

How Am I Am Yisrael?

A Curriculum Guide

by Rachel Kaplan Marks

**Designed for a High School Supplementary
School Setting**

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How Am I Am Yisrael - Rationale

You may have heard the classic joke that goes something like this: *There are many reasons that Jews go to the synagogue on Shabbat. Ms. Schwartz goes to hear the Torah being read; Mr. Epstein goes to feel closer to God; and Mr. Cohen goes to talk to Mr. Epstein.* This joke highlights an important difference between Judaism and many other faiths: One can be a Jew without ascribing to all of the tenets of the Judaism. Ms. Schwartz can express her Judaism through scripture, Mr. Epstein can express his Judaism through his relationship with God, and Mr. Cohen can express his Judaism by being an active member of the Jewish People. While this joke may, or may not elicit a chuckle, it also expresses something deeper: Just as Jewish texts, ritual observances, and Jewish theology/philosophy are all components of Judaism that sustain the Jewish People, so too is the Jewish People itself a sustaining component of Judaism.

Jewish Peoplehood is almost impossible to define, especially because the post-modern world in which we live places great value on individualism. But, what is Jewish Peoplehood? From a textual standpoint, we learn in the Talmud (Shavuot 39a) that *Kol Yisrael aravim zeh b'zeh* – all of Israel is responsible for one another. This text provides a good starting point for a definition, but given that I am attempting to define Jewish Peoplehood, perhaps I should look to traditional markers of peoplehood to sharpen my definition. Some usual markers of peoplehood are a common language, a common history, a common religion, common culture, and a common homeland. The Jewish People certainly have a shared language, Modern Hebrew. But, one could argue that actually more Jews are fluent in English than in Hebrew. The Jewish People certainly have a shared history. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Jews in all corners of the earth have not all experienced first-hand any one particular historical experience. In terms of a common religion/faith, logic tells us that Jews share Judaism. However, Jews practice Judaism in all sorts of different ways. Furthermore, there are Jews who identify as non-religious. It appears that Jews have a shared homeland – the State of Israel. However, not every Jew lives in the Jewish State. In fact, our Jewish world consists of two vibrant centers: the United States of America, and Israel. Lastly, given the diversity of the Jewish People there is not a singular Jewish culture of which to speak. So, then, it seems that **a clear definition of a cohesive Jewish Peoplehood in the 21st century is elusive at best.**

This curriculum guide aims to study the Jewish People as we stand in the 21st century from an American perspective.

The Content:

This curriculum is centered on the exploration of Jewish Peoplehood in the 21st century from an American perspective. Because each conventional marker of Jewish Peoplehood is met with a “Yes, but…” response, it is necessary to study a myriad of components of Jewish Peoplehood so that the learners can come away with a sophisticated, nuanced understanding of their own place within the Jewish People. Though it is impossible to define Jewish Peoplehood in terms of statements that apply to all Jews, it is possible to examine Jewish Peoplehood through the lens of common or shared questions. In this curriculum, we will focus on some shared questions, and explore a myriad of answers to those questions.

The Learners:

This curriculum is learner-centered. It is designed for students in a congregational supplementary high school students. Students of this age often question the relevance of Judaism in their own lives. While it is good to connect to all of the standard components of Judaism, it is also useful for Jewish pre-teens and teenagers to understand that they can connect to Judaism through the act of consciously belonging to the Jewish People.

The Teachers:

Any congregational teacher who resonates with the notion that Jewish Peoplehood is a central and necessary component of Judaism can teach a class based on this curriculum guide. This guide will provide many relevant resources, though it will be necessary for teachers to do more research and it will certainly be necessary for teachers to adapt this guide to the specific needs of their students.

The Milieu:

This Curriculum Guide is designed specifically for Reform Supplementary School programs. Given the evolution of the attitudes within the Reform Movement, it is necessary to address this topic within the Reform setting, so that the Reform youth can function within the Jewish world, and greater world with a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of Jewish Peoplehood in the 21st century.

The Enduring Understandings

1. Rather than being defined by a formula of traditional peoplehood markers, Jewish Peoplehood is comprised of a complicated web of markers that look different for each individual Jew.
2. A set of shared or common questions, rather than a set of shared or common answers to those questions, provide a helpful framework for thinking about Jewish Peoplehood.
3. Given the profound impact of the society in which Jews live on their expressions of Judaism, Jewish Peoplehood looks different in the United States of America and in Israel, the two Jewish centers that exist in the 21st century.

The Goals

1. To present the learners with new frameworks through which they can identify as a part of the Jewish People.
2. To expose the learners to the concept of thinking about Jewish Peoplehood through the lens of common questions, as opposed to any other commonalities.
3. To encourage the students engage with the larger Jewish community without sacrificing their authentic Jewish selves.

Letter to the Teacher

Shalom Fellow M'chanech/t,

I am thrilled that you will be using this curriculum guide, *How Am I Am Yisrael?*, in your supplementary school. I am confident that within this guide you will find some resources that will prove extremely helpful in eliciting meaningful conversations amongst your students about what it means to be Jewish. Sadly, many young Jews' formal educational journeys end shortly after becoming bar/bat mitzvah. The beginning of adolescence, 8th/9th grade is truly such a special time. If we, as a community, can grab students and keep them interested in between bar/bat mitzvah and confirmation, then, I believe, we can truly affect great change in the level of knowledge present in members of the Reform Movement.

This curriculum guide was designed to explore questions surrounding Jewish Peoplehood. It aims to enable the students to discover that there are a multitude of ways to be authentically Jewish and plugged into the Jewish People. This guide is designed around a number of common questions – however, there are so many more to be explored! I encourage you to use this guide as a “jumping off point.” Use the material that resonates with you, adapt the material that doesn't, and add your own along the way. You know your learners, you know your community, and you know you as a teacher – don't underestimate all of that knowledge.

Lastly, please enjoy the journey that is teaching, *How Am I Am Yisrael*. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions.

B'Chatzlacha,
Rachel Kaplan Marks
RHSOE Class of 5773/2013

How Am I Am Yisrael?

An Introduction Lesson

Objectives

- ✓ Students should begin to question what it means to be a part of Am Yisrael.
- ✓ Students should be able to begin to formulate their own opinions about the way in which they fit in to Am Yisrael.

Documentary Viewing: “The Tribe”

Synopsis¹

What can the most successful doll on the planet show us about being Jewish today? Narrated by Peter Coyote, the film mixes old school narration with a new school visual style. The Tribe weaves together archival footage, graphics, animation, Barbie dioramas, and slam poetry to take audiences on an electric ride through the complex history of both the Barbie doll and the Jewish people- from Biblical times to present day. By tracing Barbie’s history, the film sheds light on the questions: What does it mean to be an American Jew today? What does it mean to be a member of any tribe in the 21st Century?

What Does It Mean To Be Part of The Tribe?

Part 1 – Short-Write Activity

- ✓ What were your initial reactions to the film?
- ✓ How do you define a people?
- ✓ How do you define the Jewish People?
- ✓ Are you part of the Jewish People? Why or Why Not?
- ✓ Is there a Jewish language?
- ✓ What is the criteria to determine whether or not an expression (i.e. music, literature, humor) is Jewish or not?
- ✓ How do Jews practice Judaism?
- ✓ Does a people need to have a shared history?
- ✓ Can factions of people who disagree with one another on core ideological issues still belong to the same People, why or why not?
- ✓ Why might it be important for us to take a year to study the notion of Jewish Peoplehood in the 21st century?

Part 2 – Discussion

Ask the students to share their answers to each question. Be sure to let the students comment on and respond to each other’s thoughts.

Part 3 – Journaling

After the discussion, give the students an opportunity to revise their thoughts on their papers. Make sure that each student has written his/her name on his/her paper. Collect the papers at the end of the class.

¹ “About the Film,” The Tribe, accessed on April 23, 2013. <http://tribethefilm.com/about-the-film/>.

Materials

- ✓ “The Tribe” (This DVD can be obtained from the following website:
<http://tribethefilm.com/about-the-film/>)
- ✓ Journaling Handout (1 per student)
- ✓ Writing Utensils

Resources

- ✓ Journaling Handout – Introduction Resource

Introduction Resource

How Am I Am Yisrael – A Journaling Assignment

What were your initial reactions to the film?

How do you define a people?

How do you define the Jewish People?

Are you part of the Jewish People? Why or Why Not?

Is there a Jewish language? If so, what is it? If not, why not?

What is the criteria to determine whether or not an expression (i.e. music, literature, humor) is Jewish or not?

How do Jews practice Judaism?

Does a people need to have a shared history?

Can factions of people who disagree with one another on core ideological issues still belong to the same People, why or why not?

Why might it be important for us to take a year to study the notion of Jewish Peoplehood in the 21st century?

Unit 1: How Do Jews Express Themselves?

This unit consists of two parts, the first two lessons in this unit focus on Modern Hebrew, the Jewish Language par excellence. Modern Hebrew has its roots in the language of Judaism's sacred texts and is the language of the Jewish State. However, throughout history, Jews have communicated in a plethora of languages. There are even sacred texts that are written in other languages. So, the last three lessons of this unit consist of lessons that address questions of Jewish expression. How do Jews express themselves, and what are necessary criteria to classify an expression as a Jewish one?

Enduring Understandings

- ✓ Modern Hebrew replaced all other historically Jewish languages.
- ✓ The Hebrew language contains within it Jewish cultural capital drawing from the ancient tradition and contemporary culture.
- ✓ The Hebrew language has the potential to connect world Jewry.
- ✓ Jewish expression can be characterized by the following criteria: a Jewish author, Jewish language, and/or Jewish content; however the presence of Jewish cultural capital can outweigh any of the other criteria.

Essential Questions

- ✓ In what ways is it beneficial for the Jewish People to have a primary shared language?
- ✓ How have Jews used language to express their Judaism historically?
- ✓ Why might Hebrew be the best choice for that primary shared language today?
- ✓ What makes an expression Jewish?

Authentic Assessments

- ✓ In lesson 2, students will create a poem or song that incorporates at least three Hebrew words/phrases. These words can be “value words” that the students already know, such as mitzvah, tikkun olam, or chai. Otherwise they can be phrases from the liturgy, TaNaKh, or any other Jewish texts.
- ✓ In lessons 4 & 5 students will create a presentation based on their analysis of a Jewish short story. They will then teach their findings to their peers.

Knowledge for Unit

- ✓ A basic understanding of and appreciation for Modern Hebrew's place as the contemporary Jewish language and why it is such.
- ✓ Concept: Jewish cultural capital.
- ✓ Some knowledge of modern Jewish literature.
- ✓ Some knowledge of modern Jewish music.
- ✓ Some knowledge of modern Jewish humor.

Mah Zot Ivrit?

Lesson 1

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to retell the story of Eliezer Ben Yehuda.
- ✓ Students should be able to describe two etymological patterns in Modern Hebrew – words that are derived from other languages and words that are derived from the Hebrew Bible, liturgy, or other Jewish sources.
- ✓ Students should begin to value Hebrew as the language of the Jewish People.

Shalom Sesame Eliezer Ben Yehuda Video

Show the students this clip, (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzPDmhihPBM>) on Eliezer Ben Yehuda made by Shalom Sesame. Though the clip is clearly intended for a younger audience, it provides a great deal of content in an efficient and entertaining manner. While students watch the clip, they should answer the following questions, (note: The teacher may want to show the clip twice so that students can sufficiently answer the questions). The teacher should facilitate a discussion based on the guiding questions after the students have written down their answers.

Guiding Questions:

- 1) Why might Eliezer Ben Yehuda have felt compelled to move to the holy land?
- 2) What conclusions could you draw about the Jews that Eliezer Ben Yehuda encountered who were living in Jerusalem when he first arrived based on the fact that they all spoke different languages?
- 3) What do you think Eliezer Ben Yehuda means when he says, “This is very confusing?”
- 4) Why is Hebrew a logical choice for a common language for the Jews living in Israel?
- 5) From where did Eliezer Ben Yehuda draw to create new Hebrew words? How does this contribute to Hebrew being a **Jewish** language?

Dictionary Exercise

In groups of two or three, the students will generate a list of ten-fifteen modern words that they think are new words that have had to be made up in the Hebrew language. They will then look these words up in the Ben Yehuda dictionary, and record them on a piece of paper. Then, they will pick one about they would like to research the etymology. The class will come back together, and the teacher will lead the class in examining as many of the words that the students chose as possible.

Example word: computer – machshev. Root: Chet-Shin-Vet, think. So, the word for computer comes from the words for think, i.e. it is a thinking machine. The teacher could then provide examples of where words with this root are found in the TaNaKh (ex. Gen. 15:6, 1Sam. 1:13)

Note: You should come to this class with a prepared list of words that fit this criteria.

Materials

- ✓ Computer with internet access
- ✓ Projector & Speakers
- ✓ Handout with Guiding Questions (1 Per Student)
- Writing Utensils
- ✓ Ben Yehuda Hebrew-English Dictionaries (Enough for every 2-3 students)
- ✓ Blank Paper

Resources

- ✓ Handout with Guiding Questions – 1.1

Hebrew & Jewish Cultural Capital

Lesson 2 – Scripted Lesson

Background

Leonard Saxe defines Jewish cultural capital as "...the accumulation of general cultural knowledge, skills, and background pertaining to Jewish life."²

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to describe Leonard Saxe's concept of "Jewish cultural capital."
- ✓ Students should be able to identify elements of Jewish cultural capital within the Amos Oz poem, #5 in Jerusalem, 1967.
- ✓ Students should be able to appreciate the way in which Modern Hebrew draws from the Jewish tradition.

Time Table

0:00-0:05	Set Induction
0:05-0:30	Poem Analysis in Chevruta
0:30-0:45	Class Discussion re. Jewish Cultural Capital Found in the Poem
0:45-1:00	Students write their own poems

Set Induction

Explain that when the New Israeli Shekel was introduced in 1986, the Israeli newspaper headline held the title "*Moreh L'Nvuchim Parashat Shekalim*" which was talking about the New Israeli Shekel.

The pun lies in the following:

- ✓ *Moreh L'Nvuchim* is Maimonides Guide to the Perplexed
- ✓ *Parashat Shekalim* is the Torah portion read on Shabbat Shekalim. During the month or so before Passover, four Shabbatot are characterized by special maftir readings, called the *Arba Parshiot* [four Torah portions], which relate thematically to [Purim](#) or [Passover](#): Shabbat *Shekalim*, Shabbat *Zachor*, Shabbat *Parah*, and Shabbat *Hachodesh*. Shabbat *Shekalim*--which takes place the Shabbat prior to Rosh Chodesh for the month of Adar or on Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Adar itself--is named for the maftir reading, Exodus 30:11. The maftir describes a census requiring every Israelite man to contribute a half shekel to support communal sacrifices in the portable tent of meeting and later at the Temple. The egalitarian nature of this contribution is emphasized--"the rich shall not pay more, and the poor shall not pay less than half a shekel." The requirement that all individuals contribute equally to the community helped develop a sense of unity crucial to the new nation created by the Exodus.³
- ✓ One wouldn't understand the connection between Maimonides work, the Torah portion talking about the census through the use of coins, and the New Israeli Shekel without having the cultural capital, in other words, the knowledge about all four things. The

² Leonard Saxe, "Jewish Identity Development: The Israel Dimension," *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education*: 2.

³ Michele Alperin, "Special Shabbatot: Sabbath services throughout the year that highlight upcoming holidays" MyJewishLearning.com, accessed March 8, 2013,

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat/The_Sabbath/In_the_Community/Special_Shabbatot.shtml.

author of this story assumed that his newspaper readers, people fluent in Modern Hebrew, possessed this level of cultural capital.

Thus, this is a prime example of what the scholar Leonard Saxe calls, “Jewish Cultural Capital.” Jewish cultural capital is defined as “...the accumulation of general cultural knowledge, skills, and background pertaining to Jewish life.”⁴ Today, we’ll be looking at how the notion of Jewish Cultural Capital plays out in Modern Hebrew.

