogroms in Kiev in 1903, Zhitomir in 1904 and Bialystok in 1906. In 1913 the government held a blood libel trial, falsely accusing a Jew, Mendel Beilis, of murder. This led to even more anti-Jewish riots.

Many disillusioned Jews fled the country or turned increasingly to Zionism, socialism, and the revolutionary movements in an effort to solve their problems. Within the Pale of Settlement, Jewish nationalism grew, resulting in an upsurge of Jewish literature and scholarship. It became the world’s greatest center of talmudic study and nurtured such outstanding Jewish literary figures as Ahad Ha-Am, H.N. Bialik and Shalom Aleichem. In 1897 the Bund, a Jewish socialist party, was founded and became an important social and political force in Russia.

### **Communism.**

The Jews naturally supported the Revolution in 1917 which overthrew the Czars. They were rewarded by the new Bolshevik regime with the abolition of all restrictive laws. But in the ensuing civil war, the Jews were again involved and pogroms resulted. The Jews of the Ukraine, constituting about 60 percent of the Russian Jewish population were especially victimized during this period.

In 1921 Lenin emerged as the victor of the civil strife and established a communist state known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The communist party repudiated anti-Semitism, attempting instead to assimilate and integrate the Jews. Their anti-religious policies called for the closing of religious institutions and the abandonment of all religious observances. Thus the Russian Jew as an individual benefited from civil equality, but the Jewish community as a whole was pressured into completely foregoing its Jewish identity. Religious instruction was prohibited, synagogues and yeshivot closed and religious officials were forced to resign their offices.

The communist regime also confiscated all private property thus bringing economic as well as spiritual ruins to the Jews. In an attempt to improve the general economic situation, the Soviet government encouraged Jewish agricultural settlement and in 1924 set up the Commission for Jewish Settlement (Komzet) which organized five autonomous Jewish agricultural regions.



When these proved to be insufficient, a larger area on the Chinese border, called Birobidzhan was set aside specifically for the Jewish populace.

These agricultural experiments, however, failed and the Jewish participants moved back to the cities where many followed professions in the arts and sciences, becoming influential members of the intellectual class.

The Nazi invasion of 1941 was accompanied in many cases by increased anti-Jewish action on the part of the Russians. They even tried to cover up the anti-Semitic nature of the Nazi movement and described the victims simply as “Soviet citizens” rather than specifically as Jews (see Babi Yar).

Joseph Stalin, who replaced Lenin as the Soviet leader, emerged as one of Soviet Jewry’s most bitter enemies. Though in his early years he had surrounded himself with Jewish intellectuals and advisers, in 1948 he suddenly turned violently anti-Semitic. Jewish leaders were arrested, many were executed, and a large number of Jews were deported to Soviet labor camps. This nightmare persisted for about five years until March 1953 when Stalin’s death brought about some relief. But, though some Jews were released from prison, Jewish community life was not restored.

### **Modern Russia.**

Whereas the USSR supported the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, it later became increasingly pro-Arab and anti-Zionist. Russian Jews received little information on the existence of the new Jewish homeland and were forbidden to organize in any way or freely express their thoughts and feelings as Jews.

After the Six-Day War in 1967, the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Israel and clamped down heavily on pro-Zionist activity. But the war had served to awaken pro-Israel sentiment among Russian Jewry. For the first time they became acutely aware of the existence of a Jewish state and of their isolation within the Soviet Union. It sparked a renewed interest in Judaism and the desire to emigrate to Israel. Young Jews who had until then hardly even known that they were Jews began congregating at the few remaining synagogues, asking Jewish communities abroad to supply them with Hebrew books and religious articles, and pressuring the government for permission to emigrate to Israel.

The Soviet government tried hard to stop this trend. They imposed enormous taxes (“exit fees”) on those wishing to emigrate; many were arrested on trumped-up charges and others were harassed by the secret police, dismissed from their jobs, and publicly ridiculed.

The mounting pressure from world Jewry and foreign governments eventually forced the Soviets to allow some of the hundreds of thousands of its Jews demanding exit visas, to leave the country. But the problem of Soviet Jewry persisted as a focal point of world attention and controversy.

Under Mikhail Gorbachev the USSR became ever-more open to the West, including more contacts with Jews outside of Russia. Bit by bit, expressions of Jewish became evident. Even a yeshivah was openly established in Moscow.

“Since 1989, the situation of Soviet Jewry has been changing rapidly as a consequence of the dramatic geo-political changes in the region. The economic and political crisis that culminated in the disintegration of the Soviet Union as a state in 1991, generated an upsurge in Jewish emigration, approximately 300,000 went to Israel from 1989 to 1991 and in 1993, an estimated 66,000 Jews arrived. In the mid 1990s, there [were] close to 400,000 Jews in independent Russia, mainly in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The community [shrank], primarily due to emigration and the aging process. In the 1990s, Jewish life blossomed, religious and cultural organization abounded, and an umbrella organization Va’ad formed. There are now synagogues in all the major cities and towns which have a Jewish population as well as a number [of] rabbis. The Reform and Conservative movements have also become active in Russia. Due to the efforts of foreign Jewish organizations, a network of Jewish educational institutions has been established which includes four Jewish universities. Anti-Semitism, however, [continued] to be a great cause of concern. Although the post-Soviet leadership has officially condemned the phenomenon, it has taken almost no concrete action to crack down on anti-Semitic organizations or publications. The popularity of radical nationalists such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky or hard-line ex-Communists has led to feelings of uncertainty about the future of Russian Jewry.”<sup>3</sup>

“The influx [of FSU immigrants] was especially massive in the years 1990 and 1991, when 330,000 immigrants arrived in Israel. In the previous wave of the 1970s, a total of 150,000 immigrants arrived. In the FSU, the 1990s emigration decreased the size of the Jewish community from an estimated 2.5 million in 1989 to an estimated 1 million in 1999.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> BJE of Greater Los Angeles. “Jews Among the Nations: Student Guide.” Compiled by Cheryl Seidman Cohen and Jon Mitzmacher. (Los Angeles: Bureau of Jewish Education).

<sup>4</sup> Elazar Leshem and Moshe Sicron, “The Soviet Immigrant Community in Israel” in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, ed. Uzi Rebhun and Chaim Waxman. (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 81.

Unit Resource 2.1C  
**History Questions<sup>5</sup>**

**Czarist Period**

1. When did unified Russia begin its formation and by whom?
2. Where did the majority of the Jewish population live and who controlled them?
3. Why was there a Jewish ghetto, what was it called and when did it develop?
4. What was the Russian Haskalah?
5. What is a blood libel and how did it effect the Jews in Russia?
6. Who are some famous people that lived during this period?
7. How did the experience of the Jews during Czarist rule affect the rest of Jewish history?

**Communist Period**

1. When did the revolution take place? Why and how were the Jews involved?
2. How did the revolution affect the Jewish people?
3. How did the Communist party respond to the Jews? How did their response influence the practice of religion for the Jewish people?
4. Who was Lenin? Who was Stalin? What was the difference in the way the two of them approached the Jewish population?
5. What is a pogrom?
6. As a Jew, how do you think you would have lived your life during this period?

**Modern Russia**

1. How did the USSR respond to the establishment and existence of Israel? How did Jews respond?
2. What happened to the Jews who wanted to leave the USSR and why?
3. How did Jewish life change during this time period and why?
4. How did Jews finally start immigrating to Israel?
5. What do Jews in Russia face today? Is their still anti-Semitism? How does it affect their lives?
6. If you lived in Russia today, what do you imagine your life would be like?

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<sup>5</sup> Questions from BJE of Greater Los Angeles. "Jews Among the Nations: Student Guide." Compiled by Cheryl Seidman Cohen and Jon Mitzmacher. (Los Angeles: Bureau of Jewish Education).

# Lesson Two

## History—Part II

### Objectives:

- Explain obstacles that many FSU Jews overcame in order to receive permission to leave the country and immigrate to Israel during the 1960s and 1970s.
- Assess the greatest rewards and challenges of FSU immigration to Israel.

### Materials:

- Paper and pens
- Unit Resource 2.2A- Immigration Grid Clues in Envelopes
- Masking tape
- Computer access to YouTube video clips
- Unit Resource 2.2B- Power Pyramid Descriptions
- Chairs and tables for the Power Pyramid
- Unit Resource 2.2C- Articles about Soviet Jews in Israel<sup>6</sup>

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (5 mins):

Counselors will explain:

Write down everything you know about communism.

As a group, discuss:

- What is the purpose of communism?  
*(To get rid of classes and the need for money. To make everyone equal. To make everyone the same. To get rid of people's individuality. Equality—but it hasn't been done right yet, according to Marx. For all property to be communal so no one owns anything.)*
- What are the central values of communism?  
*(Equality. Communists think being fair means being equal—that everyone should be treated exactly the same. Social change. Repression. Anti-capitalism, anti-liberalism, anti-reactionary. Everything is communal.)*
- How do you think this impacted the Jewish community in the FSU?  
*(They couldn't be Jewish because being Jewish was being different. It's almost like Communism was supposed to be their "god." They couldn't own Jewish books or Zionist books because it was seen as a threat to communism. It crushed their individualism. They were expected to think of themselves as citizens of the USSR when they would rather be citizens of Israel.)*

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<sup>6</sup> Dan Brown. "Taglit Event Explores Russian Culture in Israel." 2012. Web. 13 Apr. 2012. <<http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/taglit-event-explores-russian-culture-in-israel/>>  
Olga Gershenson, "Aliyah to the Movies: Russian and Israeli Cinema." 2011. Web. 13 Apr. 2011. <<http://jewishquarterly.org/2011/05/aliyah-to-the-movies/>>

### Activity 1 (25 mins): Immigration Grid

The year: 1967. The mission: Travel to Israel.

Counselors will split the campers into groups of 6-10 people. Counselors will map out game boards using the masking tape. Each group will use one board.

1. Each player on the team is a member of the Soviet Jewish community who is trying to get to Israel. The goal is to get the entire group to Israel, which is on the other end of the grid. In order to do this, they must avoid getting caught by the KGB, the committee for state security that served as Soviet intelligence and the secret police.
2. One player at a time will enter the game. They will choose a square, open the envelope for that square and follow the instructions. If they are “safe” then they can continue trying to figure out the correct path. If they are “out,” they must return to the beginning following the same path they used to enter the grid. Then, the next player will have a turn using the information they already know from their teammate.

Here is the outline of the grid:

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X

For example, player 1 enters square B. Their clue reads, “Congratulations, you successfully helped operate the *samizdat*, the first active Jewish underground press in the Soviet Union, helping keep the spark of Judaism alive for many Jewish Soviets.”<sup>7</sup> Advance one square.” They will get to choose another square. The next envelope may say, “So sad – you were caught with Zionist papers. Lose a turn.” Then, player 1 has to return to the beginning using the same path he or she used to get there and player 2 has a turn. They enter square B, since they already know it is the correct path. Then, they go from there. If the group finishes quickly, counselors may mix up the clues and begin again.

The correct ABC order is: B, G, H, L, K, N, R, W, X

### Activity 2 (30 mins): Life in Israel

Fast forward to today. The Soviet Jewish immigrants are still disconnected from their Jewish history and religion. However, immigration is difficult for different reasons than in the 1970s. Today, Israel’s government often makes settling in Israel confusing and difficult for immigrants. Unlike the Ethiopian Jews, Russian Jews emigrated from a technologically advanced place. Most immigrants achieved degrees in medicine or other professional similar fields. In Israel, they must pass difficult tests to gain their degrees and occupations again. They have very little contact with the government and rely on neighbors, family, and friends to help in their absorption process.

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<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Rass and Morris Brafman, *From Moscow to Jerusalem: The Dramatic Story of the Jewish Liberation Movement and its Impact on Israel*. (New York, NY: Shengold, 1976), 29.

Watch the following videos about Soviet Jews in Israel today and discuss the questions.

Herzliya Aliyah Conference:

“20 Years of the Soviet Jewry in Israel.” 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiqV-Y4OagE><sup>8</sup>

20 Years ago the "great wave" of Soviet Jews has arrived to Israel.

- How has Soviet immigration helped Israel?
  - *(The immigration saved the State of Israel because of security, economy, and money. It's a huge monetary gain for Israel. The population of Israel is over 1/3 Russian. The Russian immigrants are really educated.)*
- What are the obstacles immigrants in Israel still need to overcome?
  - *(There are still so many problems of integration. Many do not completely speak Hebrew—even after 20 years of living there. People still think they negatively impacted the veteran Israeli's salaries.)*

Association of Immigrant Youth Video:

“40 Years Ago,” 2008. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dhFwFs0HyQ><sup>9</sup>

40 years ago, Jews from around the world united to help the imprisoned Former Soviet Union Jewry escape from their oppressors. Now, the next generation is continuously striving to be an integral part of Israeli society.

- After helping Soviet Jews escape from the FSU 40 years ago, what does this video ask us to do now?
  - *(Help FSU youth stay in school, learn Hebrew, improve their educational programs. We helped their parents get to Israel, but we need to make sure that life is good for them in Israel.)*
- Is there any way we can personally help the situation in Israel?
  - *(Volunteer our time or money. Continue spreading the message that things still need to improve.)*

**Power Pyramid Simulation**

Split the campers into four groups and give each group a description that will explain their demographic for the activity (Unit Resource 2.2B). The four demographics include:

1. Native-born Israelis of all ages.
2. FSU Jewish immigrants—ages 0-35
3. FSU Jewish immigrants—ages 35-70
4. FSU Jewish immigrants—70 plus

Each group will take a few minutes to read their descriptions and to discuss two or more advantages and two or more disadvantages of being a member of that demographic in Israel.

Prior to this activity, counselors will set up a room in the form of a vertical pyramid. To do this, line tables up in a row and places two rows of chairs in front of the tables. If possible, a

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<sup>8</sup> HerzliyaConference. “20 Years of the Soviet Jewry in Israel.” *YouTube*. 2010. Web. 14 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiqV-Y4OagE>>

<sup>9</sup> Frankfurt1202. “40 Years Ago,” *YouTube*. 2008. Web. 14 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dhFwFs0HyQ>>

stage can be used instead of the tables. The campers with the “most power” or advantages in Israeli society will stand on the tables or stage (group 1), the campers with “less power” will stand on the chairs in front of the stage (group 2), the next group will sit on the next row of chairs (group 3), and those with the “least power” will sit on the floor (group 4).

After the campers get a chance to discuss their information cards, they will briefly explain their identity descriptions to the other groups. Once the four groups present themselves, the groups will decide where on the power pyramid they belong. (If they choose a different position than the one above then open up the discussion and find out their rationale.)

#### Discussion Questions:

- How does the typical power structure of a family reverse for immigrants?
  - *(The children become the ones with the “most power.” The parents have to use the children to become accustomed to society rather than the other way around. It’s the same with immigrants in other countries also.)*
- How does it feel being in your position on the pyramid?
  - *(Being a native Israeli is obviously the best in this situation. It’s strange to be the child but be almost on top of the pyramid. It makes sense to be in this position—language and culture make a big difference in a new country. It feels terrible to think that my “children” or “grandchildren” have more power than me when they wouldn’t even be here without me! It’s strange to think that my “parents” or “grandparents” are disconnected from Israeli society and I would need to help/support them in ways.)*
- Are you content with where you are or is there another place you would rather be? Why?
  - *(I would rather be on top of the pyramid. It doesn’t feel good to be at the bottom of any power pyramid. I would rather that everyone is equal and we get rid of the power pyramid. I don’t think that people should have to get rid of their native culture/language in order to be accepted into Israel.)*
- What may be challenging and/or relieving for your demographic in relation to the other groups?
  - *(It’s relieving to know that FSU immigrants are integrating into society as time goes on and the culture of Israel becomes more familiar. It’s challenging to have to refer to my “children” in order to get things done in Israel. It’s challenging to see my “children” still adjusting to Israeli society—even though they speak Hebrew better than me, I know they have to fight off stereotypes at school.)*
- Thinking outside of just the descriptions you have been given, what do you gain by assimilating into Israeli society?
  - *(You gain status and respect. You won’t stand out as an immigrant. You could get rid of the “glass ceiling” that prevents immigrants from getting the top jobs.)*
- What do you lose by assimilating into Israeli society?
  - *(You lose your old language and unique aspects of FSU or Russian culture. In some ways, you forget about your history and your ancestors—sort of like what’s happened with us in the U.S. You lose elements, but it’s worth it in the end. There should be a way for all immigrants to assimilate without losing what makes them unique, but how?)*
- Is there a way to create more equality and break down the power pyramid?

- *(I think it just takes time. Native Israelis will always have more power, so I'm not sure. I think that people should just accept one another and their differences. Weren't a lot of Israelis from the FSU a long time ago? They should accept these newer immigrants.)*
- Can you give other examples of immigrant groups who have dealt with similar issues—both inside and outside Israel?
  - *(Our ancestors in America. America is also a country of immigrants—so everyone. Everywhere in American, a lot of the children are more assimilated than their parents and have more “power.”)*

**Activity 3 (25 mins): Newspaper Article or Radio Broadcast**

In small groups or individually, campers will create a newspaper article radio broadcast on one topic of Soviet Jewish life in Israel today. They may use any the articles (Unit Resource 2.2C), Youtube videos, and material from Lesson One to help. The final product can be incorporated into the final project of the unit, so tell the campers to put it in a safe place!

**Conclusion (5 mins):**

Campers who choose to will share their newspaper article or broadcast.



Unit Resource 2.2A  
**Immigration Grid Clues**

B - Congratulations, you successfully helped operate the *samizdat*, the first active Jewish underground press in the Soviet Union, helping keep the spark of Judaism alive for many Soviet Jews. Advance one square.

G – Yay! You successfully sent a letter to the West that tells the story of Soviet Jews and the need for emancipation. The word about the dire situation is spreading to the international Jewish community. Advance one square.

H – Mazel Tov! You meet another Jewish person who has newly discovered their Judaism and is interested in helping spread the Zionist message. Advance one square.

L –One of your letters urging Israel to recognize the Soviet Jewish struggle to obtain Israeli citizenship finally reached Israel. This letter is a shock to the Israeli officials who could not imagine someone renouncing their Soviet citizenship. They stay silent for the time being, thinking that they are protecting your identity, but it’s definite progress! The message will become more public soon.<sup>10</sup> Advance one square.

K – You travel to Georgia, a country on the southern border of the Soviet Union, and receive money and support from Georgian Jews to keep the *samizdat* (underground publication network) running. They are happy to support a good cause since they are blessed with more religious freedom than Soviet Jews, but would also be happy to go to Israel<sup>11</sup>. Advance one square.

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<sup>10</sup> Rass and Brafman, 42.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 47-48.

R – You, as a Soviet activist, stirred up enough attention in Israel to encourage the Knesset (the Israeli government) to discuss the situation of Russian Jews who are still stuck in Russia and are seeking emancipation. Advance one square.

W –Your message is becoming clearer to the West and to the Israeli government. Advance one square.

X –You have almost achieved your final goal—just make sure you don't get caught by the KGB (The Committee for State Security which serves as Soviet intelligence and secret police) when you're so close to reaching Israel! Advance one square.

W –Congratulations, you received an exit visa and can now enter Israel—make sure you help your friends get to the Jewish State as well. Advance one square.

A – Oh no! The KGB accused you of spying for Israel and the United States and arrested you to solitary confinement. Try to avoid the KGB in the future.

C – You should have found a better hiding place for your collection of articles from the Russian Zionist thinker, Zev Jabotinsky! Although he is a hero for many Soviet Jews, the authorities do not approve of any Zionist writings. For them, being pro-Israel means being an anti-Communist. Maybe the next player can find a better path to Israel.

D – Sorry! You are not trying hard enough to leave the country. More and more Jews are forgetting their Jewish roots because of assimilation. Too many people have been pretending not to be Jewish for so long that soon there won't be any Jewish people left! You need to find another way to get to Israel.

E – Next time you want to voice your opinion about Israel and Jewish people not being real citizens of the Soviet Union, don't do it in public! This time, you will be going to jail. Maybe the next person can find a better way to get his or her messages heard and help get people to Israel.

F – Oy vey! The Soviets charged you for “parasitism” meaning the Soviet officials believe you are living a “parasitic, antisocial way of life.” You will be exiled for 2-5 years to do physical labor in Siberia or the Far East. Next time, keep your job or stay in school!<sup>12</sup>

I – You tried to escape the Soviet Union without an exit visa. You should have known better! Not only were you arrested, but now no one in your family can legally get an exit visa. Maybe the next player can find a better path to Israel.

J – The Soviets tricked you into thinking that you were granted an exit visa. When you went to pick up your visa, they ransacked your house and stole all your important Zionist letters and papers.<sup>13</sup> Maybe the next player will have better luck.

O –Western government officials think you are lying about how many Soviet Jews want freedom from the Soviet Union. Maybe the next player can do a better job convincing them.

P –Unfortunately, the Soviet government realizes the extent of the Jewish activist movement and is making restrictions even tighter—they closed the Iron Curtain (the political, military, and ideological barrier between the NATO countries and the USSR) and sealed its gates.<sup>14</sup> Maybe the next player can find a better path.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 68-69.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 84.

Q –Sorry! You were arrested for anti-Soviet activity. You never know when the KGB will find you. Maybe the next player can find a better path.

S – Wow – it is hard being Jewish in the 1960s! The Soviet government does not like that you are reconnecting with your Jewish roots. Maybe it would be easier to give into communism. Hopefully the next player can find a better path.

T – You tried to convince Golda Meir, the Prime Minister of Israel, to reveal the situation of the Soviet Jews, but she refused. Instead, she claimed, “we Jews are in the hands of the Gentiles” and said it would be dangerous to act.<sup>15</sup> Unbelievable, right?! You know that Israel needs to step up their game, but don’t know how to convince the Prime Minister to do this. Maybe the next player can find a better way.

U – So sad. All of your Jewish books were confiscated and you were arrested. When you get out of jail, you need to be more careful! Sometimes the Soviet government puts people in mental institutes for being pro-Zionist and that’s a harder place to get out of than jail. Maybe the next player can find a better path to Israel.

V –The KGB tried to convince you that Jewish people are already free in the USSR. They won’t grant you an exit visa, at least not this time. Maybe the next player can find a better path.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 115.

Unit Resource 2.2B  
**Power Pyramid Descriptions**

**Hello Israelis!** You were all born in Israel and are fluent in Hebrew and almost fluent in English. You are from all different age ranges and cities in Israel. Some of you will become or already are doctors, lawyers, scientists, artists, and professors. Since you were born in Israel, you know how to get things done and manage the bureaucracy of the country. You know that there is no such thing as a line at the bank or the *shuk* (outside market) and you have perfected the art of walking through crowds of other Israelis. Most of your family also lives in Israel, so they are nearby for holiday celebrations and lifecycle events—except for those currently serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) who you typically see on their breaks from service. Israel is truly your home and you're proud to be an Israeli.

**Hello Former Soviet Union Jewish immigrants!** You are all 35 years of age and younger and were born in Israel. You are fluent in Hebrew and most of you understand Russian but either cannot or choose not to speak it. You have or will serve in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in which you will feel even more integrated into Israeli society than ever before. You consider yourself Israeli (more than you consider yourself Russian or Jewish) and have friends from every ethnicity in Israel. You know how to get things done and manage the bureaucracy of the country. You know that there is no such thing as a line at the bank or the *shuk* (outside market) and you have perfected the art of walking through crowds of other Israelis.

If you stay in school through your high school years, then many of you will go on to study to become doctors, lawyers, scientists, artists, or professors. Unfortunately, there is still a “glass-ceiling” that may prevent you from reaching all your goals. This invisible barrier prevents you from getting the same credit as native-born Israelis in the workplace, as they will most likely get the top executive positions. Although you are extremely integrated into Israeli society, there are still obstacles that you will face before you will be treated as complete equals.

**Hello Former Soviet Union Jewish immigrants!** You are all ages 35-70 and were born in the FSU. You speak both Hebrew and Russian and many of you were doctors, scientists, lawyers, or professors in the FSU. When you moved to Israel, you had to retake all of your exams to get licenses to practice your past professions here. These exams were extremely difficult, but you are finally doing what you love again. Unfortunately, there is a “glass-ceiling” or invisible barrier that prevents you from getting the same credit as native-born Israelis in the workplace.

Some of you may still have family members in the FSU who you visit occasionally. Those of you who do not have family there, you still think of your past home and wish it would at least snow in Israel more often. You know that life is better for you and your children in Israel, but you do not entirely understand Israelis and their culture. As much as you try to assimilate, your children are one step ahead.

**Hello Former Soviet Union Jewish immigrants!** You are all ages 70 plus. You speak Russian and may understand some Hebrew words or phrases but are really uncomfortable with the language. This often makes it hard to communicate with people in Israel, especially at the bank and the post-office—two very important places to be able to navigate in Israel! You mostly socialize with other immigrants, eat at Eastern European restaurants, shop at Russian markets, and play *sheshbesh* (backgammon) with your friends.

Some of you may still have family members in the FSU, but it's hard for you to visit them. Those of you who do not have family there, you still think of your past home and wish it would at least snow in Israel more often. You know that life is better for you and your children in Israel, but you do not understand Israelis and their culture at all. This means that you also rarely understand your own children or grandchildren. Your grandchildren mostly speak in Hebrew and they speak so fast that it all sounds like gibberish! At least you know where you came from and infuse your children and grandchildren's lives with some of your past Jewish culture, whether it's the food, music, art, or literature.

# Aliyah to The Movies: Russian and Israeli Cinema

May 3, 2011 by [Olga Gershenson](#)

Filed under [Film](#)

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Some years ago, when applying for my US passport, I took the naturalisation paperwork to the post office. It stated: 'Place of birth: Russia. Place of residence: Israel'. Confused, the clerk asked, 'Is Israel part of Russia?' 'No', I told her, 'but you have a point.' Twenty years earlier, the clerk's mistake would not have made sense. But once Russian Jews became the largest wave of Jewish migration into Israel—today one out of every six Israelis speaks Russian—the country has, in a way, become part of Russia. And Russia has in some ways become a part of Israel.

In a world that is increasingly globalised, decentralised, and diasporic, traditional national boundaries are blurred. Post-Soviet immigrants, known in Israeli parlance as 'Russians' are a case in point. These immigrants, who often maintain multiple passports, homes, and languages, make us re-think the meaning of homeland and exile: they are part of a traditional Jewish diaspora and of a new Russian diaspora. This mass migration affected both Israeli and Russian cultures. One site where these changes can be clearly identified is cinema: Russian immigrants and their homeland are becoming common in Israeli films and Israel is beginning to appear in Russian cinema. What do these films, made in both Israel and Russia, tell us about the changes in the cultural landscapes in both countries?

## Russian-Israeli filmmakers ... walk a thin line between asserting the place of the immigrants in Israel and insisting on their cultural distinctiveness.

Recently, Israeli film and TV audiences have come to expect to hear not only Hebrew, but also English, French, Arabic, Amharic and, increasingly, Russian. This multiculturalism is a new phenomenon: early Israeli cinema, especially films of the so-called heroic-nationalist genre, subscribed to the 'Hebrew only' policy. The classic *They Were Ten* (1960, dir. Baruch Diner) tells a heroic Zionist tale of the early pioneers. The film's characters are technically Jewish immigrants from Russia, but on screen they are portrayed as 'new Jews': they speak only Hebrew and even sing a Russian song in Hebrew (without any trace of an accent, naturally).

Real Russian immigrants appear on Israeli screens only after the first wave of Soviet Jews, refuseniks and dissidents, landed in Israel in the 1970s. Now we see these 'Russians' as typical newcomers struggling with a new culture and language, and trying to fit into Israeli society. Unlike heroic pioneers, they are not model Israelis. The first such film was *Lena* (1980, dir. Eytan Green): the film's eponymous heroine (Fira Cantor) is young, beautiful and torn: between loyalty to her Russian husband, a Zionist still in a Soviet jail, and love for an Israeli man: metaphorically between maintaining her Russian identity and assimilating in Israel. Lena chooses to leave her Russian husband. In this way, as is common in Israeli films, a female immigrant is inducted and assimilated into Israeli society via romantic-sexual relations with a local male. But Russian male immigrants in the film appear aggressive and irrational, without any chance to develop relationships with Israeli women. In this and other ways, *Lena* typifies the representation of Russian immigrants on Israeli screens. The casting and use of language in *Lena* are also typical: Russian immigrant actors play immigrant characters. Their accent and occasional Russian dialogue are authentic, but also foreign-sounding within the 'Hebrew only' text of the films.

## This over-the-top black comedy signals that the true 'promised land' is back in the old country and not in Israel

In the 1990s, Russian characters began to appear more frequently on Israeli screens. They are featured in many films, including *Saint Clara* (1996, dir. Ari Folman and Ori Sivan), *Circus Palestina* (1998, dir. Eyal Halfon), *The Holy Land* (2001, dir. Eytan Gorlin), *Made in Israel* (2001, dir. Ari Folman), *What a Wonderful Place* (2005, dir. Eyal Halfon),

*The Schwartz Dynasty* (2005, dir. Amir Hasfari and Shmuel Hasfari), *Love & Dance* (2006, dir. Eytan Anner), as well as in TV serials *A Touch Away* (2006, dir. Ron Ninio) and *To Love Anna* (2008, dir. Tzion Rubin). Many of these films portray immigrants sympathetically, but emphasise their cultural and religious differences.

As in *Lena*, these films portray female immigrants as beautiful, helpless, sexualised women with distinctly Russian looks (blond hair, blue eyes, round face) who are frequently shown in frontal close-ups, disconnected from their Israeli environments. Their unassimilable foreignness can be overcome only through romantic involvement with an Israeli man. In contrast, Russian male characters are confined largely to their self-contained, homosocial world that precludes assimilation into Israel. Consequently, most of the plots feature romances between female immigrants and local males.

## **Russian immigrants are represented in all these films from the Israeli perspective—as outsiders**

Will these Russian-Israeli couples manage to live happily ever after? *Love & Dance* hints at some answers. At the centre of this lyrical drama is Khen (Vladimir Volov), a young boy struggling with the cultural conflict between his Russian-born mother and Israeli father. Khen's identity is caught between his frustrated parents a conflict that is emphasised linguistically as his mother speaks to him in Russian and his father in Hebrew. As Khen is negotiating his Russianness and his Israeliness, his parents fail to reconcile their cultural differences and must part. And yet *Love & Dance* ends on a positive note: Khen overcomes his own obsession with the dysfunctional Russian beauty, and falls in love with the down-to-earth Israeli girl. In the narrative logic of the film, even the inassimilable hybrid Khen makes the right choice between his Russianness and his Israeliness.

In contrast to bi-cultural Khen, immigrant men almost never become protagonists in Israeli films. The rare relationships between immigrant men and Israeli women usually fail, like the 'forbidden' romance between the secular immigrant and the ultra-orthodox young woman in a popular TV series, *A Touch Away*. Most importantly, whether male or female, stereotypical or nuanced, Russian immigrants are represented in all these films from the Israeli perspective—as outsiders.

This stereotypical portrayal of Russian immigration began to change as immigrant filmmakers themselves started breaking into the Israeli film industry. They introduced the immigrant's point of view and added their own accented voices to Israeli cinema, creating what has been termed 'accented cinema'. The 'accent' in question is defined not only by the actual languages and accents on the screen, but also by the cultural identities of the filmmakers. Indeed, Russian-Israeli filmmakers affirm and challenge, often simultaneously, the dominant national identity: they walk a thin line between asserting the place of the immigrants in Israel and insisting on their cultural distinctiveness. Unlike the Israeli films, which are preoccupied with assimilation via inter-ethnic relationships, Russian-Israeli films rarely feature Russian-Israeli romance.

The very first Russian-Israeli film, *Coffee with Lemon* (1994) by Leonid Horowitz, who came to Israel as an established director, is illustrative of these trends. At the centre of the plot is a famous Moscow actor (played by the Russian star, Aleksandr Abdulov) who immigrates to Israel, only to discover that he cannot bridge the cultural gap and is doomed to failure. He returns to Moscow, but is killed there in a street shooting. At the end, the immigrant protagonist fits neither here nor there, a far cry from the typical immigration narrative of an Israeli film.

## **Israel today is a part of Russia, and Russia is a part of Israel**

The more recent *The Children of USSR* (2005) by a young Israel-educated director, Felix Gerchikov, also features a male protagonist, Slava, a former soccer star in his native town and now an immigrant, suffocating in a remote Israeli town and struggling to support his young family. Slava and his friends populate the margins of Israeli society, which also include violent Mizrahi youth, an Ethiopian immigrant and an oddball Hassidic soccer fan. The 'model Israeli' is nowhere to be seen, liberating the film from the reductive logic of assimilation. In fact, even the film's title indicates the inassimilability of its characters: pronounced yaldehy sssr, the title combines a Hebrew word for 'children' and a Russian word for 'USSR'. Idiosyncratic bilingual spelling not only introduces a Russian word into a Hebrew title, but also uses a Cyrillic acronym as a nostalgic icon. The central romantic relationship of the film is Slava's failing marriage to Sveta, a fellow Russian, who wants him to leave behind his dreams of soccer. But Slava is stubborn, and he succeeds in forming a



soccer team. At the end of the film, Slava is reconciled both with his Russian wife and his Israeli surroundings.