Yom Kippur 1967 excerpt by Yehuda Amichai Poetry Analysis

In *chevruta* (groups of 2) the students will read the poem in English and answer the following questions:

- ✓ What were the main ideas of the poem?
 - *Yehuda Amichai is making a confession, of sorts, to the Arab store owner.*
 - *Yehuda Amichai is reflecting on the past, in the midst of being present in Jerusalem during Yom Kippur in 1967, the first time since the year 70CE that the Jews have been able to observe the holiday there under Jewish sovereignty of the city.*
- ✓ List the Jewish references that you find in the poem.
 - *See the list below.*
- ✓ List the historical references that you find in the poem.
 - *See the list below.*
- ✓ List any references in the poem that are unclear to you.
 - *See the list below.*

Then, the teacher will read the poem to the class in Hebrew, pointing out each Jewish and historical reference to the class.

List of References (in the order they appear):

- ✓ *Tishkach* – the Hebrew letters mark the year 1967, and it is also a pun on the Hebrew verb *Tishkach* (*You Forget*)
- ✓ 1967 the 6 Day War – first time since the destruction of the 2nd Temple in the year 70CE that Jews had sovereignty over the Old City in Jerusalem
- ✓ Dark Holiday Clothes – interesting detail given that it is traditional to wear white on Yom Kippur
- ✓ Old City in Jerusalem – For more information on this, one great resource is: “The Virtual Israel Experience – Jerusalem – The Old City”⁵
- ✓ Arab’s hole-in-the-wall shop, not far from the Damascus Gate – refer to the resource above, the Damascus Gate is clearly in the Muslim quarter of the Old City, but is also not far from the Temple Mount/Western Wall
- ✓ I told him in *b’libi* (in my heart) – Reference to Judah HaLevi’s famous medieval poem, which states ***Libi B’Mizrach V’Ani B’Sof Ma’arav*** (My heart is in the east but I am at the end of the west...). Now, Amichai, also a Jewish poet, is physically in Jerusalem, but he

⁴ Leonard Saxe, “Jewish Identity Development: The Israel Dimension,” *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education*: 2.

⁵ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vie/Jerusalem2.html#four>

too has yearnings of his heart that pose obstacles, similarly to how HaLevi had obstacles that kept him from bringing the matters of his heart to fruition.⁶

- ✓ *Aron Kodesh* (Holy Ark), specifically where Torah scrolls are kept. The teacher might ask, what might be holy for Amichai about this ark?
- ✓ My father too had a shop like this.... Refers to his father's shop in Europe
- ✓ All the decades and the causes and the events – review a little bit of Jewish history, ending with Holocaust and formation of State of Israel
- ✓ My father's shop was burned there and he is buried here – this is a common story for many Israelis whose parents have pasts in Europe, but came to the land of Israel for refuge (crusades, pogroms, anti-Semitism, Nazis)
- ✓ *Neilah... Na'al et Ha'Shaar* (Concluding Yom Kippur imagery with the closing of the Gates of the Repentance and the same language being used to describe the closing of the shopkeeper's gate, before Amichai had a chance to say the things that were in his heart (*b'libo*))

Poetry Writing – *Authentic Assessment*

Instruct the students to write a Jewish poem or song. The poem/song must incorporate at least three Hebrew words/phrases. These words can be “value words” that the students already know, such as mitzvah, tikkun olam, or chai. Otherwise they can be phrases from the liturgy, *TaNakh*, or any other Jewish texts.

Materials

- ✓ blank paper
- ✓ writing utensils
- ✓ copies of Yehuda Amichai's poem excerpt, from *Jerusalem 1967* (1 per student)
- ✓ copies of Yehuda HaLevi's poem, *My Heart is in the East* (1 per student)
- ✓ for reference: *TaNakh*, *Siddur*, any other classic Jewish texts with English translation
- ✓ computer
- ✓ Projector

Resources to be included at the end of the Unit:

Handout of Amichai poem – 2.1

Guiding Questions Handout – 2.2

Yehuda HaLevi poem – 2.3

Leonard Saxe Article – 2.4

⁶ From the poem, “My Heart is in the East” by Judah HaLevi. Judah HaLevi (c. 1075-1141), Spain. This is HaLevi's most well known poem, as many see it as evidence of HaLevi having been a proto-Zionist. See the Resource Section of this unit for a full text of the Hebrew and English translation of this poem.

Jewish Expression: Literature Part 1

Lesson 3

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to explain the different properties of “Jewish Expression” (Jewish creator, Jewish content, and/or Jewish language).
- ✓ Students should be able to recall the concept of cultural capital from the previous lesson, and apply it to their analysis of an example of Jewish literature.
- ✓ Students should be able to form an opinion as to whether or not a specific expression is Jewish.

Concept Mapping

Directions for Concept Mapping⁷

- ✓ Make a circle in the center of the board, write the name of the concept in the circle.
- ✓ Add branches to the central concept that correspond to the following:
 - Category – what larger idea or unit theme is the concept part of?
 - Properties – what is the important information that explains what the concept is? List each piece of information in a separate box, but make sure you choose only the essential information.
 - Examples – Can you list any examples of the concept?

Concepts for Mapping

- ✓ Forms of Expression
 - Category: Communication
 - Properties: Creative, Original, etc.
 - Examples: Art, Literature, Poetry, Music, Movies, Humor, etc.
- ✓ Jewish Expression
 - Category: Expression
 - Properties: Jewish author, Jewish content, Jewish language
 - Examples: Any Jewish art, literary, poetry, music, movies, humor, etc.

Jewish Literature Jig Saw Part 1

Students will be divided into 3 groups.

Each group will read a short story, analyze the story (see the resource section for the analysis handout), and plan a 10-minute presentation for their peers on the story and the analysis of the story.

Story 1 – Yiddish Literature

“Modern Children” by Sholom Aleichem⁸

Background Information on Sholom Aleichem⁹

⁷ Matthew J. Perini, Harvey F. Silver, Richard W. Strong, *The Strategic Teacher: Selecting the Right Research-Based Strategy for Every Lesson* (Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007), 103-104.

⁸ Sholom Aleichem, “Modern Children” in *Tevye the Dairyman* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009).

⁹ Taken from Deana Sussman’s Curriculum Guide, “Wherever You Go, There’s Always Someone Jewish: *Exploring Jewish Identity Through Culture*”, 2012, pp. 71-72.

- Sholom Aleichem was born Solomon Rabinowitz, near Kiev, in 1859 and died in the Bronx in 1916.
- His pen name, Sholom Aleichem, is the Hebrew greeting “Peace Be Unto You”
- Sholom Aleichem himself often appears in the stories – he appears as different characters, and he writes down the stories that people bring to him
- Alfred Kazin, who wrote an introduction to the *Selected Stories of Sholom Aleichem* described the characters in the stories in the following way:

“You must understand, first, that the characters in this book possess almost nothing except the word—the Holy word, which is Hebrew, and the word of everyday life, which is Yiddish. They are “little” people not in the sense that they are unarmed, defenseless, exiled, not in the world, not in *their* kind of world. All they have is the word. They talk as poor people always talk—because poor people live near each other, and so have a lot of opportunity talk. They talk the way the European poor always talk—Cockneys or Neopolitans or Provençals: they talk from the belly; they roar, the grunt, they scream. They imitate the actual sound that life makes, and they are rough and blunt. But most of all, they are poor Jews talking, i.e. they found an irony in language itself. Their words strive after the reality, but can never adequately express the human situation.”¹⁰

Story 2 – Hebrew Literature

“Agunot” by S.Y. Agnon¹¹

Background Information on S.Y. Agnon:

Recipient of the 1966 Nobel Prize for Literature, Shmuel Yosef Agnon was born in Galicia in 1888. He immigrated to Jaffa in 1908, but spent 1913 through 1924 in Germany. In 1924 he returned to Jerusalem, where he lived until his death in 1970. A prolific novelist and short-story writer from an early age, Agnon received numerous literary awards, including the Israel Prize on two occasions.

Called "a man of unquestionable genius" and "one of the great storytellers of our time," S.Y. Agnon is among the most effusively praised and widely translated Hebrew authors. His unique style and language have influenced the writing of subsequent generations of Hebrew authors. Much of his writing attempts to recapture the lives and traditions of a former time, but his stories are never a simple act of preservation. Agnon's tales deal with the most important psychological and philosophical problems of his generation. "Via realistic and surrealistic modes," writes the New York Times, "Agnon has transmuted in his many words the tensions inherent in modern man's loss of innocence, and his spiritual turmoil when removed from home, homeland and faith." An observant Jew throughout most of his life, he was able to capture "the hopelessness and spiritual desolation" of a world standing on the threshold of a new age. Extolled for his "peculiar tenderness and beauty," for his "comic mastery" and for the "richness and depth" of his writing, it is S.Y. Agnon's

¹⁰ Sholom Aleichem, Ed. Alfred Kazin, *Selected Stories of Sholom Aleichem* (New York: Modern Library, 1956), xi.

¹¹ S.Y. Agnon, Ed. Anne Golomb Hoffman and Alan Mintz, trans. Baruch Hochman “Agunot” in *A Book that was Lost and Other Stories* (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1995) 35-47.

contribution to the renewal of the language that has been seminal for all subsequent Hebrew writing.¹²

Story 3 – North American Literature

“What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank” by Nathan Englander¹³

Background Information on Nathan Englander¹⁴:

Nathan Englander is the author of the forthcoming collection *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank* (advance praise here), as well as the internationally bestselling story collection *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*, and the novel *The Ministry of Special Cases* (all published by Knopf/Vintage). His short fiction and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *The Washington Post*, as well as *The O. Henry Prize Stories* and numerous editions of *The Best American Short Stories*. Translated into more than a dozen languages, Englander was selected as one of “20 Writers for the 21st Century” by *The New Yorker*, received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a PEN/Malamud Award, the Bard Fiction Prize, and the Sue Kaufman Prize from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. He’s been a fellow at the Dorothy & Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library, and at The American Academy of Berlin. He teaches in the Graduate Writing Program at Hunter College along with Peter Carey and Colum McCann, and, in the summer, he teaches a course for NYU’s Writers in Paris program. This year, along with the publication of his new collection, Englander's play *The Twenty-Seventh Man* will premiere at The Public Theater, and his translation *New American Haggadah* (edited by Jonathan Safran Foer) will be published by Little Brown. He also co-translated Etgar Keret's *Suddenly A Knock at the Door* forthcoming in March from FSG. He lives in Brooklyn, New York and Madison, Wisconsin.

Materials

- ✓ chalk or dry-erase board & chalk or dry erase marker
- ✓ short stories (each student should have 1 copy of the story s/he will read)
- ✓ copies of the handouts (1 Per Student)
- ✓ writing utensils (1 Per Student)

Resources

- ✓ “Modern Children” – 3.1
- ✓ “Agunot” – 3.2
- ✓ “What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank” – 3.3
- ✓ Analysis Handout – 3.4

¹² Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “*Shmuel Yosef Agnon*” on The Jewish Virtual Library, accessed on March 12, 2013, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/biography/agnon.html>.

¹³ Nathan Englander, “What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank” in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank: Stories* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

¹⁴ Nathan Englander, Accessed on March 12, 2013, <http://www.nathanenglander.com/bio/>.

Jewish Expression: Literature Part 2

Lesson 4

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to analyze a Jewish short story.
- ✓ Students should be able to reflect about characteristics of Jewish literature.

Jig Saw Part 2 – Continued from Previous Lesson

Break the students into groups consisting of one or two students from representing each short story. Each student(s) will have 10 minutes to present to his/her peers on the story that he/she read and on his/her original group's analysis of the story.

Journaling followed by Discussion

Prompt Questions:

What is the most important characteristic for a piece to be considered as Jewish literature?

- ✓ Jewish author
- ✓ Jewish content
- ✓ [Written in a] Jewish language
- ✓ Jewish cultural capital

Does any one characteristic for Jewish literatures outweigh the other three?

How would you define Jewish content?

Are there any additional characteristics that would classify a piece as Jewish literature?

Materials

- ✓ copies of 3 stories (each student should have 1 copy of the story s/he will read)
- ✓ filled out analysis handouts
- ✓ journal handout (1 per student)
- ✓ writing utensils

Resources

- ✓ journal handout – 4.1

Jewish Expression: Music

Lesson 5

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to appreciate some of the songs to which they are exposed.
- ✓ Students should be able to analyze the songs to determine if/how they fit into the category of Jewish music.

Set Induction

Lead a discussion about the characteristics for literature to be considered Jewish literature, as was determined in the previous lesson. Once the students have identified all of the characteristics, draw the connection explaining that the characteristics carry over into other realms of creative expression. Today, we'll be focusing on music, and determining if specific songs can be considered to be Jewish music.

Jewish Music Round Robin

Each of the following songs should be set up with a computer and loud speakers in 6 different rooms. In small groups, the students will travel from room to room, filling out a questionnaire (found in resources section) about each song.

- ✓ Niggun Hayadata by Beit Tefilah Yisraeli Ensemble (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dW994P4-e80>)
- ✓ Numbers by HaDag Nachash (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yp25wSVgIAU>)
- ✓ Yetziat Mitzrayim by Eti Ankri (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_j5QpvR-pY)
- ✓ Traffic Jam of Miracles by Kobi Oz (<http://makomkobioz.wordpress.com/exploring-traffic-jam-of-miracles>)
- ✓ Shir LaMaalot by Sheva (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlCUTwruDZw>)
- ✓ Forever Young by Bob Dylan (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7WTW-8RhR4>)

Create a Jewish Song

Invite the students to work in groups of 2-3. In those groups, students should compare their analyses of the six songs to which they have just listened. In their groups, the students should determine what two characteristics of Jewish music are most important. (You may want to review the characteristics that were developed previously.) Then, they should compose one verse of an original song using those two characteristics.

Materials

- ✓ 6 rooms
- ✓ 6 computers/speakers
- ✓ song analysis handouts (1 per student)
- ✓ writing utensils
- ✓ blank paper

Resources for Lesson

- ✓ song analysis handout – 5.1

Jewish Expression: Humor

Lesson 6

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to define Jewish humor, applying the criterion used to define Jewish literature and Jewish music.
- ✓ Students should be able to apply the concept of “Jewish Cultural Capital” to the clips of Jewish humor.
- ✓ Students should be able to create a working definition of Jewish Expression.

Jewish Humor Clips & Class Discussion

As a class, watch the following Jewish humor clips:

- ✓ Woody Allen’s Introduction to *Annie Hall*
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrxlfvI17oY>)
- ✓ Mel Brook’s “The Inquisition” from *History of the World Part 1*
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqgZnvfJ9Jg>)
- ✓ Jerry Seinfeld’s Jewish Dentist clips from *Seinfeld*
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mV7m6IIN_tI)
- ✓ Tracy Jordan’s *Werewolf Bar Mitzvah* from *30 Rock*
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukjCcUFMbSE>)
- ✓ Early Standup by Sarah Silverman (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEb-sXmcMLE>)

In between each clip ask the following question: What makes this Jewish humor?

Jewish Expression Wrap Up

Using either humor, music, or the written word, in groups of two, create a definition of Jewish Expression, as you understand it. Once students have created their definition, they will present it to the class. You should record similarities and differences between the definitions and discuss them with the students.

Materials

- ✓ computer
- ✓ speakers
- ✓ materials for creative project

Unit 1 Resource 1.1

Shalom Sesame: Eliezer Ben Yehuda – Guiding Questions

Why might Eliezer Ben Yehuda have felt compelled to move to the holy land?

What conclusions could you draw about the Jews that Eliezer Ben Yehuda encountered who were living in Jerusalem when he first arrived based on the fact that they all spoke different languages?

What do you think Eliezer Ben Yehuda means when he says, “This is very confusing?”

Why is Hebrew a logical choice for a common language for the Jews living in Israel?

From where did Eliezer Ben Yehuda draw to create new Hebrew words? How does this contribute to Hebrew being a **Jewish** language?