Another intra-ethnic romance is at the centre of *Paper Snow* (2003) by the veteran Russian-Israeli directors Lena and Slava Chaplin. It is a historical drama set in the 1920s to 1930s about the love affair between Hanna Rovina, star of the *Habima*, an Israeli theatre that originated in Moscow, and Alexander Penn, an Israeli communist poet who was originally from Siberia. Other literary giants, Avraham Shlonsky, Avraham Hali, and Hayyim Nahman Bialik, all of them hailing from Russia, surround Rovina and Penn. Moreover, all these Israeli historical figures are portrayed speaking to each other in Russian, which is all but unimaginable in the 'Hebrew only' national past. Unlike mainstream Israeli movies, *Paper Snow* pays tribute to their culture of origin, to their Russian literary and theatrical background. In this way, the film focuses on the Russian roots of Israeli culture, emphasising the importance of Russian Jews (past and present) to Israel.

In a more subtle form, the past also appears in the short film, *Dark Night* (2005), by a successful young Russian- Israeli director, Leonid Prudovsky. The film opens with a scene of an Israeli patrol in the occupied territories. A soldier (Pini Tavger), who comes from a Russian family, is singing a famous Soviet song of the World War II era—'Dark Night'. Driving the army jeep through the night, he explains to his fellow soldiers the significance of the song, which inspired Soviet troops, including his Jewish grandfather, as they fought against the Nazis. Similar use of the past appears in the brilliant *Yana's Friends* (1999) by Arik Kaplun. All these representations emphasise the identification of Russian immigrants with the Israeli-Jewish nation, while concurrently affirming their Russian cultural identity.

And of course, a big role in 'accented' movies is played by the language. If mainstream Israeli films, made to appeal to the Hebrew-speaking audience, feature few token words in Russian, Russian-Israeli films move freely between Russian and Hebrew. The recent TV series, *Between the Lines* (2009, dir. Evgeniy Ruman), goes a step further. This series about a Russian-language newspaper in Israel features a staff of writers and reporters, all of whom are immigrants speaking to each other in Russian (Hebrew subtitles are optional).

Not only Russian immigrants but also their homeland began to appear on Israeli screens. This is unusual, as diasporic homelands are not often depicted in Israeli films, and certainly not positively. But 'accented' movies portray Russia neutrally or even nostalgically: in *Paper Snow*, the heroine experiences a nostalgic flashback to a Russian winter as a beautiful snow-covered landscape. A brilliant recent TV series, *Troika* (2010), by the above-mentioned Leonid Prudovsky, not only features dialogue that is almost entirely Russian, but is also filmed on location both in Russia and in Israel with characters moving freely between countries, languages and identities.

As Russia began appearing on Israeli screens, Israel began appearing on Russian screens. This was a dramatic change from Soviet times, when the Cold War and continued anti-Zionist campaigns made any mention of Israel impossible. Only in the liberal era of perestroika did questions of Jewish life and interest appear on the Soviet screen. But in contrast to Israeli films, these films presented emigration as a tragedy—a consequence of local violence or injustice. Inter-ethnic romance involved a Russian Jew and a non-Jewish Russian, whose romance, as a rule, was doomed to failure. *Love* (1991), an influential film by acclaimed director Valery Todorovsky, is the tragic love story of a Russian guy and a Jewish girl who are eventually parted as persecution and anti-Semitism leave her no choice but to go to Israel.

Even in comedies, emigration is a kind of a tragic mistake and something to be fixed. In Georgii Danelia's *Passport* (1990), a non-Jewish character finds himself in Israel as an accidental new immigrant due to a case of mistaken identity. He is desperate to return to his native Georgia. Not surprisingly, some Russian movies feature return immigrants. In *Daddy* (2004, directed by a Russian film star Vladimir Mashkov), set in 1929, a character returns from Palestine, explaining that his return is a homecoming: for him Jerusalem was a place 'where one can only weep and die, and where people are strangers.' The message is clear: true home is Russia.

A different kind of return immigrant appears in Pavel Loungine's *Roots* (2005), when Baruch, a Russian-Israeli Mafioso travels to Ukraine to rebury his dear mother 'at home'. Even this over-the-top black comedy signals that the true 'promised land' is back in the old country and not in Israel.

More recently, Israel, and Russian immigrants to Israel, have started to appear even in mainstream Russian movies and TV series entirely unrelated to Jewish topics. *Padishah*, an episode of a hit detective series, *National Security Agent-3* (2001), takes Russian detectives to Israel and features scenes filmed on location, including the most alluring tourist destinations—beaches, historical sites, hotels and restaurants. Russian detectives come in contact with a wide range of

Israelis—religious and secular, new immigrants and native-born, so that the characters (and audiences) learn about everyday Israeli life. The main character (played by Russian film star Mikhail Porechenkov) even falls for a local colleague, a young, confident Israeli woman. The romance is not expected to last, but it does indicate warming relations between the two cultures. An episode in a more recent Russian detective series, *Zhurov* (2009), colourfully titled *Shabbes Goy*, takes place not just in Israel but within a Hassidic sect in Jerusalem. It was filmed on location, in the religious neighbourhood of Mea Shearim. Again, the Russian detective (Andrey Panin) is working on a case together with a local colleague (Russian-Israeli actor Vladimir Friedman) who serves as both his interpreter and cultural mediator, helping him (and the audience) to gain a rare glimpse into the life of an insular religious community.

These Russian films and TV shows appear to have no Jewish theme. So, why Israel? Israel is a historically and culturally rich foreign locale, which makes it an exciting visual setting. But more importantly, the appearance of Israel in the Russian TV series affirms old social ties between Russian-Jewish cultural producers, some of them living in Russia and some in Israel, who still collaborate with each other. The script of *Shabbes Goy* was written by a Russian Israeli, and an Israeli production company (staffed with Russian Israelis) helped with the local casting.

Some co-productions and collaborations blur national and cultural boundaries, to the point where it is hard to identify whether a film is actually Russian or Israeli. Consider *And the Wind Returneth* (1991) by Mikhail Kalik. In the 1960s, Kalik was a figurehead of the Soviet poetic cinema along with directors such as Andrey Tarkovsky and Sergey Paradjanov. Following the anti-Semitic censoring of his films, he emigrated to Israel in 1971. There, Kalik made only one film and failed to flourish as a director, but in Russia his oeuvre continued to be revered. And so, on the invitation of the Soviet film authorities, he travelled to Russia and made *And the Wind Returneth*, his cinematic autobiography. Although set mostly in Soviet Russia, the film opens and ends in Israel, depicting, among other emigrations, Kalik's own. This was not a co-production: the film was financed by Soviet state funding, and shot mostly in Russia, but, with a director who identifies as a Russian-Jewish Israeli, the film's Israeli character is inevitable. Kalik's film is not the only example of such national boundary-crossing. Leonid Horowitz directed a Russian-Jewish film, *Ladies' Tailor*, and just a couple of years later, upon his immigration, a number of 'accented' films in Israel. However, Horowitz now lives in his native Kiev. Felix Gerchikov, who directed *The Children of USSR* in Israel, is now making films in Moscow. Are these filmmakers Russian or Israeli?

Because such a large number of Jewish cultural producers immigrated to Israel, the social ties that they maintain with their Russian friends and colleagues create social networks, which, once in place, generate their own momentum, leading to new cultural production and distribution as well as the blurring of national and cultural boundaries. Movies made by these filmmakers, whether Russian or Israeli, circulate through the internet, transnational TV channels and Jewish film festivals, and are seen in Russia, Israel, and elsewhere in the Russian diaspora. These cultural crossings and exchanges make the Russian-Israeli cinema an extension of both post-Soviet or, in broader terms, Russian diasporic cinema. Of course, these developments are not limited to cinema—we see the same process at work in literature, art, business and scholarship. As Russian immigrants to Israel transform themselves through migration, they also transform cultures around them, which is why Israel today is a part of Russia, and Russia is a part of Israel.

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*A version of this article appeared in the journal *Israel Affairs*.*

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## Taglit Event Explores Russian Culture in Israel

Posted By [Dan Brown](#) On February 22, 2012 @ 10:15 am In [In the Media](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



The Tel-Aviv nightclub, Ha-Oman 17, recently played host to "Taglit Art 2012", a festival of modern Israeli art and culture, that brought together 800 Taglit-Birthright Israel participants from the countries of the Former Soviet Union.



Four separate break-out areas were dedicated to *avant-garde* Israeli music; theater and multidisciplinary arts; Israeli fashion; and an exhibition of modern visual arts. Guests snacked on *falafel* and *shakshuka* while meeting Russian-speaking Israeli artists and designers. Interestingly, the most energy *was not* found on the dance

floor, but in the artist presentations.

The festival event was superbly designed, and implemented, by the Tel Aviv based [Fishka House](#) organization.

Addressing the attendees, MK Limor Livnat, Israel's Minister of Culture and Sport, stated that since the First Aliyah of the 19th century through the much larger wave of new immigrants in the 90s, Russian-speaking immigrants have always been an integral part of Israeli culture as creators and trendsetters.

"Further proof of this is the gifted artists who are with us tonight – their language is Russian, their creations are Israeli, and their success is international," she said.



While young Jewish adults around the world have many similarities, they also have unique cultural interests and needs. This is particularly noticeable with the Russian-speaking demographic who travel to Israel with Taglit. Like the Limmud FSU festivals, Taglit has found a benefit in "tinkering" with the well-established program to provide unique experiences for participants. High on the agenda of many, what are Russian-speaking Israelis "doing right here, right now." And since some think about *aliyah*, there is an above-average interest in how one might build their career, and their home, in Israel.



There are meaningful differences in mind-set of those traveling from the FSU compared to participants from western countries. While many have previously visited family, their perspective is much narrower. Israel, and the Jewish world, do not appear in the FSU media to the degree they do in the West. University life offers neither the variety of Jewish programs, nor the discourse on regional politics, found in other parts of the world. In general, only those who attended a Jewish day school as a youngster have had *any* exposure to Jewish holidays or customs. Those at the forefront of planning programs aimed at this demographic, including Fishka, Limmud FSU, Taglit and Genesis Philanthropy Group, all recognize these differences, and plan programs accordingly.

During the 10 day program, also with the assistance of the Fishka House community, many of the groups had the opportunity to explore a young, vibrant Tel Aviv – one specifically tailored to this Russian-speaking audience.

*photos courtesy Katy Gorshkov and Gidi Avinary*

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# Lesson Three

## Jewish Practice

### Objectives:

- Discuss what it would be like to discover you are Jewish for the first time.
- Analyze the influence of government policies and practices on Jewish life and liberty in the FSU.
- Evaluate the Jewish value “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*; All people of Israel is responsible for one another,” and apply this value to the actions of Soviet Jewish activists, to our own responsibilities, and to those of the state of Israel.

### Materials:

- Paper
- Crayons (1 black crayon per person)
- Unit Resource 2.3A- Soviet Jewish Quotes
- Tape
- Pens/Pencils
- Rope

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (10 mins):

Campers will play charades with a few different movies chosen by the counselors. All the movies have a common theme that the campers will have to discover (hint: one of the main characters loses their memory/identity and has to piece it back together). Movies may include: The Bourne Identity, 50 First Dates, Paycheck, The Notebook, The Vow, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, The Butterfly Effect, Total Recall, Finding Nemo, While You Were Sleeping, Anastasia, and Memento.

Counselors will ask:

What do these movies have in common? What do you think it would be like to forget about a whole aspect of your identity and have to piece it together? How may this relate to FSU Jews and Judaism? What does it mean to not understand what being Jewish means?

FSU Jews are just beginning to reconstruct their Judaism, discover their roots, history, and religion. They are trying to remember their own history just like the characters in these movies.

#### Activity 1 (20 mins): Erasing and Recreating Identity

Ask the campers to draw all their favorite Jewish symbols or aspects of being Jewish on a small piece of paper using colorful crayons (not black!) and then to explain the importance of the images they chose to the rest of the group. Everyone can go around and admire one another’s artwork. Then ask the students to take black crayon and draw over the entire image.

Discuss: What does it mean to you to have all your favorite aspects of being Jewish blacked out? How may this activity relate to the FSU Jewish experience?

Counselors will explain: Under past government influence, Jews underwent coercive pressure to assimilate into Russian culture by rejecting their Judaism. Under these intense pressures, some converted to Christianity in the attempt to live normal lives, escape constraints from the military, and attend their schools of choice without restrictions from the government. Most attempts at full assimilation were futile—some of these people became outcasts among the Christian populace *and* the Jewish community. Other Jews (like the popular Zionist thinker Ahad Ha-Am, writers like Sholom Aleichem and Bialik, etc.) held onto their Jewish values, customs, and spirit that they refused to lose in the face of oppression. Unfortunately, what ended up happening is that over time, most Russian Jews had their Jewish memories “blacked out” as represented by the black crayon in this art project. Despite being disconnected with their Jewish past, they were still identified by the public as Jews. The black crayon in this activity represents the “Russification” of Jews—the government’s attempt to delete the Jewish aspects of their lives and being through coercive assimilation.

Imagine that you have this black paper for decades and leave it hanging in your house—your children and grandchildren won’t know what was underneath it. They will wonder, what did it represent? They will not know until they scratch away the black layer to see what’s revealed underneath.

Now, take a sharp object (like a penny) and draw your favorite Jewish objects again. Were you able to find the drawing you created previously? How does this look different than it did before? The Judaism that people created for themselves years after “Russification” looked very different than before. How do you think this large gap in Jewish memory affects them today? Do you think it would be difficult to establish ties with your Jewish roots as an adult?

### **Activity 2 (35 mins): Rediscovering Jewish Roots**

Counselors will post quotes around the room from Soviet Jews or stories of Soviet Jews who gradually became aware of their Jewish roots (Unit Resource 2:3A). Each quote will have 1-3 questions and the campers should choose at least one question and write their answers on the piece of paper on the wall. After everyone reads each quote, the students will get a few minutes to read other people’s responses and come together to discuss the quotes.

Counselors should pick a few questions from the walls to discuss.

Here are additional possible discussion questions:

What challenges did many of the people mentioned in these quotes face as Jews in the Soviet Union? What role did Zionism play in their new connections to their Jewish roots? (Moreover, what is Zionism and how is it different than Judaism?) What was so attractive about living in Israel?

### **Activity 3 (25 mins): Spider Web Activity**

Counselors will explain:

According to Shavuot 39a in the Babylonian Talmud, *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh La’Zeh*: All People of Israel are Responsible for One Another. This is most often interpreted to mean that all Jews are responsible for one another. However, being responsible for one another is not always the easiest task. This means being aware of the needs of others—their struggles and ways in which you can help. This is very apparent in the struggle of Soviet Jewry. The Israeli

government lived up to their mission of helping Soviet immigrants reach Israel, but they were initially unaware of how they could be most helpful. Being responsible means listening to others, understanding their needs, and then acting.

To test out your ability to be responsible for one another, we are going to do an activity called the Spider Web:

### **Spider Web:**<sup>16</sup>

Construct a Spider's Web using rope between trees, or on portable or stand-alone structures.

The objective is to cross from one side of the spider's web to the other without touching the web. The group must create a plan that takes participants' physical ability and size to lift, pass, and spot participants in order to get them through.

1. The group must help each other through the web without touching it, or else that person will get stuck in the extremely sticky web. Really! Just brushing against a strand even so slightly causes players to get stuck in the web.
2. Although very strong and sticky, the web is also very sensitive. The vibrations from someone passing through a hole cause it to close, making it impossible to pass another full body through the hole. For some unknown reason, it is still large enough to put hands through.
3. The entire group must get through.
4. Good Luck!

### **Some facilitation tips:**

- Be sure the group has practiced spotting and lifting, and that they are mature enough to safely do both. This activity requires lifting and must be taken seriously.
- Use clothespins to mark holes that have been passed through. After the first few people go through, it's almost impossible to remember which holes are available to use.
- You can add a time restriction if you like. The spider will be back in 15 minutes, after all.

### **Follow-up Questions:**

- What did it feel like to be responsible for one another?
- What did you have to do to make sure everyone got across safely?

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<sup>16</sup> "Spider's Web." *Ultimate Camp Resource*. Web 13 Apr. 2012.

<<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activity/spider-s-web-low-ropes-course.html>>



After the Spider-web activity, counselors will explain:

ALL OF ISRAEL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE ANOTHER<sup>17</sup>:

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, who lived in Tsfat at the time of the Ar"l [Rabbi Yitzchak Luria Ashkenazi, mid-1500s], explained the meaning of the phrase "kol yisrael arevim zeh lazeh" – "all Israel is responsible for one another": "arevim – responsible" from the language of "meoravim – mixed" – a mixture or mixing of souls. Each person has a piece of the soul of the other... This is the foundation of all foundations – to recognize that all Israel is one soul.  
– R. Shlomo Aviner

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think it means to be responsible for one another?
- Do you believe that “Israel is one soul” or that every Jewish person is connected with one another? If yes, how so?
- How does Israel, the Jewish State, act on this responsibility? (*Especially by helping Jewish people in need from other countries, implementing the Law of Return.*)
- How did Soviet Jewish activists act on this Jewish value? (*Activists worked endlessly to reach the State of Israel and helped fight for other Soviet Jews who had not yet immigrated to Israel.*)
- What can you do in your own community to enact this value? How about globally?

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<sup>17</sup> “Passover Study Guide.” *The Nesiya Institute*, 2010. Web. 14 Apr. 2012.  
<[http://nesiya.org/About\\_Nesiya/study\\_guides/Pesach\\_2010.pdf](http://nesiya.org/About_Nesiya/study_guides/Pesach_2010.pdf)>

Unit Resource 2.3A  
**Soviet Jewish Quotes**

**Quote 1**

*June 1967, Moscow:*

“In a letter addressed to the Supreme Soviet, the highest office of state in the USSR, [Yasha Kazakov, 29 years old] wrote: ‘I ask to be freed from the humiliation of being considered a citizen of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. I ask to be given the opportunity to leave the Soviet Union. I no longer consider myself a citizen of the Soviet Union...I am a Jew, and as a Jew I feel that the State of Israel is my homeland...and like any other Jew, I have an inalienable right to live in that state...’”<sup>18</sup>

**Questions:**

- ✓ What does being a citizen mean to you? What comes with citizenship?
- ✓ Why do you think Yasha Kazakov felt humiliated to be thought of as a citizen of the USSR?
- ✓ What attracted Kazakov to Israel?

**Quote 2**

“Yasha Kazakov first knew he was a Jew the same way most Jews knew—by the word ‘Jew’ written on their identity cards. There was nothing Jewish in his home, there was not the slightest observance of the Jewish holidays, there was not even a Bible. His home was like any other Russian home. Yasha was three years old when he first heard from his friends in the street that he was a Jew. His father said that the boy who called him a ‘Jid’ was just a little fool, but as time passed, Yasha discovered that there were a lot of these fools.”<sup>19</sup>

**Questions:**

- ✓ Why do you think Kazakov’s father did not want him to know he was a Jew and that his family was Jewish?

**Quote 3**

“Nineteen year-old Zitnitski, like Kazakov, personified the typical young Soviet Jew. He knew almost nothing about his Judaism or the Jewish past. Only after the Six-Day War with the open Arab threat of liquidation of the Jewish people in Israel, threats strongly hailed by Soviet propaganda, did these young Soviet Jews become aware that they were Jews too, and many started to dream about joining their people in Israel.”<sup>20</sup>

**Questions:**

- ✓ Why did these young Soviet Jews suddenly begin associating with their Jewish roots?

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<sup>18</sup> Rebecca Rass and Morris Brafman, *From Moscow to Jerusalem: The Dramatic Story of the Jewish Liberation Movement and its Impact on Israel*. (New York: Shengold, 1976), 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

#### Quote 4

Court case against the Jewish activist, Kochubievsky, in Kiev, May 1969. Gerenrot, a fellow activist, is on trial attempting to free Kochubievsky from ant-Soviet charges:

“Two officials seated next to the judge snapped to attention. ‘Do you mean to say you disagree with the judge?’ one of them declared. ‘Are you a Zionist?’

‘As I understand it, I am.’ Gerenrot replied.

‘Do you know what is written on the Zionist flag?’ the judge asked.

‘To my knowledge nothing is written there.’

‘Anti-communism is written there. You haven’t learned your Lenin well enough.’

Kochubievsky’s trial went on in vein for four days. On May 16<sup>th</sup> he was found guilty of charges against him and sentenced to three years in a corrective labor camp.”<sup>21</sup>

#### Questions:

- ✓ What does the judge mean by saying that “anti-communism” is written on the “Zionist flag?”
- ✓ What is your initial reaction to this court appearance?

#### Quote 5

“Dov Shperling was born into a typical assimilated Soviet Jewish family. It was not until 1956 when he was already 19, that he was confronted with the existence of the State of Israel. It was during the Sinai Campaign in the Middle East, as he read the papers ranting against Israeli aggression, that he discovered that the Jews had a state of their own.”<sup>22</sup>

#### Questions:

- ✓ Shperling learned about the existence of the State of Israel eight years after its creation. Why was he unaware of it before?
- ✓ What did it mean to be “a typical assimilated Soviet Jewish family?”

#### Quote 6

“Nasser’s\* speeches widely reported in the Soviet press threatening a new holocaust induced even the most assimilated Soviet Jews to unearth within themselves a Jewish soul which had lain dormant for two generations. Consequently, countless people of Jewish origin who had been completely estranged from anything Jewish, all well-established in their non-Jewish environment, found themselves, to their utter amazement, emotionally involved with the fate of the State of Israel and its Jews, of whom they had hardly heard. People who had never mentioned their Jewish origin found themselves, to their own bewilderment, ready to risk their lives for something completely foreign to them until then... Feeling threatened, not as an individual but as someone who belonged or had belonged to a certain community, the ‘non-Jewish’ Jew discovered that he was but a link in a long succession of generations.”<sup>23</sup> \*Gamal Abdul Nasser, the second president of Egypt, broadcasted anti-Israel propaganda within the weeks before the June 1967 Six-Day War, declaring his plan to destroy the Jewish State.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 64.

**Questions:**

- ✓ Why were these people suddenly ready to risk their lives?
- ✓ What ignited this passion within them?
- ✓ How may the Jewish values of *Klal Yisrael* (the community of Israel) and *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh l'zeh* (All people of Israel are responsible for one another) relate to this situation and the Soviet Jews' reactions?

**Quote 7**

*Nathan Sharansky, former Prisoner of Zion and Israeli Minister: "I, as practically all Soviet Jews, was absolutely assimilated. I knew nothing about our language, about our history, about our religion. But the pride of being a Jew, the pride of our State of Israel after the Six Day War, made me feel free from that big Soviet prison."*<sup>24</sup>

**Questions:**

- ✓ According to Sharansky, what were the impacts of Soviet assimilation upon Soviet Jews?

**Quote 8**

"According to *Kol Israel*,\* Israel was a country without problems, a country in which people never struck or protested, where unemployment was non-existent, and every new immigrant was welcomed, needed and successfully absorbed. It was heaven on earth, a socialist heaven (just like the Soviet Union)... The activists in Israel wanted to change all this. They hoped to convince *Kol Israel* to broadcast less socialist and kibbutz lore and transmit the things Russian Jews really longed for: Jewish history, the story of Zionism, the meaning of the Jewish festivals. They wanted to be told about the greatness of Judaism, that being a Jew was something to be proud of. They also felt it was urgent that *Kol Israel* use its facilities to transmit back information about the Jewish awakening in the Soviet Union in order to encourage the activists and to spread information throughout the country."<sup>25</sup> \**Kol Israel* (meaning the voice of Israel) is Israeli radio programming available in the Soviet Union.

**Questions:**

- ✓ What was the problem with Israel only broadcasting about socialism and the kibbutzim?
- ✓ Why did Russian Jews want to hear about Jewish history, the story of Zionism, and the meaning of the Jewish festivals?

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<sup>24</sup> Mishael Zion and Noam Zion. *A Night to Remember: The Haggadah of Contemporary Voices*. (Jerusalem: Zion Holiday Publications, 2007), 69.

<sup>25</sup> Rass and Brafman, 95.

### Quote 9

“Most of what I know about Jewish holidays and other customs that I follow today I learned after I immigrated.”<sup>26</sup> - Interview with Naomi, Ukrainian immigrant, 2012

#### Questions:

- ✓ How may Israeli society and culture, including schooling, media, and the Jewish calendar, impact the Jewish practices and understandings of FSU immigrants?
- ✓ How may this be rewarding and/or challenging for immigrants?

### Quote 10

Interview with Matthew, Russian immigrant, 2012:

*Question:* What customs of the FSU Jewish community are you currently practicing?

*Answer:* [Not] sure that I understand the question right. For me, there are no customs. We are more than Jews [in Israel]. We are Israeli people. We have Israeli tradition, Israeli lifestyle etc. This point of view I get after serving IDF as computer sciences officer in [the] Israeli navy. We are the same. We have the same opportunities...<sup>27</sup>

#### Questions:

- ✓ Why does this immigrant not associate with the question about Jewish customs?
- ✓ How does he define himself?

### Quote 11

“One cannot erase a nation’s history and its link to its past. The USSR has failed in its attempt to eradicate the collective memory, history and cultural tradition of a whole nation, even in the name of universal brotherhood. The uprising of the Jews in the Soviet Union, in an effort to regain their identity and freedom, is an inspiration to everyone who still believes that the inner force of essential values can win over a totalitarian regime. It is a comfort to every individual struggling to maintain his own individuality and personal freedom in a system which tries to rob him of his identity.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Naomi. Personal communication. November 17, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew. Personal communication. November 17, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Rass and Brafman, 226.

# Lesson Four

## Culture—Part I

### Objectives:

- Articulate the current influence of FSU literature, music, and theater on culture in Israel and Israel’s influence on FSU culture.

### Materials:

- Unit Resource 2.4A- Aleichem and Bialik Literature<sup>29</sup>

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (15 mins):

##### *Sing Down*

1. Split the campers into smaller groups.
2. One word will be give to the groups. Each group will come up with a list of all of the songs that they can sing which include that word.
3. The word for this set induction is **Bridge** or **Gesher**. Campers can use songs in both English and Hebrew.
4. One team at a time will go around and sing the part of the song that includes the word bridge or *gesher*. Once a certain song has been used, no other team can use it.
5. The team who has the most songs wins.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What is the function of a bridge?
- Are the bridges in these songs real bridges or symbols?
- What may they represent symbolically?
- How may the image of a bridge apply to the culture of a country full of immigrants?
- How may the bridge symbolism apply to FSU Jews in Israel?

#### Counselors will explain:

The Gesher Theater opened in Tel Aviv in 1990. Founded by new immigrants from Russia, the theater features bilingual performances and a multicultural cast. The concept of the theater mixes traditional Russian theater with modern innovations. The Gesher Theater was founded in conjunction with Israeli organizations, including the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Jewish Agency, the City of Tel-Aviv Jaffa, The Tel Aviv Development Foundation, and the

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<sup>29</sup> Literature for Unit Resource 2.4A Includes: 1. Sholom Aleichem. “Menachem-Mendel. Fortune Hunter.” In *A Treasury of Jewish Humor*. Ed. Nathan Ausubel. (New York: Paperback Library, Inc., 1967), 52-61; 773-782.

2. Sholom Aleichem. “Tevye Goes to Palestine.” In *The Tevye Stories and Others*. Transl. Julius Butwin and Frances Butwin. (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1965), 91-110.

3. Haim Bialik. “City of Slaughter.” In *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. Ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 390-391

Zionist Forum. The theater's Founder and Artistic Director, Yevgeny Arye, was originally a stage and screen director in Moscow. The theater is now an integral part of Israel and especially of the diversity of Tel Aviv, the culture capital of Israel. (We will get back to the Gesher theater at the end of the lesson).<sup>30</sup>

Habima Theater, the national theater of Israel, was originally a theater in Moscow. It was founded in the early 1900s, after the 1905 revolution. The theater's performances were in Hebrew, leading to negative reactions from the Czarist government and persecution. In 1918, it opened as the Moscow Art Theater and struggled under the Soviet government. In 1925, the theater began to tour other countries, including the U.S. Other theater members brought the theater to Palestine in 1928. Sholom Aleichem's *Der Oytser*, a Yiddish play, premiered in the theater on December 29, 1928. The theater became more popular and gained a large repertoire. In 1945, the company built HaBima Theater in Tel Aviv.<sup>31</sup>

As we see from these theaters and later examples, Jewish literature, art, music, theater and food from the FSU still impact Jewish culture and communities today, especially in Israel and in America. Today, we will be focusing on literature and theater. We will begin with Sholom Aleichem and Hayyim Bialik, two Russian writers who promoted two different languages for the arts—Yiddish and Hebrew. We will look at their impact on the world, their concerns, their interests, and their relationships with Israel. Then, we will go back to the Gesher Theater and HaBima to see what cultural bridges are being made in Israel today.

### **Station 1 (40 mins): Aleichem vs. Bialik**

Students will participate in drama activities using the interests and concerns of Aleichem and Bialik. Beforehand, counselors will explain background information about Hebrew culture vs. Yiddish culture (ultimately, the debate between their forefront authors, Bialik and Aleichem).

#### **The Great Debate: Hebrew Culture Versus Yiddish Culture**<sup>32</sup>

Hebrew culture thrived alongside Yiddish culture at the beginning of the twentieth century. Supporters of Hebrew culture were determined to revive the Jewish holy language into a living language. The most famous of those supporters was Hayyim Nahman Bialik, whose poetry not only expressed the anguish, despair, and shame that Jews felt in the face of pogroms but also celebrated the beauty of Russian Jewish life.

Bialik, who lived from 1873 to 1934, began writing in Yiddish but soon abandoned it for Hebrew. Although he and other writers used both languages, and even Polish or Russian, to reach different audiences, the conflict between the Yiddishists and the Hebraists was often fierce. In choosing one language over the other, a writer made the political statement, "I support the Bund" or "I support the return to Palestine."

<sup>30</sup> "Gesher Theater." *Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 4 May 2012.

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gesher\\_Theater](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gesher_Theater)>

<sup>31</sup> "Habima Theater." *Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 4 May 2012.

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habima\\_Theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habima_Theatre)>

<sup>32</sup> Gila Gevirtz. *Jewish History: The BIG Picture*. (New Jersey: Behrman House Publishers, 2008), 160.

In some cases the conflict threatened to tear apart families. Solomon Rabinowitz (Sholom Aleichem) chose to use a pen name because, as a Yiddish writer, he was afraid of angering his father, who supported the return to Palestine. The meaning of the pseudonym, “Peace be with you,” was both a clever play on a Jewish greeting *and* a plea for tolerance.

**Sholom Aleichem** (1859-1916), known as the “Jewish Mark Twain,” was born in Pereyaslav, Ukraine, the third oldest of over a dozen children. He grew up in the shtetl Voronko and had a traditional Jewish education in a school known as a *heder*. Although he initially began writing in Russian and Hebrew, Aleichem soon became the leading advocate of Yiddish as a literary language. After becoming a patron for struggling Yiddish writers, Sholom lost his money and became a struggling artist himself.

Sholom Aleichem’s advocacy of Yiddish began with the very fact that he changed his last name from Rabinowitz to Aleichem: to the Yiddish phrase “Sholom Aleichem,” meaning “Peace be with you.”<sup>33</sup> Aleichem chose Yiddish despite its position as an “inferior idiom of expression.”<sup>34</sup> The “proper” language of literature was Hebrew, the language of the Torah, while the everyday spoken language of Russian and eastern European Jews and many literary characters themselves was Yiddish. Through his use of Yiddish, he sought to communicate directly to his Jewish audience and encourage a new and improved understanding of Jewish culture— an embrace of its traditions and of the spoken language of its people.

Aleichem’s characters, their stories, and the music accompanying their performances, provide a view of Jewish life within Russia. His works portray life in the shtetl: the members of the community (rabbi, merchant, beggar, intellectual, rich and poor), the violence of pogroms, the impact of various political ideals, and the controversies that arose between Jews.

Aleichem’s struggles and personality can be seen through the actions and words of two specific characters: Menachem Mendl, the wandering businessman and Tevyeh, the dairyman. Mendl is a representation of Sholom’s experiences in the business world. The troubles that his father endured as a merchant combined with his own path as a struggling artist resulted in stories of random, unsuccessful, yet wishful occupation attempts. Menachem Mendl is an innovator and a dreamer who travels from place to place, seeking opportunity in order to feed his hungry family.

Tevyeh represents the traditional Jew who takes pride in the culture of his people, works hard to support his family, and refuses to succumb to assimilation into Russian Christian society. Weitzner explains that Tevyeh “does not hate Gentiles. He simply knows that being Jewish is the core of his existence. It is an intuitive knowledge.”<sup>35</sup> He is not a scholar of the Talmud, but more of a Jewish folklorist. When Tevyeh was performed in the Moscow Jewish Theater in 1938, his character had to be altered due to the Communist Party’s view of Jewish people. According to Weitzner, “The Communist did not regard Jews as a nation. In deference to the Soviet ideology, Tevye had to become less Jewish.”<sup>36</sup> In 1964, Tevyeh became a star on Broadway in *Fiddler on the Roof* and then on film when *Fiddler on the Roof* was made into a motion picture in 1971.

<sup>33</sup> Jacob Weitzner. *Sholem Aleichem in the Theater*. (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 95.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 89.



Drama activities with Aleichem’s Menachem Mendl and Tevye:

1. A few campers will volunteer to act out one of the two stories from Sholom Aleichem in Unit Resource 2.4A. During the play, other campers can shout out a “style of acting” change and the performers will have to change their voices and mannerisms to fit that style. For example, campers can say, “Cowboy style,” “Southern accent,” “Shakespearean,” “Opera,” “Israeli accent,” “British accent,” etc. Other campers can also yell FREEZE and change positions with either the reader or the actor.

2. At the end of the play, the group should point out at least three major themes of the play. (Money, God, Biblical characters, prayer, fortune.)

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Aleichem focuses on these themes?
- What may this reveal about the time period in which he lived?
- What may this reveal about his life?

3. A couple of campers will volunteer to act out the other story from Unit Resource 2.4A.

During the play, students can yell FREEZE and ask the characters questions. For instance, they can ask, “Why are you SO worried about money?!” or “What does that Yiddish phrase mean?” The campers performing will have a glossary of Yiddish terms (attached to Unit Resource 2.4A) that they can use to answer the questions.

The same discussion questions can apply to this activity. In addition:

- How do the Yiddish words and phrases contribute to the story?
- Why did the translator choose to keep these words in Yiddish?
- Are you familiar with either of these main characters (Menachem or Tevye)? Why do you think they may still be popular today?

4. Now that the campers have some knowledge of Aleichem’s characters and experience acting them out, they can create their own improvisation using the characters and their concerns. A couple of campers can volunteer to act first, using the audience’s scenario ideas to develop the story along with the Yiddish word sheet.

**Haim Nahman Bialik**<sup>37</sup> (1873-1934). Celebrated as the poet laureate of modern Hebrew, Bialik exercised a profound influence on modern Jewish culture. Raised in the Pale of Settlement, he broke with traditional Judaism at the age of eighteen, and he devoted himself to the creation of a national, secular Jewish culture. His attitude to traditional Judaism, however, was ambivalent.

Bialik was sent to Kishinev on behalf of the Jewish Historical Commission in Odessa in order to interview survivors of the pogrom and to prepare a report on the atrocities. After his visit to Kishinev, he wrote this poem, denouncing neither God nor the Russian mobs but the Jews themselves. This poem became a symbol of the Zionist revolt against traditional Judaism’s supine acceptance of Exile and the bi-millennial humiliation of Jewry.

Drama activity with Bialik’s epic poem, “City of Slaughter” in Unit Resource 2.4A:

Students will read the text individually and then participate in a public dramatic reading. They should stay true to the intensity and power of the text, but may ask questions throughout the reading.

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<sup>37</sup> Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz. *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 390-391.

Discussion Questions:

- Who is Bialik attacking in this poem? Why?
- What behavior is he humiliated by?
- How would he rather see the Jewish people, including the Rabbi, behaving?
- How is the tone and concerns of the poem different from the stories we looked at from Aleichem?
- How may this relate to Bialik's decision to write in Hebrew and not Yiddish? How does he view Yiddish and the people that the language represents? Do you think this is fair of him?
- In your opinion, how do we view the Yiddish and Hebrew languages today?

**Activity 2 (35 mins): Bridging Culture**

Counselors will explain:

As seen by Aleichem and Bialik's literature, one of the major concerns in the FSU was with which type of Jewish language FSU Jews should express themselves. The great debate between Yiddish and Hebrew often had to do with how they could hold onto elements of being Jewish and how they should go about doing this. This created a separation between those who believed in the return to Palestine and those who wanted to take pride in their Eastern European Jewish culture and live in the Diaspora.

When Jews from the FSU immigrated to Israel, they achieved remarkable accomplishments in the arts and theater, as seen by Habima, now the national theater of Israel (a Hebrew language theater), and Gesher Theater, one of the only bilingual theaters in the world. However, the concerns of FSU Jews in Israel are different than those of Aleichem and Bialik. Now, they wonder how to hold onto their native culture and integrate it with Israeli culture—the debate is between Russian and Hebrew rather Yiddish and Hebrew. Gesher Theater chose both. They chose to bridge Russian and Israeli language and culture in order to keep both elements of their identities.

Beyond allowing us to see FSU accomplishments in Israel, the concept of the Gesher Theater can help us learn more about ourselves as people, campers, and Jews. It can help us understand how we combine different elements of our own identities.

Campers will then split into small groups of 2-3 and take 15 minutes to explore camp and collect different symbols that define their camp culture, language, and identities. They should think of it as making a collage (typically done with magazines) of their own interests, but using the whole campground. They should visit each different space in camp with which they feel a real connection and take something (that they will return later!) to bring back to the group.

When the campers come back together as a large group, they will discuss what they found around camp.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you enjoy certain parts of camp more than others? Why or why not?
- Is there a certain language you use at camp that is different from the language you use outside of camp?

- How do the activities you participate in at camp relate to your own identity?
- How can you bridge all of these things, the entire culture and language of camp, with the world outside of camp?
- How do you think Russian-Hebrew theater helps FSU immigrants create these bridges? What aspects of their identities may it tie together?

## GLOSSARY

- ach*: an exclamation of surprise, dismay, or disapproval.
- ach and vey*: alas and alack, woe be to it!
- Adar*: the twelfth month of the Jewish year.
- Adenom*: a Dutch-Yiddish corruption of *Adonai*, my Lord; i.e., my God!
- Adoishem*: an indirect reference to the Deity, since any direct mention of God's name is forbidden to orthodox Jews.
- a *guten Shabbos*: a good Sabbath—the salutation at parting during the Sabbath.
- aleph*: the first letter in the Hebrew-Yiddish alphabet.
- ayeleh*: the unhatched egg inside a chicken.
- baal-tefilah*: the precentor, the leader of prayer.
- baba*. See *bubba*.
- baba stories (bubba myseh's)*: grandmother tales; i.e., fairy tales, inventions.
- balabusteh*: a mistress of a household, a competent housewife.
- bar-mitzvah*: the confirmation ceremony for Jewish boys
- when they reach thirteen.
- bar-mitzvah becher*: a small wine-cup, usually of silver or brass, presented to a *bar-mitzvah* boy for use during his recitation of the *Kiddush*, the benediction, on the Sabbath and on holy days.
- batinka*: dear little father. (Ukrainian).
- batlen* (pl. *batlonim*): an unworldly Talmudic student with no gift for practical everyday life. In every east European ghetto there were to be found such misfits, made so by poverty, constant religious study, and a lack of opportunity.
- belek*: the white meat of a chicken; a dish made with *belek*.
- benshing*: an anglicization of the Yiddish word *benshen*, to say grace after meals.
- bet*: a letter in the Hebrew alphabet; in Yiddish it is pronounced *boys*.
- Bima*: the platform in the synagogue where the *chazan* sings the service and the rabbi delivers his sermon.

*blintze*: a roll of thin dough containing a filling of cheese or *kasha* (groats).

*boychik*: a little boy. By adding the Yiddish-Russian "chik" to "boy" a brand-new word was added to English in the United States.

*bratzek*: a Russian intoxicating drink made from fermented grain.

*briss* (*brith*): the circumcision ceremony which takes place on the eighth day after the birth of a Jewish boy.

*bubba* (*bube*, *baba*): grand-mother.

*bulke*: a roll.

*Cabala* (*Cabalah*): "the hidden wisdom"; a body of mystical knowledge that, beginning with the thirteenth century in Spain, stood in opposition to the rationalism of the *Talmud*.

*challeh* (*challeh*, *chalah*): white bread specially baked for eating on the Sabbath and on holy days.

*chasseneh*: wedding.

*Chassid* (pl. *Chassidim*, adj.

*Chassidei*): a member of a Cabalistic mystical sect centered around wonder-working rabbis as mediators between God and man. This sect was founded in the Ukraine by Rabbi Israel Baal-Shem, or "Master of the Name"; i.e., a wonder worker, during the middle of the eighteenth century.

*chazan* (pl. *chazanim* or *chazanim*): a cantor.

*cheder* (*chayder*, *chedar*): old-style orthodox Hebrew

school.

*cheder-yingel*: a boy who studies in a *cheder*.

*chine*: playful humor, humorous anecdote.

*chochem*: a sage.

*chochina*: wisdom.

*choten*: See *schaler*.

*chrentzlech* (*chrentzlech*): the plural for *chrentz*, a pancake made of *matzo*-meal, which is eaten during the week of Passover.

*chluppe*: the marriage canopy under which bride and groom stand during the wedding ceremony.

*chitzpanik*: impudence, unmitigated nerve.

*chitzpanik*: an impudent fellow.

*coff* (*koph*): the letter in the Hebrew-Yiddish alphabet resembling the letter *k* phonetically.

*doded*: a letter in the Hebrew-Yiddish alphabet.

*Deitsch*: a German, but also refers to a Jew dressed, not in the traditional clothes of the east European ghetto, but in modern Western attire. This was regarded among the ghetto orthodox of former days as a form of heresy, and even as a steppingstone to apostasy.

*draydlech* (*draydlech*): the plural of *draydl*. From the German *drehen*, "to turn" or spin. These are small metal or wooden tops, having four sides, and are spun around with two fingers. Jewish children traditionally play with them during *Hanukkah*, the Festival of Lights.

*drasha*: sermon, speech.

*dybbuk*: a soul condemned to wander for a time in this world because of its sins. To escape the perpetual torments inflicted upon it by evil spirits, the *dybbuk* seeks refuge in the body of some pious man or woman over whom the demons have no power. The *dybbuk* is a Cabalistic-Classic conception.

*ech*: a groan, a disparaging exclamation.

*Eliul*: the sixth lunar month in the Jewish calendar.

*epis* (*epus*): something, a reference to something vague.

*Eretz Yisroel* (*Eretz Yisrael*): the Land of Israel.

*essrig* (*esrog*, *ethrog*, pl.

*essrigim*): a large, sweet-smelling citrus fruit of the lemon family used together with the *lulav*, made of palm, myrtle, and willow branches, in the synagogue procession during *Sukkot*, the Feast of Tabernacles.

*et*: a minimizing gesture, a negative exclamation.

*feh*: an exclamation of disgust or disapproval.

*feldsher* (also *feldsher*): a practical medical practitioner in east European countries but having neither the training nor status of a qualified physician.

*faishegch leffel*: dietary correct spoons used for meat soups, etcetera.

*fresser*: to gorge, to gormandize.

*fressing*: gormandizing; by adding the English suffix *ing* to

the Yiddish word *fress*, we have a new English word in the vocabulary of American Jews.

*gabbar*: a treasurer or warden of a synagogue.

*Galuth* (*Golass*, *Goluth*): the Jewish Dispersion, the Exile.

*ganef* (or *ganey*): a thief.

*gaon*: a genius, a title of honor given to great Talmudic scholars. It was the title given to Rabbi Elijah of Vilna (the *Vilner Gaon*), the celebrated eighteenth-century Talmudist.

*gefillt hetsel* (*gefillt hetsel*): stuffed chicken-neck skin.

*gelt*: money.

*Gemara* (or *Gemarrah*, *Gemorrah*): the Aramaic name for the *Talmud*.

*gesheft*: business.

*gevatt*: outcry of alarm, fear; exclamation of exasperation and amazement.

*gimmel*: letter in the Hebrew-Yiddish alphabet.

*golem* (*golem*): a numbskull—"a clay golem," a stupid clod.

*goy* (pl. *goyim*, adj. *goyisher*): a Gentile.

*goyet*: a Gentile woman.

*gozlem*: a murderer, a violent criminal.

*grager* (or *gragar*, *greger*): a traditional Jewish toy that makes a disagreeable grating noise, used by Jewish children in the synagogue during the reading of the *Megillah*, the Book of Esther, upon each mention of the name of Haman the Wicked.

*gribbenes* (or *grivvenes*, *greven*): small crisp pieces left from rendered poultry

fat, eaten as a delicacy or combined with *kasha* groats or rice.

*groshen*: small German silver coins whose old value was about two cents.

*gui yom-tov*: good Holy Day!  
*gymnasia* (or *gymnasium*): the Russian secondary school.

*Habadalah* (*Havdalah*): the benedictions and prayers recited at the conclusion of the Sabbath over a cup of wine, the smelling of spices, and the kindling of a light.

*Haggadah* (or *Hagadah*): the book containing the Passover home service of the *Seder*. It consists in large part of the narrative of the Jewish exodus from ancient Egypt led by Moses.

*haida*: Russian cry used frequently by drivers, meaning: let's go, here we go.  
*halawai* (or *alevai*): exclamation implying better for me if I hadn't done that; a regretful retrospection of something past.

*Hanukkah*: described variously as The Festival of Lights, The Feast of Dedication, and The Feast of the Maccabees. It is celebrated for eight days from the twenty-fifth day of Kislev (in December). It was instituted by Judas Maccabeus and the Elders of Israel in 165 B.C. to commemorate the rout of the invading forces of Antiochus Epiphanes and the purification of the Temple sanctuary.

*Hanukkah lamp*: an eight-branched lamp, usually of

brass, with an extra branch serving as *shammes*, or monitor. On each of the eight successive days of *Hanukkah* an additional candle is lit together with one in the monitor.

*Hasid*: See *Chassid*.  
*hazen* or *hazzan*: See *chazan*.  
*hock-flaish*: chopped meat, meat balls.

*Holy Ark*: also called The Ark of the Law, is a chest or closet in a synagogue placed against the wall facing Jerusalem, and containing the Holy Scrolls of the Torah.

*homnataschen* (also *homnataschen*, a *homnatsch*): triangular pockets of dough filled with poppyseeds or prunes, eaten during *Purim*, the Festival of Lots.

*hopak*: a vigorous Russian folk dance.

*hruba*: the back wall of a Russian kitchen oven; by pressing against it one keeps warm on cold winter days. It also has a narrow platform which is used for sleeping.

*intelligentsia*: the Russian word for the intellectual class.

*Kabala*: See *Cabala*.

*kabzen* (*kapsn*): a pauper.  
*Kaddish*: the mourner's prayer recited in the synagogue during services thrice daily for eleven months by the immediate male relatives of the deceased, who must be more than thirteen years of age. Also means a son who recites the *Kaddish* for a parent.

*kateh*: bride.

*kapote*: derived from the old

French word *capote*, or coat. It is a long coat of medieval origin which Jews continued wearing in the east European ghettos centuries after it had gone out of fashion among Christians.

*kasha*: groats.

*kashe*: a question.

*kers*: the ancient ghetto practice whereby the young bride's parents supported, in their own home, their daughter and son-in-law for a specified period of time after their marriage.

*Kiddush*: the blessing of sanctification recited by the male members of an orthodox household over wine in a brass or silver cup during the Sabbath and on holy days before meals.

*kinderlach*: an endearing variant of *kinder*, children.

*kishken*: stuffed beef casing; also called "stuffed derma."

*kittel*: the white coatlike shroud every pious Jew has prepared against the day of his death. He also wears it in synagogue on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.

*letzner* (pl. *kletzmerim*): a Jewish folk musician, usually one playing at weddings in a band consisting in the main of several string and wood-wind instruments.

*kneidlach* (or *kneidlach*, a *kneidel* or *knyedl*): balls of boiled *marzo* meal cooked in chicken soup, sometimes separately.

*knishes* (s. *knish*): potato or *kasha* dumpling, fried or

baked.

*koogler*: see *kugel*.

*kopeck* (or *kopek*): a small Russian copper coin; there are 100 kopecks in a ruble.

*kosher*: food that is permitted to be eaten, and prepared, according to the Jewish dietary laws.

*kotchken*: duck.

*koved*: honor.

*kreple* (pl. *kreplach*): a small pocket of dough filled with chopped meat; it is usually boiled and eaten with chicken soup.

*krina tartarum*: cream of tartar.

*kuf*: letter in the Hebrew-Yiddish alphabet.

*kugel*: noodle or bread suet pudding, sometimes cooked with raisins.

*kvass*: a popular fermented drink of Russia.

*kvassnik*: a maker or seller of *kvass*.

*lamdan*: a scholar.

*landsman* (pl. *landsleit*): a man from the same town in the old country.

*lange mem*: a letter in the Hebrew-Yiddish alphabet used at the end of a word in writing.

*latke* (pl. *latkes*): pancake.

*lattes*: patches.

*latvink*: a cobbler, a layer of patches.

*leb*: affectionately added on as a suffix to the name of some person; i.e., "Hashe-leb," meaning Hashe-my-life, or, Hashe-dear.

*le' chayim!*: "to life!" the traditional Jewish toast.

*lekech*: honeycake, usually with

*retetch*: turnip.  
*rishus*: harm, evil; refers especially to anti-Semitic acts.  
*Rosh Hashanah*: the Jewish New Year, the most solemn day next to *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.  
*ruble (rouble)*: silver coin of Russia; in Czarist times it had the exchange value of fifty-one cents.  
*schacher-macher*: a business manipulator, a flangler.  
*schalei (shalei, scholei)*: potted meat and vegetables cooked on Friday and simmered overnight for the Sabbath noonday meal.  
*schlemihl*: a clumsy bungler, an inept person, butter-fingered.  
*schlimmazi*: a consistently luckless fellow, a ne'er-do-well.  
*schmaltz*: rendered animal fat.  
*schmorrer*: a beggar who shows wit, brass, and resourcefulness in getting money from others as though it were his right.  
*Seder*: the Passover religious home service recounting the Jewish liberation from Egyptian bondage in the days of the Pharaohs.  
*setrah (or sidrah)*: a section of the Pentateuch, the Five Books of Moses, prescribed for weekly reading on the Sabbath in the synagogue, or for study by children in religious school.  
*selig*: blessed; used in recalling a beloved deceased—"mana selig."

*sha (shai)*: a peremptory hissing sound, a request for silence.  
*shaloah u' ishivoh*: religious questions and their rabbinical answers.  
*Shabbos*: the Jewish Sabbath.  
*Shabbesigen*: adjective of *Shabbos*.  
*Shabroth (Shevuos, Shevivoh, Shabroth)*: the Festival of Weeks, or Pentecost. It originally was a harvest festival.  
*shadchan (pl. shadchonom)*: a marriage broker, a matrimonial agent.  
*shalach-monehs*: the gift of cakes, sweets, fruit, and wine, customary for sending during the Feast of *Purim*.  
*shammes (pl. shammosim)*: a synagogue sexton.  
*Shass*: the six divisions of the *Talmud*.  
*Shechinah (Shekhinah)*: God's radiance or presence; a neo-Platonic idea.  
*sheitel*: a wig; before the wedding the ultra-orthodox bride has her hair cut off and she wears a *sheitel* ever after.  
*shiti-piti*: a colloquialism—"a mere nothing."  
*shivah*: the seven days of mourning following death in the family.  
*shlattenshammes*: a communal busy-body, a tale carrier, a mere messenger.  
*shlepp*: to pull, to drag.  
*shmate (pl. shmates)*: a rag.  
*shmelke*: a pal, intimate.  
*shmendrik*: a fool, a simpleton.  
*shmiggege*: same as *shmendrik*.  
*shofar*: ram's horn blown during the synagogue services on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*.  
*sholom aleichem*: Yiddish salutation with a handclasp on meeting—"peace be to you."

The person greeted responds in reverse—"aleichem sholom, "to you be peace."  
*shomer*: a watchman; specifically refers to the armed Israeli watchman in the agricultural settlements.  
*shool (also shul, shule, shoolie)*: synagogue.  
*shtik goy*: idiomatic expression for one inclined to heretical views, or to ignorance of Jewish religious values.  
*shtrymel (shtremel)*: a traditional hat of medieval origin worn by East European pious Jews; it is trimmed with fox tails and is usually worn on the Sabbath.  
*shits*: a joke, nonsense.  
*Shulchan Aruch (Shulchan Aruk)*: a sixteenth-century compilation by the Cabalist, Rabbi Joseph Caro of Safed; it is a codification of Jewish law and serves as a handbook for ritual conduct among the pious.  
*siderl (derived from siddur)*: Hebrew book of daily prayer.  
*Sinchas Torah*: "Rejoicing over the Torah," a festival which celebrates the completion of the reading of the Torah, i.e., the Five Books of Moses. It takes place on the last day of *Sukkot*, the Feast of Tabernacles.

fruits, in which the family dines during the Feast of Tabernacles.  
*Sukkas (Sukkot)*: the Feast of Tabernacles, a survival of the ancient festival on which Jews were required to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.  
*taam*: taste, charm.  
*takkeh*: an emphatic—"really!"  
*tallis (tallit)*: prayer shawl.  
*Talmud*: the Corpus Juris of the Jews. It is a compilation of religious, ethical, civil, and legal decisions and teachings interpreting Scripture. It was completed about A.D. 500.  
*Talmud-Torah*: a modern Hebrew school.  
*tante*: aunt.  
*tante (tantele, tainka, tatenin)*: papa.  
*tante-name*: papa-mama, parents.  
*toyglach*: holiday candied cake.  
*tehzshik*: a finch.  
*tefillin (fillin)*: phylacteries.  
*Tisha b'Ab (Tishabov)*: ninth day of the Jewish month of *AB*, set aside by Jewish tradition for fasting and mourning over the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.  
*toonked*: dunked.  
*toy-tov*: good-good.  
*tréja (tréfench or trisja)*: food forbidden by Jewish dietary laws, or improperly prepared.  
*trifniak*: one who eats *tréja* food.  
*tsibbeleh*: onion.  
*tsimmes*: dessert, most often stewed prunes, sweetened carrots, and noodles.  
*tyereh*: dear, dear one.

*uriman (urimelci, pl.):* a poor man, a beggar.  
*Ve' Adar:* the thirteenth month of the Jewish embolistic year.  
*yachne:* a slattern, a coarse, loud-mouthed type of woman.  
*yarnulka (yarnulke, yarmulke):* skull-cap.  
*yeshiva (yeshiva):* Talmudic college.

*yeshiva bocher (pl. yeshiva bocherim):* a student in a Talmudic college.  
*Yiddisher kupp:* a Jewish head, Jewish brains.  
*yingele:* little boy.  
*Yom Kippur:* the Day of Atonement.  
*yom-tov:* holiday, holy day.  
*zaydeh (zadeh):* grandpa.  
*zhukel:* insect.

SO LAUGH A LITTLE

by Molly Picon

as told to Eth Clifford Rosenberg

The funniest, most famous Jewish comedienne in the world tells the colorful story of her fabulous career—and her even more fabulous *Bubba*.  
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## GLOSSARY\*

- beigel* (*bagei*): Hard circular roll with hole in the center like a doughnut.
- blintzes*: Cheese or *kasha* rolled in thin dough and fried.
- borsh*: A beet or cabbage soup, of Russian origin.
- bris*: Circumcision ceremony.
- Bubi-Kama* (*Baba Kama*): "First Gate," a Talmudic treatise on compensation for damages.
- cheder*: Old-style orthodox Hebrew school.
- chremzlach*: Fried *matzo* pancakes, usually served with jelly or sprinkled with powdered sugar.
- datcha*: Summer cottage in the country.
- dybbuk* (same as *gilgul*): A soul condemned to wander for a time in this world. To escape the perpetual torments from evil spirits it seeks refuge in the body of a pious man or woman over whom the demons have no power.
- gabai*: Synagogue treasurer.
- Gamorah* (*Gemara*): The Aramaic name for the *Talmud*, i.e. to learn. (See *Talmud*).
- Gehenna*: Hell.
- gilgul* (see *dybbuk*).
- groschen*: Small German silver coin whose old value was about two cents.
- gulden*: An Austrian silver florin worth about forty-eight cents.
- Hagadah*: The book containing the Passover home service, consisting in large part of the narrative of the Jewish exodus from Egypt.
- Hannukah* (*Chanukah*): Described variously as "The Festival of Lights," "The Feast of Dedication," and "The Feast of the Maccabees." It is celebrated for eight days from the 25th day of *Kislev* (December). It was instituted by Judas Maccabeus and the elders of Israel in 165 B.C. to commemorate the rout of the invader Antiochus Ephthanes, and the purification of the Temple sanctuary.

\*Many of the spellings of Hebrew words used in these stories are rendered phonetically as they occurred in popular usage. In such cases throughout the glossary, the correct transliterated spelling is given in parentheses.

**Hoshono Rabo (Hoshana Rabbah):** The seventh day of *Succoth* (Feast of Booths).

**kaddish:** The mourner's prayer recited in synagogue twice daily for one year by the immediate male relatives, above thirteen years, of the deceased.

**kasha:** Groats.

**knehtlach:** Balls of boiled matzo meal cooked in chicken soup.

**knishes:** Potato or kasha dumpling, fried or baked.

**kopek:** A small copper coin; there are 100 *kopeks* in a *ruble*.

**kosher:** Food that is permitted to be eaten and prepared according to the Jewish dietary laws.

**kreplach:** Small pockets of dough filled with chopped meat, usually boiled and eaten with chicken soup.

**matzot:** unleavened bread eaten exclusively during Passover to recall the Jewish *exodus* from Egypt.

**matz-tov:** Good luck!

**matzuzah (mezuzah):** Small rectangular piece of parchment inscribed with the passages Deut. VI. 4-9 and XI. 13-21, and written in 22 lines. The parchment is rolled up and inserted in a wooden or metal case and nailed in a slanting position to the right-hand doorpost of every orthodox Jewish residence as a talisman against evil.

**Megila (Megillah):** Literally, "a roll," referring to the *Book of Esther* which is read aloud in the synagogue on *Purim*.

**Medresh (Midrash):** A body of exegetical literature, devotional and ethical in character, which attempts to illuminate the literal text of the Bible with its inner meanings. The *Medrash* is constantly cited by pious and learned Jews in Scriptural and Talmudic disputation.

**melamed:** Old style orthodox Hebrew teacher.

**noqid:** A rich man, the leading secular citizen of a community.

**nu:** Exclamatory question, i.e. "Well? So what?"

**Pesach:** Passover, the festival commemorating the liberation of the Jews from their bondage in Egypt. It lasts seven days, beginning with the 15th of *Nisan* (March-April).

**Perek:** A chapter of the *Talmud*.

**Purim:** Festival of Lots, celebrating the deliverance of the Jews from Haman's plot to exterminate them, as recounted in the *Book of Esther*. It is celebrated on the 14th and 15th of *Adar*, the 12th Jewish lunar month (March).

**Rambam:** Popular name for Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) eminent, Spanish-Jewish philosopher and physician (1135-1204).

**Rav:** Rabbi.

**seder:** The home service performed on the first two nights of Passover (see *Hagadah*).

**shadchan:** Marriage-broker.

**shammes (pl. shamasin):** Sexton.

**shetel:** A wig worn by ultra-orthodox married women.

**Shevuot (Shabbot):** Various known as "The Festival of Weeks" and "Pentecost." It originally was a harvest festival and is celebrated seven weeks after Passover.

**shlimazl:** An incompetent person, one who has perpetual bad luck. Everything happens to him.

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**Shma Koleinu (Shema Koleinu):** "Hear our voices!" The first words of a Day of Atonement hymn; a popular idiom meaning: "Idiot."

**Shma Yisroel (Shema Yisroel):** The first words in the confession of the Jewish faith: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God the Lord is One!"

**Shmin-essa (Shemoneh Eseret):** Eighteen (actually nineteen) benedictions, forming the most important part of the daily prayers, recited silently, standing up, by the worshipper.

**shochet (pl. shochtim):** Ritual slaughterer.

**shofar:** Ram's horn blown in the synagogue at services on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*.

**Sholom Aleichem:** Peace be unto you.

**shul:** Synagogue.

**Simchas Torah:** "Rejoicing over the Torah," the last day of *Succoth* (Feast of Tabernacles), celebrating the completion of the reading of the Torah.

**starosta:** Village elder or "mayor" in Czarist Russia.

**succot:** A booth made of fresh green branches in which pious Jews celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This is done symbolically to recall the forty years wandering—"that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

**Succos (Succoth):** The Feast of Tabernacles, survival of the ancient festival on which male Jews were required to go on a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. Lasts nine

days and begins on the 15th day of the seventh lunar month of *Tishri* (September-October).

*tallis* (*tallith*): Prayer-shawl.

*tallis-kot'n* (*tallith katon*): "Small *tallis*," a four-cornered fringed under-garment worn by male orthodox Jews in pursuance of the Biblical commandment to wear a garment with fringes.

*Talmud*: The Corpus Juris of the Jews, a compilation of the religious, ethical and legal teachings and decisions interpreting the Bible; finished c. A.D. 500.

*tyllin*: Phylacteries.

*Tora*: "Doctrine" or "law"; the name is applied to the five books of Moses, i.e. the Pentateuch.

*verst*: Fried dough filled with cheese or jelly.

*verst*: A Russian measure of distance, equal to about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of an English mile.

*vertutin*: Cheese or cooked cherries rolled in dough.

*yeshiva*: Talmudic college.

*Yom Kippur*: Day of Atonement; the most important Jewish religious holiday; a fast day, spent in solemn prayer, self-searching of heart and confession of sins by the individual in direct communion with God. It takes place on the tenth day of *Tishri*, eight days after Rosh Hashana (New Year).

# THE MARRY POED

A NOVEL BY

RICHARD E. KIM

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along now, I have to see what my 'sans culottes' are doing, Gargon, l'addion! Adieu, monsieur, goodbye, auf wiedersehen, au revoir, a rivederci, seit gesund!"

*There are more would-be slaughterers than chickens.*

### PIPE DREAMERS AND FORTUNE HUNTERS

Kreplach that you see in a dream are no kreplach

MENACHEM-MENDEL, FORTUNE HUNTER  
An Excerpt from the Epistolary Novel, *Menachem-Mendel*

*Menachem-Mendel is no hero out of a novel and, moreover, he is no imaginary person. He is nebbesh, a Jew "of the whole year round." The author is personally and intimately acquainted with him. Together he and I have traveled a stretch of life of almost twenty years. I got to know him in the year 1892 on "The Small Exchange" in Odessa. Afterwards, the two of us, side by side, went through all the seven purgatories of Glihenom in the city of Yehupetz on the Exchange. We then went together to St. Petersburg and to Warsaw, we struggled together through all kinds of crises, and knocked about from one business into another. And, oy vay! we found no lack anywhere! . . . For everything that is built on air and wind has got to collapse in the long run.—Sholom Aleichem*

By Sholom Aleichem  
Translated from the Yiddish by Nathan Ausubel

*(Menachem-Mendel in Yehupetz writes to his wife Sheindel in Kasrilevke.)*  
To my dear wife, the wise, the virtuous, the pious Sheindel, long life to her!

First of all, I'd like to inform you that, God be praised, I'm well and am enjoying life and peace. And may the blessed God arrange matters so that we should always hear from each other only good news and of happy experiences. Amen!

Secondly, I wish to inform you that all week long I've been lying sick in Boberik, that is, God forbid, not dangerous sick—I've been suffering merely from a nasty illness. What happened was that I fell on my back, so that now I'm unable to turn from one side to the other. By this time I already feel a little better, although all week long I thought I was going out of

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mind. Believe me, it was no small matter to be kept away from the Stock Exchange for eight long days and not to know the quotations! All that time I was imagining that such terrific things were going on there that the world was simply turning over! God willing, maybe today or the day after, I shall most certainly go to the city. In the meantime, I'm writing you this letter, I so want to have a talk with you and, while I'm at it, give you a correct accounting of my affairs, so that you shouldn't think that I'm out of my head, that I am, God forbid, crazy, or that I have been duped.

At this moment there lie in my portfolio, all told, 150 shares of Putivil, 100 shares of Transport, 5 of Maltzever, 5 of Liepulech, 5 Vegelech, and some Premies. As for Putivil and Transport, I'm holding them on margin (I planked down a deposit of three rubles). When the time will come for me to sell them—and sell them I surely will—I'll have left, after deducting all expenses, a clear profit of four or five thousand rubles. Besides that I'm "long" on some twenty or thirty shares of Putivil and Maltzever. From them I reckon to make a profit of seventeen or eighteen hundred rubles. So there you already have a total of seven thousand rubles. The five Maltzever that I bought for cash I figure cheaply at four thousand rubles, because it will be a disgrace and a shame if in a short time they wouldn't be worth at least two thousand rubles apiece, although for the last few days they've gone down a bit. But that decline is nothing more than a manipulation on the part of the St. Petersburg speculators so that they should be able to "uncover."

But the real stuff still remains, and by that I mean the Liepulech and the Vegelech! Here you have my figures clear as gold: until *ultimo* we have eighteen days, and, since the Liepulech are advancing a hundred rubles a day, we have the sum of eighteen hundred times five and that amounts exactly to nine thousand rubles.

Now what about the Vegelech? They're advancing at the rate of one hundred and fifty rubles a day, so there you have eighteen, times one hundred and fifty, times five. Doesn't this amount to thirteen thousand five hundred rubles? And then where is *epis Volga* in my calculation? And *Dnieper*? And *Dora*?

In short, I'm not sewing for myself a big purse by any means, but I figure that all in all, making allowances for all expenses, such as *carriage* and *stealage*, all in all I'll make close to forty-five thousand! May the Blessed God help that *ultimo* should pass smoothly! Then, God willing, I'll realize on all my "little papers" and I'll be able "to turn over on the other side." That

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means that I'll be "bearish" and start playing the market *à la baisse*. I'll trade in everything and I'll coin money even on the "left side."