An Excerpt From "Jerusalem 1967" by Yehuda Amichai¹

ביום כפור בשנת תשכ"ח לבשתי
בגדי חג כהים והלכתי לעיר העתיקה בירושלים.
עמדתי זמן רב לפני כוך חנותו של ערבי,
לא רחוק משער שכם, חנות
כפתורים ורוכסנים וסלילי חוטים
בכל צבע ולחצניות ואבזמים.
אור יקר וצבעים רבים, כמו ארון-קודש פתוח.

אמרתי לו בלבי שגם לאבי
היתה חנות כזאת של חוטים וכפתורים.
הסברתי לו בלבי על כל עשרות השנים
והגומרים והמקרים, שאני עכשיו פה
וחנות אבי שרופה שם והוא קבור פה.

כשסימתי היתה שעת נעילה.
גם הוא הוריד את התריס ונעל את השער
ואני חזרתי עם כל המתפללים הביתה.

On Yom Kippur in 1967, the Year of Forgetting, I put on
my dark holiday clothes and walked to the Old City of Jerusalem.
For a long time I stood in front of an Arab's hole-in-the-wall shop,
not far from the Damascus Gate, a shop with
buttons and zippers and spools of thread
in every color and snaps and buckles.
A rare light and many colors, like an open Ark.

I told him in my heart that my father too
had a shop like this, with thread and buttons.
I explained to him in my heart about all the decades
and the causes and the events, why I am now here
and my father's shop was burned there and he is buried here.

When I finished, it was time for the Closing of the Gates prayer.
He too lowered the shutters and locked the gate
and I returned, with all the worshippers, home.

¹ Yehuda Amichai, *Poems of Jerusalem and Love Poems* (Riverdale-on-Hudson: The Sheep Meadow Press, 1992), 44-45.

Unit 1 Resource 2.2

Guiding Questions: Yehuda Amichai's Jerusalem 1967

What were the main ideas of the poem?

List the Jewish references that you find in the poem.

List the historical references that you find in the poem.

List any references in the poem that are unclear to you.

ליבי במזרח – יהודה הלוי¹

ליבי במזרח ואנכי בסוף מערב.
איך אטעמה את אשר אוכל ואין יערב?
איכה אשלם נדדי ואסרי, בעוד
ציון בחול אדום ואני בכבל ערב?
יקל בעיני עזוב כל טוב ספרד, כמו
יקר בעיני ראות עפרות דביר נחרב!

My Heart is in the East by Judah HaLevi²

My heart is in the East --
and I am at the edge of the West.
how can I possibly taste what I eat?
How could it please me?
How can I keep my promise
or ever fulfill my vow,
when Zion is held by Edom
and I am bound by Arabia's chains?
I'd gladly leave behind me
all the pleasures of Spain --
if only I might see
the dust and ruins of your Shrine.

שולמית אליצור, שירת החול העורית בספרד המוסלמים, כרך שני (תל אביב: בית ההוצאה לאור של האוניברסיטה ופתוחה, 1, 2004), 445.

² Peter Cole, trans. edit, *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain 950-1492* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 164.

challenge of Israel education, to borrow Einstein's phrase, is to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge and channel that joy into *ahavat Yisrael* – both the country and the Jewish people.

Perhaps the challenge is easy to meet for Jews living in Israel, but the majority of contemporary Jews live in the Diaspora. How can Israel, and the study of Israel, help to develop the Jewish identity of those living in Diasporic communities? Pedagogy aside, insights from sociology and social psychology suggest the specific mechanisms by which exposure to Israel can affect Jewish identity, and they tell us that the Israel experience is a powerful tool to turn Judaism

history, or ritual. And Jewish cultural fluency operates as a feedback loop – the more fluency one develops, the easier it is to engage in Jewish life; the more one engages in Jewish life, the more likely one becomes to identify strongly and positively with it; and the more one identifies strongly and positively with Jewish life, the more driven one tends to be to develop greater and greater levels of cultural fluency.

But formal educational settings are not the only Jewish educational settings available, and in any case they do not always promote strong, positive associations with Jewish life. As Rabbi Eric Yoffie, former President of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ),

from an abstract collection of values into a concrete, salient identity.

Jewish Cultural Capital

For some, the joy in creative expression and knowledge of Israel is awakened through formal education. Jewish cultural capital development – the accumulation of general cultural knowledge, skills, and background pertaining to Jewish life – has depended on this investment.

Typically, the more time one spends in a formal Jewish educational setting, developing the general knowledge and skills that are particular to Jewish life, the easier it will become to engage in and relate to any and every aspect of the culture, be it language, literature, music, cuisine,



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– Albert Einstein

noted in a sermon on his organization's 2001 Biennial, "Many of our parents look upon religious school as a punishment for being young. Too often in their eyes it is the castor oil of Jewish life, a burden passed from parent to child with the following admonition: 'I hated it, you'll hate it, and after your Bar Mitzvah, you can quit.'" Formal education is not joyful for all participants, and even when it is, it needs to be reinforced to be effective. Thus, informal educational programs, such as camps, youth groups, and Israel experiences, are extremely important. If formal educational settings are "the castor oil of Jewish life" for some, informal educational programs are the honey, substituting a sweet taste to accompany the efforts to transmit the same cultural knowledge and skills. By using a fun setting to model the same history, culture, traditions, and rituals as are taught in formal educational settings while encouraging participants to try on new practices and behaviors, teachers can help participants learn by focusing on what they enjoy about the subject matter rather than the chore-like frame Rabbi Yoffie described. Perhaps more importantly, they encourage participants to engage in Jewish culture and to consider what it means to them to be Jewish. Whichever route one takes in Jewish education, the effect of building cultural capital remains clear: the more Jewish cultural capital one accumulates – the more salient one's Jewish identity is likely to be.

Personal & Social Identity

Identity salience, in social psychological parlance, is the probability that a particular identity will be invoked in a specific context. Each of us has multiple personal identities that consist of a series of meanings attached to the roles they enact in the course of our day-to-day lives. These identities can be arranged hierarchically, with more salient identities more likely

to be enacted. The salience of any given identity is determined not only by one's investment in constructing the identity but also by the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards offered by enacting it and the degree to which one's self-esteem depends on enacting the identity well.¹ Similarly, every individual also

has multiple social identities, each consisting of a series of meanings attached to their membership in the specific groups or social categories to which they

The challenge of Israel education... is to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge and channel that joy into *ahavat Yisrael*—both the country and the Jewish people.



→ Exposure to Israel, along with the Israel experience, can affect Jewish identity, ...[turning] "Judaism from an abstract collection of values into a concrete, salient identity."

→ Cultivating Jewish cultural capital is key to enhancing the salience and evaluation of an individual's Jewish identity.

belong. A strong, positive evaluation of one's group typically leads to higher self-esteem and self-efficacy, in turn reinforcing the self-concept.²

Cultivating Jewish cultural capital is key to enhancing the salience and evaluation of an individual's Jewish identity. It is difficult to imagine intrinsic or extrinsic rewards of Jewish identity outside of the context of Jewish cultural capital that makes Jewish history, culture, and peoplehood meaningful to the individual. Within this context, however, the rewards become clear. Time and resources expended in accruing Jewish cultural capital create social networks that are more densely Jewish. The creation of numerous social connections with other Jews who are substantially similar to oneself in ways one deems particularly important tends to increase commitment to one's Jewish identity.³ In order to maintain and reinforce the social network, one becomes more likely to engage in Jewish activities, increasing the salience of Jewish identity by promoting greater engagement in Jewish activities⁴ as well as making commitment to such activities more consistent over time.⁵ In turn, in order to maintain a positive self-concept and a strong, positive evaluation of the group, opportunities available outside the group are increasingly judged as less beneficial or congruent with one's own goals and desires. Indeed, as Jewish identity becomes more salient, one will more actively seek out and even create social situations that support decisions to focus increasingly on Jewish social contacts and activities.⁶

An individual for whom Jewish identity becomes highly salient views the world through a Jewish lens. Where one lives becomes a question not merely of the general affordability of necessary goods and services,

“When [the tour guide] mentioned that Abraham and Isaac and David were part of the history of the city,” one person said during a visit to Jerusalem, “it felt like it was everything I was taught as a kid coming to life. This is where

Judaism really happened—beyond any textbook.”

proximity to work and/or school, and social networks, but also of the availability of Jewish goods and services and social networks. Interest in social activities and organizations increasingly becomes in part a function of the Jewish content of the activities and the Jewish character of the participants. How one behaves is influenced increasingly by Jewish values, traditions, ethics, and even laws.

As with cultural capital, theories of personal and social identity rely on an iterative and interactive process to strengthen Jewish identity. The more time, effort, and resources are invested in Jewish identity, and the more opportunities for the identity to be tested, the stronger it becomes. By unifying abstract learning, social and ritual behavior, and ethnic history into something tangible, Israel can increase the effects of cultural capital and the mechanisms of identity development exponentially.

Why Israel Experiences are Powerful

The Land of Israel is historically both a central literal and figurative space of Jewish identity. Jewish children, even those with limited education, learn to recognize Israel as the land of their ancestry and heritage. It is the place where most of the stories they learn from Jewish history took place and it is reinforced by the prominent role that Zion and Jerusalem play in the liturgy they are taught. Israel is a central focal point in the process by which children acquire the shared meanings by which their community defines Jewish life and culture.⁷

But the benefit of purely cognitive knowledge is limited. For Jews who live in modern-day Israel, this is no obstacle. Tangible, visceral connections to Jewish history are so ubiquitous that even mundane tasks—eating, breathing, and speaking—become infused with Jewish meaning, and specifically Jewish acts are elevated. Diaspora Jews have no such connection in their daily lives, but upon experiencing Israel for themselves, they develop a concrete understanding of what was previously only an abstract impression of the special Jewish quality of Israel. Shaul Kelner, observing the effects of Israel tourism on Taglit-Birthright Israel participants, notes:

Taglit’s tourists commonly spoke of Israel in terms that highlighted its uniqueness as a site of ancient Jewish roots: “When [the tour guide] mentioned that Abraham and Isaac and David were part of the history of the city,” one person said during a visit to Jerusalem, “it felt like it was everything I was taught as a kid coming to life. This is where Judaism really happened – beyond any textbook.”⁸

What matters most is not the content per se. Neither the past history of the Jewish people nor the general



→ First-hand exposure to both the triumphs and challenges of Israel not only corrects mistaken impressions... but also encourages [a] more detailed examination of every aspect of one’s prior knowledge.

components of Jewish rites and traditions change based on one’s current geographic location; rather, the place itself is the key feature because it changes the way people think about Jewish history, rites, and traditions. In any Jewish educational setting, the degree to which participants’ Jewish identity is affected depends on the strength and internal coherence of the messages they absorb in context and the degree to which those messages are consistent with their previous knowledge and attitudes.⁹ But in the Diaspora, the backdrop for the messages is an abstract location, and so the messages are not evaluated as stringently. Israel, by contrast, provides a concrete setting against which to evaluate the messages – the very setting in which Jewish history occurred and from which Jewish traditions were originally derived. By reifying participants’ connection to Israel, the Israel experience draws upon their Jewish cultural capital, provides a powerful new context to elaborate upon it, demands that they consider the implications of their previously accumulated knowledge in fine detail, and makes their Jewish identities more salient.

Perhaps more importantly, an Israel experience provides an opportunity to develop first-hand impressions of the modern State of Israel, rather than relying on often faulty anecdotal reports, stereotypes,

The great power of Israel to develop Jewish identity remains only abstract without personal experience.

and generalizations. Authentic experience helps one distinguish between simplistic depictions of Israel in the media and old narratives of Israel as a survivalist enclave for Jews escaping the Holocaust and anti-Semitism around the world and more nuanced, accurate descriptions of a thriving, multicultural society at the forefront of advances in science

and technology. If done well, such experience will allow individuals to understand the vibrancy of Israeli society, as well as the ways in which Israelis confront universal as well as Israel-specific issues of inequality, conflict, and sustainability. First-hand exposure to both the triumphs and challenges of Israel not only corrects mistaken impressions and promotes expertise with respect to Israel, but also encourages more detailed examination of every aspect of one's prior knowledge. In turn, this heightened scrutiny tends to increase the salience of Israel and Judaism in the construction of one's personal and social identities.

But of course we cannot exclusively rely on the actual experience of Israel. It is delimited in time and space. But we can co-opt Israel education in many ways to strengthen the Israel dimensions of identity development. One important dimension of this process is the inter-personal relationship between young Israelis and overseas peers. Identity is strongly affected by peer relations and contemporary patterns of social networking enable maximizing this process. As one of the

other pamphlets in this series emphasizes, language plays a shaping role in identity development. Language as linked to Israel experience and Israel education are a force of great potential. In addition, arts, culture, and immersive networks offer additional arenas for an identity development that draws upon and strengthens a Jewish and Israel identity. The ability to make this happen in practice is the artistry of the Israel pedagogue; the theoretical potential for Israel education as a force in identity development is a lesson strongly suggested by thinking and research in the social psychology of identity.

Epilogue

The ineffable quality of Israel – the sense that even mundane tasks are infused with Jewish meaning when performed in Israel – is summarized in a widely unrecognized axiom of Jewish life: where one is Jewish affects how one is Jewish. Identity is affected in myriad ways by changing social contexts, and the effects of exposure to a context other than that to which one is accustomed can, and often do, have long-lasting effects.¹⁰

Jewish identity is no different. Given the unique context of Israel as the only Jewish-majority country in the world, the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people, the location of much of the foundational history of Jewish culture, and the most important area of common cultural ground shared by Jews of all cultures and walks of life around the world, exposure to Israel the place and the reality should be expected to have profound effects on Jewish identity.

Theoretical exposure, however, is not sufficient to overcome the abstractness that second- and third-hand exposure to Israel provides. The great power of Israel to develop Jewish identity remains only abstract without personal experience. The Israel visit and the ancillary personal, cultural, and linguistic ties provide the greater detail and concrete connection necessary to stimulate deeper consideration of prior knowledge, more nuanced understanding of learned concepts, and greater salience of Jewish personal and social identities. It draws upon one's prior learning and experience and expands upon in ways that would not be possible in any other context, and is therefore a

powerful tool to turn Judaism from an abstract collection of values into a concrete, salient identity.



Notes

1 Stryker, S., and R. Serpe. 1981. "Commitment, Identity Salience and Role Behavior: Theory and Research Example." In W. Ickes and E. Knowles (eds.), *Personality Roles and Social Behavior*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

2 See, for instance: Tajfel, H. 1982. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Tajfel, H., and J.C. Turner. 1986. "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior." In S. Worchel and W.G. Austin (eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (2nd edition, pp. 7-24). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

3 Callero, P.L. 1985. "Role Identity Salience." *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 48, 203-214.

4 Emmons, R.A., E. Diener, and R.J. Larsen. 1986. "Choice and Avoidance of Everyday Situations and Affect Congruence: Two Models of Reciprocal Interactionism." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 815-826.

5 Demo, D.H. 1992. "The Self-Concept Over Time." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18, 303-326.

6 Swann, W.B. 1983. "Self-Verification: Bringing Social Reality into Harmony with the Self." In J. Suls and A.G. Greenwald (eds.), *Psychological Perspectives on the Self* (pp. 33-66). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

7 The social learning perspective defines socialization as the process by which children learn the shared meanings of the groups in which they are reared. Variation in meanings gives groups and subgroups their distinctiveness, and learning the shared meanings of one's own group encourages in-group identification. See Shibusani, T. 1961. *Society and Personality*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

8 Kelner, S. 2010. *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism*. New York and London: NYU Press.

9 This analysis draws upon the elaboration-likelihood model, which seeks to explain how attitude change is produced through differing means of processing messages. See Petty, R.E., and J.T. Cacioppo. 1986. "The Elaboration-Likelihood Model of Persuasion." In L. Berkowitz (ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (vol. 19, pp. 207-249). New York: Academic Press.

10 Ethier, K.A., and K. Deaux. 1994. "Negotiating Social Identity When Contexts Change: Maintaining Identification and Responding to Threat." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 243-251.



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"What's the matter with you! Herel Here is your money! Take it and count it, see if it's right, here in front of your witnesses. The seal, as you see, is untouched. The wax is whole, just as it ought to be."