And after that I'll become "bullish" and play *à la hausse*, and once again I'll earn a nice fat pile. If the God above only wills it the fifty thousand can grow into a hundred thousand and the two hundred thousand into four hundred thousand, and so on and so forth until it will swell into a million. How else, *narrete*, do you think one can become a *millionchik*, a Brodsky? And who do you suppose a Brodsky is anyway? Just a man of flesh and blood who eats and drinks and sleeps exactly like you and me! May I see everything that's good in this world if I didn't clap my own eyes on him once! That's how I know.

In short, you needn't aggravate yourself on account of it. I've made a close study of this speculation business and am considered such an expert on the Exchange that, believe it or not, they even come to me for advice. With God's help I've gotten quite a hang of the game!

Now as to what you say that you have no faith in all this and urge me to quit it—that doesn't surprise me in the least. Now you take Chinkis! There's a certain speculator whose name is Chinkis. He's a very passionate speculator and an incurable card player. By day he plays the market and by night he plays cards. Only the other week he had the following experience: he dreamed at night that he was at a card game and that he got a bad hand. That he took as a sign that he should be "bearish" and play the market *à la baisse*. So he went to St. Petersburg and Warsaw and, in the course of only one day, unloaded his entire portfolio of stocks. Needless to say, he's now tearing his hair for this piece of foolishness.

Serves him right! Let him not believe in dreams!

I'm eagerly looking forward to tomorrow when I'll find out the quotations. I've decided that, as soon as I get to the city, I'll call on the jeweler and get you a brooch and a pair of diamond earrings and, if I'll have time enough, I'll run over to Padol Street and buy you some underwear, tablecloths, towels, and goods for the children's shirts, and *epis* other household necessities. Now don't you go and say that, God forbid, I've forgotten all about you!

And because I'm rushed for time I'm going to cut short this letter. In my next letter, God willing, I'll write you everything in detail. For the present may God keep us both in health and prosperity. Kiss the children for me and give my hearty regards to each one separately: to your father and mother, and

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everybody else. Also tell Berel-Benjamin in my name that he shouldn't take it so to heart: a wife is a gift of God. The Lord gives and the Lord takes—blessed be the Name of the Lord!

Your husband,  
Menachem-Mendel

P. S. Good that I've reminded myself! What you wrote concerning Wassilkov shows me that you did not get my meaning at all. Because I lack a residence permit I've no legal right to live in the city. Therefore, I wish to become a merchant. But this I cannot do until I've been at least for half a year a registered resident of Wassilkov. And just as soon as I can get permission to live here I'll rent, God willing, a house on Padol Street and settle you and the children there in a good hour.

Why really are you so angry at Yehupetz? I think it's because you're not acquainted with it and its inhabitants. The city itself, it goes without saying, is a *tzarzkele*! And as for its inhabitants, they're as precious as gold and silver! They're all so gentle, so genial, men as well as women. They've only one little weakness—they're passionate card players. As soon as night falls they plunge into card games and they sit there without budging until the crack of dawn. And they keep on calling out "Pass!" all the time. The grown-ups play a game called Preference, while the little ones play Stukelka. Oka and even Terel-Merrel.

The above-mentioned

## II

(*Sheine-Sheindel in Kasrilevke writes to her husband Menachem-Mendel in Yehupetz.*)

To my worthy dear husband, the rich, the famous, the wise, the learned Menachem-Mendel, may his light never grow dim!

First of all I wish to inform you that, God be praised, we are all in the best of health. God grant that you are the same and may we further hear of no worse.

Secondly, I'm writing you, dear husband, that, God forbid, you shouldn't take it amiss—a *mazi-rov* is coming to you! That precious brother of yours, your Berel-Benjamin, has remarried again in a good and lucky hour! What do you say to him? He couldn't even wait two full months after his wife's funeral! So he rode off to Berdichev, from where the whole world imports its stepmothers, and he brought home for his children a mama. And of all things she had to be a girl of nineteen! The devil take all men—what sort of conduct is that? What does my mother,

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long life to her, say? "Better that we should remain widows after you men than that you should make orphans of our children!"

I imagine I can see you crying, Mendel, were you, for instance, God forbid, to outlive me. May the Yehupetzter ladies never live to see that day! They'd buzz around you like bees and before even the thirty days of mourning would be over, one of them would be sure to sting you. You'd then become, as my mother would say, "A kosher spoon in a kosher pot!" You'd remain a Yehupetzter for the rest of your days.

You say you're a cock-of-the-walk there, Mendel. Nu, go ahead, show off, flutter around, jump into the fire for all I care! One thing I can tell you, I'm not coming out to you, even if I should know that you were lying on your deathbed. Nor am I impressed very much with your fifty thousand rubles. First of all, you belong to me with the fifty thousand or without the fifty thousand. And secondly, your fifty thousand have the value of a pinch of snuff to me. What does my mother say: "So long as money is on paper it's still paper!"

I'll tell you the whole truth, dear husband; if you are able to count in your hand a few rubles and you want to wait until it will become fifty thousand, either you are a *meshugener* or you're just a bandit and a wicked man! When you do that you just show no pity for your children or your wife, may she live to be a hundred and twenty!

Now how do you like the way he nourishes me with tomorrow's? *Tomorrow* he's going to the jeweler's . . . *tomorrow* he's going to get me underwear . . . everything *tomorrow*! You be fool! Let God worry about tomorrow! You better buy me today what you promise. Grab what you've got, snatch it up—it'll be as good as found! My mother, life and health to her, expresses it very wisely. She says, "What earthly use do you have, daughter, of jewelry, tablecloths, and towels? Better let him send you money," says she. "The Angel of Death," says she, "doesn't take the corpse whether he's got a shroud on."

I'm going to wait a couple of weeks more until I'll feel well. Then I'll get me into a cart, God willing, and I'll come out to see you. And when I do come, I'll give you such a time of that no one will envy you! I warn you—I'll deg your footsie! I'll follow you wherever you'll go! I guarantee you that you'll turn from Yehupetzter in the middle of the night, as devoutly expects out of the depths of her heart.

Your truly devoted wife,  
Sheine-Sheine

### III

(*Menachem-Mendel in Yehupetzter writes to his wife Sheine-Sheindel in Kasrilevke.*)

To my dear wife, the virtuous, the wise, the pious, Sheine-Sheindel, long life to her!

First of all, I'd like to inform you that, God be praised, I am well and am enjoying life and peace. And may the blessed God arrange matters so that we should always hear from each other only good news and of happy experiences! Amen!

Secondly, I wish to inform you that matters have taken a bad turn here, namely: the prices that are now being quoted in St. Petersburg have made everything grow dark before my eyes. It struck us here in Yehupetzter like a thunderbolt, like an exploding bomb! All the stockbrokers' offices are in a state of deep gloom, just as if an earthquake had shaken the town. And right after the bad news from St. Petersburg the Warsaw Exchange also marked a heavy decline in prices.

Oh what a mad dashing hither and thither there took place! What a din, what terror, what panic! All the speculators ran for cover, dried up, so to speak, and I among them.

The Exchange was closed! The offices remained deserted, the brokers walked about downcast and worried.

Just try and picture it, dear wife; the Maltzev, which I had figured to sell very cheaply at 2000 rubles, "thought it over" and collapsed to 950! Now take, for example, Putvil. Who could have thought that from 180 they'd shrink to 67? About Transport it's no use talking even. Transport really got it in the neck—no one even wants to hold it in the hand! The same can be said for Volga and Dnieper and Don, and all the other stocks.

But all this is as gold compared to what's happening in Warsaw. A catastrophe has struck Warsaw! Ever since the world began such a slaughter has not been seen as in Warsaw! What do you think Warsaw did? She too "thought it over" and flung Lileputlech from 2450 rubles down to 620! And then Vegelech! They already were up so fine, so high! We thought: *ur ur!* any day now they're going to reach 3000 rubles. And how high, let me ask you, do they stand today? You wouldn't even guess! Four hundred stinking rubles!

Nu, how do you like such stock quotations? It's the end of the world, I'm telling you! And *ach* and *vay* to Warsaw! First she acts real nice, drives and drives the prices up all the time, and suddenly, right smack in the middle, *na!*—there you have a lively wedding! What the cause for this somersault was no one

knows. One person says one thing, one person says another. It all comes from money, I mean it comes from not having any money. In German they call it *Geldmangel*, a scarcity of money, and in our language we call it very simply: "We haven't got a kopeck."

No doubt you'll ask: "Why, goodness me, wasn't it only yesterday that money was rolling in all the gutters?" *Takkeh*, that's a question! What actually happened was that the speculators got a good cooking, and I among them.

To tell you the truth, I'm a lot angrier at Warsaw than I'm at St. Petersburg. Nu, all right St. Petersburg—so what? It moves slowly over there. Every day there's a steady drop of twenty-thirty rubles and that's enough. That's at least in a businesslike way. But Warsaw! May every decent Jew be spared from ever knowing it! That's *epis* a kind of Sodom, the Compassionate One protect us from it! There isn't a day when Warsaw doesn't slump down with a hundred and fifty, with two hundred, and even with three hundred rubles at a time. It's just one slap down after another, so that we're all stunned. We haven't even time enough to look around us.

Oh that Warsaw! Millions it's costing us, I'm telling you—millions! *Gevail!* Where were our wits?

Ah, if I had only followed your advice, dear wife! I would now be in a position of thumbing my nose at the world three times over. Even Brodsky wouldn't be my equal. But plainly it must be the will of God. Quite likely the right hour hasn't struck yet for me. It's my luck that my broker, long life to him, doesn't ask me for the few rubles that I owe him on my account. On the contrary, he's sorry for me. He told me that when times will go better he may be able to throw some good tips my way so that I should be able to earn a ruble or two.

In the meantime, there's nothing I can do. Today it's corpses and not speculators that are walking around the Exchange. The brokers are all idle, it's dark and bitter everywhere you turn. Speculation, they say, is all but dead, and won't be able to get up again, not even on the Day of the Resurrection! There's simply nothing to turn to. If I had just a little cash I'd be able to go by one way or another, and I'd wait until the bad times are over. For how do they say? "The sky hasn't fallen down on the earth yet."

How foolish to give up hope! My heart tells me that before long there'll be plenty to do, because God lives and Yehupeiz is a city. If not this, it'll be that! But my one worry is: where will I get some jinglers? How does your mama say? "If you've got fingers you can't thumb your nose!"

I've asked several people about a small loan for a short time but they swore to me that there is hardly any cash in the city now. Even the richest are tight in money. People simply stretch out on all fours begging for a *groschen*.

Oh, if the blessed God would *epis* perform a miracle with me! Robbers should fall on me and kill me or I should die, just so, while walking on the street, because dear wife, I can no longer bear it all! Funny, isn't it! My financial position was already so secure, I had, as they say, "A full cap," and suddenly—there you have it!

Because I feel very downhearted I'm cutting short my letter. God willing, in my next letter I'll write you everything in detail. For the present, may God keep us in health and prosperity. Write me what the children, long life to them, are doing and how your health is. Give my hearty regards to each one separately: to your father and mother and to everybody else.

Your husband,  
Menachem-Mendel

P. S. Good that I have reminded myself! The world has a saying that after a fire one gets rich. What I mean to say is that after the disaster we've gone through one should be able to do golden business. You can pick up everything for almost next to nothing, you can buy the finest stocks for practically no money. I can predict that anybody who will now go to St. Petersburg or Warsaw to buy *epis* he can make a fortune! When all is said and done, I think I have a right to boast that I understand this game through and through. To be able to speculate on the Exchange you've got to have three things: brains, luck, and money. As for brains, blessed be the Lord, I have as much as all the other speculators here have. Luck, of course, is for God to distribute. And money? Money is in the pocket of Brodsky!

The above-mentioned

#### IV

(*Shaine-Sheindel in Karilevke writes to her husband Menachem-Mendel in Yehupeiz.*)

To my worthy dear husband, the rich, the famous, the wise, the learned Menachem-Mendel, may his light never grow dim! First of all, I wish to inform you that, God be praised, we are all in the best of health. God grant that you are the same, and may we further hear of no worse.

Secondly, I'm writing you, dear husband, that although I really should be writing a lot to you I have nothing to say. What

is there to say? What would I get out of it if I were to tell you what's in my heart and thus bury you alive, God forbid? Would it help me any? You know very well I'm not *Blumeh-Zlateh* who is a husband-eater. Don't be afraid, I'm not going to eat you up! I'm not going to say one cross word, not even clack my tongue. But one thing I do want to ask you, may apoplexy strike my enemies' bones! Go ahead and tell me if I didn't warn you beforehand that this was just the way it would end? You say if I didn't write you all the time: "I'm telling you, Mendel, run away from Yehupetz as from a fire!" Of what good are rags and paper shares to you, I ask you? As mama says, "Stay at home so you won't wear out your boots!"

So did you listen to me? So you got stuck like a nail in Yehupetz! Why, he's ready to break his neck for those fine creatures over there! Oh, may they break their necks for you and for me and for all of us and for all Israel! Believe me, I wouldn't be the one to go on all fours before them for a loan, better let God give them easy sickness with May fever for a whole year! How does my mother, long life to her, say? "Better beg of God than of the most generous person."

Really, you surprise me very much, Mendel! You know better than I what the holy books say: "He who lives by violence shall die by violence!" So why do you write such foolishness? Don't you know that everything comes from God? You yourself see how the Master of Creation is carrying on with you in order to teach you a lesson not to lust after easy songbirds in Yehupetz! A Jew has got to work hard, has got to live by the sweat of his brow, and has got to earn bread for his wife!

Just take a look at Nechemiah! He is a decent young fellow and knows what's written in the holy books, too, may I have such a good year! And just the same, see how he knocks himself out running around to all the fairs! He goes everywhere on foot and slaves away like a horse. Maybe he too would prefer to do what you are doing, walk all over Yehupetz swinging his cane? Maybe he too would rather not put his hand into cold water, would prefer to trade in papers, go sleigh-riding to Boiberik, and, just like you, watch the Yehupetzer ladies play that fine game, *Ferdel-Merdel*? But too bad—he can't do that! He's got a wife at home and her name is *Blumeh-Zlateh*. And whenever *Blumeh-Zlateh* throws a look at *Nechemiah* he loses his tongue. He knows already what she means. Nu, so just let him try to return home from *Yarmelinetz* and not bring her a little coat, a little hat, a little parasol (oy, may she not enjoy all those things, oy, may she have *tzoress* and get apoplexy in her heart, that slut!).

So what am I trying to bring out? That I have to be satisfied with words, just words! You keep on writing me: you're buying me this, you're buying me that—it's all wind and an empty attic, I'm telling you!

Maybe you think I'm just dying for your gifts? I need them like I need a hole in the head—your brooches and your diamonds! I'll settle for them with that I should live to see you in good health. It's hard for me to believe that you're still among the living. Last night *Grandma Tzeitel*, peace to her memory, appeared to me in a dream. She looked exactly the same as when she was alive, not a bit changed. That I take as a bad omen, it frightens me! Therefore, I'd like to see you get home and in good health as soon as possible, which is the dearest wish today and always of

Your truly devoted wife,  
*Sheine-Sheindel*

—God'll help!

—Oy, if only He'll help me until He'll help me!

*He owes God for his soul  
and the butcher for the meat.*

#### HER RICH AMERICAN COUSIN

*By Zygmunt Schorr*

*Translated from the Yiddish by Nathan Ausubel*

*Kreindl* owns a little store with all sorts of odds and ends. In *Kreindl's* store you can buy what you can't find anywhere else in town: an odd button, a clothes hanger, a dresshook, a ribbon, a heavy needle, a this and a that and other trifles. All her "merchandise" is contained in a few large and small boxes. Nonetheless she draws her livelihood from it. She dresses decently, goes to the cinema on Saturdays and holy days, and pays an occasional visit to the Yiddish theater, where she gets her money's worth of laughter and tears. She lives modestly and even manages to put by a little something for her daughter against the right day when the right young man will appear.

But what is man? A creature prey to envy!

It so happened that *Kreindl's* neighbor received one hundred dollars from a relative in America. When *Kreindl* heard the great news she almost jumped out of her skin. Everybody



she uttered a word to me? Or complained, or wept, even once? Then you don't know Teyve's daughters. She kept her grief to herself, but she wasted away, she flickered like a dying candle. Only once in a while she would let out a sigh, and that sigh was enough to tear out your heart.

Well, I was driving home that evening, sunk in meditation, asking questions of the Almighty and answering them myself. I wasn't worried about God so much, I could come to terms with Him, one way or another. What bothered me was people. Why should people be so cruel to each other, when they could be so kind? Why should human beings bring suffering to one another as well as to themselves, when they could all live together in peace and good will? Could it be that God had created man on this earth just to make him suffer? What satisfaction would He get out of that?

Thinking these thoughts, I drove into my farm and saw at a distance that over by the pond a big crowd had gathered, old people, young people, men, women, children, everybody in the village. What could it be? It was not a fire. Someone must have drowned. Someone had been bathing in the pond and had met his death. No one knows where the Angel of Death lurks for him, as we say on the Day of Atonement.

Suddenly I saw Golde running, her shawl flying, her arms outstretched, and in front of her the children, Teibel and Beilke, and all three of them screaming and weeping and wailing: "Daughter!" "Sister!" "Schprinzle!" I jumped off the wagon so fast that I don't know to this day how I reached the ground in one piece. But when I got to the pond it was too late. . . .

There was something I meant to ask you. What was it? Oh, yes. Have you ever seen a drowned person? When someone dies he usually dies with his eyes closed. A drowned person's eyes are wide open. Do you know the reason for this? Forgive me for taking up so much of your time. I am not a free man either. I have to get back to my horse and wagon and start delivering milk and cheese. The world is still with us. You have to think of earning a living, and forget what has been. For what the earth has covered is better forgotten. There is no help for it, and we have to return to the old saying that as long as "my soul abides within me"—you have to keep going, Teyve. Be well, my friend, and if you think of me sometimes, don't think ill of me.

## Teyve Goes to Palestine

WELL, well, look who's here! Reb Sholom Aleichem, how are you? You're almost a stranger. I never dreamed of this pleasure. Greetings! Here I've been wondering over and over, why we haven't seen him all this time, either in Bolberik, or in Yehupetz. Who can tell? Maybe he had packed up and left us altogether—gone off yonder where people don't even know the taste of radishes and chicken fat. But then I thought: Why should he do such a foolish thing? A man of wisdom and learning like him? Well, thank God, we meet again in good health. How does the passage go? "A wall cannot meet a wall"—Man meets man. . . .

You are looking at me, sir, as though you didn't recognize me. It's me, your faithful old friend, Teyve. "Look not at the pitcher but at its contents." Don't let my new coat fool you; it's still the same *shimazi* who's wearing it, the same as always. It's just that when a man puts on his Sabbath clothes, right away he begins to look like somebody—as though he were trying to pass for a rich man. But when you go forth among strangers you can't do otherwise, especially if you are setting out on a long journey like this, all the way to Palestine. . . .

You look at me as if you're thinking: How does it happen that a plain little man like Teyve, who spent all his life delivering milk and butter, should suddenly get a notion like this into his head—something that only a millionaire like Brodsky could allow himself in his old age? Believe me, Mr. Sholom Aleichem, "It is altogether questionable. . . ." The Bible is right every time. Just move your suitcase over this way, if you will be so good, and I will sit down across from you and tell you the whole story. And then you'll know what the Lord can do. . . .

But first of all, before I go on, I must tell you that I have been a widower for some time. My Golde, may she rest in peace, is dead. She was a plain woman, without learning,

without pretensions, but extremely pious. May she intercede for her children in the other world; they caused her enough suffering in this one, perhaps even brought on her untimely death. She couldn't bear it any longer, seeing them scatter and disappear the way they did, some one way, some another. "Heavens above!" she used to say, "What have I left to live for, all alone without kith or kin? Why, even a cow," she would say, "is lonesome when you wean her calf away from her."

That's the way she spoke, and she wept bitterly. I could see the poor woman wasting away, day by day, going out like a candle, right before my eyes. And I said to her with my heart full of pity, "Ah, Golde, my dear, there is a text in the Holy Book: *'Im K'osim im K'odim—Whether we're like children or like slaves,* which means that you can live just as well with children as without them. We have," I told her, "a great Lord and a good Lord and a mighty Lord, but just the same I'd like to be blessed for every time He puts one of His tricks over on us."

But she was, may she forgive me for saying this, only a female. So she says to me, "It's a sin to speak this way, you mustn't sin, Teyve." "There you go," said I. "Did I speak any evil? Did I do anything contrary to the Lord's will? All I meant was that if He went ahead and did such a fine job of creating this world of His so that children are not children, and parents are no better than mud under one's feet, no doubt He knew what He was doing."

But she didn't understand me. Her mind was wandering. "I am dying, Teyve," she said. "And who will cook your supper?" She barely whispered the words and the look in her eyes was enough to melt a stone. But Teyve is not a weakling; so I answered her with a quip and a quotation and a homily. "Golde," I said to her, "you have been faithful to me these many years, you won't make a fool of me in my old age." I looked at her and became frightened. "What's the matter with you, Golde?" "Nothing," she whispered, barely able to speak. Then I saw that the game was lost. I jumped into my wagon and went off to town and came back with a doctor, the best doctor I could find. When I come home, what do I see? My Golde is laid out on the ground with a candle at her head, looking just like a little mound of earth that had been raked together and covered with a black cloth. I stand there and

think to myself: "Is that all that man is?—Is this the end of man? Oh, Lord, the things you have done to your Teyve. What will I do now in my old age, forsaken and alone?" And I threw myself on the ground.

But what good is shouting and weeping? Listen to me and I will tell you something. When a person sees death in front of him he becomes a cynic. He can't help thinking, "What are we and what is our life?—What is this world altogether with its wheels that turn, its trains that run wildly in all directions with all its tumult and confusion, noise and bustle?" And even the rich men with all their possessions and their wealth—in the end they come to nothing too.

Well, I hired a *kaddish* for her, for my wife Golde, and paid him for the whole year in advance. What else could I do if God had denied us sons to pray for us when we were dead, and given us only daughters, nothing but daughters one after another? I don't know if everybody else has as much trouble with his daughters, or if I'm the only *shtimazl*, but I've had no luck with any of my daughters. As far as the girls themselves are concerned, I have nothing to complain about. And as for luck—that's in God's hands. I wish I had half the happiness my girls wish me to have. If anything, they are too loyal, too faithful—and too much of even the best is superfluous. Take my youngest, for instance—Beilke we call her. Do you have any idea of the kind of girl she is? You have known me long enough to know that I am not the kind of father who will praise his children just for the sake of talking. But since I've mentioned Beilke I'll have to tell you this much: Since God first began making Beilkes, He never created another like this Beilke of mine. I won't even talk about her looks. Teyve's daughters are all famous for their great beauty, but this one, this Beilke, puts all the others in the shade. But beauty alone is nothing. When you speak of Beilke, you really have to use the words of the Proverbs regarding "a woman of valor." Charms are deceitful. I am speaking of character now. She is pure goodness all the way through. She had always been devoted to me, but since Golde died I became the apple of her eye. She wouldn't let a speck of dust fall on me. I said to myself, as we say on the High Holy Days: "The Lord precedes anger with mercy."—God always sends a remedy for the disease." Only sometimes it's hard to tell which is worse, the remedy or the disease.

For instance, how could I have foreseen that on my account Beilke would go and sell herself for money and send her old father in his declining years to Palestine? Of course that's only a way of speaking. She is as much to blame for this as you are. It was all his fault, her chosen one. I don't want to wish him ill, may an armory collapse on him. And yet if we look at this more closely, if we dig beneath the surface, we might find out that I am to blame as much as anyone, as it says in the *Gemorah*: "Man is obligated. . . ." But imagine my telling you what the *Gemorah* says.

But I don't want to bore you with too long a tale. One year passed, then another. My Beilke grew up and became a pre-sentable young woman. Teyve kept on with his horse and wagon, delivering his milk and butter as usual, to Bobberk in the summer, to Yehupetz in the winter—may a deluge overtake that town, as it did Sodom. I can't bear to look at that place any more, and not so much the place as the people in it, and not so much the people as one man, Ephraim the *Shadchan*, the matchmaker, may the devil take him and his father both. Let me tell you what a man, a *shadchan*, can do.

"And it came to pass," that one time, in the middle of September, I arrived in Yehupetz with my little load. I looked up—and behold! "*Haman approcheth*. . . ." There goes Ephraim the *Shadchan*. I think I've told you about him before. He is like a burr; once he attaches himself to you, you can't get rid of him. But when you see him you have to stop—that's the power he has in him.

"Whoa, there, my nagel!" I called out to my little horse. "Hold on a minute and I'll give you something to chew on." And I stop to greet the *shadchan* and start a conversation with him. "How are things going in your profession?" With a deep sigh he answers, "It's tough, very tough." "In what way?" I ask.

"There's nothing doing."

"Nothing at all?"

"Not a thing."

"What's the matter?"

"The matter is," says he, "that people don't marry off their children at home any more."

"Where do they marry them off?"

"Out of town, out of the country in fact."

"Then what can a man like me do," I say, "who has never

been away from home and whose grandmother's grandmother has never been away either?"

He offers me a pinch of snuff. "For you, Reb Teyve," he says, "I have a piece of merchandise right here on the spot."

"For instance?"

"A widow without children, and with a hundred and fifty rubles besides. She used to be a cook in the very best families."

I give him a look. "Reb Ephraim, for whom is this match intended?"

"For whom do you suppose? For you."

"Of all the crazy fantastic ideas anybody ever had, you've dreamed up the worst." And I whipped my horse and was ready to start off. But Ephraim stopped me. "Don't be offended, Reb Teyve, I didn't want to hurt your feelings. Tell me, whom did you have in mind?"

"Whom should I have in mind? My youngest daughter, of course."

At this he sprang back and slapped his forehead. "Wait!" he cried. "It's a good thing you mentioned it! God bless you and preserve you, Reb Teyve."

"The same to you," I said. "Amen. May you live until the Messiah comes. But what makes you so joyful all of a sudden?"

"It's wonderful! It's excellent! In fact, it's so good, it couldn't possibly be any better."

"What's so wonderful?" I ask him.

"I have just the thing for your daughter. A plum, a prize, the pick of the lot. He's a winner, a goldspinner, a rich man, a millionaire. He is a contractor and his name is Padhatzur."

"Hm. Padhatzur? It sounds familiar, like a name in the Bible."

"What Bible? What's the Bible got to do with it? He is a contractor, this Padhatzur, he builds houses and factories and bridges. He was in Japan during the war and made a fortune. He rides in a carriage drawn by fiery steeds, he has a lackey at the door, a bathtub right in his own house, furniture from Paris, and a diamond ring on his finger. He's not such an old man either and he's never been married. He is a bachelor, a first-class article. And he's looking for a pretty girl, it makes no difference who she is or whether she has a stitch to her back, as long as she is good-looking."

"Whoa, there! You are going too fast. If you don't stop to

graze your horses we'll land in Hotzenplotz. Besides, if I'm not mistaken you once tried to arrange a match for this same man with my older daughter, Hodel."

When he heard this, the *shadchan* began laughing so hard I was afraid the man would get a stroke. "Oh-ho, now you're talking about something that happened when my grandmother was delivered of her firstborn. That one went bankrupt before the war and ran off to America."

"When you speak of a holy man, bless him. . . . Maybe this one will run off too."

He was outraged at this. "How can you say such a thing, Reb Teyve? The other fellow was a fraud, a charlatan, a spendthrift. This one is a contractor, with business connections, with an office, with clerks, everything."

Well, what shall I tell you—the matchmaker became so excited that he pulled me off the wagon and grabbed me by the lapels, and shook me so hard that a policeman came up and wanted to send us both to the police station. It was lucky that I remembered what the passage says: "You may take interest from a stranger.—You have to know how to deal with policemen."

Well, why should I drag this out? Padhatzur became engaged to my daughter Beilke. "The days were not long." It was quite a while before they were married. Why do I say it was quite a while? Because Beilke was no more eager to marry him than she was to lie down and die. The more he showered her with gifts, with gold watches and rings and diamonds, the more distasteful he became to her. I am not a child when it comes to such matters. I could tell from the look on her face and from her eyes red with weeping how she felt. So one day I decided to speak to her about it. I said to her as if I had just this minute thought of it, "I am afraid, Beilke, that this groom of yours is as dear and sweet to you as he is to me."

She flared up at this. "Who told you?"

"If not," I said, "why do you cry nights?"

"Have I been crying?"

"No, you haven't been crying, you've just been bawling. Do you think if you hide your head in your pillow you can keep your tears from me? Do you think that your father is a little child, or that he is in his dotage and doesn't understand that you are doing it on his account? That you want to provide for him in his old age, so he will have a place to lay his head and

won't have to go begging from house to house? If that's what you have in mind, then you are a big fool. We have an all-powerful God, and Teyve is not one of those loafers who will fold his hands and live on the bread of charity. 'Money is worthless,' as the Bible says. If you want proof, look at your sister Hodel, who is practically a pauper; but look at what she writes from the ends of the earth, how happy she is with her Fefere! Well, do you know what she said to this? Try and make a guess.

"Don't compare me to Hodel," she said. "Hodel grew up in a time when the whole world rocked on its foundations, when it was ready at any moment to turn upside down. In those days people were concerned about the world and forgot about themselves. Now that the world is back to where it was, people think about themselves and forget about the world." That's how she answered, and how was I to know what she meant?

Well, You know what Teyve's daughters are like. But you should have seen my Beilke at her wedding. A princess, no less. All I could do was stand and gaze at her, and I thought to myself, "Is this Beilke, a daughter of Teyve? Where did she learn to stand like this, to walk like this, to hold her head like this, and to wear her clothes so that she looked as though she'd been poured into them?"

But I wasn't allowed to gaze at her very long, for that same day at about half past six in the evening the young couple arose and departed.—They went off, the Lord knows where, to Nitzly somewhere, as is the custom with the rich nowadays, and they didn't come back until around *Hannukah*. And when they came back I got a message from them to be sure to come to see them in Yehupetz at once, *without fail*.

What could it mean? If they just wanted me to come, they would simply have asked me to come. But why be sure to come and *without fail*? Something must be up. But the question was, what? All sorts of thoughts, both good and bad, crowded through my head. Could the couple have had a fight already and be ready for a divorce? I called myself a fool at once. Why did I always expect the worst? "Maybe they are lonesome for you and want to see you? Or maybe Beilke wants her father close to her? Or perhaps Padhatzur wants to give you a job, take you into the business with him, make you the manager of his enterprises?" Whatever it is, I had to go. And

I got into my wagon, and "went forth to Heron." On to Yehupetz!

As I rode along, my imagination carried me away. I dreamed that I had given up the farm, sold my cows, my horse and wagon and everything else, and had moved into town. I had become first a foreman for my son-in-law, then a paymaster, then a factotum, the general manager of all his enterprises, and finally a partner in his business, share and share alike, and rode along with him behind the prancing steeds, one dun-colored and the other chestnut. And I couldn't help marveling, "What is this and what is it all for?" How does it happen that a quiet, unassuming man like me should have suddenly become so great? And what do I need all this excitement and confusion for, all the hurry and flurry, day and night, night and day? How do you say it? "*To seat them with the mighty*—hobnobbing with all the millionaires?" Leave me be, I beg of you. All I want is peace and quiet in my old age, enough leisure so that I can look into a learned tome now and then, read a chapter of the Psalms. A person has to think once in a while of the next world too. How does King Solomon put it? Man is a fool—he forgets that no matter how long he lives he has to die some time.

It was with thoughts like these running through my head that I arrived in Yehupetz and came to the house of Padhatzur. What's the good of boasting? Shall I describe to you his "*abundance of wealth*"? His house and grounds? I can never had the honor of visiting Brodsky's house, but I can hardly believe that it could be more splendid than my son-in-law's. You might gather what sort of place it was from the fact that the man who stood guard at the door, a fellow resplendent in a uniform with huge silver buttons, wouldn't let me in under any consideration. What kind of business was this? The door was of glass and I could see the lackey standing there brushing clothes, may his name and memory be blotted out. I wink at him, I signal to him in sign language, show him with my hands that he should let me in because the master's wife is my own flesh and blood, my daughter. But he doesn't seem to understand me at all, the pigheaded lout, and motions to me also in sign language to go to the devil, to get out of there.

What do you think of that? I have to have special influence

to get to my own daughter. "Woe unto your gray hairs," I told myself. "So this is what you have come to." I looked through the glass door again and saw a girl moving about. A chambermaid, I decided, noticing her shifty eyes. All chambermaids have shifty eyes. I am at home in rich houses and I know what the maids who work there are like.

I wink at her. "Open up, little kitty." She obeys me, opens the door and says to me in Yiddish, "Whom do you want?" And I say, "Does Padhatzur live here?" And she says, louder this time, "Whom do you want?" And I say still louder, "Answer my question first. Does Padhatzur live here?" "Yes," she says. "If so," I tell her, "we can talk the same language. Tell Madame Padhatzur that she has a visitor. Her father Tevye has come to see her and has been standing outside for quite some time like a beggar at the door, for he did not have the good fortune to find favor in the eyes of this barbarian with the silver buttons whom I wouldn't exchange for your littlest finger."

After she heard me out, the girl laughed impudently, slammed the door in my face, ran into the house and up the stairs, then ran down again, opened the door and led me into a palace the like of which my father and grandfather had never seen, even in a dream. Silk and velvet and gold and crystal, and as you walked across the room you couldn't hear your own step, for your sinner's feet were sinking into the softest carpets, as soft as newly fallen snow. And clocks, clocks everywhere. Clocks on the walls, clocks on the tables. Clocks all over the place. Dear Lord, what more can you have in store? What does a person need that many clocks for? And I keep going, with my hands clasped behind my back. I look up—several Tevyes at once are cutting across toward me from all directions. One Tevye comes this way, another Tevye that way; one is coming toward me, another away from me. How do you like that? On all sides—mirrors. Only a bird like him, that contractor of mine, could afford to surround himself with all those mirrors and clocks.

And he appeared in my mind's eyes the way he had looked the first day he came to my house—a round, fat little man with a loud voice and a sniggering laugh. He arrived in a cart drawn by fiery steeds and proceeded to make himself at home as though he were in his own father's vineyard. He saw my Belke, talked to her, and then called me off to one side

and whispered a secret into my ear—so loud you could have heard it on the other side of Yehupetz. What was the secret? Only this—that my daughter had found favor in his eyes, and one-two-three he wanted to get married. As for my daughter's finding favor in his eyes, that was easy enough to understand, but when it came to the other part, the one-two-three—that was "like a double edged sword to me"—it sank like a dull knife into my heart.

What did he mean—one-two-three and get married? Where did I come into the picture? And what about Beilke? Oh, how I longed to drum some texts into his ears, and to give him a proverb or two to remember me by. But thinking it over, I decided: "Why should I come between these young people? A lot you accomplished, Teyve, when you tried to arrange the marriages of your older daughters. You talked and you talked. You poured out all your wisdom and learning. And who was made a fool of in the end? Teyve, of course."

Now let us forsake the hero, as they say in books, and follow the fortunes of the heroine. I had done what they asked me to do, I had come to Yehupetz. They greeted me effusively: "Sholom Aleichem," "Aleichem sholom." "How are you?" "And how are things with you?" "Please be seated." "Thank you, I am quite comfortable." And so on, with the usual courtesies. I was wondering whether I should speak up and ask why they had sent for me—"Today of all days"—but it didn't seem proper. Teyve is not a woman, he can wait.

Meanwhile, a man-servant with huge white gloves appeared and announced that supper was on the table, and the three of us got up and went into a room that was entirely furnished in oak. The table was of oak, the chairs of oak, the walls panelled in oak and the ceiling of oak, and all of it was elaborately carved and painted and curlicued and bedizened. A kingy feast was set on the table. There was coffee and tea and hot chocolate, all sorts of pastries and the best of cognacs, appetizers and other good things, as well as every kind of fruit. I am ashamed to admit it, but I am afraid that in her father's house, Beilke had never seen such delicacies.

Well, they poured me a glass, and then another glass and I drank their health. I looked over at my Beilke and thought to myself, "You have really done well by yourself, my daughter. As they say in Hallel: 'Who raiseth up the poor out of the dust . . . When God has been kind to a poor man, and lifteth

up the needy out of the dung-hill,' you can't recognize him any longer." She is the same Beilke as before and yet not the same. And I thought of the Beilke that used to be and compared her to this one and my heart ached. It was as though I had made a bad bargain—let us say I had exchanged my hard-working little horse for a strange colt that might turn out to be a real horse or nothing but a dummy.

"Ah Beilke," I thought, "look at what's become of you. Remember how once you used to sit at night by a smoking lamp, sewing and singing to yourself? Or how you could milk two cows in the blink of an eye. Or roll up your sleeves and cook a good old-fashioned *borsht*, or a dish of beans or dumplings with cheese, or bake a batch of poppyseed cakes. 'Father,' you would call, 'wash up, supper is ready.' And that was the finest song of all to my ears."

And now she sits there with her Padhatzur, like a queen, and two men run back and forth waiting on the table with a great clatter of dishes. And she? Does she utter a single word? But let me tell you, her Padhatzur isn't silent. He talks enough for two. His mouth doesn't shut for a moment. In all my life I had never seen a man who could jabber so endlessly and say so little, interspersing all his talk with that sniggering laugh of his. We have a saying for this: "He makes up his own jokes and laughs at them himself."

Besides us three, there was another guest at the table—a fellow with bulging red cheeks. I don't know who or what he was, but he seemed to be a glutton of no mean proportions. All the time Padhatzur was talking and laughing, he went on stuffing himself. As it is written: "Three who have eaten—he ate enough for three." This one guzzled and the other one talked, such foolish empty talk—I couldn't understand a word of it. It was all about contracts, government pronouncements, banks, money, Japan.

The only thing that interested me was his mention of Japan, for I too had had dealings with that country. During the war, as you know, horses "commanded the highest prices—they went looking for them with a candle." Well, they finally found me too, and took my horse with them. My little horse was measured with a yardstick, put through his paces, driven back and forth, and in the end he was given a white card—an honorable discharge. I could have told them all along that their trouble was for nothing. "The righteous man knoweth the soul

of his animal." No horse of Teyve's will ever go to war. But forgive me, Mr. Sholom Aleichem, for straying away from my subject. Let's get back to the story.

Well, we had eaten and drunk our fill, as the Lord had bade us do, and when we got up from the table, Padhatzur took my arm and led me into an office that was ornately furnished with guns and swords hanging on the walls, and miniature cannon on the table. He sat me down on a sort of divan that was as soft as butter, and took out of a gold box two long, fat, aromatic cigars, lit one for himself and one for me. He then sat down opposite me, stretched out his legs and said, "Do you know why I have sent for you?"

"Ah," I thought, "Now he is getting down to business." But I played dumb and said, "Am I my brother's keeper?"—

How should I know?"

So he said, "I wanted to talk to you, and it's you yourself I want to talk about."

"If it's good news," I replied, "go ahead, let's hear it."

He took the cigar out from between his teeth, and began a long lecture. "You are a man of sense, I believe, not a fool, and you will forgive me for speaking frankly with you. You must know already that I am doing business on a very big scale, and when a man does business on such a tremendous scale . . ."

"Now he is getting there," I thought to myself, and interrupted him in the middle of his speech. "As the *Gamorah* says in the Sabbath portion: '*The more business the more worries* . . . Do you happen to be familiar with that passage in the *Gamorah*?"

He answered me quite frankly. "I will tell you the honest truth, I have never studied the *Gamorah* and I wouldn't recognize it if I saw it." And he laughed that irritating laugh of his. What do you think of a man like that? It seems to me that if God has chastised you by making you illiterate, at least keep it under your hat instead of boasting about it. But all I said was, "I gathered that you had no knowledge of these things, but let me hear what you have to say further."

"Further I want to tell you, that it isn't fitting, considering the scale of my enterprises, and the repute in which my name is held, as well as my station in life, that you should be known as Teyve the Dairyman. I'll have you know that I am personally acquainted with the Governor, and that it is very

likely that one of these days Brodsky might come to my house or Polakov or maybe even Rothschild, whomever the devil sends."

He finished speaking, and I sat there and looked at his shiny bald spot and thought to myself, "It may be true that you are personally acquainted with the Governor, and that Rothschild might even come to your house some day, but just the same you talk like a common cur." And I said, not without a touch of resentment in my voice, "Well, and what shall we do about it, if Rothschild does happen to drop in on you?" Do you suppose that he understood the dig? Not a bit of it. As we say: "*There was neither bear nor woods.*"

"I would like you to give up the dairy business," he said, "and go into something else."

"And what," said I, "would you suggest that I go into?"

"Anything you like. Aren't there enough different kinds of business in the world? I'll help you with money, you can have whatever you need, as long as you quit being Teyve the Dairyman. Or, look here, do you know what? Maybe you'd like to pick yourself up one-two-three and go to America?"

Having delivered himself of this, he put the cigar back between his teeth, looked me straight in the eye, and his bald head glistened.

Well, what would you say to such a vulgar person?

At first impulse I thought, "What are you sitting there for like a graven image? Get up, kiss the *mazuzá*, slam the door in his face, and—*he went to his eternal rest*—get out without as much as a good-bye." I was as stirred up as all that. The colossal nerve of this contractor. Telling me to give up an honest, respectable livelihood and go off to America. Just because it might come to pass that on some far-off day Rothschild might condescend to enter his house, Teyve the Dairyman had to run off to the ends of the earth.

I was boiling inside and some of my anger was directed at her, at Belle herself. How could she sit there like a queen among a hundred clocks and a thousand mirrors while her father Teyve was being tortured, was running the gauntlet? "May I have as many blessings," I thought to myself, "how much better your sister Hodel has made out than you. I grant you this, she doesn't have a house with so many fancy gew-gaws in it, but she has a husband who is a human being who can call his soul his own, even if his body is in prison.

And besides that he has a head on his shoulders, has Federal, and not a pot with a shiny cover on it. And when he talks there is something to listen to. When you quote him a passage from the Bible he comes back at you with three more in exchange. Wait, my contractor, I will drum a quotation into your ears that will make your head swim."

And I addressed myself to him thus: "That the *Gemorah* is a closed book to you, I can easily understand. When a man lives in Yehupetz and his name is Padhatzur and his business is that of contractor, the *Gemorah* can very well hide itself in the attic as far as he is concerned. But even a peasant in wooden sandals can understand a simple text. You know what the *Targum* says about Laban the Aramean?" And I gave him a quotation in mixed Hebrew and Russian. When I finished he threw an angry look at me and said, "What does that mean?"

"It means this—that out of a pig's tail you cannot fashion a fur hat."

"And what, may I ask, are you referring to?"

"I am referring to the way you are packing me off to America."

At this he laughed that snickering laugh of his and said, "Well, if not America, then how would you like to go to Palestine? Old Jews are always eager to go to Palestine."

Something about his last words struck a chord in my heart. "Hold on, Teyve," I thought. "Maybe this isn't such a bad idea after all. Maybe this is the way out for you. Rather than to stay here and suffer such treatment at the hands of your children, Palestine would be better. What have you got to lose? Your Golde is dead anyway, and you are in such misery. You might as well be buried six feet underground yourself. How much longer do you expect to pound this earth?" And I might as well confess, Mr. Sholom Aleichem, that I've been drawn for a long time toward the Holy Land. I would like to stand by the Wailing Wall, to see the tombs of the Patriarchs, Mother Rachel's grave, and I would like to look with my own eyes at the River Jordan, at Mt. Sinai and the Red Sea, at the great cities Pithom and Raamses. In my thoughts I am already in the Land of Canaan—"the land flowing with milk and honey"—when Padhatzur breaks in on me impatiently: "Why waste all this time thinking about it? Make it one-two-three and decide."

"With you, thank the Lord, a trip to Palestine is one-two-three like a simple text in the Bible. But for me it's a difficult passage to interpret. To pack up and go off to Palestine one has to have the means."

He laughs scornfully at this, gets up and goes over to a desk, opens a drawer, takes out a purse, and counts out some money—not a trifling sum, you understand—and hands it to me. I take the wad of paper he has handed to me—the power of money!—and lower it into my pocket. I would like to treat him to a few learned quotations, a *medresh* or two, that would explain everything to him, but he won't listen to me.

"This will be enough for your trip," says he, "and more than enough. And when you arrive and find that you need more money, write me a letter, and I will send it to you—one-two-three. I hope I won't have to remind you again about going, for, after all, you are a man of honor, a man with a conscience."

And he laughed again that snickering laugh of his that penetrated to my very soul. I was tempted to fling the money into his face and to let him know that you couldn't buy Teyve for money and that you didn't speak to Teyve of "honor" and "conscience." But before I had time to open my mouth, he rang the bell, called Belle in, and said to her, "Do you know what, my love! Your father is leaving us, he is selling everything he owns and going one-two-three to Palestine."

"I dreamed a dream but I do not understand it," as Pharaoh said to Joseph. What sort of nightmare is this? I think to myself, and I look over at Beilke. Do you think she as much as frowned? She stood there rooted to the ground, pale and without expression on her face, looking from one to the other of us, not uttering a word. I couldn't speak either, and so we both stood there looking at each other, as the Psalm says: "*May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.*" We had both lost our powers of speech.

My head was whirling and my pulse beating as though I had been breathing in charcoal fumes. I wondered why I felt so dizzy. Could it be that expensive cigar he had given me? But he was still smoking his and talking away. His mouth didn't shut for a moment, though his eyelids were drooping as though he were ready to fall asleep.

"You have to go to Odessa by train first," he said. "And



from Odessa by sea all the way to Jaffa, and the best time for a sea voyage is right now, for later on the winds and the snows and the hurricanes begin and then and then. . . ." His words were getting jumbled, he was asleep on his feet, but he didn't stop jabbering. "And when you are ready to start let us know and we'll both come to see you off at the station, for when can we hope to see you again?" He finished at last, with a huge yawn, and said to Bellke, "Why don't you stay here awhile, my soul? I am going to lie down for a little bit."

"That's the best thing you have said so far," I thought to myself. "Now I will have a chance to pour my heart out to her." I was ready to spill out all the wrath that had been accumulating in my breast all morning. But instead Bellke fell on my neck and started weeping. You should have heard her weep! My daughters are all alike in this respect. They can be very brave and manly up to a point—then all of a sudden, when it comes to something, they break down and weep like willow trees. Take my older girl Hodel. How she carried on at the last moment when she was telling me good-bye and went to join her Fefel in his exile. But how can I compare the two? This one isn't worthy of lighting the oven for the other. . . .

I will tell you the honest truth. I myself, as you well know, am not a man who is given to tears. I wept once in my life when my Golde lay stretched out on the ground with the candles at her head, and once when Hodel went off to join her husband and I was left standing alone at the station with my horse and wagon. There may have been one or two other occasions on which I weakened, I don't remember. I am not given to weeping. But Bellke's tears wrung my heart so that I couldn't hold myself in. I didn't have the heart to scold her. You don't have to explain things to me. I am Teyve. I understood her tears. She was weeping for "the sin I have sinned before thee"—because she hadn't listened to her father. Instead of scolding her and voicing my anger against Padhatzur, I began to comfort her with this story and that proverb as only Teyve can do.

But she interrupted me, "No, father, that isn't why I am crying. It's only because you are leaving on my account and there is nothing I can do to stop it, that's what hurts me."

"You talk like a child," I told her. "Remember we have a merciful God and your father is still in possession of all his

faculties. It's a small matter for him to take a trip to Palestine and back again. As it is written: "They journeyed and they encamped—*Tuda i nazad*—I will go and I will return."

As though she had guessed my thoughts, she said, "No, father, that's the way you comfort a little child, you give it a toy or a doll and tell it a story about a little white goat. If you want a story, let me tell you one instead. But the story I will tell you is more sad than beautiful."

And she began telling me a long and curious tale, a story out of the thousand and one nights, all about Padhatzur, how he came up from obscure beginnings, worked himself up by his own wits to his present station in life, rose from the lowest to the highest rank. Now that he was rich he wanted the honor of entertaining important people in his home, and to that end he was pouring out thousands of *rubles*, handing out charity in all directions. But money, it seems, isn't everything. You have to have family and background, as well. He was willing to go to any length to prove that he wasn't a nobody, he boasted that he was descended from the great Padhatzurs, that his father was a celebrated contractor too. "Though he knows," she said, "quite well, and he knows that I know, that his father was only a poor fiddler. And on top of that he keeps telling everyone that his wife's father is a millionaire."

"Whom does he mean? Me? Who knows, maybe I was destined at one time to be a millionaire. But I'll have to let this suffice me."

"If you only knew how I suffer when he introduces me to his friends and tells them what an important man my father is, and who my uncles were and the rest of my family. How I blush at the lies he makes up. But I have to bear it all in silence for he is very eccentric in those matters."

"You call it being an 'eccentric.' Te me he sounds like a plain liar or else a rascal."

"No, father, you don't understand him. He is not as evil as you think. He is a man whose moods change very frequently. He is really very kind-hearted and generous. If you happen to come to him when he is in one of his good moods he will give you anything you ask for. And nothing is too good for me. He would reach down and hand me the moon and the stars on a platter if I expressed a wish for them. Do you suppose I have no influence over him at all? Just recently

I persuaded him to get Hodel and her husband out of exile. He promised to spend as much money as necessary on only one condition—that they go from there straight to Japan."

"Why to Japan?" I asked. "Why not to India, or to Persia to visit the Queen of Sheba?"

"Because he has business in Japan. He has business all over the world. What he spends on telegrams alone in one day would keep us all alive for a half year." Then her voice dropped. "But what good is all this to me? I am not myself any more."

"It is said," I quoted, "if I am not for myself who will be for me?—I am not I and you are not you!"

I tried to distract her with jokes and quotations and all the time my heart was torn into pieces to see my child pining away—how do we say it—"in riches and in honor."

"Your sister Hodel," I told her, "would have done differently."

"I've told you before not to compare me to Hodel. Hodel lived in Hodel's time and Beilke is living in Beilke's time. The distance between the two is as great as from here to Japan." Can you figure out the meaning of such crazy talk?

I see that you are in a hurry, but be patient for just a minute and there will be an end to all my stories. Well, after having supped well on the grief of my youngest child, I left the house "in mourning and with bowed head," completely crushed and beaten. I threw the vile cigar he had given me into the street and shouted, "To the devil with you."

"Whom are you cursing, Reb Teyve?" I heard a voice behind my back. I turned around and looked. It was he, Ephraim the *Shadchan*, may no good come to him.

"God bless you, and what are you doing here?" I asked.

"What are you doing here?"

"I've been visiting my children."

"And how are they getting along?"

"How should they be getting along? May you and I be as lucky."

"Then I see you are satisfied with my merchandise."

"Satisfied, did you say? May God bless you doubly and trebly for what you have done."

"Thank you for the blessings. Now if you could only add to them something more substantial."

"Didn't you get your matchmaker's fee?"

"May your Padhatzur have no more than I got."

"What's the matter? Was the fee too small?"

"It isn't the size of the fee so much as the manner of giving it."

"What's the trouble then?"

"The trouble is," said he, "that there isn't a *groschen* of it left."

"Where did it disappear to?"

"I married off my daughter."

"Congratulations. Good luck to the couple and may you live to rejoice in their happiness."

"I am rejoicing in it right now. My son-in-law turned out to be a crook. He beat up my daughter, took the few *guilders* away and ran off to America."

"Why did you let him run off so far?"

"How could I stop him?"

"You could have sprinkled salt on his tail."

"I see you are feeling pretty chipper today, Reb Teyve."

"May you feel half as good as I feel."

"Is that so? And I thought you were fixed for life. If that's the case, here is a pinch of snuff."

I got rid of the matchmaker with a pinch of snuff, and went on home. I began selling out my household goods. It wasn't easy, I can tell you, to get rid of all the things that had accumulated through the years. Every old pot, every broken kettle wrenched my heart. One thing reminded me of Golde, another of the children. But nothing hurt me so much as parting with my old horse. I felt as though I owed him something. Hadn't we labored together all these years, suffered and hungered together, known good luck and bad luck together? And here I was up and selling him to a stranger. I had to dispose of him to a water-carrier, for what do you get from a teamster? Nothing but insults. Here is how the teamsters greeted me when I brought my horse to them.

"God be with you, Reb Teyve. Do you call this a horse?"

"What is it, then, a chandelier?"

"If it isn't a chandelier then it's one of the thirty-six saints who hold up the world."

"What do you mean by that?"

"We mean an old creature thirty-six years old without any teeth, with a gray lip, that shivers and shakes like an old woman saying her prayers on a frosty night."

That's teamsters' talk for you. I could swear that my little horse understood every word, as it is written: "An ox knows his master—An animal knows when you are offering him for sale." I was sure he understood, for when I closed the deal with the water-carrier and wished him luck, my horse turned his patient face to me and gave me a look as though to say: "This is my portion for all my efforts—Is this how you reward me for my years of faithful service?"

I looked back at him for the last time as the water-carrier led him away and I was left standing all alone. I thought, "Almighty, how cleverly You have fashioned Your world. You have created Teyve and You have created his horse and to both You have given the same fate. A man can at least talk, he can complain out loud, he can unburden his soul to another, but a horse? He is nothing but a dumb beast, as it is said: 'The advantage of man over animal.'"

You wonder at the tears in my eyes, Mr. Sholom Aleichem. You are probably thinking that I am weeping for my horse. Why only for my horse? I am weeping for everybody and everything. For I shall miss everybody and everything. I shall miss my horse and the farm, and I shall miss the mayor and the police sergeant, the summer people of Boiberik, the rich people of Yehupetz, and I shall miss Ephraim the Matchmaker, may a plague take him, for when all is said and done, if you think the whole matter over, what is he but a poor man trying to make a living?

When God brings me safely to the place where I am going, I do not know what will finally become of me, but one thing is clear in my mind—that first of all I shall visit the grave of Mother Rachel. There I will offer a prayer for my children whom I shall probably never see again and at the same time I will keep in mind Ephraim the Matchmaker, as well as yourself and all of Israel. Let us shake hands on that, and go your way in good health and give my blessings to everyone and bid everyone a kind farewell for me. And may all go well with you.

## The Purim Feast

"I DON'T know what's to become of the child, what he's going to grow up into. He's like a dripping dishrag, a soggy handkerchief, like a professional mourner. . . . A child that can't stop crying."

This was my mother talking to herself as she dressed me in my holiday clothes. As she spoke she gave me now a shove, now a push, now a cuff over the head; she grabbed me by the hair or pulled my ear, pinched me, and slapped me—and with all that she expected me to be laughing instead of crying! She buttoned me up from top to toe in my best coat which was much too tight for me. I could barely breathe and my eyes almost popped out of my head. The sleeves were so short that my bluish red wrists stuck out of my cuffs as though they were swollen. This was more than my mother could bear.

"Look at that pair of hands!" And she slapped me smartly across my wrists to make me drop them. "When you sit at Uncle Hertz's table remember to keep your hands down, do you hear me? And don't let your face get as red as Yadwocha the peasant girls. And don't roll your eyes like a tomcat. Do you hear what I'm telling you? And sit up like a human being. And the main thing—is your nose. Oh, that nose of yours. Come here, let me put your nose in order."

Alas for my poor nose when my mother decides to "put it in order." I don't know what my nose has done to deserve such a fate. It seems to me that it's a nose like all noses, short and blunt, slightly turned up at the end, pinkish in color, and usually dripping. But is that a reason for such cruel treatment? Believe me, there have been times when I have begged the Almighty to take my nose away altogether, to cause it to fall off and end my misery once for all. I used to imagine that I would wake up one fine morning without a nose. I would come up to my mother after breakfast and she would grab hold of me and cry out in a terrible voice, "Woe is me, where is your nose?"

## 27. THE CITY OF SLAUGHTER (1903)

HAIM NAHMAN BIALIK<sup>1</sup>

Arise and go now to the city of slaughter;  
 Into its courtyard wind thy way;  
 There with thine own hand touch, and with the eyes of thine head,  
 Behold on tree, on stone, on fence, on mural clay,  
 The spattered blood and dried brains of the dead.  
 Proceed thence to the ruins, the split walls reach,  
 Where wider grows the hollow, and greater grows the breach;  
 Pass over the shattered hearth, attain the broken wall  
 Whose burnt and barren brick, whose charred stones reveal  
 The open mouths of such wounds, that no mending  
 Shall ever mend, nor healing ever heal.  
 There will thy feet in feathers sink, and stumble  
 On wreckage doubly wrecked, scroll heaped on manuscript,  
 Fragments against fragmented—  
 Pause not upon this havoc; go thy way....  
 Descend then, to the cellars of the town,  
 There where the virginal daughters of thy folk were fouled,  
 Where seven heathens flung a woman down,  
 The daughter in the presence of her mother,  
 The mother in the presence of her daughter,  
 Before slaughter, during slaughter, and after slaughter!  
 Touch with thy hand the cushion stained, touch  
 The pillow incarnadined;  
 This is the place the wild ones of the wood, the beasts of the field  
 With bloody axes in their paws compelled thy daughters yield;  
 Beasted and swined!  
 Note also, do not fail to note,  
 In that dark corner, and behind that cask  
 Crouched husbands, bridegrooms, brothers, peering from the cracks,  
 Watching the sacred bodies struggling underneath  
 The bestial breath,  
 Stuffed in fith, and swallowing their blood!  
 The lecherous rabble portioning for booty  
 Their kindred and their flesh!

Crushed in their shame, they saw it all;  
 They did not stir nor move;  
 They did not pluck their eyes out; they  
 Beat not their brains against the wall!  
 Perhaps, perhaps, each watcher had it in his heart to pray:  
*A miracle, O Lord,—and spare my skin this day!*  
 Those who survived this foulness, who from their blood awoke,  
 Beheld their life polluted, the light of their world gone out—  
 How did their menfolk bear it, how did they bear this yoke?  
 They crawled forth from their holes, they fled to the house of the Lord,  
 They offered thanks to Him, the sweet benedictory word.  
 The *kohanim* [descendants of priestly families] sallied forth; to the Rabbi's house  
 they flitted:  
*Tell me, O Rabbi, tell, is my own wife permitted?*  
 The matter ends; and nothing more.  
 And all is as it was before....  
 Come, now, and I will bring thee to their lairs  
 The privies, jakes and pigpens where the heirs  
 Of Hasmonians lay, with trembling knees,  
 Concealed and cowering,—the sons of the Maccabees!  
 The seed of saints, the scions of the lions!  
 Who, crammed by scores in all the sanctuaries of their shame,  
 So sanctified My name!  
 It was the flight of mice they fled,  
 The scurrying of roaches was their flight;  
 They died like dogs, and they were dead!

## NOTES

1. Haim Nahman Bialik (1873-1934). Celebrated as the poet laureate of modern Hebrew, Bialik exercised a profound influence on modern Jewish culture. Raised in the Pale of Settlement, he broke with traditional Judaism at the age of eighteen, and he devoted himself to the creation of a national, secular Jewish culture. His attitude to traditional Judaism, however, was ambivalent. On the one hand, he was angered at what he felt to be the moribund state of traditional Jewish society; on the other hand, he was painfully aware of the dilemma of modern Jews whose struggle for the right to determine their own destiny seemed to require a desperate rejection of divine law. Bialik was sent to Kishinev on behalf of the Jewish Historical Commission in Odessa in order to interview survivors of the pogrom and to prepare a report on the atrocities. After his visit to Kishinev, he wrote a poem, denouncing neither God nor the Russian government, but the Jews themselves. This poem became a symbol of the Zionist revolt against traditional Judaism's acceptance of Exile and the bi-millennial humiliations of Jewry.
2. The *kohanim* are subject to strict laws of purity.

Source: Haim Nahman Bialik, "City of Slaughter," trans. Abraham M. Klein, in *The Complete Works of Hayyim Nahman Bialik*, ed. Israel Effros (New York: Histadruth Ivrit of America, 1948), vol. 1, pp. 129, 133-34. Copyright 1948 by Bloch Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of Bloch Publishing Company.

# Lesson Five

## Culture—Part II

### Objectives:

- Discuss the influence of FSU Jewish art and food on Jewish culture and communities in the past and present.

### Materials:

- Unit Resource 2.4A- Cooking Recipes
- Cooking Ingredients
- Unit Resource 2.4B- Marc Chagall artwork
- Unit Resource 2.4C- Chagall Windows letter
- Unit Resource 2.4D- Additional information on Marc Chagall<sup>38</sup>
- Cloth for Challah Cover
- Fabric Markers

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (5 mins):

Jewish literature, art, music, theater and food from the FSU still impact Jewish culture and communities today, especially in Israel and in America. Today, we will be focusing on food and art.

Counselors will read the following passage:

#### IMA SHARANSKY—A RUSSIAN BALABUSTA<sup>39</sup>

I visited Ima (Mother) Sharansky, the mother of Natan Sharansky, former prisoner of conscience [former Soviet refusenik who lived in solitary confinement], at her son's home in Jerusalem's Old Katamon. As I walked into the house on a tree-lined lane, the fragrance of ripe figs from the tree right outside the front door filled the air. Her twelve-year-old granddaughter, Raquela, wearing the long, modest dress of religious Jews, ushered me in and immediately offered me a glass of cold apple juice. I had the feeling that this child was used to being polite to visitors in her home. A few minutes later, her grandmother walked in, a diminutive woman with the ready, winning smile and animation of her famous son.

With the help of Ludmila Chielminski Schiffman, a niece raised by Mrs. Sharansky, we were able to communicate in English about the Ukraine, the family's ordeal when her son was in solitary confinement there for eight years, and the foods she has made for him all his life.

"Very, very seldom, maybe one time in six months, if he behaved very good—but he never behaved very good—we could send him two pounds of cookies," she said. "My son Leonid made cookies, vitaminized things with nuts and white chocolate. I tried millions of times

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<sup>38</sup> James Johnson Sweeney. *Marc Chagall*. (New York: The Modern Museum of Art, 1969).

<sup>39</sup> Joan Nathan. *The Foods of Israel Today*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 274.

to visit Natan. I went to receptions at the government. I spent half my time writing letters to the KGB. And I wouldn't leave the Ukraine until my son left in 1986."

Born in 1908, Mrs. Sharansky was a child during the Russian Revolution. When she was five years old she left her hometown of Balta for Odessa, where she grew up and went to university. "In my apartment the door was closed, so I could cook what I wanted," she said. "Who knew what was Jewish and what was Russian?" Although dishes like challah and bagels were unknown, she prepared recipes handed down orally from her mother. She made her own cottage cheese, which she hung in a net, and after Stalin's time used a "partisan action" to sneak in the matzoh.

"My mother has the patience for many things," said her son Natan. "Since we had limited opportunities in Ukraine and we had to make everything on our own, she worked hard into the night to cook for us."

This passage from *The Foods of Israel Today* is found on the same page as Ima Sharansky's gefilte fish recipe and her description on how much easier it is to find fish and make gefilte fish in Israel than in Ukraine. The transition from the FSU to Israel, for many immigrants, meant that they could eat Jewish foods and make the recipes of their parents without hiding their identities. Food, such as matzah, is easily attainable and accepted. Today, we are not going to be making gefilte fish, but will make two other FSU dishes that have made their way into Israeli culture.

### **Activity 1 (55 mins): Rugelach, Knishes, and Kugel**

Counselors will explain the origins of each of these foods before the campers begin cooking:

- ❖ **Rugelach:** A Jewish pastry of Eastern European origin. The name is Yiddish and the English probably translates as "little twists," although some contend it means "royal." The most famous bakery in Jerusalem, Marzipan, is known for their chocolate and cinnamon rugelach.  
(Note: The dough for the rugelach should be refrigerated for an hour.)
- ❖ **Kugel:** A baked Ashkenazic Jewish pudding or casserole usually made from egg noodles or potatoes. The name of the dish is Yiddish but originally comes from German and means "sphere, globe, or ball." Ask, does your family make kugel for Jewish holidays and dinners?

The food will be saved for the next day's culminating celebration of the unit and eaten during their final presentations.

### **Activity 2 (30 mins): Marc Chagall**

Counselors will set up tables with images of Chagall's artwork (Unit Resource 2.4B) and explain background information about Mark Chagall:

**Marc Chagall** (1889-1985) was born in Vitebsk, Russia. He was a Russian-French early modernist who created art through almost every medium, including painting, book illustrations, stained glass, stage sets, ceramic, tapestries, and fine art prints. In Israel, he is widely known for his stained glass windows in the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem (Refer to the Chagall windows letter- Unit Resource 2.4C). His art combined modern art with Eastern European folk culture. He synthesized various forms of art and themes, including Cubism, Poetry, Flowers, the bible, music, animals, and his home village. During his career, Chagall worked as a set designer for Sholom Aleichem's plays (beginning in 1921). He eventually moved to America in 1941, but is well known internationally.

Discussion Questions:

- What themes are repeated through the artwork you see on the table?
- What seems to be Chagall's main interests?
- Why do you think he chose to paint these?

Campers will then create a challah cover that reflects the artwork, style, and interests of Chagall.

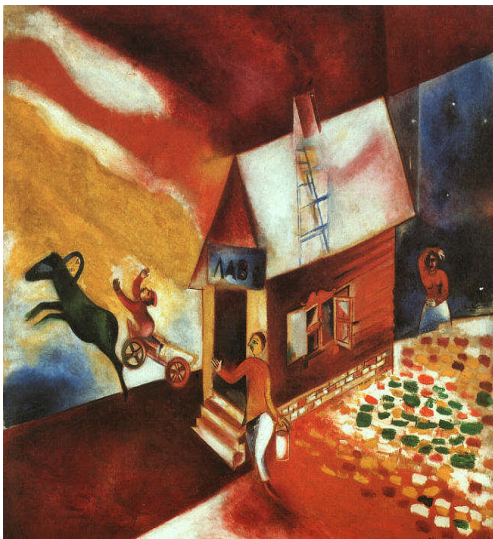
Unit Resource 2.4A  
Chagall Art



The Fiddler



I and the Village



The Flying Carriage



The Spoonful of Milk





Jew at Prayer



The Birthday



7 juillet - 15 octobre 1984  
Saint-Paul

Fondation Maeght

**Marc Chagall**

Rétrospective de l'œuvre peint

# THE JERUSALEM WINDOWS

MARC CHAGALL



The Exodus



Moses Receiving the 10 Commandments



The House in My Village



Pantomime

Unit Resource 2.4B  
**The Chagall Windows**<sup>40</sup>

**“This is my modest gift to the Jewish people who have always dreamt of biblical love, friendship and of peace among all peoples. This is my gift to that people which lived here thousands of years ago among the other Semitic people.”**

Marc Chagall  
February 6, 1962

The light that emanates from the twelve stained glass windows bathes the Abbell Synagogue at the Hadassah University Medical Center in a special glow. The sun filters through the brilliant colors of the stained glass capturing their radiance. Even in the misty haze of a cloudy day, Chagall’s genius transforms time and space.