The traveler felt as if a new soul had been installed in his body. His hands trembled and tears stood in his eyes.

"Why did you have to do it, Rabbi? Why did you have to play this trick on me? A trick like this."

"I just wanted to show you—the kind—of—leading citizens—we have in our town."

MODERN CHILDREN

Modern children, did you say? Ah, you bring them into the world, sacrifice yourself for them, you slave for them day and night—and what do you get out of it? You think that one way or another it would work out according to your ideas or station. After all, I don't expect to marry them off to millionaires, but then I don't have to be satisfied with just anyone, either. So I figured I'd have at least a little luck with my daughters. Why not? In the first place, didn't the Lord bless me with handsome girls; and a pretty face, as you yourself have said, is half a dowry. And besides, with God's help, I'm not the same Teyve I used to be. Now the best match, even in Ychupetz, is not beyond my reach. Don't you agree with me?

But there is a God in heaven who looks after everything, "a Lord merciful and compassionate" who has His way with me summer and winter, in season and out. And He says to me, "Teyve, don't talk like a fool. Leave the management of the world to Me."

So listen to what can happen in this great world of ours. And to whom does it have to happen? To Teyve, *shlimazi*. To make a long story short, I had just lost everything I had in a stock market investment I had gotten involved in through that relative of mine, Menachem-Mendel (may his

name and memory be forever blotted out), and I was very low. It looked as if it was all over with me. No more Teyve, no more dairy business.

"Fool," my wife says to me. "You have worried enough. You'll get nowhere worrying. You'll just eat your heart out. Pretend that robbers had broken in and taken everything away . . . I'll tell you what," she says to me. "Go out for a while. Go see Lazer-Wolf, the butcher, at Anatavka. He wants to see you about something very important."

"What's the matter?" I asked. "What is he so anxious to see me about? If he is thinking of that milch cow of ours, let him take a stick and knock that idea out of his head."

"What are you so anxious about her for?" she says to me. "The milk that we get out of her, or the cheese or butter?"

"I'm not thinking about that," I answer. "It's just the idea. It would be a sin to give the poor thing away to be slaughtered. You can't do that to a living creature. It is written in the Bible . . ."

"Oh, enough of that!" she comes back at me. "The whole world knows already that you're a man of learning! You do what I tell you. You go over and see Lazer-Wolf. Every Thursday when our Tzeitl goes there for meat, he won't leave her alone. 'You tell your father,' he keeps saying, 'to come and see me. It's important.'"

Well, once in a while you have to obey your wife. So I let her talk me into it, and I go over to Anatavka, about three miles away. He wasn't home. "Where can he be?" I ask a snubnosed woman who is bustling around the place.

"They're slaughtering today," says the woman, "and he went down to bring an ox. He'll be coming back pretty soon."

So I wait. And while I'm waiting I look around the house a little. And from what I see, it looks as if Lazer-Wolf has been a good provider. There is a cupboard filled with copperware—at least a hundred and fifty *rubles*' worth; a couple of samovars, some brass trays, silver candlesticks and gilded

goblets. And a fancy *Hannukah* lamp and some trinkets made of porcelain and silver and everything.

"Lord Almighty!" I think to myself. "If I can only live to see things like that at my children's homes . . . What a lucky fellow he is—such wealth, and nobody to support! Both his children are married, and he himself is a widower . . ."

Well, at last the door opens and in stamps Lazer-Wolf.

"Well, Reb Teyve," he says. "What's the matter? Why is it so hard to get hold of you? How goes it?"

"How should it go?" I say to him. "I go and I go, and I get nowhere. 'Neither gold nor health nor life itself,' as the *Torah* says."

"Don't complain, Reb Teyve," he answers me. "Compared with what you were when I first knew you, you're a rich man today."

"May we both have what I still need to make me a rich man," I say. "But I am satisfied, thank God. *'Abracadabra askakudra'*, as the *Talmud* says."

"You're always there with a line of *Talmud*," he comes back. "What a lucky man you are, Reb Teyve, to know all these things. But what does all that wisdom and knowledge have to do with us? We have other things to talk about. Sit down, Teyve." He lets out a yell, "Let's have some tea!" And as if by magic the snubnosed woman appears, snatches the samovar, and is off to the kitchen.

"Now that we are alone," he says to me, "we can talk business. Here is the story. I've been wanting to talk to you for a long time. I tried to reach you through your daughter. How many times have I begged you to come? You understand, I've been casting an eye . . ."

"I know," I say, "that you have been casting an eye on her, but it's no use. Your pains are wasted, Reb Lazer-Wolf. There's no use talking about it."

"Why not?" he asks, with a frightened look.

"Why yes?" says I. "I can wait. I'm in no hurry. My house isn't on fire."

"But why should you wait, if you can arrange it now?"

"Oh, that's not important," I say. "Besides, I feel sorry for the poor thing."

"Look at him," says Lazer-Wolf with a laugh. "He feels sorry for her . . . If somebody heard you, Reb Teyve, he'd have sworn that she was the only one you had. It seems to me that you have a few more without her."

"Does it bother you if I keep them?" I say. "If anyone is jealous . . ."

"Jealous? Who is talking of jealousy?" he cries. "On the contrary, I know they're superior, and that is exactly why—you understand? And don't forget, Reb Teyve, that you can get something out of it too!"

"Of course . . . I know all a person can get from you . . . A piece of ice—in winter. We've known that from way back."

"Forget it," he says to me, sweet as sugar. "That was a long time ago. But now—after all—you and I—we're practically in one family, aren't we?"

"Family? What kind of family? What are you talking about, Reb Lazer-Wolf?"

"You tell me, Reb Teyve. I'm beginning to wonder . . ."

"What are you wondering about? We're talking about my milch cow. The one you want to buy from me."

Lazer-Wolf throws back his head and lets out a roar.

"That's a good one!" he howls at me. "A cow! And a milch cow at that!"

"If not the cow," I say, "then what were we talking about? You tell me so I can laugh too."

"Why, about your daughter. We were talking about your daughter Tzeitl the whole time. You know, Reb Teyve, that I have been a widower for quite a while now. So I thought, why do I have to go looking all over the world—get mixed up with matchmakers, those sons of Satan? Here we both are. I know you, you know me. It's not like running after a stranger. I see her in my shop every Thursday. She's made a good impression on me. I've talked with her a few times.

She looks like a nice, quiet girl. And as for me—as you see for yourself—I'm pretty well off. I have my own house. A couple of stores, some hides in the attic, a little money in the chest. I live pretty well . . . Look, Teyve, why do we have to do a lot of bargaining, try to impress each other, bluff each other? Listen to me. Let's shake hands on it and call it a match."

Well, when I heard that I just sat and stared. I couldn't say a word. All I could think was: Lazer-Wolf . . . Tzeitl . . . He had children as old as she was. But then I reminded myself: what a lucky thing for her. She'll have everything she wants. And if he is not so good-looking? There were other things besides looks. There was only one thing I really had against him: he could barely read his prayers. But then, can everybody be a scholar? There are plenty of wealthy men in Anatevka, in Mazapewka, and even in Yehupetz who don't know one letter from another. Just the same, if it's their luck to have a little money they get all the respect and honor a man could want. As the saying goes, "There's learning in a strongbox, and wisdom in a purse . . ."

"Well, Reb Teyve," he says. "Why don't you say something?"

"What do you want me to do? Yell out loud?" I ask mildly, as if not wanting to look anxious. "You understand, don't you, that this is something a person has to think over. It's no trifle. She's my eldest child."

"All the better," he says. "Just because she is your eldest . . . That will give you a chance to marry off your second daughter, too, and then, in time with God's help, the third. Don't you see?"

"Amen. The same to you," I tell him. "Marrying them off is no trick at all. Just let the Almighty send each one her predestined husband."

"No," he says. "That isn't what I mean. I mean something altogether different. I mean the dowry. That you won't need for her. And her clothes I'll take care of too. And maybe you'll find something in your own purse besides . . ."

"Shame on you!" I shout at him. "You're talking just as if you were in the butcher shop. What do you mean—my purse? Shame! My Tzeitl is not the sort that I'd have to sell for money!"

"Just as you say," he answers. "I meant it all for the best. If you don't like it, let's forget it. If you're happy without that, I'm happy too. The main thing is, let's get it done with. And I mean right away. A house must have a mistress. You know what I mean . . ."

"Just as you say," I agree. "I won't stand in your way. But I have to talk it over with my wife. In affairs like this she has her say. It's no trifle. As Rashi says, 'A mother is not a dust rag.' Besides, there's Tzeitl herself to be asked. How does the saying go? 'All the kinsmen were brought to the wedding—and the bride was left home . . .'"

"What foolishness!" says Lazer-Wolf. "Is this something to ask her about? Tell her, Reb Teyve! Go home. Tell her what is what, and get the wedding canopy ready."

"No, Reb Lazer-Wolf," I say. "That's not the way you treat a young girl!"

"All right," he says. "Go home and talk it over. But first, Reb Teyve, let's have a little drink. How about it?"

"Just as you say," I agree. "Why not? How does the saying go? 'Man is human—and a drink is a drink.' There is," I tell him, "a passage in the *Talmud* . . ." And I give him a passage. I don't know myself what I said. Something from the *Song of Songs* or the *Hagadah* . . .

Well, we took a drop or two—as it was ordained. In the meantime the woman had brought in the samovar and we made ourselves a glass or two of punch, had a very good time together, exchanged a few toasts—talked—made plans for the wedding—discussed this and that—and then back to the wedding.

"Do you realize, Reb Lazer-Wolf, what a treasure she is?" "I know . . . Believe me, I know . . . If I didn't I would never have suggested anything . . ."

And we both go on shouting. I: "A jewel! A diamond! I

hope you'll know how to treat her! Not like a butcher . . ." And he: "Don't worry, Reb Teyve. What she'll eat in my house on weekdays she never had in your house on holidays."

"Tut, tut," I said. "Feeding a woman isn't everything. The richest man in the world doesn't eat five-*trible* gold pieces, and a pauper doesn't eat stones. You're a coarse fellow, Lazer-Wolf. You don't even know how to value her talents—her baking—her cooking! Ah, Lazer-Wolf! The fish she makes! You'll have to learn to appreciate her!"

And he: "Teyve, pardon me for saying it, but you're somewhat befuddled. You don't know your man. You don't know me at all . . ."

And I: "Put gold on one scale and Tzeitl on the other . . . Do you hear, Reb Lazer-Wolf, if you had a million *rubles*, you wouldn't be worth her little finger."

And he again: "Believe me, Teyve, you're a big fool, even if you are older than I am."

We yelled away at each other that way for a long time, stopping only for a drink or two, and when I came home it was late at night and my feet felt as if they had been shackled. And my wife, seeing right away that I was tipsy, gave me a proper welcome.

"Sh . . . Golde, control yourself," I say to her cheerfully, almost ready to start dancing. "Don't screech like that, my soul. We have congratulations coming."

"Congratulations? For what? For having sold that poor cow to Lazer-Wolf?"

"Worse than that," I say.

"Traded her for another one? And outsmarted Lazer-Wolf—poor fellow?"

"Still worse."

"Talk sense," she pleads. "Look, I have to haggle with him for every word."

"Congratulations, Golde," I say once more. "Congratulations to both of us. Our Tzeitl is engaged to be married."

"If you talk like that then I know you're drunk," she says.

"And not slightly, either. You're out of your head. You must have found a real glassful somewhere."

"Yes. I had a glass of whisky with Lazer-Wolf, and I had some punch with Lazer-Wolf, but I'm still in my right senses. Lo and behold, Golde darling, our Tzeitl has really and truly and officially become betrothed to Lazer-Wolf himself."

And I tell her the whole story from start to finish, how and what and when and why. Everything we discussed, word for word.

"Do you hear, Teyve," my wife finally says, "my heart told me all along that when Lazer-Wolf wanted to see you it was for something. Only I was afraid to think about it. Maybe nothing would come of it. Oh, dear God, I thank Thee, I thank Thee, Heavenly Father . . . May it all be for the best. May she grow old with him in riches and honor—not like that first wife of his, Fruma-Sarah, whose life with him was none too happy. She was, may she forgive me for saying it, an embittered woman. She couldn't get along with anybody. Not at all like our Tzeitl . . . Oh, dear God, I thank Thee, dear God . . . Well, Teyve, didn't I tell you, you simpleton . . . Did you have to worry? If a thing has to happen it will happen . . ."

"I agree with you," said I. "There is a passage in the *Talmud* that covers that very point . . ."

"Don't bother me with your passages," she said. "We've got to get ready for the wedding. First of all, make out a list for Lazer-Wolf of all the things Tzeitl will need. She doesn't have a stitch of underwear, not even a pair of stockings. And as for clothes, she'll need a silk dress for the wedding, and a cotton one for summer, a woolen one for winter, and petticoats, and cloaks—she should have at least two—one, a fur-lined cloak for weekdays and a good one with a ruffle for Saturdays. And how about a pair of button-shoes and a corset, gloves, handkerchiefs, a parasol, and all the other things that a girl nowadays has to have?"

"Where, Golde, darling, did you get acquainted with all these riggings?" I ask her.

"Why not?" says she. "Haven't I ever lived among civilized people? And didn't I see, back in Kasrlevka, how ladies dressed themselves? You let me do all the talking with him myself. Lazer-Wolf, is, after all, a man of substance. He won't want everybody in the family to come bothering him. Let's do it properly. If a person has to eat pork, let him eat a bellyful . . ."

So we talked and we talked till it was beginning to get light. "My wife," I said, "it's time to get the cheese and butter together so I can start for Boiberik. It is all very wonderful indeed, but you still have to work for a living."

And so, when it was still barely light I harnessed my little old horse and went off to Boiberik. When I got to the Boiberik marketplace—Ohol Can a person ever keep a secret? Everybody knew about it already, and I was congratulated from all sides. "Congratulations, congratulations! Reb Teyve, when does the wedding come off?"

"The same to you, the same to you," I tell them. "It looks as if the saying is right: 'The father isn't born yet and the son is dancing on the rooftops . . .'"

"Forget about that!" they cry out. "You can't get away with that! What we want is treats. Why, how lucky you are, Reb Teyve! An oil well! A gold mine!"

"The well runs dry," I tell them, "and all that's left is a hole in the ground."

Still, you can't be a hog and leave your friends in the lurch. "As soon as I'm through delivering I'll be back," I tell them. "There'll be drinks and a bite to eat. Let's enjoy ourselves. As the Good Book says, 'Even a beggar can celebrate.'"

So I got through with my work as fast as I could and joined the crowd in a drink or two. We wished each other good luck as people do, and then I got back into my cart and started for home again, happy as could be. It was a beau-

tiful summer day, the sun was hot, but on both sides of the road there was shade, and the odor of the pines was wonderful. Like a prince I stretched myself out in the wagon and eased up on the reins. "Go along," I said to the little old horse, "go your own way. You ought to know it by now." And myself, I clear my throat and start off on some of the old tunes. I am in a holiday mood, and the songs I sing are those of *Rosh Hashono* and *Yom Kippur*. As I sing I look up at the sky but my thoughts are concerned with things below. The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth He gave to the Children of Adam, for them to brawl around in, to live in such luxury that they have time to tear each other apart for this little honor or that . . . They don't even understand how one ought to praise the Lord for the good things that He gives them . . . But we, the poor people, who do not live in idleness and luxury, give us but one good day and we thank the Lord and praise Him; we say, "*Ohavti, I love Him*"—the Highest One—"for He hears my voice and my prayer, He inclines His ear to me . . . For the waves of death compassed me, the floods of Belial assailed me . . ." Here a cow falls down and is injured, there an ill wind brings a kinsman of mine, a good-for-nothing, a Menachem-Mendel from Yehupetz who takes away my last penny; and I am sure that the world has come to an end—there is no truth or justice left anywhere on earth . . . But what does the Lord do? He moves Lazer-Wolf with the idea of taking my daughter Tzeitl without even a dowry . . . And therefore I give thanks to Thee, dear God, again and again, for having looked upon Teyve and come to his aid . . . I shall yet have joy. I shall know what it is to visit my child and find her a mistress of a well-stocked home, with chests full of linens, pantries full of chicken fat and preserves, coops full of chickens, geese and ducks . . .