The synagogue’s Jerusalem stone floor and walls absorb this beauty and reflect it. Standing within the simple square that forms the pedestal for the windows, gazing up at the vivid imagery, the Jewish symbols, the floating figures of animals, fish and flowers, even the most casual viewer is overwhelmed by their power and presence.

Every pane is a microcosm of Chagall’s world, real and imaginary; of his love for his people, his deep sense of identification with Jewish history, his early life in the Russian shtetl.

“All the time I was working, I felt my mother and father looking over my shoulder; and behind them were Jews, millions of other vanished Jews -- of yesterday and a thousand years ago,” Chagall said.

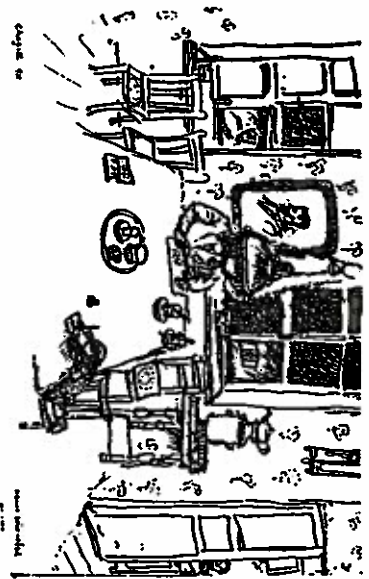
The Bible was his primary inspiration, particularly Jacob’s blessings on his twelve sons and Moses’ blessings on the twelve tribes. Each window is dominated by a specific color and contains a quotation from the individual blessings.

Chagall and his assistant, Charles Marq, worked on the project for two years, during which time Marq developed a special process for applying color to the glass. This allowed Chagall to use as many as three colors on a single pane, rather than being confined to the traditional technique of separating each colored pane by a lead strip.

The synagogue was dedicated in the presence of the artist on February 6, 1962 as part of Hadassah’s Golden Anniversary Celebration.

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<sup>40</sup> “Art at Hadassah.” Hadassah Medical Organization. Web. 14 Apr. 2012.  
[http://www.hadassah.org.il/English/Eng\\_MainNavBar/About/Art+at+Hadassah/](http://www.hadassah.org.il/English/Eng_MainNavBar/About/Art+at+Hadassah/)



### EARLY YEARS: A SOURCE OF RECOLLECTIONS

Marc Chagall was born in Vitebsk, Russia on July 7, 1889. Vitebsk, at the time of Chagall's birth, was a city of some 60,000 inhabitants. It is an old town—mentioned by the Byzantine chroniclers as early as the 10th century—situated on both banks of the river Dvina about eighty miles northwest of Smolensk. In Chagall's boyhood it was a typical provincial capital, with its pear-domed church towers, its stone buildings painted a striking yellow, its modest gray wooden buildings, its interminable wooden fences and its packed Jewish quarter. More than half its population were Jews. This was the town in which Chagall's early years were passed and which, in recollection, was to provide him with the subject matter for so many of his pictures. This was the "sad and joyful city," as he calls it, of his youth.

His father worked in a herring depot. The family was a large one: he had eight sisters and a brother. The atmosphere in which he was brought up was deeply religious. Day after day, he recalls, winter as well as summer, his father arose at six o'clock in the morning and went to the synagogue. Prayer and ritual color all his earlier memories, as fasts and feasts date them—Pasch, Sukkot, Simhat Torah. His paternal grandfather was a religious instructor, and his mother's father, a butcher in Lyozno, spent half his day in the synagogue. His Uncle Neuch, who also lived in Lyozno, had a violin. He was an ardent Chasidist. Every evening after his long day in the butcher shop he would play the rabbi's song; every Saturday he would put on a thalis, or prayer shawl, and read the Bible aloud.

There were, as he puts it, "half-a-dozen uncles or a little more." And he had as many aunts, each of whom likewise made her contribution to the family folklore which was to supply the elements of so much of his work in later years. For, as he says, "if my art did not play any role in the life of my relatives, on the other hand their life and their creations have greatly influenced me . . . It doesn't matter to me if people discover with joy and satisfaction the enigma of my paintings in these innocent adventures of my relatives."\*

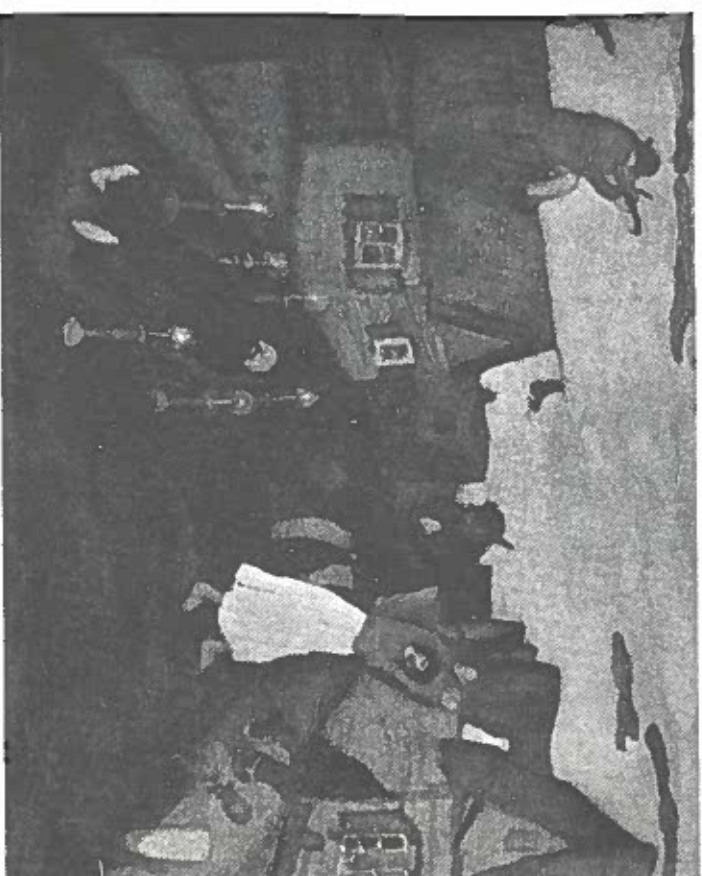
\* Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent quotations from Chagall are taken from his autobiography (tbl. 5), written about 1920.

*Candles in the Dark Street* of 1908 (below), so often described as his "first illogical or fantastic painting" is a good example of the manner in which he turns such material into "fantasy" by those curious representational juxtapositions which we have come to associate with his work.

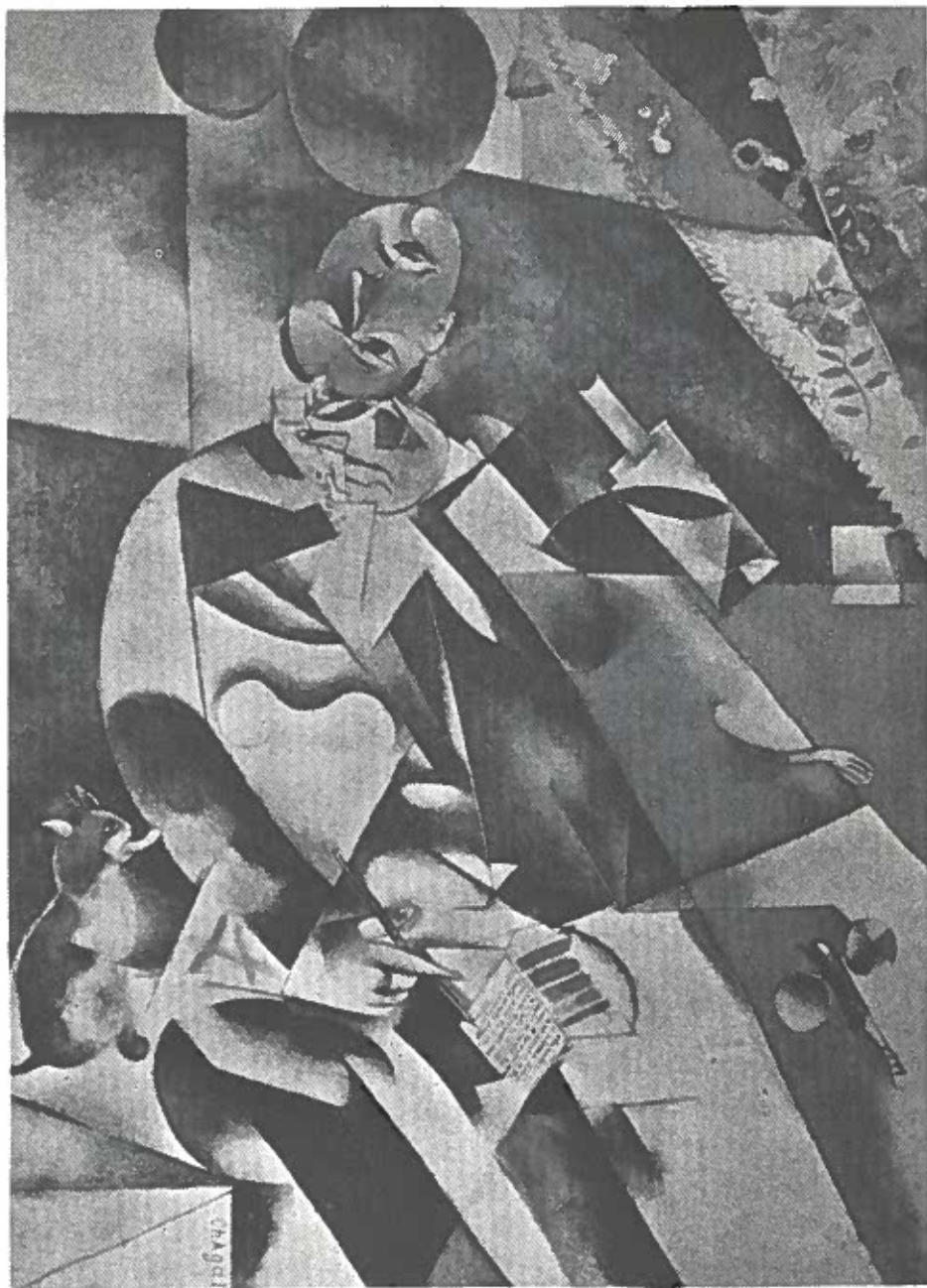
In his autobiography he recounts an anecdote of his Lyozno grandfather. In the course of festivities, one Sukkot, or Simhat Torah, his grandfather was found to be missing. They searched on all sides for him. Finally, it was discovered that his grandfather had climbed to the roof because the weather was so good and was sitting there quietly regaling himself on raw carrots.

When we add to this story the phrase he employs of his Uncle Neuch's musicianship "He played the violin like a shoemaker," we recognize in these combined recollections the iconographic source of both the fiddler seated on the rooftop and the shoemaker's shop sign in the upper left-hand corner of the picture.

Then if we turn to another recollection in his autobiography, that of his first encounter with death, we find the rest of the subject matter of the picture: "One morning before dawn suddenly I heard cries from the street below my windows. By the feeble glimmer of the night lamp I managed to distinguish a woman running alone down the deserted street. She waved her arms, sobbed, begged the neighbors who were still asleep to come to save her husband as if I,



*Candles in the Dark Street* (L a Mort). 1908. Oil, 26 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 34". Owned by the artist.



**Half-Past Three (The Poet).** 1911. Oil, 78 x 57". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Walter C. Arensberg, Hollywood.



Solitude. 1933. Oil, 43 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 66". Owned by the artist.

## PRESENTIMENTS

As a preparation for this work he decided in 1931 to make a trip to the Near East, Egypt, Syria, Palestine. In the course of his journey he painted a series of landscapes notable for a meticulous documentary character, which nevertheless does not interfere with a distinctive emotional overtone. While the subject matter and technical treatment in a painting such as *The Waiting Wall* are completely different from his Vitebsk realist paintings of 1914, there is a certain kinship between these two phases of his work. Just as the playfulness of his first Paris work had been supplanted by a greater thoughtfulness on his return to his native environment, now the light-hearted sentiment of his Peira Cava landscapes and the carefree work of the twenties have given way to a melancholy expression. And freedom from anxiety is rarely to show itself during the next decade.

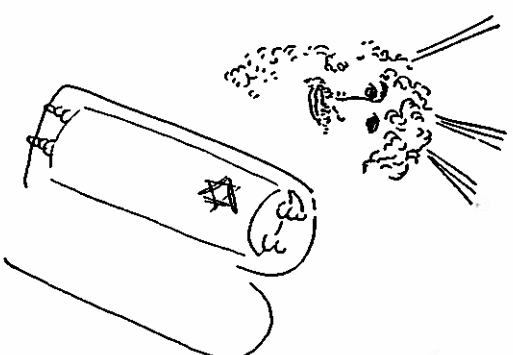
In fact with a painting such as *Solitude* (above) an air of spiritual foreboding begins to appear in his work, as if something within him were sensitive to developments which on all sides were preparing the way for the tragedy still six years off.

During the same years his restlessness increased. In 1932 he made a trip to Holland to study Rembrandt. In 1933 he attended the opening of his large retrospective exhibition in Basel. In

1934 he went to Spain to study El Greco; in 1935 to Poland; in 1937 to Italy and the primitives. And in the paintings of this period we find his old themes returning. Haunted by his forebodings and in the midst of the general European discontent, he seemed to turn back for reassurance to his recollections of Vitebsk. These pictures of the middle thirties are composed much as were those of his early nostalgic phase; but he is now quite far from the cubist insistence on the composition of the picture plane. This is replaced by the new atmospheric and textural interests of his recent landscape studies.

In *Nude over Vitebsk* we have the square and the great white church of St. Elias. The nude, used "to fill the empty space" of the sky, is possibly a recollection of his fiancée posing for him, which he describes in his memoirs. In another canvas we have a view of his home and "the stoop-shouldered beggar with his sack on his back and his stick in hand" composed with two vases of flowers out of the twenties. In *Time is a River Without Banks* (page 65) appear the huge clock, which recurs so insistently in early drawings and paintings, the inevitable lovers and a herring which his father's work would never permit him to forget. And in *The Bride and Groom of the Eiffel Tower* (page 68) he brings a whole sequence of events into one composition in the primitive convention.

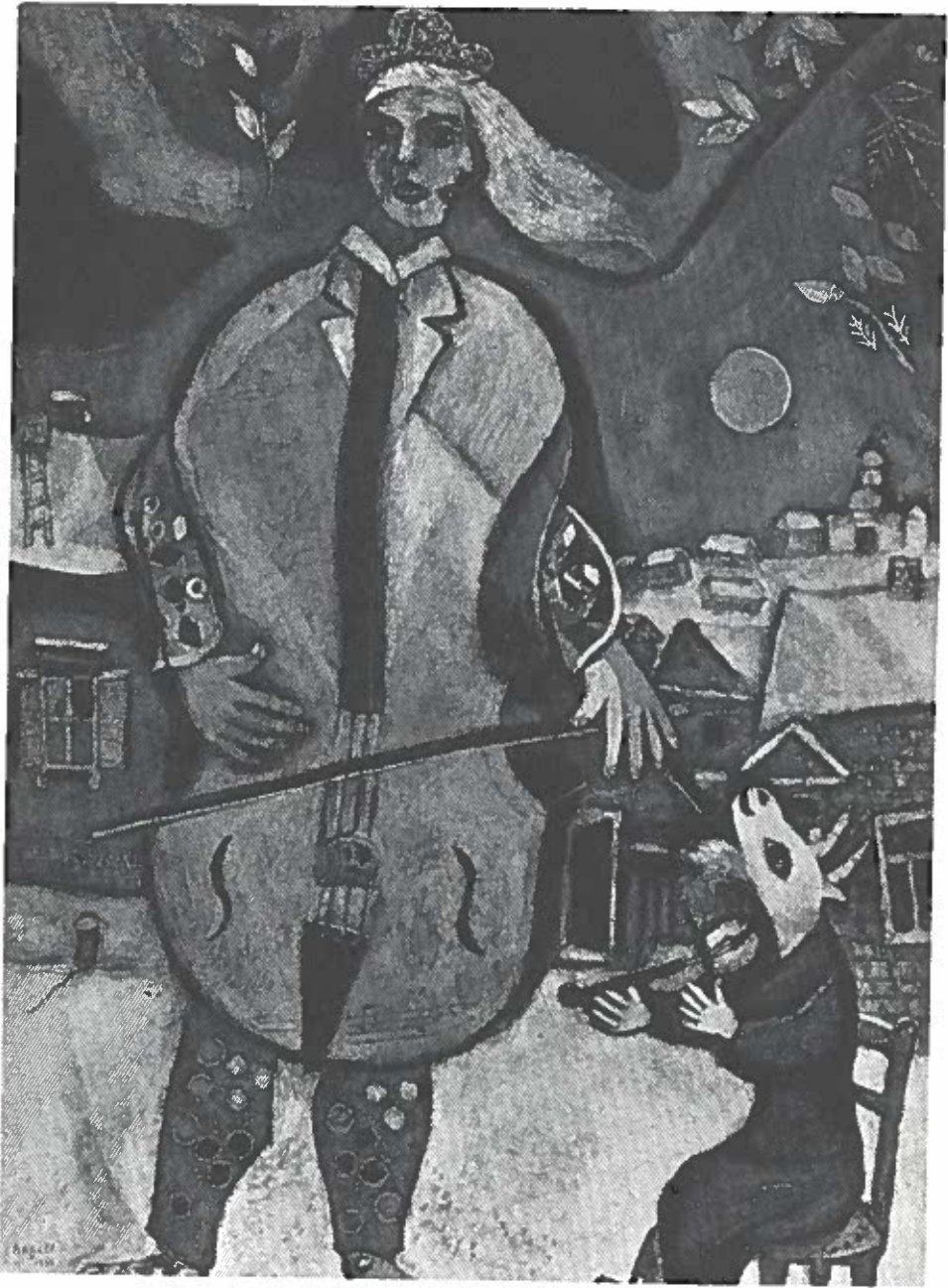
The other aspect of his work in these years is nourished by his steadily increasing "presentiments." From *Solitude* these forebodings of evil or warnings of impending disaster take a more dramatic turn in *Crucifixion* of 1938 (page 62); and become colored by social alarms in *Revolution* of two years later.



## WORK ON THE BIBLE

All this time the work on the Bible illustrations had progressed. On his return from Palestine, Chagall had made about twenty sketches for the book of Genesis to feel his way compositionally. He then started at once on the definitive plates. And by the time of Vollard's death in July 1939 he had completed 109 plates of the series.

Like the preliminary gouache and oil sketches, in which he had employed the same motives

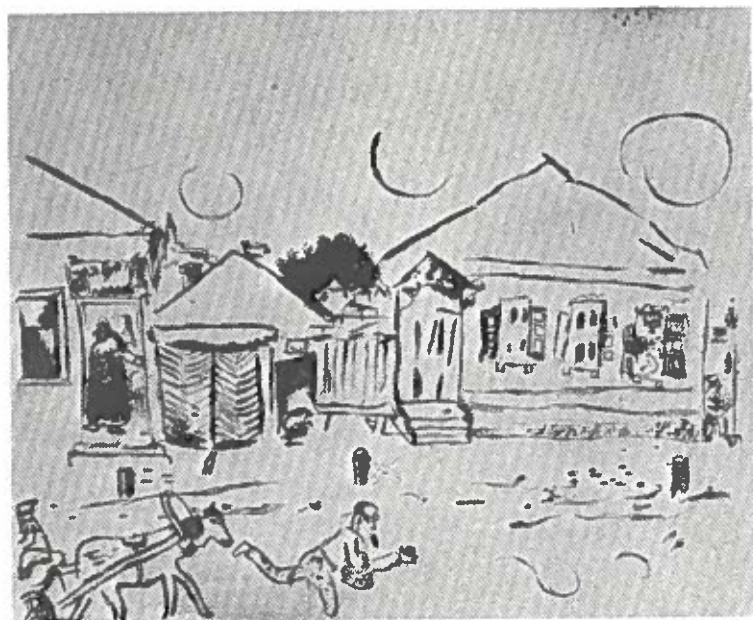


**The Cello Player.** 1939. Oil, 39 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Municipal Museum, Amsterdam. Regnault Collection.





*Mein Leben*. 1923: (right) The Grand-fathers. Drypoint,  $10\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{16}$ ". (below) Pokrowa Street. Drypoint,  $7\frac{1}{16} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ ".



## Unit Resource 2.4D

### **Rugelach**<sup>41</sup>

#### Ingredients (Yields 5-6 dozen cookies):

- ✓ 8 ounces cream cheese
- ✓ 8 ounces salted butter
- ✓ 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ✓ 1 ½ cups sugar
- ✓ 2-3 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ✓ 1 cup raisins
- ✓ ¾ cup chopped walnuts [optional]
- ✓ Confectioner's sugar

#### Instructions:

1. Cream the cheese and butter together on high speed with an electric mixer until well combined and light and fluffy (the mixture should feather out from the edge of the bowl). Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add flour and turn your mixer on and off ONLY until dough looks like the flour has been incorporated. Remove the dough from the bowl and lightly drop it on a smooth surface a few times until it forms a compact mass. (Pressing with your hands could soften the butter and change the consistency of your finished product).
2. Divide mixture into 8 cylinders, and refrigerate 1 hour or until dough is firm.
3. Roll each portion of the dough into a board that is heavily “floured” with confectioner’s sugar. Roll out into a 6x9 –inch rectangle.
4. Combine the sugar, cinnamon, raisins, and walnuts in a bowl.
5. After the dough is rolled out, sprinkle with some of the sugar-nut mixture. Roll dough into a log from the long side. Pinch the seam together on the bottom and the ends slightly under.
6. Cut filled logs into 8-9 pieces, and place on an ungreased or parchment-lined cookie sheet. Repeat with remaining dough logs.
7. Bake in 350 degree F oven for 12-15 minutes or until golden. Cool completely before freezing.

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<sup>41</sup> Tina Wasserman. *Entrée to Judaism: A Culinary Exploration of the Jewish Diaspora*. (New York: URJ, 2010), 141.

## Rugelach from the Marzipan Bakery in Jerusalem



### Kugel

#### Ingredients:

- ✓ 1pkg (12 oz) wide noodles
- ✓ ½ cup melted butter
- ✓ 7 eggs
- ✓ 1 pint sour cream
- ✓ 1 pint cottage cheese
- ✓ ¾ cup milk
- ✓ ½ tsp. salt
- ✓ ½ cup sugar
- ✓ 1 cup golden raisins

#### *For topping:*

- ✓ 1 ½ cups crumbled corn flakes
- ✓ 1 cup sugar
- ✓ ¼ cup melted butter

#### Instructions:

1. Cook noodles according to package and drain. Add butter and set aside. In large mixing bowl, beat eggs; add remaining ingredients and stir. Add to noodles and blend well. Pour into greased 9x13 pan. Mix topping and spread on top.
2. Bake at 325° for 1-1¼ hours

# Lesson Six

## Unit Conclusion

### Objectives:

- Integrate the important themes and messages of the week about FSU Jewry and their relationship with Israel.

### Materials:

- Supplies for the Pecha Kucha (will vary depending on camp resources): art supplies, computer/printer access, musical instruments

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Activity 1: Final project—Pecha Kucha

This presentation will be in the following format – Pecha Kucha. Counselors will explain:

*Pecha Kucha* ([Japanese](#): chit-chat) is a presentation methodology in which 20 slides are shown for 20 seconds each, usually seen in a multiple-speaker event called a Pecha Kucha Night (PKN). Pecha Kucha events consist of around a dozen presentations, each presenter having 20 slides, each shown for 20 seconds on a timer. Thus, each presenter has just 6 minutes and 40 seconds to explain his or her ideas before the next takes the stage.

Campers should watch the YouTube video that will explain this in more detail and provide an example:

Dan Pink. “Pecha Kucha Get to the PowerPoint in 20 Slides,” 2007.

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NZOt6BkhUg>><sup>42</sup>

Campers will only have 6 minutes and 40 seconds to present with no more than 20 slides that should be timed to switch every 20 seconds. If they have computers, they can use whatever text, image, or graphic they like to support the presentation and can access more information online. Since this is at camp and they may not have access to computers, they may use hand drawn pictures, music, video, photographs, and short skits for each 20 second “slide” and use a stop watch to time themselves. The main idea is for the campers to be able to concisely present a large range of ideas in a short amount of time. Also, if they don’t have computers, counselors should make sure to provide resources (like those in the bibliography) to help students collect more information on FSU Jewry.

#### Students can choose from 3 Themes for their Pecha Kucha:

1. Accomplishments of Former Soviet Union Jewish immigrants in Israel

#### Slide ideas for this Pecha Kucha:

- Professional accomplishments

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<sup>42</sup> Dan Pink. “Pecha Kucha Get to the PowerPoint in 20 Slides,” *YouTube*. 2007. Web. 14 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NZOt6BkhUg>>

- Contributions to music, art, food, clothing, theater, and movies
  - Participation in the IDF
  - Identifying Jewishly
2. *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh La'Zeh*: All People of Israel are Responsible for One Another, the ways in which we can fulfill this responsibility, and how Israel enacted this during the FSU (and Ethiopian) immigrations.

Slide ideas for this Pecha Kucha:

- Law of Return
  - Sending aid
  - Providing government support
  - Integrating FSU (and Ethiopian) cultural elements into Israel's schools and arts.
3. Depict ways in which FSU immigration (and Ethiopian immigration) parallel elements of our story of the Exodus from Egypt.

Slide ideas for this Pecha Kucha:

- Struggle to leave an oppressive place
- Journey to Israel
- Questioning the decision to leave the familiar
- Adjusting to a new life

Students may use this Haggadah as a resource: Mishael Zion and Noam Zion. *A Night to Remember: The Haggadah of Contemporary Voices*. (Jerusalem: Zion Holiday Publications, 2007.)

**Conclusion/Celebration** (May need to extend past the time of the lesson):

After each group creates their Pecha Kucha, the entire unit will come back together to celebrate the FSU culture in Israel, eat the foods they prepared the previous lesson, and present the Pecha Kucha to the rest of the group (and if possible, to other units in the camp).

## Unit Three: North American Immigrants in Israel

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# Unit Three: North American Immigrants in Israel

## Unit Enduring Understandings:

- North American Jewish immigrants add to the multiple narratives, perspectives, and voices present among contemporary Israelis.
- Personal narratives from North American Jewish immigrants in Israel strengthen our connection to the people of Israel.
- The North American Jewish immigrant experience reveals multiple insights into the differences between Israeli and American society, culture, and religion.
- The Jewish practices of North American immigrant communities in Israel illuminate alternative avenues of connection to our own Judaism and Jewish identities.

## Unit Goals:

- To survey the greatest rewards and challenges of North American immigration to Israel.
- To engage in new understandings of the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Israeli society.
- To compare North American Jewish religion, culture and practices to Israeli understandings of Jewishness and Judaism.
- To explore the various meanings of “Israel” and their relationship to North American and other Diaspora communities.

## Unit Objectives:

By the end of the unit, campers should be able to:

- Discuss their relationship with *Eretz Yisrael*—Land of Israel, *Medinat Yisrael*—State of Israel, *Am Yisrael*—People of Israel, *Torat Yisrael*—Torah of Israel, and *Ivrit*— Hebrew.
- Choose the Zionist ideology that resonates with them the most and develop their own definition.
- Identify Jewish holiday practices that are specific to Israel or North America.
- Recognize ways they may practice Judaism differently in Israel.
- Assess the greatest rewards and challenges of North American immigration to Israel.
- Compare North American affiliations with branches of Judaism to Israeli-Jewish affiliations and labels.
- Discuss different forms of Judaism that North American immigrants practice in Israel.
- Demonstrate the shifting nature of culture through the influence of the North American immigrant community’s culture on Israel, and vice versa.
- Compare and contrast the differences and similarities between the Jewish immigrant experience for North American, Ethiopian, and Former Soviet Union individuals.
- Determine 5-10 ways Israel influences or may influence their own lives or their Jewish community.
- Coordinate Shabbat services and Havdalah that demonstrate knowledge of the North American Jewish community in Israel, the immigrant experience, and their influence on Israeli culture.

**Evidence of Learning:**

- Students will write their own Zionist ideology.
- Students will create a Facebook timeline or Pinterest boards for a North American immigrant.
- Students will create a new version of a prayer for the end of the week's Shabbat in order to provide an innovative perspective on prayer and Shabbat for other campers.
- Students will determine 5-10 ways Israel influences or may influence their own lives or their Jewish community.
- Students will organize a Shabbat for the entire camp that integrates the lessons from this unit.

**Reflection Groups:** Everyday in their reflection groups, the students will address the questions written at the bottom of each lesson.



# Lesson One

## History

### Objectives:

- Discuss their relationship with *Eretz Yisrael*—Land of Israel, *Medinat Yisrael*—State of Israel, *Am Yisrael*—People of Israel, *Torat Yisrael*—Torah of Israel, and *Ivrit*— Hebrew.
- Choose the Zionist ideology that resonates with them the most and develop their own definition.

### Materials:

- Rope for Tug-of-War
- Unit Resource 3.1A- *How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less* excerpt<sup>1</sup>
- Unit Resource 3.1B- The Meaning of Israel in Contemporary Jewish Life

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (10 mins):

Counselors will split the group into two—labeling one group “Israel” and the other group “America.” Counselors will explain, both groups have different names but you both represent one person—one North American—with an inner tension between living in America and Israel. Let’s see who wins this time. The two groups will then play tug of war.

#### Counselors will explain:

There are numerous differences between the North American immigration and assimilation process and that of the Ethiopian and Former Soviet Union. What do you think some of the differences may be? Today, in North America, the decision to make aliyah is not due to oppression or living in better conditions. Most Americans who move to Israel live in less fancy apartments and make less money than they would in the states. However, for some reason, Israel calls to them. They experience this inner tug-of-war between living in America and living in Israel. Many play it safe and continue living in America but others take that leap toward Israel, hoping that it is the right decision.

#### Explain information on **North American Aliyah:**

Approximately 110,000 North American immigrants live in Israel. There has been a steady flow of olim from North America since Israel’s inception in 1948. Record numbers arrived in the late 1960s after the Six-Day War, and in the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> In 2009, 3,767 North American immigrants made aliyah to Israel, the highest rate in 36 years.<sup>3</sup> American olim immigrate to enhance their

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Glidden. *How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less*. (New York: DC Comics, 2010), 82-83.

<sup>2</sup> “Aliyah.” *Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 12 Apr. 2012.

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah#North\\_American\\_Aliyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah#North_American_Aliyah).>

<sup>3</sup> JTA Article: “U.S. aliyah in 36 years.” JTA: The Global News Service of the Jewish People. 2009. Web. 12 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.jta.org/news/article/2009/12/29/1009932/us-aliyah-highest-in-26-years>>

lives religiously and culturally, not for material gains.<sup>4</sup>

“When it comes to the structural assimilation of American olim, the evidence is overwhelming that Americans have entered all structural spheres of Israeli society and that their rate of structural assimilation is high. We need but cite the evidence with respect to housing, education, occupation, and income to demonstrate the Americans are indeed an elite group in Israeli society.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Activity 1 (40 mins): How do I relate to Israel?**

First, counselors will ask the campers, how are we different than people already living in Israel? Then, pass out a page from Sarah Glidden’s graphic novel, *How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less* (Unit Resource 3.1A). Ask, in what ways does Glidden view our differences and similarities?

Explain, the majority of Israelis were not so far different from us a few generations ago. Now, we live in different regions of the world and we, as North American Jews, need to decide what Israel means to us. It’s an individual decision.

Prior to this activity, counselors will put 5 signs around the room:

1. *Eretz Yisrael*—Land of Israel
2. *Medinat Yisrael*—State of Israel
3. *Am Yisrael*—People of Israel
4. *Torat Yisrael*—Torah of Israel
5. *Ivrit*—Hebrew

When the campers arrive, they will pass out 5 different color post-its to each camper, each color representing one of the 5 signs.

Counselors will then explain: There are many aspects of Israel that everyone one of us relates to in different ways. On each post-it, write how this particular phrase or word relates to you. What role does it play in your life, in your understanding of Judaism, or in your Jewish identity?

After putting the post-its on the walls, counselors will separate the campers into 5 groups and assign them to a different category. Campers will then group the post-its into topic categories and label the categories. For example, if people respond that *Eretz Yisrael* relates to the stories in the Torah, then all mentions of the Torah will be grouped together and labeled “Torah stories.”

Each group will then explain their categories to the rest of the unit and share their findings.

Group discussion:

- How did people define these categories? Did everyone define them in the same way?
- How have your experiences shaped your understanding of Israel and relationship with Israel? (Have you been to Israel? Do you have family or friends in Israel?)
- Where did you first begin learning about Israel? Where do you learn about Israel currently?

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<sup>4</sup> Chaim Waxman. *American Aliyah*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 139.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 147.

- How do these places shape your relationship with *Eretz Yisrael*—Land of Israel, *Medinat Yisrael*—State of Israel, *Am Yisrael*—People of Israel, *Torat Yisrael*—Torah of Israel, and *Ivrit*— Hebrew?

**Activity 2 (40 mins): The Meaning of Israel in Contemporary Jewish Life**

Counselors will divide the campers into four groups and pass out four ideological positions to each group (Unit Resource 3.1B). Then, they will assign each group one ideological perspective to support. Campers will then engage in a four-way debate on their ideology. Each group must be familiar with the others’ perspectives in order to debate against them. At the end, the counselors will ask the campers to stand in different corners of the room to show which ideology they actually support.

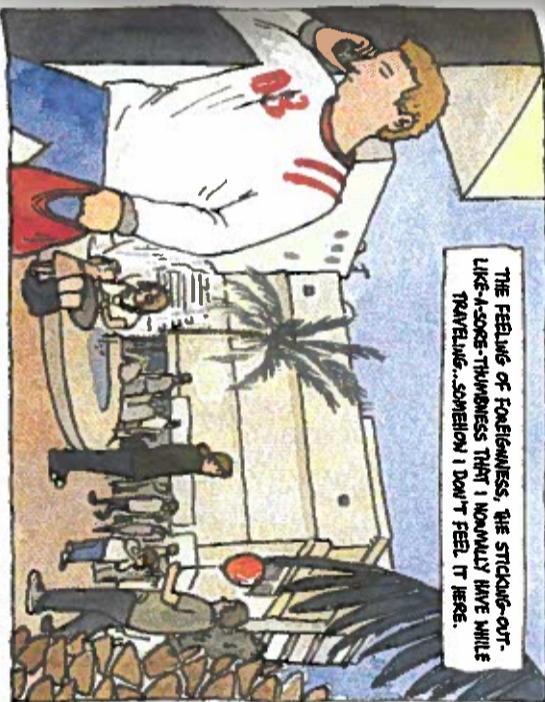
**Discussion Questions:**

- Why do you identify most with this ideology?
- What role do you see Israel playing in your life and in your Judaism? Could this include aliyah?
- How do you think these perspectives may relate to Americans who made aliyah? (Include the range of religious observance—from secular to Orthodox).

Students will then write their own Zionist ideology, either as a group, in smaller groups, or individually. Students who want to share their ideology may do so at the end of the activity.

**Reflection Group Questions:**

1. Why is discussing Israel and our relationship to Israel important as North American Jews?
2. Why is it also important for Israelis to learn about us?
3. How can we bridge the gap between Israel and us in more ways?



Unit Resource 3.1B  
**The Meaning of Israel in Contemporary Jewish Life<sup>6</sup>**  
(Four Ideological Positions)

Israel as the Exclusive Center of the Jewish World

**Background of Position: David Ben Gurion** (1886-1973) came to Israel from Poland in 1906. He became a founding father of the State of Israel and its first Prime Minister. He believed that ultimately communities must work towards their own demise, by encouraging aliyah.

--Maintains that Jewish communities in the free world are doomed to disappear as a result of assimilation and intermarriage, and other Jewish communities will disappear as a result of persecution or spiritual repression.

--Only through the State of Israel is it possible to preserve Judaism and the Jewish people.

--Only *aliyah* can secure Israel's future—not financial contributions, demonstrations, prayers, emotions, or visits.

--Efforts whose objective is to strengthen the Jewish communities in the Galut for their own sake are a waste of our limited resources. We must concentrate all our efforts in bringing the Jews of the Gola to Israel.

--Only in Israel will we have control over our own destiny. Only in Israel will we have spiritual and national freedom. This is what our history teaches us, what our dreams demand of us and how we shall secure our future.

Excerpt: From *Class to Nation* (1933)

*“Zionism is a revolutionary movement. It is not merely a revolution of the political and economic structure—but a revolution of the very foundations of the personal lives of the members of the people. It is a revolt against a tradition of many centuries, a tradition of practically living in exile while in theory longing helplessly for redemption.*

*Instead of rootless life in exile, we substitute an attempt at reconstruction and creativity on the soil of the homeland. Instead of a people dependent on other, instead of a minority living at the mercy or a majority—we call for a self-sufficient people, master of its own fate.”*

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<sup>6</sup> BJE of Greater Los Angeles. “Israel: Homeland, Refuge, or Spiritual Center?” Student Guide. Compiled by Eve M. Fein. Edited by Sara B. Wolk. (Los Angeles: Bureau of Jewish Education), 14-17. BJE compiled these four ideologies from Israel on My Mind and Melton Curriculum.

## Israel As One of Several Important Jewish Concentrations

**Background of Position: Breira**, a Jewish movement founded in the U.S. in 1975, whose aim was to advocate the equality of all Jewish communities. Motivated by the perception that Israel's interests had taken on too much importance in the Jewish world, they believed the result was neglect of other important Jewish concerns and of the strengthening of local Jewish communities. Although the organization as such no longer exists, its position is still accepted by a large part of the community.

--The State of Israel is one of several important Jewish centers, having no special value by virtue of its being located in Eretz Yisrael.

--A meaningful Jewish existence is possible in the Diaspora no less than it is possible in Israel.

--*Aliyah* is a positive act, but all Jews, including Israelis have the right to settle anywhere they choose.

--The continuation of Jewish life now depends upon the mutual support of the Jewish people in Israel and in the Diaspora.

--All Jews are responsible for each other, and Israel can take no priority in her requests for financial aid, political support, or for the Jews of the Diaspora themselves. The interests of the Jewish communities outside of Israel are no less important than Israel's needs.

Excerpt: Breira's National Platform (1977)

*"Jews throughout the world and throughout the ages constitute one people. The State of Israel is a particular manifestation of this peoplehood; the communities of the Diaspora form an equally vital element. The continuity of Jewish life now rests on the interdependence of the Jewish people in both Israel and the Diaspora.*

*Primary decisions of Israel's life and policy must be made by the Israelis, as decisions of Diaspora life must be made by each Jewish community for itself. We must communicate our feelings to each other as a reflection of mutual responsibility, support and concern. Israel and the Diaspora are strong enough to accept or reject the others' suggestions on their merits; neither should attempt to manipulate the other.*

*We affirm aliyah as a positive act, but we also affirm the right of Israelis to take up residence elsewhere. We reject any move to make it difficult or impossible for those Soviet Jews who exercise their right to resettle and rebuild their lives outside of Israel."*

## Israel as the Central Component of the Jewish Civilization

**Background Source: Mordechai Kaplan** (1881-1983), founder of the Reconstructionist Movement which defined Judaism as a religious civilization in ongoing development. He believed that Judaism needed to adapt to the social and intellectual reality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- The Land of Israel is an important element of Judaism, but, in and of itself, not enough to sustain a people.
- Judaism is a civilization, including history, language, customs, behavioral norms, spiritual and social ideas, values, traditions, and religion.
- These elements all grew out of the ancient life of the Jewish people in the land of Israel.
- The Jewish experience in the Diaspora has and continues to influence and enrich what we know today as Judaism.
- The importance of the State of Israel cannot be overstated; only there, in a Jewish majority society, can Judaism be fully applied to daily life.

This experience must be seen as the source of a cultural renewal, but the relationship of the Jewish state to the Diaspora is best understood as one of heart and body. The heart—center of the Jewish cultural experience—is in the Land of Israel; all other parts of the body—the Jews of the Diaspora—are kept alive by what goes on there. At the same time, the life of the Jewish community in Israel is continually enriched by the creative efforts and cultural developments of the Jews in the Diaspora.

### Excerpt: Judaism As A Civilization

*“Jewish unity is not determined by geographical boundaries; it is cultural rather than political. Jews are an international nation. Palestine (read, Israel) should serve as the symbol of the Jewish renaissance and the center of Jewish civilization. Without such a center, it is impossible for Jews to be conscious of their unity as a people.*

*A civilization is the product of social interaction of a group commonly known as a nation, whose life is rooted in a specific part of the earth. The particular part of the earth where a civilization arises and flourishes is as essential to a civilization as shelter is to a human being. Those who identify with the civilization share the psychological values of that landscape, even if they be far removed from it.*

*Judaism is unlikely to survive unless it thrives as a primary civilization in Palestine (read Israel). With the resulting enrichment of Judaism’s cultural and spiritual content, Jews in the Diaspora will then feel themselves members of a minority group that possesses motivation, idea and purpose.*

*Judaism could neither have arisen, nor continued to exist apart from the land that gave it birth. To appreciate what Eretz Yisrael has meant to Judaism it is necessary to understand the intimate relation that exists between a people’s country and its social and spiritual life. The Jews never stood up in prayer, never rose from a meal, never celebrated a Sabbath or festival, never rejoiced at a wedding, never mourned the loss of a beloved, never drew comfort from his religion without evoking the hope of restoration to Zion.”*

## Israel as a Central Religious Value of Judaism

**Background Source: Abraham Joshua Heschel** (1907-1972), philosopher and foremost educator of the Conservative Movement's Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

--Israel is a religious value of Judaism, and therefore must function as a spiritual center in Jewish life.

--Part of the significance of Judaism is its task in bringing about the messianic era. To do this, Jews must recognize that they are obligated to act as a moral power in the world.

--Israel, as the spiritual center of the Jewish people, must serve as a source of inspiration for us.

--It would be a mistake to see in the birth of Israel the arrival of redemption itself, but Israel's mere existence should be seen as indicating that redemption is indeed possible—if we live our lives as we should.

--Israel must be seen as a framework through which one can confront the problems of the world. It is not necessary to physically enter into the framework in order to realize its potential. What is required of us is that we join actively in dealing with the spiritual challenges facing the Jews of Eretz Yisrael.

--Our responsibility is to participate in the process of "birth."

--The way in which we relate to Israel proclaims to all how seriously we relate to our role in the history and destiny of the world as "a light unto the nations."

Excerpt: An Echo of Eternity

*"In no other community do we witness such an intense, ongoing search, such an effort to understand itself in terms of a higher vision as in Israel. Our return to Zion is the major event within history that began with a lonely man—Abraham—whose destiny was to be a blessing to all nations.*

*The State of Israel is not the fulfillment of the Messianic promise, but it makes the Messianic promise plausible. Even while our faith is fading, Israel will abide as long as the power of the biblical word prevails. People think that faith is an answer to all human problems. In truth, faith is a challenge to all human answers. To have faith is to be in labor. People say that a Jewish state would be an answer to all Jewish questions. In truth, the State of Israel is a challenge to many of our answers.*

*The ultimate meaning of the State of Israel must be seen in terms of the vision of the prophets; the redemption of all men. The religious duty of the Jew is to participate in the process of continuous redemption."*



# Lesson Two

## Jewish Practice-Part I

### Objectives:

- Identify Jewish holiday practices that are specific to Israel or North America.
- Recognize ways they may practice Judaism differently in Israel.
- Assess the greatest rewards and challenges of North American immigration to Israel.

### Materials:

- Duct tape, post-its
- Pens
- Paper
- Unit Resource 3.2A- Holiday Flashcards and Rituals
- Unit Resource 3.2B- Four North American Narratives

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (15 mins):

Counselors will pass out duct tape, post-its, and pens to the campers. Each camper will use the tape or post-its to create a timeline of their Jewish year—including the holidays they celebrate from the beginning to the end of the year and their favorite parts of each holiday. They can be as creative as they want with the way they create the timeline—it does not have to be linear but can include circles, Jewish stars, etc. Encourage them to write down family, synagogue, or camp traditions related to each holiday that stands out for them. After each camper finishes, they can walk around and view other camper’s timelines.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What are the similarities between most of these timelines? Which holidays or traditions appear on most of them?
- What were some of the differences? Which holidays appear less frequently?
- What were some favorite elements of each holiday?
- In what ways, if any, may your timelines reflect North American customs?
- What holidays, if any, may be more popular in Israel? Why?

#### Activity 1 (40 mins): Holiday Competition

Counselors will split the group into two teams. Each member of the first team will receive a number and each member of the second team will receive a letter of the alphabet. Counselors will then place flashcards of different Jewish holidays in a row on the ground and ask both groups to line up facing each other on both sides of the flashcards (Unit Resource 3.2A). A counselor will then say a tradition or ritual (also in Unit Resource 3.2A)—either Israeli or generally Jewish—for one of the holidays on the ground. The counselor will announce a letter-number combination and the campers with that letter or number will run to find which holiday that tradition represents. For example, if the counselor says, “We eat dairy items for this holiday,” then the campers will look for the “Shavuot” flashcard. The team with the most

flashcards in the end wins. If the campers are not familiar with a tradition or holiday, then the counselors “win” the card and should explain the match to the campers.

Discussion Questions:

- Which of these holidays are not familiar to you?
- Which ones do you celebrate/commemorate?
- Which traditions are specific to Israel? How could we bring those traditions to Jewish communities in North America? Should we? Why, or why not?
- To which holidays and traditions do you think you would have a stronger connection in Israel?
- In what ways may living in a Jewish country influence your Jewish practices?

Counselors will explain:

Pick one of the holidays that are more specific to Israel and create your own short program or activity idea that could relay the importance and meaning of the holiday to other North American Jews.

### **Activity 2 (35 mins): Four North American Olim**

Counselors will explain:

Read the narratives of four North Americans who made aliyah and fill out the “Love, Like, Dislike about Israel” chart for each of the immigrants.

Discussion Questions:

- What seem to be some common challenges that each of the immigrants faced when immigrating to Israel?
- What seem to be the rewards of living in Israel, according to these narratives?

Then, pick one narrative and create a Facebook timeline or Pinterest boards (boards can include topics like “Jewish holidays,” “Recipes YUM,” “IDF Rules of Thumb,” “J-ru—life in the holy city,” “Hebrew signs” etc.) that describe their lives and relationship with Israel.

### **Reflection Group Questions:**

1. What insights, if any, did you discover about North American *olim* after reading their stories?
2. What appealed to them about Israel and what challenges do/did they face making *aliyah*?
3. Imagine being in their position, what do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of living in Israel?

Unit Resource 3.2A  
**Holiday Flashcards and Rituals**

The holidays listed are in order of their occurrence during the year. On the right are Israeli or general rituals for each holiday. The counselors can read any of the rituals listed during the game.

<b>Shabbat</b>	We take a break from school and work. Some people avoid using all technology and electricity. We light the candles, bless the wine, and eat challah. For breakfast, we eat a Yemenite bread called Jachnun that cooks slowly through the night.
<b>Rosh Hashanah</b>	We blow the shofar and dip apples in honey. We celebrate the sweetness of the New Year and the cycle of life by eating a round challah dipped in honey. We wish people a “Shanah Tova u’metukah—a good and sweet year.”
<b>Yom Kippur</b>	We fast and atone for our sins, praying that we will be “inscribed in the book of life.” We can walk in the middle of the street because there are NO cars on the road!
<b>Sukkot</b>	We build a “booth” and invite guests to eat meals together each night. We eat, sleep, and pray in the sukkah. We wave the lulav and shake the etrog.
<b>Shemini Atzeret</b>	We celebrate this holiday after the last day of Sukkot, a day before Simchat Torah. We are restricted from work on this day, but are commanded to be joyful and recite Hallel (prayers of praise).
<b>Simchat Torah</b>	We parade around the city or synagogue with the Torah. We unravel the Torah for the whole community to see and begin reading it from the beginning again.
<b>Hanukkah</b>	We say “Nes Gadol Hayah Po; a great miracle happened here” while playing dreidel. We enjoy all different flavors of sufganiyot from local bakeries, including those in our neighborhood malls. We light candles for eight nights and sing, “I am a latke” and “Dreidel Dreidel Dreidel.”
<b>Tu B’shvat</b>	We plant trees. We participate in a small seder (originally, a Kabbalistic tradition), during which we eat different kinds of fruit—those with a hard outer shell, a hard inner shell, and

	no shell at all. We eat seven specific fruits derived from Deuteronomy 8:8 which calls Israel, “A land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and [date] honey.”
<b>Purim</b>	We dress up in masks and costumes and are commanded to be joyous. We read from the <i>Megilat Esther</i> and shake <i>rashanim</i> (groggers) while enjoying <i>Oznei Haman</i> (Haman’s ears-Hamantaschen).
<b>Pesach</b>	We sing “Pharaoh Pharaoh” and “Dayenu.” We participate in a Seder and read from the Hagaddah. We clean our houses of <i>chametz</i> and eat matzah for an entire week. The grocery stores cover certain aisles with plastic during this holiday to prevent us from accidentally buying <i>chametz</i> .
<b>Yom Ha’Shoah (Holocaust Memorial Day)</b>	We commemorate the Jews who we lost in the Holocaust. On this day, sirens are sounded and the whole country stands in silence for 2 minutes, beginning at 10am.
<b>Yom Ha’Zikaron (Memorial Day)</b>	On this day, we remember fallen soldiers and victims of terror and read their names at public ceremonies. On this day, a siren is sounded and the whole country stands in silence for two minutes, beginning at 11 am.
<b>Yom Ha’atzmaut (Independence Day)</b>	We celebrate with barbeques and bonfires on the beach. We participate in community sing-alongs with music from new and old composers.
<b>Lag B’Omer</b>	We celebrate this holiday by cutting our hair, attending weddings, and participating in parades, bonfires, and barbeques. This is the thirty-third day of counting the Omer, the days between Passover and Shavuot, which represent the days between freedom in Egypt and receiving the Torah at Sinai.
<b>Shavuot</b>	We eat dairy products, study Torah all night long, and read from the book of Ruth.
<b>Tisha B’Av</b>	We fast, read from Ecclesiastes (the book of Lamentations), and commemorate the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem.

Unit Resource 3.2B  
**Four North American Narratives<sup>7</sup>**

**Name:** Nicholas

**Birth year:** 1985

**Age at the time of Aliyah:** 23

**Hometown:** Brooklyn, NY

**My Story:**

I immigrated to Israel in July of 2007. I was 23 year old. I immigrated because I wanted to serve in the Israel Defense Forces. I immigrated by myself. The experience was incredible and one that I will never forget. The strange part was that I had never been to Israel before moving there. Therefore I moved to a country I had never visited to join their military. The one thing I missed about the United States that I would like to bring to Israel is Major League Baseball.

[While adjusting to life in Israel,] the language was by far the most difficult challenge. I am naturally not strong at languages and Hebrew is not an easy language to grasp in my opinion. Luckily I had great friends in the army who helped me along the way and my Hebrew improved quickly.

The bureaucracy in Israel is not the easiest to navigate through. We take for granted in America how easily it is to set up accounts, change addresses, etc. It felt like in Israel everything was a headache. However that could have been because I was in the military and my 1 day off every 2 weeks I had to go do these kinds of errands.

[The greatest advantage to living in Israel was] living amongst Jews in the spiritual homeland of the Jews. There was no greater honor than defending the Jewish people in the Israel Defense Forces.

Everything in Israel felt more Jewish to me than anything I did at home in America. Israel's secular life is what a lot of Jews do in America to practice. So I felt like it just came naturally to celebrate the holidays, do Shabbat dinners etc. It is much more difficult in the United States.

One of the best parts of Israel is the sense of community. Every day I got an invitation to eat a meal here, travel there etc. The generosity from Israelis and everyone there was incredible. I felt that I learned more about Judaism in Israel in 3 years than I did my entire life at home in America.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> All four personal narratives are quoted from interviews or questionnaires from *olim*. Their names have been changed for anonymity and the date of the interviews or questionnaires are included in the footnotes.

<sup>8</sup> Nicholas. Personal communication, November 14, 2011.

**Name:** Sharon

**Birth year:** 1955

**Age at the time of Aliyah:** 24

**Hometown:** Boston, Massachusetts

**My Story:**

I moved to Israel in 1985 to study in Jerusalem with my boyfriend and we became engaged in Jerusalem that year. We eventually moved back to the United States, but our love for Israel continued. We returned to Israel for one year and then debated about whether or not to make aliyah. We had no obligations to return to the US and had already made a spiritual aliyah so we decided to stay. We debated about whether we wanted our children to serve in the army (when we had children) and this created tension for us—we were not sure if we could commit to that. But, we got the sense that everything we would do would have an added meaning and that we would be a part of unfolding Jewish stories and Jewish history—not that this is negating the importance of unfolding Jewish history in other places—but it was an added sense of meaning and belonging and significance in Israel.

In America, being a liberal Jew meant everything was a choice. I didn't keep kosher at all in the US or Shabbat. I was always swimming against the stream of American culture in the US. Today, my family is a part of a Progressive Jewish congregation in Israel, a dynamic, supportive, caring community.

Still, moving to Israel, I had to make serious cultural adjustments to things I value. For example, there is no privacy! In 1989, when I was travelling on the bus with my newborn baby, everyone had an opinion about the baby. [How to hold him, what to feed him, how to dress him, etc.] Also, my handwriting was bad; it was large and childish writing. So, when I was in the market, the person behind me saw my bad handwriting and started asking, "How long have you been here, are you married? Do you have children?"

Now I appreciate this and respond how I want to. In America, people can live in a multi-dwelling and not know who their neighbors are or talk to them. Here, we know about others; everything about them; and we help each other out. We value each other—even if they are "too much" in your business.

For my husband and I, language was not a huge issue. Speaking is easy, but it's hard for me to read in Hebrew. I have not read a Hebrew novel and I read the newspaper (Ha'aretz) in English, not Hebrew. In a way, I live with a veil between aspects of Hebrew society and myself.

I know that I am inherently through and through American. I am aware that the way I think is through my American Jewish values. But, I have become more spontaneous which is very Israeli—I would feel uncomfortable with advance Shabbat dinner plans.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Sharon. Personal communication. November 14, 2011.

**Name:** Talia

**Birth year:** 1984

**Age at the time of Aliyah:** 25

**Hometown:** Toronto, Canada

**My Story:**

I moved to Israel in March 2010. I was 25 years old. I immigrated because it was something I had wanted to do my whole life. I was at a point in my life and career where things were stagnant and I needed a change. I immigrated by myself with Nefesh B'nefesh. It was a good experience-there were others on my flight who were moving as well so had many people to swap stories with. To me it felt completely surreal and it was as if I was just going on another trip to Israel.

I left my entire family behind which was the hardest part. I also left behind friends and a life that was familiar. It was very hard to adjust at first but now I am able to communicate on a consistent basis which makes things easier. [I do] miss A LOT of food products that they don't offer here which would be amazing for them to import. Generally just the North American lifestyle is missed...having time to do extra curricular things, have time for myself, slower paced life.

The process [of making aliyah] itself wasn't too bad. When flying with nefesh b'nefesh they take care of most things for you. You fill out an application initially and they pay for your flight to Israel. You also meet with a local representative from the Jewish Agency who will get an idea of why you want to come to Israel, your background etc. Once they approve your application you just have to get an aliyah visa from your local consulate. It isn't too complicated of a process but does take a few months.

One of the biggest challenges is finding a job/making a good living in Israel to support you. Depending on your field some jobs are easier to acquire than others. Also the language barrier can be extremely challenging-not everywhere are there people that are bilingual so simply getting around can be hard. I also found that while Nefesh was great at the process BEFORE you arrive to Israel once you arrive they aren't that supportive.

I currently keep a kosher kitchen, light Shabbat candles, have Shabbat meals every Friday, try and go to kabbalat Shabbat once a month if not more. [I have] been trying to figure out religiously where I fit/trying new things [because] there are so many sects of modern orthodoxy in Israel. I have found it easier than in North America to keep these customs-it feels so natural doing them here and being accessible to different shuls. Also no matter who you meet there is always an invite for a Shabbat meal-even if you have just met a family/person once the invitation is always open.

The bottom line is I feel at home here. It is hard to explain to someone who hasn't experienced living here but it just feels right. I am able to experience things I wouldn't at home, go out of my comfort zone and get immersed in a different culture and way of life. I love that everyone here is like one big family and are always looking out for each other and care about protecting this country. There is a feeling of Jewish unity here that you can only feel in this country.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Talia. Personal communication. November 27, 2011.

**Name:** Sophie

**Birth year:** 1986

**Age at time of Aliyah:** 25

**Hometown:** Los Angeles, CA

**My Story:**

I immigrated because I love Israel, and I can't imagine living my life anywhere else or really building my future anywhere else but here. I immigrated by myself. However, I went straight into a program with almost 200 young immigrants from ages 21-35, single, also in a similar position as myself, and we are all learning Hebrew together in a program for five months (ulpan).

The biggest advantage is the Jewish life here-it is everywhere, no matter where you live. Just from people understanding you, or coming from a similar background, is fantastic. I hope that my chances of meeting a Jewish guy here are better, G-d willing. The country is fun, thriving, so many young people, and they really help you here to get your life started in Israel.

[I practice a lot of the Jewish customs that I did in North America--] global Jewish customs... I clean my apartment before Shabbat, light candles for Shabbat. I dressed up for the holidays, and dipped apples in honey. I like to go to synagogue on Friday night, and sometimes there are not so many women here at synagogue Friday night. My whole life I did two seders, and when Pesach comes this year I know there will only be one seder which will seem really odd.

I think I receive support of my American Jewish customs from the other North Americans I am surrounded by. We are a support for each other, and watch American football games together, watched the 9/11 memorial together on TV, and may do something for Thanksgiving together too. We are also a group to go to synagogues with more English speaking congregants, and can find people that also share North American customs.

Here Shabbat is such a communal thing that everyone does together and everyone knows its Shabbat, even for people not observing Shabbat it is something everyone talks about. Everywhere here there is an eruv<sup>11</sup>, so now I carry things with me on Shabbat, which I didn't do before. I don't drive on the freeway for one hour anymore before Shabbat to get home like I used to do. I used to pray always facing East, here it is wherever Jerusalem is from where you are, not always East.

[In Israel] I love the culture, the attitude. I love that people care-that everyone really thinks in a family mentality, that they are caring for you not because of their title or position, but because you are a human being and genuinely need help. Of course you have people who are dishonest here just like everywhere else, but in general, especially as a new immigrant, you feel this overwhelming support from the community at large here. I love the land, the history, the vibrant culture and attitude of the people here, and I love living in a Jewish state that our ancestors fought so hard to build.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> An eruv is ritual enclosure of the community that permits observant Jews to carry objects on Shabbat from the private domain (their home) to the public domain.

<sup>12</sup> Sophie. Personal communication. November 18, 2011.



	<b>LOVE</b>	<b>LIKE</b>	<b>DISLIKE</b>
<b>Nicholas</b>			
<b>Sharon</b>			
<b>Talia</b>			
<b>Sophie</b>			

# Lesson Three

## Jewish Practice-Part II

### Objectives:

- Compare North American affiliations with branches of Judaism to Israeli-Jewish affiliations and labels.
- Discuss different forms of Judaism that North American immigrants practice in Israel.

### Materials:

- Butcher paper
- Markers or crayons (many different colors)
- Havdalah candle materials: wax and string
- Unit Resource 3.3A- Guided Meditation

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (15 mins):

Counselors will take a long piece of butcher paper and write “agree” on one end and “disagree” on the other end, creating a scale through the middle of the paper, numbered 1-10. Then, hand out different color crayons or markers to every camper.

#### Counselors will explain:

Write the number of the statement along the 1-10 scale, depending on how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Most of you have a different color so that you know what you answered and we can discuss your responses at the end.

(Counselors, remember to say the number of the statement each time!)

1. I feel connected to Judaism and the Jewish community outside of camp.
2. I enjoy being affiliated with a branch of Judaism (Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Orthodox).
3. I think that being affiliated with a branch of Judaism strengthens my connection to my religion.
4. Most of the Jewish things I do occur within a Jewish institution or through a Jewish institution (synagogue, school, camp, JCC, or youth group.)
5. I think that America is a great place to be Jewish.
6. I think that it would be easier to be Jewish in Israel than in America.
7. I celebrate Shabbat in some way every week (or try to).
8. I will continue participating in the Jewish activities and celebrating holidays when I go to college.
9. I plan on participating in a Hillel when I go to college.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What similarities or differences between people’s answers stand out for you? (*Most people affiliate with a branch of Judaism. Some people will participate in Hillel and some people won’t. There were a lot of different answers for # 6—I wonder people’s rationale behind this.*)

- Explain some of your answers. Were any of the statements tough to respond to?
  - *(I realized that most of the things I do that are Jewish are connected with an organization—even my havurah. I think that America is a great place to be Jewish but I’m not sure if it would be easier or not in Israel—it would be different. Some of them were tough to answer cause I’ve never thought about it before. I’m not sure what I’ll end up doing in college. I will definitely participate in Jewish activities in college.)*
- What would Judaism look like in America without the different movements and types of synagogues? How would people express their Judaism? What would a Jewish community look like?
  - *(People would have to do Jewish things in their homes and with their friends. I’m not sure that it would work without these movements or institutions—people wouldn’t have a place to gather or learn about being Jewish. People would become too assimilated—like what happened in the FSU. The Jewish community would still exist if people learned on their own and were committed to it.)*

Counselors will explain:

In Israel, movements are not popular. The majority of Israelis use the terms *dati* (religious) and *chiloni* (secular) to express their religious affiliations. For some, being *dati* means being Orthodox, so they call themselves secular. Despite the label, the majority of “secular” Jews still celebrate or observe Shabbat, kashrut, festivals and holidays, and life-cycle events.<sup>13</sup> However, there have been attempts to bring the Reform and Conservative movements to Israel to show Israelis that there are more ways to be *dati* than being Orthodox.

Counselors will provide a brief history of the Reform and Conservative movements in Israel, (the Progressive and Masorti movements):

In 2002, Israel’s Reform and Conservative movements reported that an estimated fifteen thousand people participate regularly in their congregational activities (5,000 in Reform and 10,000 in Conservative). Even if this number were double, this is less than 1% of the Jewish population in Israel.

The **Reform** movement in Israel began in 1958 with the Harel synagogue in Jerusalem, followed by the founding of five other congregations in the early 1960s. In 1965, members of the six synagogues met together at a conference to begin creating opportunities for non-Orthodox forms of Judaism in Israel. In 1971, they combined their efforts by creating the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) that still exists today.<sup>14</sup> The movement now includes: Kibbutz Lotan and Kibbutz Yahel in southern Israel, a communal settlement, a group within one other kibbutz, and twenty-eight congregations throughout Israel.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Shlomit Levy, et al. “The Many Faces of Jewishness in Israel” in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, ed. Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman. (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 271-273.

<sup>14</sup> Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism- <http://www.reform.org.il/eng/index.asp>

<sup>15</sup> Ephraim Tabory. “The Israel Reform and Conservative Movements and the Market for Liberal Judaism” in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, ed. Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman. (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 285.

The **Conservative** movement has attracted more people than the Reform movement in Israel. In 1971, The Conservative movement established the Masorti (Traditional) Movement—a name meant to appeal to Israel’s traditional Jews. As of 2001, the Conservative movement listed fifty-two congregations, but not all of them hold regular services. It also established a kibbutz settlement and is affiliated with a moshav.<sup>16</sup>

“Nonaffiliation with a religious denomination in America appears to lead (as well to indicate) marginality in the Jewish ethnic community. Thus, even individuals who are religiously lax may be motivated to affiliate with an institutionalized form of Judaism in order to retain and manifest an ethnic Jewish identity. There is little question of one’s Jewish identity in Israel, however. One need not join a synagogue to ensure that one’s children receive some Jewish education or meet other Jews. The use of Hebrew as the vernacular and the incorporation of Jewish symbols into Israel’s “civic” religion, negate, or, at least, moderate the function that a liberal religious movement might play in strengthening Jewish identity [...] Israel is geared to the observance of Jewish holidays; *kashrut* is observed in most public institutions and many other places as well.”<sup>17</sup>

Today, we are going to get a glimpse of two different places in Israel where some North American olim choose to live: Jerusalem and Tzfat (spelled Safed in English). Those who live in Jerusalem vary drastically in their religious practices: some choose to become members of Progressive synagogues, some try different shuls and see what they enjoy, and some live in Religious Zionists communities (who combine their religious beliefs with Zionism—working to build a Jewish state in all the land of Israel, including the settlements). Tzfat appeals to many olim because it is more spiritual, the home to Kabbalah, and connects people to Judaism in a different way.

### **Activity 1 (40 mins): Jerusalem**

During this activity, campers will learn about a Progressive community in Israel and participate in a guided meditation. Then, they will create their own version of a prayer for this week’s Shabbat.

#### Counselors will explain:

There are hundreds of synagogues in Jerusalem, but one that is popular for North Americans and visitors is Kehillat Kol Haneshamah<sup>18</sup>. Kol Haneshamah is a Progressive synagogue in Baka, the eastern part of Jerusalem where many English-speakers from America, England, and South Africa choose to live. The community offers many ways to participate in prayer—through meditation, chanting, and discussion. It combines spiritualism and tikkun olam (repairing the world). Members of the community say that it feeds both the spiritual side of life and the intellectual side—the text study side.

In the spirit of the Kol Haneshamah’s Shabbat tradition, we ask you to reflect on this past week. Think about your favorite moments, new things you’ve learned, and new friends you’ve made.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 308.

<sup>18</sup> Kehillat Kol Haneshamah. Web. 14 Apr. 2012.

<<http://www.kolhaneshama.org.il/eng/kolhaneshama>>

What do you want to carry with you into the next week or leave behind? Think to yourself for a minute and then discuss with the people sitting near you.

Now, find a place to get comfortable and relax.