Suddenly my horse dashes off downhill, and before I can lift my head to look around I find myself on the ground with all my empty pots and crocks and my cart on top of me! With the greatest difficulty I drag myself out from under

and pull myself up, bruised and half-dead, and I vent my wrath on the poor little horse. "Sink into the earth!" I shout. "Who asked you to show that you know how to run? You almost ruined me altogether, you devil!" And I gave him as much as he could take. You could see that he realized he had gone a little too far. He stood there with his head down, humble, ready to be milked . . . Still cursing him, I turn the cart upright, gather up my pots, and off I go. A bad omen, I tell myself, and I wonder what new misfortunes might be awaiting me . . .

That's just how it was. About a mile farther on, when I'm getting close to home, I see someone coming toward me. I drive up closer, look, and see that it's Tzeitl. At the sight of her my heart sinks, I don't know why. I jump down from the wagon.

"Tzeitl, is that you? What are you doing here?"

She falls on my neck with a sob. "My daughter, what are you crying about?" I ask her.

"Oh," she cries, "Father, Father!" And she is choked with tears.

"What is it, daughter? What's happened to you?" I say, putting my arm around her, patting and kissing her.

"Father, Father, have pity on me. Help me . . ."

"What are you crying for?" I ask, stroking her head. "Little fool, what do you have to cry for? For heaven's sake," I say, "if you say *no* it's *no*. Nobody is going to force you. We meant it for the best, we did it for your own sake. But if it doesn't appeal to you, what are we going to do? Apparently it was not ordained . . ."

"Oh, thank you, Father, thank you," she cries, and falls on my neck again and dissolves in tears.

"Look," I say, "you've cried enough for one day . . . Even eating pastry becomes tiresome . . . Climb into the wagon and let's go home. Lord knows what your mother will be thinking."

So we both get into the cart and I try to calm her down. I tell her that we had not meant any harm to her.

God knows the truth: all we wanted was to shield our daughter from poverty. "So it was not meant," I said, "that you should have riches, all the comforts of life; or that we should have a little joy in our old age after all our hard work, harnessed, you might say, day and night to a wheelbarrow—no happiness, only poverty and misery and bad luck over and over . . ."

"Oh, Father," she cries, bursting into tears again. "I'll hire myself out as a servant. I'll carry rocks. I'll dig ditches . . ."

"What are you crying for, silly child?" I say. "Am I forcing you? Am I complaining? It's just that I feel so wretched that I have to get it off my chest; so I talk it over with Him, with the Almighty, about the way He deals with me. He is, I say, a merciful Father, He has pity on me, but He shows me what He can do, too; and what can I say? Maybe it has to be that way. He is high in heaven, high up, and we are here below, sunk in the earth, deep in the earth. So we must say that He is right and His judgment is right; because if we want to look at it the other way round, who am I? A worm that crawls on the face of the earth, whom the slightest breeze—if God only willed it—could annihilate in the blink of an eye. So who am I to stand up against Him with my little brain and give Him advice on how to run this little world of His? Apparently if He ordains it this way, it has to be this way. What good are complaints? Forty days before you were conceived, the Holy Book tells us, an angel appeared and decreed: 'Let Teyve's daughter Tzeitl take Getzel, the son of Zorach, as her husband; and let Lazer-Wolf the butcher go elsewhere to seek his mate.' And to you, my child, I say this: May God send you your predestined one, one worthy of you, and may he come soon, Amen. And I hope your mother doesn't yell too much. I'll get enough from her as it is."

Well, we came home at last. I unharnessed the little horse and sat down on the grass near the house to think things over, think up some fantastic tale to tell my wife. It was late, the sun was setting; in the distance frogs were croak-

ing; the old horse, tied to a tree, was nibbling at the grass; the cows, just come from pasture, waited in the stalls to be milked. All around me was the heavenly smell of the fresh grass—like the Garden of Eden. I sat there thinking it all over . . . How cleverly the Eternal One has created this little world of His, so that every living thing, from man to a simple cow, must earn its food. Nothing is free. If you, little cow, wish to eat—then go, let yourself be milked, be the means of livelihood for a man and his wife and children. If you, little horse, wish to chew—then run back and forth every day with the milk to Boberik. And you, Man, if you want a piece of bread—go labor, milk the cows, carry the pitchers, churn the butter, make the cheese, harness your horse, drag yourself every dawn to the *datchas* of Boberik, scrape and bow to the rich ones of Yehupetz, smile at them, cater to them, ingratiate yourself with them, see to it that they are satisfied, don't do anything to hurt their pride . . . Ah, but there still remains the question: *Mah nishano?* Where is it written that Teyve must labor in their behalf, must get up before daybreak when God Himself is still asleep, just so that they can have a fresh piece of cheese, and butter for their breakfasts? Where is it written that I must rupture myself for a pot of thin gruel, a loaf of barley bread, while they—the rich ones of Yehupetz—loll around in their summer homes without so much as lifting a hand, and are served roast ducks and the best of *krishes*, *blintzes* and *vertutin*? Am I not a man as they are? Would it be a sin, for instance, if Teyve could spend one summer himself in a *datcha* somewhere? But then—where would people get cheese and butter? Who would milk the cows? The Yehupetz aristocrats, maybe? And at the very thought of it I burst out laughing. It's like the old saying: "If God listened to every fool what a different world it would be!"

And then I heard someone call out, "Good evening, Reb Teyve." I looked up and saw a familiar face—Motel Kamzoi, a young tailor from Anatevka.

"Well, well," I say, "you speak of the Messiah and look

who's here! Sit down, Motel, on God's green earth. And what brings you here all of a sudden?"

"What brings me here?" he answers. "My two feet."

And he sits down on the grass near me and looks off toward the barn where the girls are moving about with their pots and pitchers. "I have been wanting to come here for a long time, Reb Teyve," he says at last, "only I never seem to have the time. You finish one piece of work and you start the next. I work for myself now, you know, and there is plenty to do, praise the Lord. All of us tailors have as much as we can do right now. It's been a summer of weddings. Everybody is marrying off his children—everybody, even the widow Trhubecha."

"Everybody," I say. "Everybody except Teyve. Maybe I am not worthy in the eyes of the Lord."

"No," he answers quickly, still looking off where the girls are. "You're mistaken, Reb Teyve. If you only wanted to you could marry off one of your children, too. It all depends on you . . ."

"So?" I ask. "Maybe you have a match for Tzeitl?"

"A perfect fit!" the tailor answers.

"And," I ask, "is it a good match at least?"

"Like a glove!" he cries in his tailor's language, still looking off at the girls.

I ask, "In whose behalf is it then that you come? If he smells of a butcher shop I don't want to hear another word!" "God forbid!" he says. "He doesn't begin to smell of a butcher shop!"

"And you really think he's a good match?"

"There never was such a match!" he answers promptly.

"There are matches and matches, but this one, I want you to know, was made exactly to measure!"

"And who, may I ask, is the man? Tell me!"

"Who is it?" he says, still looking over yonder. "Who is it? Why, me—myself!"

When he said that I jumped up from the ground as if I'd

been scalded, and he jumped too, and there we stood facing each other like bristling roosters. "Either you're crazy," I say to him, "or you're simply out of your mind! What are you—everything? The matchmaker, the bridegroom, the ushers all rolled into one? I suppose you'll play the wedding march too! I've never heard of such a thing—arranging a match for oneself!"

But he doesn't seem to listen. He goes right on talking.

"Anyone who thinks I'm crazy is crazy himself! No, Reb Teyve, I have all my wits about me. A person doesn't have to be crazy in order to want to marry your Tzeitl. For example, the richest man in our town—Lazer-Wolf, the butcher—wanted her too. Do you think it's a secret? The whole town knows it. And as for being my own matchmaker, I'm surprised at you! After all, Reb Teyve, you're a man of the world. If a person sticks his finger in your mouth you know what to do! So what are we arguing about? Here is the whole story: your daughter Tzeitl and I gave each other our pledge more than a year ago now that we would marry . . ."

If someone had stuck a knife into my heart it would have been easier to endure than these words. In the first place, how does a stitcher like Motel fit into the picture as my son-in-law? And in the second place, what kind of words are these, "We gave each other our pledge that we would marry?" And where do I come in? . . . I ask him bluntly, "Do I still have the right to say something about my daughter, or doesn't anyone have to ask a father any more?"

"On the contrary," says Motel, "that's exactly why I came to talk with you. I heard that Lazer-Wolf has been discussing a match, and I have loved her now for over a year. More than once I have wanted to come and talk it over with you, but every time I put it off a little. First, till I had saved up a few rubles for a sewing machine, and then till I got some decent clothes. Nowadays almost everybody has to have two suits and a few good shirts . . ."

"You and your shirts!" I yell at him. "What childish nonsense is this? And what do you intend to do after you're married? Support your wife with shirts?"

"Why," he says, "why, I'm surprised at you, Reb Teyve! From what I hear, when you got married you didn't have your own brick mansion either, and nevertheless here you are . . . In any case, if the whole world gets along, I'll get along, too. Besides, I have a trade, haven't I?"

To make a long story short, he talked me into it. For after all—why should we fool ourselves?—how do all Jewish children get married? If we began to be too particular, then no one in our class would ever get married at all . . . There was only one thing still bothering me, and that I still couldn't understand. What did they mean—pledging their troth? What kind of world has this become? A boy meets a girl and says to her, "Let us pledge our troth." Why, it's just too free-and-easy, that's all!

But when I looked at this Motel standing there with his head bent like a sinner, I saw that he was not trying to get the best of anybody, and I thought: "Now, what am I becoming so alarmed about? What am I putting on such airs for? What is my own pedigree? Reb Tzotzel's grandchild! And what huge dowry can I give my daughter—and what fine clothes? So maybe Motel Kamzoil is only a tailor, but at the same time he is a good man, a worker; he'll be able to make a living. And besides, he's honest too. So what have I got against him?"

"Teyve," I say to myself, "don't think up any childish arguments. Let them have their way." Yes . . . but what am I going to do about my Golde? I'll have plenty on my hands there. She'll be hard to handle. How can I make her think it's all right? . . .

"You know what, Motel," I said to the young suitor. "You go home. I'll straighten everything out here. I'll talk it over with this one and that one. Everything has to be done right. And tomorrow morning, if you haven't changed your mind by that time, maybe we'll see each other."

"Change my mind!" he yells at me. "You expect me to change my mind? If I do, I hope I never live to go away from here! May I become a stone, a bone, right here in front of you!"

"What's the use of swearing?" I ask him. "I believe you without the oath. Go along, Motel. Good night. And may you have pleasant dreams."

And I myself go to bed, too. But I can't sleep. My head is splitting. I think of one plan and then another, till at last I come upon the right one. And what is that? Listen, I'll tell you . . .

It's past midnight. All over the house we're sound asleep. This one is snoring, that one is whistling. And suddenly I sit up and let out a horrible yell, as loud as I can: "Help! Help! Help!" It stands to reason that when I let out this yell everybody wakes up, and first of all—Golde.

"May God be with you, Teyve," she gasps, and shakes me. "Wake up! What's the matter with you? What are you howling like this for?"

I open my eyes, look around to see where I am, and call out in terror, "Where is she? Where is she?"

"Where is who?" asks Golde. "What are you talking about?"

I can hardly answer. "Fruma-Sarah. Fruma-Sarah. Lazer-Wolf's first wife . . . She was standing here a minute ago."

"You're out of your head," my wife says to me. "May God save you, Teyve. Do you know how long Fruma-Sarah has been dead?"

"I know that she's dead," I say, "but just the same she was here just a minute ago, right here by the bed, talking to me. Then she grabbed me by the windpipe and started to choke me . . ."

"What on earth is the matter with you, Teyve?" says my wife. "What are you babbling about? You must have been dreaming. Spit three times and tell me what you dreamt, and I'll tell you what it meant."

"Long may you live, Golde," I tell her. "It's lucky you

woke me up or I'd have died of fright right on the spot. Get me a drink of water and I'll tell you my dream. Only I beg you, Golde, don't become frightened: the Holy Books tell us that sometimes only three parts of a dream come true, and the rest means nothing. Absolutely nothing. Well, here is my dream . . .

"In the beginning I dreamt that we were having a celebration of some kind, I don't know what. Either an engagement or a wedding. The house was crowded. All the men and women we knew were there—the *rov* and the *shochet* and everybody. And musicians, too . . . In the midst of the celebration the door opens, and in comes your grandmother Tzeitl, may her soul rest in peace . . ."

"Grandmother Tzeitl!" my wife shouts, turning pale as a sheet. "How did she look? How was she dressed?"

"How did she look?" I say . . . "May our enemies look the way she looked. Yellow. A waxen yellow. And she was dressed—how do you expect?—in white. A shroud. She came up to me. 'Congratulations,' she said, 'I am so happy that you picked such a fine young man for your Tzeitl who bears my name. He's a fine, upstanding lad—this Motel Kamzoll . . . He was named after my uncle Mordecai, and even if he is a tailor he's still an honest boy . . .'"

"A tailor!" gasps Golde. "Where does a tailor come into our family? In our family we have had teachers, cantors, *shamosim*, undertakers' assistants, and other kinds of poor people. But a tailor—never!"

"Don't interrupt me, Golde," I tell her. "Maybe your grandmother Tzeitl knows better . . . When I heard her congratulate me like that, I said to her, 'What is that you said, Grandmother? About Tzeitl's betrothed being a tailor? Did you say Motel? . . . You mean a butcher, don't you? A butcher named Lazer-Wolf?'"

"No," says your grandmother again. "No, Teyve. Your daughter is engaged to Motel, and he's a tailor, and she'll grow old with him—if the Lord wills—in comfort and honor."

"But, Grandmother," I say again, "what can we do about Lazer-Wolf? Just yesterday I gave him my word . . ."

"I had barely finished saying this when I looked up, and your grandmother Tzeitl is gone. In her place is Fruma-Sarah—Lazer-Wolf's first wife—and this is what she says: 'Reb Teyve, I have always considered you an honest man, a man of learning and virtue. But how does it happen that you should do a thing like this—let your daughter take my place, live in my house, carry my keys, wear my clothes, my jewelry, my pearls?'"

"Is it my fault," I ask her, "if Lazer-Wolf wanted it that way?"

"Lazer-Wolf!" she cries. "Lazer-Wolf will have a terrible fate, and your Tzeitl too, if she marries him. It's a pity, Reb Teyve. I feel sorry for your daughter. She'll live with him no more than three weeks, and when the three weeks are up I'll come to her by night and I'll take her by the throat like this . . ." And with these words Fruma-Sarah grabs me by the windpipe and begins choking me—so hard that if you hadn't waked me up, by now I'd have been—far, far away . . ."

"Ptu, ptu, ptu," spits my wife three times. "It's an evil spirit! May it fall into the river; may it sink into the earth; may it climb into attics; may it lie in the forest—but may it never harm us or our children! May that butcher have a dream like that! A dark and horrible dream! Motel Kamzoll's smallest finger is worth more than all of him, even if Motel is only a tailor; for if he was named after my uncle Mordecai he couldn't possibly have been a tailor by birth. And if my grandmother—may she rest in peace—took the trouble to come all the way from the other world to congratulate us, why, all we can do is say that this is all for the best, and it couldn't possibly be any better. Amen. Selah . . ."

Well, why should I go on and on?

The next day they were engaged, and not long after were

married. And the two of them, praise the Lord, are happy. He does his own tailoring, goes around in Boiberk from one *datcha* to another picking up work; and she is busy day and night, cooking and baking and washing and tidying and bringing water from the well . . . They barely make enough for food. If I didn't bring her some of our cheese and butter once in a while—Or a few *groschen* sometimes—they would never be able to get by. But if you ask her—my Tzeitl, I mean—she says everything is as good as it could be. Just let Motel stay in good health.

So go complain about modern children. You slave for them, do everything for them! And they tell you that they know better.