### **Counselors will read the meditation (Unit Resource 3.3A)**

#### Counselors will explain:

At the end of the week, we will lead Shabbat services, but we want to make services interesting and memorable for the rest of camp. Just like the Progressive movement attempts to do, we want you to try to make Judaism and prayer relevant to others. Your task is to create a new version of a prayer for this week's Shabbat. You can use meditation, yoga, or music—something different than you usually do during Shabbat services. Provide a new perspective on prayer and Shabbat for other campers. Prayer ideas: Modeh Ani, Mah Tov, Lecha Dodi, V'ahava.

#### **Activity 2 (30 mins): Tzfat**

During this activity, the campers will learn about the city of Tzfat and then make Havdalah candles to use at the end of the week.

#### Counselors will explain the history of Tzfat and Kabbalat Shabbat:

Another city that many North Americans call home is Tzfat in northern Israel. Tzfat is known for being the city of Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism, and a center of art. Among the many different artists and galleries, many tour groups make a stop at Avraham Loewenthal's "Tzfat Gallery of Mystical Art"(ask around and see if anyone has been there!).<sup>19</sup> Loewenthal, originally from Michigan, made aliyah in 1994 and creates art that directly relates to his own understanding and experiences of Kabbalah. It is also home to the Safed candle company<sup>20</sup> (which is popular in every Judaica shop in America—you have probably seen their candles) and is a popular place for art based on Kabbalistic concepts and meditative states.

Tzfat is also where the tradition of Kabbalat Shabbat began in the sixteenth century. Kabbalat Shabbat, meaning "Welcoming of Shabbat" is the short Friday service that occurs just before the evening Shabbat service. In the Talmud, we are told that Rabbi Hanina would put on his best clothes, go outside and watch the sunset on Friday night. He would sing, "Come, let us go out and welcome Shabbat the Queen." (Shabbat 119a). Rabbi Yannai would do exactly the same thing, except he would sing, "Come O Bride, come O Bride." In 1942 Jews began leaving Spain, Italy, and other places in Europe because they were not allowed to practice their religion and live in peace. One of the places they gathered was the city of Tzfat. The city became a magnet for Kabbalists, Jewish mystics. These scholars created a service out of the Talmudic description of Rabbi Hanina and Rabbi Yannai going out to welcome Shabbat." The song that came from this may be familiar-- Leha Dodi. (Ask if anyone remembers how this song is sung.) Rabbi Shlomo Ha-Levy, a Kabbalist from Tsfat, wrote Leha Dodi in which he calls Shabbat both a queen and a bride.

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<sup>19</sup> "About the Artist." Tzfat Gallery of Mystical Art. Web. 14 Apr. 2012.

<<http://www.kabbalahart.com/newsite/artistbio.html>>

<sup>20</sup> "Safed Candles." *Safed*. Web. 14 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.safed.co.il/safed-candles.html>>

Shabbat is a time that we consider holy—filled with *kedushah*. At the end of Shabbat, we have Havdalah, meaning separation. We separate Shabbat from the rest of the week—the sacred from the profane (and metaphorically say goodbye to the Shabbat bride/queen until next week). At the end of Shabbat this week, you are going to lead a Havdalah service—leading the prayers over the wine, spices, and candles. (The easiest way to remember the order of the service is to begin with the senses from the bottom of the face to the top. First, we use the sense of taste, then smell, then sight.)

### **Havdalah Candles:**

Campers will then make Havdalah candles. Each camper will pick out three colors for their candles and intertwine them with three wicks.

### **Conclusion (5 mins):**

During this lesson, we looked at two cities in Israel where North American olim live and explored different understandings of Judaism. In Israel, the Reform and Conservative movement are called Progressive and Masorti, but most Israelis identify as *dati* (religious) or *chiloni* (secular). We then looked at a Progressive community in Jerusalem and then Kabbalah in Tzfat. Discussion Questions:

- What did you learn about Judaism in Israel?
  - *(Branches of Judaism aren't popular in Israel. People identify with Judaism differently than us. Israelis need to learn that being "religious" does not necessarily mean being Orthodox. "Progressive" Judaism is the closest to our "Reform" Judaism in Israel. Tzfat is the city of Kabbalah.)*
- How may the Jewish practices of Israelis and *olim* (immigrants) be different or similar to your own?
  - *(Immigrants from North America probably want to be a part of a synagogue like Kehillat Kol Haneshamah. Israelis probably already feel Jewish and don't do things that connect them with Jewish prayer and other aspects of Judaism. I can't imagine that we're that different except that Israelis understand the Hebrew they are saying. They probably have more fun during holidays because everyone around them is also celebrating.)*
- How may their general experiences of Jewish life be different or similar to your own?
  - *(We belong to synagogues and youth groups in order to be a part of the Jewish community—their whole lives are within a Jewish community. We all pray toward the Western Wall, read prayers in Hebrew, and celebrate mostly the same holidays. They are immersed in Jewish culture—it's so different from here where things are closed on Christmas and Easter, not Yom Kippur and Shabbat.)*

### **Reflection Group Questions:**

1. What may be appealing for Americans who move to Israel in terms of Jewish practice?  
*(There are a lot of different Jewish opportunities. They can try out new things everywhere and find what they like. They can live or study in Tzfat and learn about real Kabbalah. They don't have to make as much of an effort like in America. Being Jewish and doing Jewish things is the norm.)*
2. What role does your synagogue, religious school, day school, youth group, or camp play in you Jewish life? Are these affiliated?

*(Most of them are affiliated, but not all. These are the ways that I stay involved with the Jewish community. I really only go to camp—it's my favorite part of being Jewish.)*

3. What would Judaism in North American look like without affiliations?

*(I'm not sure that it would work without affiliations. It would be better because I think there is so much tension between affiliations now. We would need synagogues and youth groups, but just like the JCC, they don't need to be affiliated. Affiliations make it so that you pray or learn about Judaism among people who mostly agree with your own beliefs or view of the world. I could be "labeled" Conservative but I go to a Reform school because there are more students—affiliations don't really matter.)*

4. How may the labels shape our understanding of ourselves of Jews? What are the advantages or disadvantages to this?

*(It prevents us from experiencing other forms of Judaism and stepping outside our comfort zone. It brings us closer to one Jewish community. It strengthens our Jewish identities and gives us something specific to believe. Reform Judaism is "choice through knowledge" so if you know about Judaism, this works!)*

## Chapter 11

# SHABBAT SHALOM

*Shabbat is a vision of the World To Come.*

—Zohar

*It is only with the heart that one can see rightly;  
what is essential is invisible to the eye.*

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

**A**CCORDING to the famous late nineteenth century essayist, Ahad Ha-Am, "More than the Jewish People has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish People." That oft-quoted and insightful observation summarizes the importance of Shabbat in Jewish Life from the beginnings of our people's history to the present time.

No institution or ritual encompasses more of what Judaism stands for than does Shabbat. It is a time when all Jewish values, practices and beliefs converge in one holy day. Shabbat is an unparalleled opportunity for the fulfillment of Torah study, prayer, self-reflection and meditation, the building of intimate relationships with family and friends, and the enjoyment of the material pleasures of life such as food, drink, sex and sleep. It is a time to dance and to sing, to rejoice and to celebrate.

Shabbat is a window into living a complete and rich Jewish experience, as its spirit infuses the other six days of the week. Whether observed according to every letter of the Halakhah, or in a way that is meaningful and inspiring to each individual in his/her own way, Shabbat is a day for expansion of the soul and the kindling of the spirit. The guided imagery exercises below are designed to help participants enter into the mood and ambiance of this unique day.

## PREPARATION FOR SHABBAT

It is said that the journey is more important than the destination. For Shabbat this may be an exaggeration, because the experience of Shabbat is even greater than the preparation involved before it. However, the Shabbat day (from Friday just before sundown until Saturday just after sundown) is greatly enhanced by walking across its threshold with hours and even days of preparation.

○ *Since all human beings require a combination of work and rest, Shabbat offers an opportunity to pause from our labors and concentrate on being instead of doing.*

*Find a comfortable place to sit or lie, and begin to enter the state of being, leaving doing behind. . . . To help this experience of Shabbat enter our entire being, take a few deep breaths, and with each breath exhale the worries and cares of the week days. Breathe in the spirit of Shabbat—the spirit of refreshment and renewal, of rest and relaxation, of joy and exaltation of the soul. . . .*

*After a minute or two of winding down, let your eyes become heavy, and your eyelids close. . . . Roll your eyes back into your head a bit, and find yourself becoming drowsy and in a deep state of restful consciousness. . . .*

*Since Shabbat is such a vital part of our existence, its spirit hovers over us all seven days of the week. Everything we do, even on all the six non-Shabbat days, can be considered one long preparation for the peak experience of Shabbat.*

*Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, we are still floating high from the rest and joy of the previous Shabbat. On Wednesday we begin to think about what special preparations we want to do for the coming Shabbat. We shop in the supermarket and purchase special foods so that both our body and our soul can benefit from the Shabbat experience. Walk around the supermarket and load your cart with some special things which you want for this coming Shabbat. . . . What did you purchase? (Pause).*

*At home that evening, make some telephone calls and invite some dear ones to join you for this Shabbat evening meal, or for Shabbat lunch or Seudah Shlishit. . . . Whom did you invite? . . . How did they respond? . . . (Pause).*

*You decide that this coming Shabbat will be a bit extra special, even more than others. You go into a special store and buy something that will make this coming Shabbat even more beautiful in your home. . . . What are you buying? (Pause).*

*In the place at home where you keep your holy books, you go to the shelf with material on the weekly Sifrah, the Torah portion for this week. . . . Look over the*



books, and take one or two to begin your preparation for studying this week's Sidrah and Hafarah. . . . Perhaps you have a favorite commentary you enjoy reading along with the Sidrah. Take a look at some of the comments in that book. . . . (Pause).

Thursday evening you sit down to relax after dinner, and begin to read the daily paper and perhaps another of your favorite magazines. In some way an idea in this paper or magazine reminds you of an idea you just read about in the Sidrah of the week. Around the Shabbat dinner table you can share this idea with your dear ones. . . . What do you expect will be their reaction when you connect the Sidrah with contemporary thoughts and ideas? (Pause).

Thursday evening before you retire, you set the table in the dining room for Shabbat dinner. You use your best dishes and flatware, water goblets and shiny silver kiddush cups. You set out the Shabbat candlesticks, the challah plate and cover, a challah knife (only if you are a challah-slicer, and not a challah-tearer).

Friday around lunch time you check to make sure you have everything ready for Shabbat. You double-check to see if you have Shabbat candles, at least two challot (one for "Keep" and one for "Remember"—the two versions of Shabbat in the Ten Commandments), and a bottle of your favorite kosher wine. Get some lovely flowers, perhaps from your back yard, to make the Shabbat table beautiful and sweet-smelling. . . . Gaze at the flowers. . . sniff them. See how it makes you feel. . . . Now do anything else you want to add to Shabbat and make it a very special day. . . . What else did you add to make the day extra special? (Pause).

In case you are a challah baker, you take some time on Thursday evening (or Friday if you prefer) and bake a few challot. You take out your recipe from *The Jewish Catalog* or other source, and begin to mix the ingredients, the flour, granulated yeast, water, sugar, some raisins if you like, an oiled bowl. . . . Taste a bit of the dough (but not too much). How sweet and soft is it in your mouth? . . .

After the dough has risen for several hours, you begin to divide the dough for as many challot as you want to bake, and artfully braid it. Braiding the dough reminds you that some think of the challot as the golden hair of the Shabbat bride. . . .

Following ancient custom you separate a small chunk of challah dough and throw it into the oven, as a kind of sacrifice, reminding you of the sacrifices given to the Kohanim in the ancient Temple. When you do that you recite a special blessing from your siddur. . . . Next you brush the dough with egg wash and sprinkle it with some sesame seeds. You then bake it in the oven for about a half hour at 350 degrees. Then you remove your beautiful, golden, shiny challot from

the oven and let them cool until you are ready to serve them at Shabbat dinner. . . . Look at the challot, and see how they shine. . . . In their shiny reflection you see a beautiful picture that has much personal meaning to you. . . . What is it? (Long pause).

When Friday afternoon comes, and the Shabbat bride is about to arrive, you empty your pockets of all the coins in them and drop them into the Tzedakah box. Next you take out your siddur and practice humming some of the beautiful songs which welcome Shabbat, like *LeKha Dodi* ("Come, O Sabbath Bride") or *Biatik's* lovely poem-song, *Ha-Chama MeRosh Ha-Ilanot* ("The Sun on the Treetops"). . . . You take a nice warm shower, put on your Shabbat clothes, and then sit back in your most comfortable chair, now all completely ready for Shabbat. You take a short nap and fifteen minutes later you hear a gentle knock at the door. Your Shabbat guests, including the Shabbat bride, have arrived. . . . (Pause). ○

## SHABBAT CANDLES

○ Let your eyes close and become very comfortable and relaxed. Allow some deep, slow breaths to bring peace and harmony into your body and soul. . . . See how good and at peace you feel. . . . Everything is just right. . . . Your heart is calm, you are at one with yourself and the world. . . .

You are at home, getting ready to light the Shabbat candles. . . . The house is clean and in order. . . . The Shabbat table is set and ready. . . . The beautiful silver kiddush cups at each place highlight the white table cloth. An artistic ceramic challah plate graces the center of the table, and covering the challot is a large silk cover from Jerusalem, hand-painted with a picture of the Kotel, the Western Wall, in lovely pastel colors. The meal is prepared, the company invited. . . .

You are ready to usher in Queen Shabbat. The matches lie impatiently next to the candle holders. . . .

Before you pick up the match and strike it to make the last fire of the week, your mind wanders a bit, and you are thinking of many things. . . . First, you think about all the pious Jewish women who have kindled their Shabbat candles throughout the centuries. . . . An image comes to your mind, with one particular woman, from a different land and a different time, standing as you are, on the border of Friday and Shabbat, about to cross over into the mystic Land of Shabbat. . . . See if there is something you would like to say to this woman. (Pause).

Coming out of your reverie for a while, you prepare once again to kindle the four or five Shabbat candles, one for each of several special people in your life. . . .

# Lesson Four

## Culture

### Objectives:

- Demonstrate the shifting nature of culture through the influence of the North American immigrant community's culture on Israel, and vice versa.
- Compare and contrast the differences and similarities between the Jewish immigrant experience for North American, Ethiopian, and Former Soviet Union individuals.

### Materials:

- Ball
- Decorations with names of Israeli products, restaurants, and logos
- Music playing in background (with artists speaking in Hebrew and English)
- Unit Resource 3.4A- Modern Hebrew Phrases<sup>21</sup>
- Unit Resource 3.4B- Shabbat Character Roles
- Unit Resource 3.4C- Shabbat Shopping List
- Different color nametags, wristbands, or shirts
- Stamps or stickers
- Unit Resource 3.4D- Jewish Community comparison chart

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Set Induction (10 mins):

Using the Hebrew phrases (Unit Resource 3.4A), counselors will quiz the campers. A counselor will say a word or phrase in Hebrew and then throw a ball to a camper who will translate the word and throw the ball back. Once the campers are familiar with some words, they can throw the ball to one another and have other campers translate the words. This can also be done from English to Hebrew.

#### Activity 1 (45 mins): Shabbat Preparation

Counselors will decorate a room with names of products, restaurants, and logos from Israel. One part of camp should be designated as the *shuk* (outside market) and other areas of camp should be designated as the Bank (Bank Ha-Poalim), the Bookstore (Steimatazky), and the Bakery (Café Ne'eman). Booths should be set up that "sell" all of the items on the Shabbat Shopping List (Unit Resource 3.4C).

Ask the campers to look around the room:

- What looks similar to America?
- What looks different?
- What about the music you hear? (Are there English words in the music? Is it familiar to you?)

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<sup>21</sup> *Fodor's Israel*. Ed. Linda Cabasin, et al. (New York: Fodor's Travel, 2006), 392-396.

Counselors will explain:

Israel is not as developed as America, but it does have a close connection with Western culture. There are huge malls with American, European, and Israeli shops. Stores and restaurants display Hebrew and English names. Many people in major cities speak Hebrew and English. However, there are also outside markets (that resemble Farmer’s markets, but are permanent) that sell fruit, meat, vegetables, bread, desserts, inexpensive clothing, purses, socks, etc. The most popular *shuk* (market) in Jerusalem is Machane Yehuda and in Tel Aviv, it’s *Ha-Shuk Ha-Carmel*. Not everyone at the *shuk* speaks English and the crowds can be tough to get through. Israeli’s don’t always have the best manners!

Today, you are hosting a Shabbat and need to collect all of the items that you will need (Unit Resource 3.4C). Most of the items will be located in the *shuk*, but others will be spread throughout the city (meaning throughout the camp).

Counselors will then assign campers a role during the activity and hand them a slip of paper with their role (Unit Resource 3.4B), which will determine how easy or difficult it will be for them to collect each of the items on the list. Campers will get different color nametags or wristbands (or ask them to arrive in different color shirts) to show other campers and counselors their “identity” in the game.

Game Task:

The aim for each of these groups is to collect the entire list of Shabbat items as quickly as possible in their roles. The counselors should be aware of each of the camper’s “identities” and treat them accordingly. The campers will travel from booth to booth trying to collect all of the products on the list and will succeed once the counselors agree to put a stamp or sticker on the appropriate part of their Shabbat list. The campers will have to figure out how to succeed in their roles during the game—ultimately, to unravel the mystery of how to become integrated into Israeli society.

Counselor Key for How Campers can Succeed in Their Roles:

**Israeli:**

1. The Israeli will naturally get all of the products on the list first *if* they do not wait in lines.
2. When the Israeli speaks, they must speak in a Hebrew accent. Speaking in a Hebrew accent (during this activity) is equivalent to speaking in Hebrew. However, they must try to incorporate some basic Hebrew words from the list.
3. In order to get checked off for *all* the items on the list, they must “invite” at least three people to their Shabbat meal.

**American Immigrant—Type I:**

The only way they will succeed is if they:

1. Start pushing their way through lines.
2. Use their Hebrew words list.
3. Offer their help to American immigrants in Type II categories and “invite” at least one other person to their Shabbat meal.
4. They must also be seen in conversation with other “American Immigrant—Type I” friends that they see along the way.

**American Immigrant—Type II:**

The only way they will succeed is if they:

1. Start pushing their way through lines.
2. Ask “Israelis” for help.
3. Use their Hebrew words list.
4. Counselors should make it difficult for them by actually speaking to them in Hebrew (as much as possible) and expecting them to respond in Hebrew.
5. Figure out when the bank is actually opened or closed (the counselors should make this a challenge as well).

**Activity Closing:**

After all of the campers “collect” their items, come back together and discuss the activity.

Discussion Questions:

- For each group, what was easy or difficult about your role?
- What aspects of Israeli culture did you have to adjust to?
- What was it like having to try to communicate in Hebrew? What are the challenges of having a language barrier?
- In what ways has American or Western culture influenced Israel? (Look at the signs and names of different places.)

**Activity 2 (35 mins): Jewish Immigrant Community Comparisons**

Now that we have explored the Ethiopian, FSU, and North American communities each through three lenses: history, Jewish practice, and culture—let’s compare all three.

Counselors will hand out the Jewish Community comparison chart and pencils (Unit Resource 3.4D). Allow to campers to take a few minutes and think about the chart, filling in as many things as they can remember. Then, as a group, discuss the activities and lessons from each community.

Discussion Questions:

- What was most memorable for you this summer?
- What did you learn about each community?
- What were some of the similarities and differences between each of these community’s experiences?

**Reflection Group Questions:**

Each camper should bring his/her favorite modern Israeli song. As a reflection group, listen to the songs and ask:

1. What is this music about?
2. In what ways does this music incorporate American styles or values?
3. How has any of our American-Jewish music been influenced by Israeli styles or values?

Many people in Israel speak at least one other language, in addition to Hebrew, and most can get by in English. So the chances of getting too lost for words are slim. At the same time, your traveling experience can be enriched by having at least a few words to share in conversation or to use while touring and shopping, even at the local grocery store. Here are some basic words and expressions that may be of use during your stay. Please note that the letters "kh" in this glossary are pronounced like the "ch" in *chamuka* or the Scottish *loch*.

**English** Hebrew Transliteration Pronunciation

## Greetings and Basics

Hello/good-bye/peace	Shalom	shah-lohm
Nice to meet you	Na'im me'od	nah-eem meh-ohd
Good morning	Boker tov	boh-ker tohv
Good evening	Erev tov	eh-rev tohv
Good night	Layla tov	lahy-lah tohv
How are you? (to a woman)	Ma shlomekh?	mah shloh-moykh
How are you? (to a man)	Ma shlomkha?	mah shloh-m-khah
How are you?	Ma nishma?	mah-nee-shmah
Fine	Beseder	beh-say-dehr
Everything is fine	Hakol beseder	hah-kohl beh-say-dehr
Is everything okay?	Hakol beseder?	hah-kohl beh-say-dehr
Very well	Tov me'od	tohv-meh-ohd
Excellent/terrific	Merzuayan	meh-tzoo-yahn
Send regards!	Timsor dash!	teem-sohr dahsh
Thank you	Toda	toh-deh
Thank you very much	Toda raba	toh-dah rah-beh
See you again	Lehitra'ot	leh-heer-rah-ohd
Yes	Ken	keh-n
No	Lo	lo
Maybe	Oolai	oo-ligh
Excuse me/Sorry	Slicha	slee-khah
Again/Could you repeat that?	Ad na'am	ahd nah-ahm

## Days

Today	Hayom	hah-yohm
Tomorrow	Machar	mah-khahr
Yesterday	Etmol	cht-mohl
Sunday	Yom Rishon	yohm ree-shohm
Monday	Yom Sheni	yohm sheh-nee
Tuesday	Yom Shlishi	yohm sh-leeshee
Wednesday	Yom Revi'i	yohm reh-vee
Thursday	Yom Chamishi	yohm kha-mee-shee
Friday	Yom Shiishi	yohm shee-shee
Saturday, Sabbath	Shabbat	yohm shah-bat

## Numbers

1	Echad	eh-khad
2	Shtayim	shtah-yeem
3	Shalosh	shah-lohsh
4	Arba	ah-rbah
5	Chamesh	chah-maysh
6	Shesh	shehsh
7	Sheva	sheh-vah
8	Shmonah	shmoh-nah
9	Teisha	toy-shah
10	Esseh	eh-sehr
11	Achad esreh	ah-chaht eh-sreh
12	Shteim esreh	shtoym eh-sreh
20	Esrin	eh-sreem
50	Chamishim	kha-mee-sheem
100	Me'a	meh-ah
200	Ma'tayim	mah-tah-yeem

## Useful Phrases

Do you speak English?	Ata medaber anglit?	ah-ta meh-dah-ber ahng-leet
I don't understand (man)	Ani lo mevin	a-nee loh meh-veen
I don't understand		

I am lost (man)	Ani avud	a-nee ah-wood
I am lost (woman)	Ani avuda	a-nee ah-wood-dah
I am American	Ani Amerika'i	ah-nee ah-mer-ee-kah- ee
I am British	Ani Briti	ah-nee bree-tee
I am Canadian	Ani Canadi	ah-nee kah-nah-dec
What is the time?	Ma hash'a'a?	mah hah-shah-ah
Just a minute	Rak rega	rahk reh-gah
Mimute, moment	Rega	reh-gah
Now	Achshav	ahkh-shahv
Not yet	Od lo	ohd loh
Later	Achar kach	ah-khahr kahkh
I would like	Hayiti mevakesh	hah-ye-tee m-vah- kehsh
Where is...?	Eifo..?	oyfoh
The central bus station	Hatachana hamerkazit	hah-tah-khah-nah hah-mehr-kah-zeet
The bus stop	Tachanat ha'otobus	tah-khah-nahht hah-oh- toh-boos
The train station	Tachanat harakevet	tah-khah-nahht hah- rah-keh-vehht
The city center	Merkaz ha'ir	mehr kahz hah-eer
The post office	Hado'ar	hah-doh-ahr
A pharmacy	Beit mirkachat	bayt meer-kah-khaht
A public telephone	Telefon tziburi	teh-leh-fohn tze-boo- ree
A good restaurant	Mis'ada tova	mee-sah-dah toh-vah
The rest rooms	Hasherutim	hah-shay-roo-teem
Right	Yemina	yeh-mee-nah
Left	Smola	s-moh-lah
Straight ahead	Yashar	yah-shar
Here	Kan	kahn
There	Sham	shahm
Do you have a (vacant) room?	Yesh lachem cheder (panui)?	yesh lah-chehm khed-ehr (pah-nooy)
Is it possible to order a taxi?	Efishar le hazmin monit?	ehf-shahr leh-hahz- meen moh-need
Taxi	Monit	moh-need
A little	k'tzat	keh-tzahht

## Dining

I would like	Hayiti mevakesh	hah-ye-tee m-vah- kehsh
Some water, please	Mayim, bevakasha	mah-yeem beh-vah- kah-shah
Bread	Lechem	leh-khehm
Soup	Marak	mah-rahk
Meat	Bassar	bah-ssahr
Chicken	Off	ohf
Vegetables	Yerakot	yeh-rah-koht
Dessert	Kinuach	kec-noo-ahkh
Cake	Ooga	oo-gah
Fruit	Perot	peh-roht
Coffee	Cafe	kah-feh
Tea	Te	teh
fork	Mazleg	mahz-lehg
spoon	Kapit	kah-peat
knife	Sakin	sah-keen
plate	Tzalachat	tzah-lah-chaht
Napkin	Mapit	mah-peat
Food	Ochel	oh-khehi
Meal	Arucha	ah-roo-khah
Breakfast	Aruchat boker	ah-roo-khaht boh-ker
Lunch	Aruchat tzaharayim	ah-roo-khaht tzah- rah-rah-yeem
Dinner	Aruchat erev	ah-roo-khaht eh-rehv
Do you have a menu in English?	Yesh tafrit be'anglit?	yesh tahf-reet beh- ahng-leet
A pita filled with	Manat felafel	mah-naht feh-lah- fah-lah



Unit Resource 3.4B  
**Shabbat Character Roles**

**Israeli:** The Israeli is pushy and is fluent in Hebrew. This means that they can get to the front of a mob in seconds and ask the shop owner for what they need quickly. They do not believe in lines. They run errands faster than non-natives and can often be seen as rude and abrasive. The word *slicha*, excuse me, is rarely a part of their vocabulary. On the other hand, if they have the opportunity, they will warmly invite you into their home for Shabbat or any other occasion.

**American Immigrant—Type 1:** These American immigrants have lived in Israel for several years and can speak and understand Hebrew nearly fluently (although they may prefer to read in English). However, after years of practice, they still carry a very distinct American accent that makes them stand out to Israelis. They get errands done pretty quickly, but the American values that are ingrained within them make them a little less pushy, direct, and spontaneous. They sometimes believe in standing in lines, but if they get fed up, they will push their way through. If they run into friends while running errands, they will stop to talk for at least a few minutes, feeling that it would be rude just to rush away.

**American Immigrant—Type 2:** These American immigrants are new to Israel. They aren't as comfortable with Hebrew as older *olim* (immigrants) and definitely not as fluent as native Israelis. If they have the option, they prefer conversing in English. This means that they are less efficient at getting errands done and are often trying to figure out how to say things in Hebrew before getting to the front of a mob. They still have their American values of politeness ingrained in them, meaning they will stand in lines if it looks like someone else was waiting before them. They do not enjoy asking for help because that would reveal to others the fact that they are still adjusting to aspects of Israeli society (specifically, the language barrier). They have a lot of trouble at the bank because the opening and closing hours never really makes sense! However, they know their way around the city pretty well and can point others in the right direction.



Unit Resource 3.4C  
**Shabbat Shopping List**

- Shekalim from Bank HaPoalim
- Shabbat candles
- Wine or Grape Juice
- Shabbat prayer books from the Steimatzky bookstore (enough for all your guests)
- Challah from Café Ne’eman
- Israeli salad (tomatoes, cucumber, onions) and other Israeli-style salads
- Hummus
- Chicken, fish, or tofu
- Rice
- Plates, forks, knives, spoons, and cups
- Nuts and dried fruit
- Dessert—Rugalach from Marzipan

Unit Resource 3.4D  
**Jewish Community Comparison Chart**

	Ethiopian	Former Soviet Union	North American
History			
Jewish Practice			
Culture			

# Lesson Five

## Unit Conclusion

### Objectives:

- Determine 5-10 ways Israel influences or may influence their own lives or their Jewish community.
- Coordinate Shabbat services and Havdalah that demonstrate knowledge of the North American Jewish community in Israel, the immigrant experience, and their influence on Israeli culture.

### Materials:

- Unit Resource 3.4A- Israel Sheet
- Unit Resource 3.5B- The Shabbat Sheet
- Pens
- Paper
- Siddurim

### Core Learning Experiences:

#### Activity One (15 mins): Israel in My Life

Campers will write a number 0-10 next to these statements. 0 means “disagree” and 10 means “agree.”

1. Israel is important to me.
2. Israel is an important part of my Jewish identity.
3. Israel is really important to the communal life of the Jewish people.
4. The only way to truly support Israel is to make aliyah.
5. The Jewish people would continue to thrive even without the state of Israel.
6. I feel comforted knowing that I can live in Israel if there is hostility toward the Jewish people elsewhere.
7. I believe it is important to be familiar with different Jewish immigrant/ethnic communities in Israel.
8. I believe in the Jewish value, “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*: All people of Israel (or all Jewish people) are responsible for one another.”
9. I believe that Israel fulfills the value of “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*: All people of Israel (or all Jewish people) are responsible for one another.”

### Discussion Questions:

- How, if at all, have your answers changed since the beginning of the summer?
- What is your own role in “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*: All people of Israel (or all Jewish people) are responsible for one another?”
- In what ways is Israel important in your life and in your Jewish community? (**Write down 5-10 ways Israel influences or may influence your own life or your Jewish community.**)
- How can you incorporate this idea into your camp Shabbat?

**Activity 2 (75 mins): Planning Shabbat**

Campers will volunteer to plan and lead each element of Shabbat and Havdalah. In the spirit of Progressive Judaism in Israel, the aim of the camp Shabbat experience is to try to make Judaism and prayer relevant to others at camp. Instruct the campers to think about all the different activities you did over the summer and the lessons you've learned about Israel and integrate them into the entire Shabbat experience.

The campers should use the new versions of a prayer that they created during the Jewish Practice-Part II lesson. They should try to create something different than you usually do during Shabbat services and provide a new perspective on prayer and Shabbat for other campers.

Unit Resource 3.5B is a possible outline for Shabbat to separate responsibilities. However, if the campers have an alternative idea that they agree upon—go with it!

The campers should split into 5 groups and each will lead a different part of Shabbat tefilah:

1. Shabbat Evening
2. Shabbat Morning
3. Torah Reading
4. Parashat Ha-Shavua Text Study or Activity
5. Havdalah

Each group will discuss the following questions in-depth before they plan their part of Shabbat:

1. How do I attract the other campers' attentions so they know that this Shabbat is special?
2. How do I bring Israel into this Shabbat?
3. How does this part of tefilah and its prayers relate to Israel and the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora?
4. What does Israel represent during our tefilah?
5. What activities from this summer may relate to the prayers we are saying?
6. How may we incorporate the narratives of Ethiopian, FSU, and North American Jewish immigrants in Israel into this part of tefilah?
7. What may the experiences of Shabbat at camp have in common with the experiences of Shabbat in Israel?

Ideas for creating a variety of tefilah experiences: dance, music, meditation, stories, interactive activities, visualizing being in Israel, yoga, hiking, journaling, discussion.

**Reflection Group Questions:**

1. What are you going to take away with you from this summer?
2. In what ways, if any, has your view of the people of Israel changed during this summer?
3. How do you see Israel relating to your own life today?

Unit Resource 3.5A

**Israel Sheet**

Campers will write a number 0-10 next to these statements. 0 means “disagree” and 10 means “agree.”

1. Israel is important to me. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Israel is an important part of my Jewish identity. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Israel is really important to the communal life of the Jewish people. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The only way to truly support Israel is to make aliyah. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The Jewish people would continue to thrive even without the state of Israel. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I feel comforted knowing that I can live in Israel if there is hostility toward the Jewish people elsewhere. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I am familiar with different Jewish immigrant/ethnic communities in Israel. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I believe in the Jewish value, “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*: All people of Israel (or all Jewish people) are responsible for one another.” \_\_\_\_\_
9. I believe that Israel fulfills the value of “*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la’zeh*: All people of Israel (or all Jewish people) are responsible for one another.” \_\_\_\_\_

## The Shabbat Sheet

### Shabbat Evening:

- **Shabbat opening** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Candle lighting** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Kabbalat Shabbat** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Kiddush** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Birkat Hamotzi** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Birkat Hamazon** \_\_\_\_\_

### Shabbat Morning:

- **Morning Service** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Taking out the Torah** \_\_\_\_\_
- **First Aliyah** \_\_\_\_\_
- **First Reading** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Second Aliyah** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Second Reading** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Third Aliyah** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Third Reading** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Haftarah** \_\_\_\_\_
- **D'var Torah** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Misheberach (prayer for the sick)** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Prayer for Israel** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Returning the Torah** \_\_\_\_\_

### Havdallah:

- **Wine** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Spices** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Havdallah Candle** \_\_\_\_\_