And . . . maybe they do . . .

YOU MUSTN'T WEEP— IT'S YOM-TEV

I am willing to bet any amount you want that no one in the world was as happy at the coming of spring as were the two of us—I, the cantor Peis's son, Motel, and the neighbor's calf, Meni. (It was I who had given him that name.) Both of us together had crept out of our narrow winter quarters to greet the first day of spring, both of us together had felt the warm rays of the sun and together we had smelled the fresh odors of the newly sprouted grass. I, Motel, the cantor's son, came out of a cold, damp cellar that smelled of sour dough and medicine and Meni, the neighbor's calf, was let out of even the worse stench of a smell, filthy shed with flimsy walls through whose chinks the snow sifted in winter and the rain beat in summer.

Having escaped into God's free world, the two of us, Meni and I, began to show our unbounded joy, each in his own way. I, Motel, the cantor's son, lifted up both my arms above my head, opened my mouth, and drew in as much of the fresh warm air as my lungs could contain. And I felt as though I were growing in height, as though I were drawn up there into the blue sky where the fleecy clouds drifted, up there where the birds dipped and rose and were lost to view. And from my overfilled breast there escaped a song that was

Agunot

1

IT IS SAID: A thread of grace is spun and drawn out of the deeds of Israel, and the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself, in His glory, sits and weaves—strand on strand—a prayer shawl all grace and all mercy, for the Congregation of Israel to deck herself in. Radiant in the light of her beauty she glows, even in these, the lands of her exile, as she did in her youth in her Father's house, in the Temple of her Sovereign and the city of sovereignty, Jerusalem. And when He, of ineffable Name, sees her, that she has neither been sullied nor stained even here, in the realm of her oppressors, He—as it were—leans toward her and says, "Behold thou art fair, my beloved, behold thou art fair." And this is the secret of the power and the glory and the exaltation and the tenderness in love which fills the heart of every man in Israel. But there are times—alas!—when some hindrance creeps up, and snaps a thread in the loom. Then the prayer shawl is damaged: evil spirits hover about it, enter into it, and tear it to shreds. At once a sense of shame assails all Israel, and they know they are naked. Their days of rest are wrested from them, their feasts are fasts, their lot is dust instead of luster. At that hour the Congregation of Israel strays abroad in her anguish, crying, "Strike me, wound me, take away my veils from me!"

Her beloved has slipped away, and she, seeking him, cries, "If ye find my beloved, what shall ye tell him? That I am afflicted with love." And this affliction of love leads to darkest melancholy, which persists—Mercy shield us!—until, from the heavens above, He breathes down upon us strength of spirit, to repent, and to muster deeds that are pride to their doers and again draw forth that thread of grace and love before the Lord.

And this is the theme of the tale recounted here, a great tale and terrible, from the Holy Land, of one renowned for his riches—Sire Ahtezzer by name—who set his heart on going up from the diaspora to the holy city Jerusalem—may she be rebuilt and established—to work great wonders of restoration in the midst of her ruins, and in this way to restore at least a corner of the anteroom which will be transformed into our mansion of glory on the day when the Holy One, blessed be He, restores His presence to Zion—may it be soon, in our day!

And credit him kindly, Lord—credit him well for his wishes, and for his ministrations to his brethren, sons of his people, who dwell before Thee in the Land of the Living, and this though he ultimately failed.

Sire Ahtezzer fathered no sons, but he praised the Ineffable sevenfold daily for the daughter who fell to his lot. He cherished her like the apple of his eye, and set maidservants and tiwomen to wait on her, that her very least wish might be honored. And, surely, she was worthy of all this respect, for she was the pattern of virtue, and all the graces were joined together in her person: princely the radiance of her countenance; like the patriarchs', her straitness of virtue; her voice pleasing as the harp of David; and all her ways modest and gentle. But all this pride was inward, and dwelt apart, in the innermost chambers, so that only the intimates of her father's house might behold her, at twilight, when—at times—she went down to walk in the garden, among the spice trees and the roses, where the doves fluttered about her

in the twilight, murmuring their fondness in her ears and shielding her with their wings, like the golden cherubs on the Ark of the sanctuary.

And when her season came, the season of love, her father sent couriers to all the dispersions of Israel, to spy out a youth that would be her match, such a paragon, a cluster of virtue, as had no peer in all the world. Here it was that the evil one intervened, and not in vain were the words bruited about, by the men of Jerusalem, to the effect that Sire Ahiezer had slighted all the seminaries and academies, all the seats of learning in the Land of Israel when he sent to find a match for his daughter among the sons of the exile abroad. But who might admonish so mighty a man—who might tender him counsel? They all began eagerly to await the match that the Holy One, blessed be He, would provide for this cloistered grace, glorious child, vaunted daughter of Jerusalem.

And then, months having passed, a scroll was received from the emissaries, declaring: "We hereby proclaim with joy: with the aid of the Lord we have found in Poland a boy, a wondrous lad, in virtue clad, with wisdom blest, head and shoulders above all the rest; pious, modest, pedigreed, model of virtue and good deed; paragon and worthy son, wreathed in blessings from the sages, who bless this match with all their hearts and wages." And so forth.

The grandee, Sire Ahiezer, seeing his designs were prospering, thought it only fitting that the above-mentioned bridegroom hold forth at a great academy in Jerusalem, that scholars might stream from the ends of the earth to hear the law from his lips. What did he do? He convened all manner of craftsmen, built a great mansion, adorned it inside and out—painted it and gilded it, and furnished it with several cartloads of precious texts, no jot of godly wisdom lacking among them. And he designated a hall for prayer, adorned it with all manner of adornment, and called on the scribes to prepare the scrolls of the law, and on the

gold- and silversmiths to design the ornaments of the scrolls—and all of this in order that the prayers of the sage might be neighbor to his studies, so that he might truthfully say, "Here is my God, and I will praise Him." The grandee, wishing to consummate his work of glorifying the sanctuary, set his heart on an Ark for the scrolls—an Ark such as the eye of man had never seen.

He began to ask after a proper craftsman. Among the journeymen he came on one said to be versed in the subtlest of crafts, one Ben Uri by name—a man both modest and diffident, a mere craftsman as met the eye were it not for the spark that flashed from his glance, and was reflected in the work of his hand. Ahiezer took note, and placed the work of the Ark in his hand.

2

Sire Ahiezer took Ben Uri and lodged him by the garden, at the bottom of his house. Ben Uri brought his tools and readied himself for the task. Immediately, another spirit possessed him. His hands wrought the Ark; his lips uttered song all the day.

Dinah, lovely child of Ahiezer, stood by her window, gazing into the trees, and heard. Dreaming, she was drawn to the singer as though—God save us!—a spell had been cast. So she went down, she and her handmaidens with her went down, to examine the work of the man. She peered into the Ark, she stirred his paints, examined his carvings, and picked up his tools. All the time Ben Uri worked, singing as he worked, working even as he sang. Dinah heard his song and did not know her heart. And he, even as he wrought, all the time aimed his song at her heart, to wrap it in his rapture, so that she might stand there forever, never depart.

But as Ben Uri pursued his work, he cleaved more and

more to it, until both eyes and heart passed into the Ark; no part of him was free of it. Memory of Dinah fled him; it was as though she did not exist. Not many days passed before he stopped singing altogether; his voice rang out no more. Ben Uri stood by the Ark all day, carving figures on the Ark and breathing the soul of life into them. Lions mounted upon it, a mane of gold on each of the pair, their mouths brimming with song, uttering the glories of the Lord.

On the hangings that draped the doors of the Ark, eagles poised above, their wings spread, to leap toward the sacred beasts above. At the sound of the golden bells when the Ark was opened, they would soar in their places, flap their wings, and wrap the universe in song. Already the worthies of Jerusalem awaited the day the Ark would be borne up to the House of the Lord the hand of the grandee had buided, when the scrolls of the law, crowned with silver and lapped in gold and decked out in all the jewels of sanctity, would find their place within this Ark.

Rapt, Ben Uri wrought, possessed by a joy he had never known before. In no kingdom, in no province, in the course of no labor had he exulted as he exulted here, in the place where the Divine Presence was revealed and then reviled, in the multitude of our transgressions. Not many days passed before his labors were ended. Ben Uri looked at the work of his hands and was astonished how the Ark stood firm and he broke out in tears.

While he himself was like an empty vessel. His soul was sad Ben Uri went out to seek the air among the trees in the garden, to restore his spirits a little. The sun set in the west; the face of the heavens crimsoned. Ben Uri went down to the far corners of the garden, he laid himself down, and he slept. At just that moment Dinah left her chamber. Her robe clung to her flesh; fear was on her countenance. It was many days since she had heard Ben Uri's voice, since she had looked on the man. She went to his chamber to look at the Ark. She came, but did not find him there. Dinah

stood in Ben Uri's chamber, and the Ark of God stood at the open window, where Ben Uri had worked. She stood near the Ark, and examined it. The evil one came, and poured a potion of vengeance into her heart. He pointed at the Ark and said, "It is not for nought that Ben Uri takes no thought of you; it is the Ark that separates you twain." At that moment Dinah lifted her arms, and smote the Ark. The Ark teetered, and fell through the open window.

The Ark fell, but no part of it was broken, no corner of it was blemished. It lay there among the trees in the garden below. Roses and lilies nodded over it, like mourners at the ark of the dead. Night drew a mantle of black silk over the Ark. The moon came out of the clouds, and, weaving its silvery web, traced a Star of David on the shroud.

3

On her couch in the night Dinah lies and her heart wakes. Her sin weighs heavily upon her: who could bear her burden of guilt? Dinah buries her head in her pallet, oppressed by sorrow, by shame. How can she look to Heaven, how call to it for grace? Dinah springs from her couch and lights the taper in her room. In the mirror opposite, light flares out in her eyes. It had been her mother's glass, but held no trace of her mother's glance. Were Dinah to look into it now, it is only her own countenance she would see—the countenance of a sinner. "Mother, Mother!" her heart cries out. But there is no answer. Dinah rose and crossed to the window, she rested her chin on her hands, and looked out. Jerusalem is cradled in mountains. The wind swept down and entered her chamber, extinguishing the light, as in a sickroom, where some invalid sleeps. It played around her hair and through her ears, whispering sweet melodies, like the songs Ben Uri had sung. Where, oh where, is he now?

Among the trees in the garden he sleeps, like a lyre whose strings are rent, whose melodies have forsaken it. And the Ark lies prone, in the garden. The Guardian of Night unfurls his pinions of darkness, and the lions and eagles in the Ark nestle under his wings. An unspotted moon slips out of the clouds; another moon rises to meet her in the waters of the pond. They stand, face to face, like a pair of Sabbath candles. To what might the Ark have been compared at that moment? To a woman who extends her palms in prayer, while her breasts—the Tables of the Covenant—are lifted with her heart, beseeching her Father in Heaven: "Master of the Universe, this soul which Thou hast breathed into him Thou hast taken from him, so that now he is cast before Thee, like a body without its soul, and Dinah, this unspotted soul, has gone forth naked into exile. God! Till when shall the souls that dwell in Thy kingdom suffer the death of this life, in bereavement, and the service of Thy habitation sound out in suffering and dread?"

All Israel which was in Jerusalem had foregathered to consecrate the Ark, to bear it up from Ben Uri's chamber to the synagogue. They thronged into Ben Uri's chamber, but the Ark was not there. Bewildered, they cried, "Where is the Ark?—the Ark of the Lord?" "Where is the Ark?" "The Ark, where is it?" They were still crying out when they spied it, under the window, prone in the yard. Directly they began to heap abuse on its creator, saying that the ne'er-do-well, the scoundrel was surely an infamous sinner, quite unqualified for the hallowed work of the Ark: having presumed to undertake it, he had surely called down the wrath of the Heavens, which had overturned it. And, having revered the Ark, they loathed it. The rabbi immediately condemned it to banishment. Two Ishmaelites came, and heaved it into the lumber room. The congregation dispersed in torment, their heads covered with shame.

The morning star glimmered and dawned, lighting the skies in the east. The folk of Jerusalem awoke as from an evil

dream. The Ark had been banished, their joy had set, Ben Uri had vanished, none knew whither. Misery reigned in the house of the Sire.

Night and day Dinah keeps to her window. She raises her eyes to the heavens, and casts them down again, like a sinner. Sire Ahiezer is dogged by worries. The synagogue his hands had builded stands desolate, without Ark, without prayer, without learning. Sire Ahiezer bestirred himself and commissioned an Ark to replace Ben Uri's. They installed it in the synagogue, but it stood there like an emblem of loss. Whoever comes to pray in the synagogue is at once struck by dire melancholy; he slips away from that place, and seeks some place of worship, humble and poor, where he can pour out his heart before God.

4

The time of rejoicing is come; the wedding day is near, and in the house of Sire Ahiezer they knead and they bake and they dress all the viands, and prepare fine draperies to hang in the gateway, for the day his daughter will enter under the bridal canopy with her partner in joy, the esteemed and the learned Ezekiel, God preserve him.

And—seel—upon the hillside the feet of a courier—a special emissary with scroll in hand: "'Twill be the third day hence!' They were preparing themselves to delight in the bride and the bridegroom on the day of their joy, saying, "A precious pearl it is the couriers have drawn from the sea of learning which is Poland, and the festivities will be such as Jerusalem shall not have seen the likes of, since the day her sons were driven into exile." All the men of Jerusalem went forth to welcome the bridegroom, and they brought him into the city in great honor, with tabor and cymbal and dancing. They escorted him to the house of Sire Ahiezer,

and the great ones of the city, assessing his virtues, were dazzled by a tongue dropping pearls, and by his regal presence. Then the wedding day arrived. They accompanied the bride to the house of the rabbi, to receive her blessing from his lips. Suddenly, she raised her voice in weeping, and cried, "Leave us alone!" They left her with the rabbi. She told him all that had happened, how it was she who had overturned the Ark. The rabbi stood mute with terror, his very vision was confounded. But, deferring to the eminence of the bride on this, her day of grace and atonement, began to ply her with comfort. "My child," he said, "our sages of blessed memory tell us that when a person takes a wife to himself, all his sins fall away. Notice that it was person they said, not man, and thence we gather that it was not man, the male, that was meant, but mankind in general, so that man and wife are one in this, that on the day of their marriage the Holy One, blessed be He, pardons their sins. And should you ask, How is a woman to earn her absolution, on whom the yoke of works weighs so lightly?—know that the good Lord has called you to the greatest of all works. And should you ask, What could that be?, I will tell you: it is the rearing of children in the ways of the Lord." And he proceeded to speak the praises of her bridegroom, to endear him to her, and draw her heart to his virtues. And when the rabbi came to the matter of the Ark, he intimated that silence would be seemly, and held that the Ark would be restored to its rightful place, to the synagogue, and that merciful God would grant Dinah forgiveness. After the bride had left the house of the rabbi, the latter sent Sire Ahiezer word regarding the restoration of Ben Uri's Ark to the synagogue. They sought it, but did not find it. Stolen? Hidden? Ascended to Heaven?—who could presume to say?

Day ebbed and the sun set. All the great ones of Jerusalem foregathered with Sire Ahiezer, in his house, to celebrate his daughter's marriage. Jerusalem glowed in precious light, and the trees in the garden were fragrant as spices. The musi-

cians plied their instruments, and the servants clapped for good cheer. Yet, none the less, a sort of sadness has found a place among them. This sadness attacks the bridal canopy, and rips it into shreds. They assemble at the grandee's table, to partake of the wedding feast. The throats of the scholars are filled with delicate viands and wines, with song and hymns of praise. The jester calls for a dance for the righteous, and they move out in a ritual ring to cheer the bride and the groom. But this dear pair are afflicted by some sadness; it drives a wedge between them, and forces their elbows apart. And neither drew near to the other all that night, even in the seclusion of their chamber. The groom broods in one corner, his thoughts straying elsewhere. He dwells on his father's house, on Freidele, whose mother had tended his father and him since his sainted mother had died. And Dinah broods in the other, her thoughts going back to the Ark and its builder who has vanished from the city, no one knowing where he has turned.

At morning prayers the young man stood wrapped in a prayer shawl and crowned with phylacteries. He reigns as bridegroom all the seven days of the feast, and is not left alone, lest envious spirits assail him. But how to ward off the spirits that hold sway in his heart, and afflict him greatly? Just when he is preparing to give himself over, heart and soul, to the *shema*, and shields his eyes with his palms in order to shut out anything that might intrude on his devotions—just then his Freidele slips into the palm of his hand, and stands there before his eyes. And once she has accommodated herself there, she stays there till the end of the service, when he unwinds his phylacteries and lays them in their reticule. This reticule—Freidele has made for him with characters embroidered upon it! He folds the reticule, and wraps it in his prayer shawl, and furtively puts it away. His father, come from Poland for the nuptials, watches him, angry and troubled. What might he be wanting in the house of Sire Ahiezer? If wealth he craved, here was wealth, so

prodigal; if love of woman, his wife was comely and gracious; if a home, this one was fit for a king. Why, then, was he restless? They went in to breakfast, and chanted the seven blessings of nuptial felicity, and seated the couple side by side. Their bodies are close, but their hearts have been given to others.

5

And they never drew near. Month comes and month goes. In numbers the scholars assembled, to attend the law from Ezekiel's lips, and the academy was filled with holy lore. Gracious learning was on his tongue, and whatever his mode of expounding—simple or subtle or mystic—bright angels gathered around him, shedding the light of the law on his brow. But even as he teaches, anguish gnaws at his heart, as though—God forbid!—he lacks gratitude for having been deemed worthy to go up to the Holy Land.

And Dinah—Dinah sits, despondent. At times she goes out for a while, and stands by the spot where Ben Uri had wrought, and stares at his implements, which are gathering dust. She clasps her hands, and murmurs some few of the songs Ben Uri had sung, sings until her eyes are dimmed by tears. Her soul weeps in secret for her pride. Once, as Rabbi Ezekiel was passing by, he heard a pleasing melody rising within that chamber. When he paused to listen, they told him that it was no mortal voice he heard singing, but rather the evil spirits that had been created out of Ben Uri's breath as he sat and sang at his work. Rabbi Ezekiel hastened away. Thenceforth, when forced to walk in that part of the house, he averted his head, in order to avoid lending his ears to the chants of such as these.

Toward evening, Rabbi Ezekiel goes to walk in the hills. The mighty ones of Israel walk out at that hour, and their re-

tainers go before them, striking the earth with their staffs, and all the people hasten to rise in awe and deference before them, and the sun casts purple canopies over each of the righteous as it goes down to greet its Creator. The elect, who are deemed worthy of this, are granted the privilege of finding their place in the Holy Land in their lifetime, and not only this, but those deemed worthy of dwelling there in their lifetime are privileged to enjoy the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. But Rabbi Ezekiel? His feet are planted in the gates of Jerusalem, and stand on her soil, but his eyes and his heart are pledged to houses of study and worship abroad, and even now, as he walks in the hills of Jerusalem, he fancies himself among the scholars of his own town, strolling in the fields to take the evening air.

It is told that once they found there Freidele sitting with her friends, singing:

They have borne him far away

To wed a dowered maiden.

His father did not care to know

Our hearts were heavy laden.

One day an emissary of the rabbis returned to Jerusalem from the diaspora, and brought a letter for Rabbi Ezekiel. His father was pleased to inform him that he had negotiated the home journey in safety, and now, as ever before, was bearing up under the burdens of justice and learning in their town. In passing, he thought his son might care to know that Freidele had found her mate and had moved—together with her mother—to another city, so that the sexton's wife was therefore looking after his needs. Rabbi Ezekiel read the letter and began to weep. Here was Freidele, decently wedded, and here was he, fancying her still. And his own wife? When they pass each other she stares off in one direction, he in another.

Month comes, month goes, and the academy grows ever

more desolate. The scholars, one by one, steal away. They cut a staff from some tree in the garden, take it in hand, and set off on their separate ways. It is obvious for all to see—Heaven help us!—that Rabbi Ezekiel's soul is tainted. Sire Ahiezer perceived that his works had not prospered, that the couple was ill-matched, that the marriage, in fact, was no marriage at all.

The couple stand silent before the rabbi, their eyes downcast. Rabbi Ezekiel is about to divorce his wife. And just as he did not look at her at the hour of their marriage, so he does not look at her in the hour of their parting. And just as Dinah did not hear his voice as he said to her, "Lo, thou art sanctified unto me," so she does not hear it as he says, "Lo, I cast thee forth." Our sages of blessed memory said that when a man puts his first wife away from him, the very altars weep, but here the altars had dropped tears even as he took her to wife. It was not long that Sire Ahiezer left Jerusalem with his daughter. He had failed in his settlement there; his wishes had not prospered. He went forth in shame, his spirit heavy within him. His house was deserted, the House of Study stood desolate. And the quorum that had gathered in the synagogue to honor Sire Ahiezer so long as he was there, now did not assemble there for even the first round of afternoon prayers on the day of his departure.

6

That very night, after the departure, the rabbi, seated at study, nodded over his Talmud. In a dream he saw that he would suffer exile. Next morning, following the council of our sages, he put the best possible interpretation on his dream, and fasted all day. After he had tasted a morsel and returned to his study, he heard a voice. He raised his eyes, and saw the Divine Presence in the guise of a lovely woman,

garbed in black, and without adornment, nodding mournfully at him. The rabbi started out of his sleep, rent his garments, again made good his dream, and sat fasting for a day and a night, and in the dark of the following evening inquired as to the signification of his dream. Providence disclosed to him a number of things concealed from mortal sight, and he beheld with eyes of spirit the souls of those bereaved of their beloved in their lifetimes groping dismally in the world for their mates. He peered hard and saw Ben Uri. Ben Uri said to him, "Wherefore hast thou driven me out, that I should not cleave to my portion in the Kingdom?" "Is it thy voice I hear, Ben Uri, my son?" the rabbi cried, and he lifted his voice and he wept. Weeping, the rabbi woke out of his sleep, and knew that his doom had been sealed. He washed his hands, drew on his mantle, took up his staff and his wallet, and, calling to his wife, said, "My daughter, seek not after me in my going forth, for the doom of exile has been levied upon me, to redeem the forsaken in love." He kissed the *mezuzah*, and slipped away. They sought him, and did not find him.

They say he wanders still. Once an aged emissary from the Holy Land stopped at a House of Study in the diaspora. One night he nodded at his devotions, and in his sleep he heard a voice. He awoke, and saw that selfsame rabbi, holding a youth by the hem of his robe and trying to draw him away. Frightened, the emissary cried out, "Rabbi, are you here?" The rabbi vanished. The youth then confided to the emissary that when the House of Study was emptied of its worshippers, he had begun to fashion an ornament for the easterly wall of the synagogue, and the emissary had borne witness to the loveliness of that ornament, and to the craft with which it was fashioned. But as soon as he had begun, that old man had stood at his side, drawn him by the hem of his robe, and whispered, "Come, let us rise and go up to Jerusalem."

Since that time innumerable tales have been told of that rabbi, and of his sojourning in the "world of confusion,"

Mercy shield us! Rabbi Nissim, of blessed memory, who traveled about in the world for many years, used to say, "May I forfeit my portion in the redemption of Israel, if I did not behold him once floating off into the Great Sea on a red kerchief, with an infant child in his arms. And even though the hour was twilight, and the sun was setting, I swear by all that we yearn for in prayer that it was he, but as for that child—I do not know who that was."

At the present time it is said that he has been seen wandering about in the Holy Land. The world-wise cavil and quibble, and even—some of them—mock. But little children insist that at times, in the twilight, an old man hails them, and peering into their eyes drifts into the gathering dusk. And whoever has heard the tale here recounted surely knows that the man is that rabbi, he, and no other. But God alone knows for a fact.

Translated by BARUCH HOGHMAN

The Kerchief

1

EVERY YEAR my father, of blessed memory, used to visit the Lashkowitz fair to do business with the merchants. Lashkowitz is a small town of no more consequence than any of the other small towns in the district, except that once a year merchants gather together there from everywhere and offer their wares for sale in the town's marketplace; and whoever needs goods comes and buys them. In earlier times, two or three generations ago, more than a hundred thousand people used to gather together there; and even now, when Lashkowitz is in its decline, they come to it from all over the country. You will not find a single merchant in the whole of Galicia who does not keep a stall in Lashkowitz during the fair.

2

For us the week in which my father went to the market was just like the week of the Ninth of Ab. During those days there was not a smile to be seen on Mother's lips, and the children also refrained from laughing. Mother, peace be with

**What We Talk About
When We Talk About
Anne Frank**

What We Talk About
When We Talk About

Anne Frank

They're in our house maybe ten minutes and already Mark's lecturing us on the Israeli occupation. Mark and Lauren live in Jerusalem, and people from there think it gives them the right.

Mark is looking all stoic and nodding his head. "If we had what you have down here in South Florida . . .," he says, and trails off. "Yup," he says, and he's nodding again. "We'd have no troubles at all."

"You *do* have what we have," I tell him. "All of it: Sun and palm trees. Old Jews and oranges and the worst drivers around. At this point," I say, "we've probably got more Israelis than you." Debbie, my wife, she puts a hand on my arm. Her signal that I'm taking a tone, or interrupting someone's story, sharing something private, or making an inappropriate joke. That's my cue, and I'm surprised, considering how much I get it, that she ever lets go of my arm.

"Yes, you've got it all now," Mark says. "Even terrorists."

I look to Lauren. She's the one my wife has the relationship with—the one who should take charge. But Lauren isn't going to give her husband any signal. She and Mark ran off to Israel twenty years ago and turned Hassidic, and neither of them will put a hand on the other in public. Not for this. Not to put out a fire.

"Wasn't Mohamed Atta living right here before 9/11?" Mark says, and now he pantomimes pointing out houses. "Goldberg, Goldberg, Goldberg—Atta. How'd you miss him in this place?"

"Other side of town," I say.

"That's what I'm talking about. That's what you have that we don't. Other sides of town. Wrong sides of the tracks. Space upon space." And now he's fingering a granite countertop in our kitchen, looking out into the living room and the dining room, staring through the kitchen windows out at the pool. "All this house," he says, "and one son? Can you imagine?"

"No," Lauren says. And then she turns to us, backing him up. "You should see how we live with ten."

"Ten kids," I say. "We could get you a reality show with that here in the States. Help you get a bigger place."

The hand is back pulling at my sleeve. "Pictures," Debbie says. "I want to see the girls." We all follow Lauren into the den for her purse.

"Do you believe it?" Mark says. "Ten girls!" And the way it comes out of his mouth, it's the first time I like the guy. The first time I think about giving him a chance.

Facebook and Skype brought Deb and Lauren back together. They were glued at the hip growing up. Went to school together their whole lives. Yeshiva school. All girls. Out in Queens through high school and then riding the subway together to one called Central in Manhattan. They stayed best friends forever until I married Deb and turned her secular, and soon after that Lauren met Mark and they went off to the Holy Land and went from Orthodox to *ultra*-Orthodox, which to

me sounds like a repackaged detergent—ORTHOODOX ULTRA®, now with more deep-healing power. Because of that, we're supposed to call them Shoshana and Yerucham. Deb's been doing it. I'm just not saying their names.

"You want some water?" I offer. "Coke in the can?"

"You?—which of us?" Mark says.

"You both," I say. "I've got whiskey. Whiskey's kosher, too, right?"

"If it's not, I'll kosher it up real fast," he says, pretending to be easygoing. And right then, he takes off that big black hat and plops down on the couch in the den.

Lauren's holding the verticals aside and looking out at the yard. "Two girls from Forest Hills," she says. "Who ever thought we'd be the mothers of grown-ups?"

"Trevor's sixteen," Deb says. "You may think he's a grown-up, and he may think he's a grown-up—but we, we are not convinced."

"Well," Lauren says, "then whoever thought we'd have kids raised to think it's normal to have coconuts crashing out back and lizards climbing the walls?"

Right then is when Trev comes padding into the den, all six feet of him, plaid pajama bottoms dragging on the floor and T-shirt full of holes. He's just woken up and you can tell he's not sure if he's still dreaming. We told him we had guests. But there's Trev, staring at this man in the black suit, a beard resting on the middle of his stomach. And Lauren, I'd met her once before, right when Deb and I got married, but ten girls and a thousand Shabbos dinners later—well, she's a big woman, in a bad dress and a giant blond Marilyn Monroe wig. Seeing them at the door, I can't say I wasn't shocked myself. But the boy, he can't hide it on his face.

"Hey," he says.

And then Deb's on him, preening and fixing his hair and hugging him. "Trevy, this is my best friend from childhood," she says. "This is Shoshana, and this is—"

"Mark," I say.

"Yerucham," Mark says, and sticks out a hand. Trev shakes it. Then Trev sticks out his hand, polite, to Lauren. She looks at it, just hanging there in the air—offered.

"I don't shake," she says. "But I'm so happy to see you. Like meeting my own son. I mean it," she says. And here she starts to cry, for real. And she and Deb are hugging and Deb's crying, too. And the boys, we just stand there until Mark looks at his watch and gets himself a good manly grip on Trev's shoulder.

"Sleeping until three on a Sunday? Man, those were the days," Mark says. "A regular little Rumpelforeskin." Trev looks at me, and I want to shrug, but Mark's also looking, so I don't move. Trev just gives us both his best teenage glare and edges out of the room. As he does, he says, "Baseball practice," and takes my car keys off the hook by the door to the garage.

"There's gas," I say.

"They let them drive here at sixteen?" Mark says. "Insane."

. . .

"So what brings you," I say, "after all these years?" Deb's too far away to grab at me, but her face says it all. "Was I supposed to know?" I say. "Jeez, Deb must have told me. She told me, for sure. My fault."

"My mother," Mark says. "She's failing and my father's getting old—and they come to us for Sukkot every year. You know?"

"I know the holidays," I say.

"They used to fly out to us. For Sukkot and Pesach, both. But they can't fly now, and I just wanted to get over while things are still good. We haven't been in America—"

"Oh, gosh," Lauren says. "I'm afraid to think how long it's been. More than ten years. Twelve," she says. "Twelve years ago. With the kids, it's just impossible until enough of them are big. This might be"—and now she plops down on the couch—"this might be my first time in a house with no kids under the roof in that long. Oh my. I'm serious. How weird. I feel faint. And when I say *faint*," she says, standing up, giving an oddly girlish spin around, "what I mean is giddy."

"How do you do it?" Deb says. "Ten kids? I really do want to hear."

That's when I remember. "I forgot your drink," I say to Mark.

"Yes, his drink. That's how," Lauren says. "That's how we cope."

. . .

And that's how the four of us end up back at the kitchen table with a bottle of vodka between us. I'm not one to get drunk on a Sunday afternoon, but I tell you, with a plan to spend the day with Mark, I jump at the chance. Deb's drinking, too, but not for the same reason. For her and Lauren, I think they're reliving a little bit of the wild times. The very small window when they were together, barely grown-up, two young women living in New York on the edge of two worlds. And they just look, the both of them, so overjoyed to be reunited, I think they're half celebrating and half can't handle how intense the whole thing is.

Deb says, as she's already on her second, "This is really racy for us. I mean *really* racy. We try not to drink much at all these days. We think it sets a bad example for Trevor. It's not good to drink in front of them right at that age when they're all transgressive. He's suddenly so interested in that kind of thing."

"I'm just happy when he's interested in something," I say. Deb slaps at the air. "I just don't think it's good to make drinking look like it's fun with a teenager around."

Lauren smiles and straightens her wig. "Does anything we do look fun to our kids?" I laugh at that. Honestly, I'm really liking her more and more.

"It's the age limit that does it," Mark says. "It's the whole American puritanical thing, the twenty-one-year-old drinking age and all that. We don't make a big deal about it in Israel, and so the kids, they don't even notice alcohol. Except for the foreign workers on Fridays, you hardly see anyone drunk at all."

"The workers and the Russians," Lauren says.

"The Russian immigrants," he says, "that's a whole separate matter. Most of them, you know, not even Jews."

"What does that mean?" I say.

"It means matrilineal descent, is what it means," Mark says. "It means with the Ethiopians there were conversions."

But Deb wants to keep us away from politics, and the way we're arranged, me in between them and Deb opposite (it's a round table, our kitchen table), she practically has to throw herself across to grab hold of my arm. "Fix me another," she says.

And here she switches the subject to Mark's parents.

"How's the visit been going?" she says, her face all somber.

"How are your folks holding up?"

Deb is very interested in Mark's parents. They're Holocaust survivors. And Deb has what can only be called an unhealthy obsession with the idea of that generation being gone. Don't get me wrong. It's important to me, too. I care, too. All I'm saying is, there's healthy and unhealthy, and my wife, she gives this subject a lot, *a lot*, of time. "Do you know," she'll say to me and Trevor, just absolutely out of nowhere, "World War Two veterans die at a rate of a thousand a day?"

"What can I say?" Mark says. "My mother's a very sick

woman. And my father, he tries to keep his spirits up. He's a tough guy."

"I'm sure," I say. And then I look in my drink, all serious, and give a shake of my head. "They really are amazing."

"Who?" Mark says. "Fathers?"

I look back up and they're all three staring at me. "Survivors," I say, seeing I jumped the gun.

"There's good and bad," Mark says. "Like anyone else."

And then he laughs. "Though there isn't anyone else in my parents' place."

Lauren says, "You should see it. The whole of Carmel Lake Village, it's like a DP camp with a billiards room. They're all there."

"One tells the other," Marks says, "and they follow. It's amazing. From Europe to New York, and now, for the end of their lives, again the same place."

"Tell them that crazy story," Lauren says. "Tell them,

Yuri."

"Tell us," Deb says. And I can see in her eyes that she wants it to be one of those stories of a guy who spent three years hiding inside one of those cannons they use for the circus. And at the end of the war, a Righteous Gentile comes out all joyous and fires him through a hoop and into a tub of water, where he discovers his lost son breathing through a straw.

"So you can picture my father," Mark says, "in the old country, he went to *heder*, had the *peyes* and all that. But in America, a classic *galusmonger*. He looks more like you than me. It's not from him that I get this," he says, pointing at his beard. "Shoshana and I—"

"We know," I say.

"So my father. They've got a nice nine-hole course, a diving range, some greens for the practice putting. And my dad, he's at the clubhouse. I go with him. He wants to work

out in the gym, he says. Tells me I should come. Get some exercise. And he tells me"—and here Mark points at his feet, sliding a leg out from under the table so we can see his big black clodhoppers—"You can't wear those Shabbos shoes on the treadmill. You need the sneakers. You know, sports shoes?" he says. And I tell him, 'I know what sneakers are. I didn't forget my English any more than your Yiddish is gone.' And so he says, '*Ah shaynem dank dir in pupik.*' Just to show me who's who."

"The point," Lauren says. "Tell them the point."

"So he's sitting in the locker room, trying to pull a sock on, which is, at that age, basically the whole workout in itself. It's no quick business. And I see, while I'm waiting, and I can't believe it. I nearly pass out. The guy next to him, the number on his arm, it's three before my father's number. You know, in sequence."

"What do you mean?" Deb says.

"I mean, the number tattooed. It's the same as my father's camp number, digit for digit, but my father's ends in an eight. And this guy's, it ends in a five. That's the only difference. I mean, they're separated by two people. And I look at this guy. I've never seen him before in my life. So I say, 'Excuse me, sir' to the guy. And he just says, 'You with the Chabad? I don't want anything but to be left alone. I already got candles at home.' I tell him, 'No. I'm not. I'm here visiting my father.' And to my father, I say, 'Do you know this gentleman? Have you two met? I'd really like to introduce you, if you haven't.' And they look each other over for what, I promise you, is minutes. Actual minutes. It is—with *kanood* I say this, with respect for my father—but it is like watching a pair of big beige manatees sitting on a bench, each with one sock on. They're just looking each other up and down, everything slow. And then my father says, 'I seen him. Seen him around.' The other guy, he says, 'Yes, I've seen.' 'You're both survivors,' I tell them. 'Look, look,' I say. 'The num-

bers.' And they look. 'They're the same,' I say. And they both hold out their arms to look at the little ashen tattoos. '*The same*,' I tell them. And to my father, I say, 'Do you get it? The same, except his—his, it's right ahead of yours. Look! Compare.' So they look. They compare." And to us now, Mark's eyes are popping out of his head. "I mean, think about it," he says. "Around the world, surviving the unsurvivable, these two old guys end up with enough money to retire to Carmel Lake and play golf every day. So I say to my dad, 'He's right ahead of you,' I say. 'Look, a five,' I say. 'And yours is an eight.' And the other guy looks and my father looks, and my father says, 'All that means is, he cut ahead of me in line. There, same as here. This guy's a curter, I just didn't want to say.' 'Blow it out your ear,' the other guy says. And that's it. Then they get back to putting on socks."

Deb looks crestfallen. She was expecting something empowering. Some story with which to educate Trevor, to reconfirm her belief in the humanity that, from inhumanity, forms. So now she's just staring, her mouth hanging on to this thin, watery smile.

But me, I love that kind of story. I'm starting to take a real shine to both these two, and not just because I'm suddenly feeling sloshed.

"Good story, Yuri," I say, copying his wife. "Yerucham," I say, "that one's got zing."

Yerucham hoists himself up from the table, looking proud. He checks the label of our white bread on the counter—making sure it's kosher. He takes a slice, pulls off the crust, and rolls the white part against the countertop with the palm of his hand. He rolls it up into a little ball. He comes over and pours himself a shot and throws it back. And then he eats that crazy dough ball. Just tosses it in his mouth, as if it's the bottom of his own personal punctuation mark—you know, to underline his story.

"Is that good?" I say.

"Try it," he says. He goes to the counter and slings me, through the air, he pitches me a slice of white bread, and says, "But first pour yourself a shot."

I reach for the bottle and find that Deb's got her hands around it, and her head's bowed down, like the bottle is anchoring her, keeping her from tipping back.

"Are you okay, Deb?" Lauren says. She's got a hand on Deb's neck, and then switches to rubbing her arm. And I know what it is. I know what it is and I just up and say it: "It's because it was funny."

"Honey!" Deb says.

"She won't tell you, but she's a little obsessed with the Holocaust. And that story, no offense, Mark, it's not what she had in mind."

Mark is staring back and forth between us. And, honestly, the guy looks hurt. And I should leave it be, I know. But I just have to go on. It's not like someone from Deb's high school is around every day offering insights.

"It's like she's a survivor's kid, my wife. It's crazy, that education they give them. Her grandparents were all born in the Bronx, but it's like, I don't know. It's like here we are twenty minutes from downtown Miami, but really it's 1937 and we live on the edge of Berlin. It's astounding."

"That's not it!" Deb says, openly defensive, her voice just super high up on the register. "I'm not upset about that. It's just the alcohol. All this alcohol," she says, and rolls her eyes, making light. "It's that and seeing Lauren. Seeing Shoshana, after all this time."

"Oh, she was always like this in high school," Shoshana says. "Sneak one drink, and she started to cry."

"Alcohol is a known depressive," Yerrucham says. And for that, for stating facts like that, he's straight on his way to being disliked again.

"You want to know what used to get her going, what would make her truly happy?" Shoshana says. And I tell you, I don't see it coming. I'm as blindsided as Deb was with that numbers story.

"It was getting high," Shoshana says. "That's what always did it. Smoking up, it would just make her laugh for hours and hours."

"Oh my God," Deb says, but not to Shoshana. She's pointing at me, likely because I look as startled as I feel. "Look at my big bad secular husband," Deb says. "He really can't handle it. He can't handle his wife's having any history of naughtiness at all—Mr. Liberal Open-Minded." And to me, she says, "How much more chaste a wife can you dream of than a modern-day Yeshiva girl who stayed a virgin until twenty-one? Honestly," she says, "what did you think Shoshana was going to say was so much fun?"

"Honestly-honestly?" I say. "I don't want to. It's embarrassing."

"Let's hear," Mark says. "We're all friends here. New friends, but friends."

"I thought you were—" I say, and I stop. "You'll kill me." "Say it!" Deb says, positively glowing.

"Honestly, I thought you were going to say it was something like competing in the Passover Nut Roll, or making sponge cake. Something like that." I hang my head. And Shoshana and Deb are just laughing so hard, they can't breathe. They're grabbing at each other, so that I can't tell, really, if they're holding each other up or pulling each other down. I'm afraid one of them's going to fall.

"I can't believe you told him about the nut roll," Shoshana says.

"And I can't believe," Deb says, "you just told my husband of twenty-two years how much we used to get high. I haven't

touched a joint since before we were married," she says. "Have we, honey? Have we smoked since we got married?"

"No," I say. "It's been a very long time."

"So, come on, Shosh. When was it? When was the last time you smoked?"

Now, I know I mentioned the beard on Mark. But I don't know if I mentioned how hairy a guy he is. It grows, that thing, right up to his eyeballs. Like having eyebrows on top and bottom both. It's really something. So when Deb asks the question, the two of them, Shosh and Yuri, they're basically giggling like children, and I can tell, in the little part that shows, in the bit of skin I can see, that Mark's eyelids and earlobes are in full blush.

"When Shoshana said we drink to get through the days," Mark says, "she was kidding about the drinking."

"We don't drink much," Shoshana says.

"It's smoking that she means," he says.

"We smoke," Lauren says, reconfirming.

"Cigarettes?" Deb says.

"We still get high," Shoshana says. "I mean, all the time."

"Hassidim!" Deb screams. "You're not allowed! There's no way."

"Everyone does in Israel. It's like the sixties there," Mark says. "Like a revolution. It's the highest country in the world. Worse than Holland, and India, and Thailand put together. Worse than anywhere, even Argentina—though they may have us tied."

"Well, maybe that's why the kids aren't interested in alcohol."

And Yerucham admits that maybe this is so.

"Do you want to get high now?" Deb says. And we all three look at her. Me, with surprise. And those two just with straight longing.

"We didn't bring," Shoshana says. "Though it's pretty rare anyone at customs peeks under the wig."

"Maybe you guys can find your way into the glaucoma underground over at Carmel Lake," I say. "I'm sure that place is rife with it."

"That's funny," Mark says.

"I'm funny," I say, now that we're all getting on.

"We've got pot," Deb says.

"We do?" I say. "I don't think we do."

Deb looks at me and bites at the cuticle on her pinkie.

"You're not secretly getting high all these years?" I say, feeling honestly like maybe I'm about to get a whole list of deceptions. I really don't feel well at all.

"Our son," Deb says. "He has pot."

"Our son?"

"Trevor," she says.

"Yes," I say. "I know which one."

It's a lot for one day, that kind of news. And it feels to me a lot like betrayal. Like my wife's old secret and my son's new secret are wound up together and that I've somehow been wronged. Also, I'm not one to recover quickly from any kind of slight from Deb—not when there are other people around. I really need to talk stuff out. Some time alone with Deb, even five minutes, would fix it. But it's super-apparent that she doesn't need any time alone with me. She doesn't seem troubled at all. What she seems is focused. She's busy at the counter, using a paper rampon wrapper to roll up a joint.

"It's an emergency preparedness method we came up with in high school," Shoshana says. "The things teenage girls will do when they're desperate."

"And we were desperate," Deb says, as if everything's already funny. "Do you remember that nice boy from Y.H.S.Q. that we used to smoke in front of?"

"I can picture him," Shoshana says. "But not the name."

"He'd just watch us," Deb says. "There'd be six or seven of us in a circle, girls and boys not touching—we were so religious. Isn't that crazy?" Deb is talking to me, as Shoshana and Mark don't think it's crazy at all. "The only place we touched was passing the joint, at the thumbs. And this boy, we had a nickname for him."

"Passover?!" Shoshana yells.

"Yes," Deb says, "that's it. All we ever called him was 'Passover.' Because every time the joint got to him, he'd just pass it over to the next one. Passover Rand," Deb says. "Now I remember."

Shoshana takes the joint and lights it with a match, sucking in deep. "It's a miracle when I remember anything these days," she says. "I'm telling you. It's the kids. After my first was born, I forgot half of everything I knew. And then half again with each one after. Ten kids later, it's amazing when I remember to blow out a match after I light it." She drops the one she's holding into the sink, and it makes that little hiss. "Just last night, I woke up in a panic. I couldn't remember if there were fifty-two cards in a deck or fifty-two weeks in a year. The recall errors—I'm up all night worrying over them, just waiting for the Alzheimer's to kick in."

"It's not that bad," Mark tells her. "It's only everyone on one side of your family that has it."

"That's true," she says, passing her husband the joint. "The other side is blessed only with dementia. Anyway, which is it? Weeks or cards?"

"Same, same," Mark says, taking a hit. When it's Deb's turn, she holds the joint and looks at me,

like I'm supposed to nod or give her permission in some handsomely anxiety-absolving way. And I just can't take it anymore. Instead of saying, "Go ahead," or "Let's do it," I pretty much bark at Deb. "When were you going to tell me about our son?" I say. "When was that going to happen? How long have you known?"

At that, Deb takes a long hit, and holds it deep, like an old pro.

"Really, Deb. How could you not tell me you knew?"

Deb walks over and hands me the joint. She blows the smoke in my face, not aggressive, just blowing.

"I've only known five days," she says. "I was going to tell you, obviously. I just wasn't sure how, or if I should talk to Trevy first, maybe give him a chance," she says.

"A chance to what?" I ask.

"To let him keep it as a secret between us. To let him know he could have my trust, could be forgiven, if he promised to stop."

"But he's the son," I say. "I'm the father. Even if it's a secret with him, it should be a double secret between me and you. I should always get to know—but pretend not to know—any secret with him."

"Do that double part again," Mark says, trying to follow.

But I ignore him.

"That's how it goes," I say to Deb. "That's how it's always been." And because I'm desperate and unsure, I follow it up with "Hasn't it?"

I mean, we really trust each other, Deb and I. And I can't remember feeling like so much has hung on one question in a long, long time. I'm trying to read her face, and something really complex is going on, some formulation. And then she just sits right there on the floor at my feet.

"Oh my God," she says. "I'm so fucking high. Like instantly."

Like, like," and then she starts laughing. "Like, Mike," she says. "Like, kike," she says, turning completely serious. "Oh my God, I'm really messed up."

"We should have warned you," Shoshana says.

As she says this, I'm holding my first hit in, and already trying to fight off the paranoia that comes rushing behind that statement. Mark takes the joint back and passes it straight to Shoshana, respecting the order of things.

"Warn us what?" I say, my voice high, and the smoke still sweet in my nose.

"This isn't your father's marijuana," he says. "The THC levels. It's like, I don't know, the stuff from our childhood? One hit of this new hydroponic stuff, it's like if maybe you smoked a pound of the stuff we had when we were kids."

"I feel it," I say. And I do, in a deep, deep way. And I sit down with Deb on the floor and take her hands. I feel nice. Though I'm not sure if I thought that or said it, so I try it again, making sure it's out loud. "I feel nice," I say.

"I found it in the laundry hamper," Deb says. "That's where I got the pot."

"In the hamper?" Shoshana says.

"Leave it to a teenage boy to think that's the best place to hide something," Deb says. "His clean clothes show up folded in his room, and it never occurs to him that someone empties the hamper. To him, it's the loneliest, most forgotten space in the world. Point is," Deb says, "I found an Altoids tin at the bottom, stuffed full. Just brimming with pot." Deb gives my hands a squeeze. "Are we good now?"

"We're good," I say. And it feels like we're a team again, like it's us against them. Because when Shoshana passes Deb the joint, Deb says, "Are you sure you guys are allowed to smoke pot that comes out of a tin that held non-kosher candy? I really

don't know if that's okay." And it's just exactly the kind of thing I'm thinking right then.

"She's on Facebook, too," I say. "That can't be allowed, either. These are very bad Hassidim," I say, and we laugh at that. We laugh hard.

"First of all, we're not eating it. We're smoking it. And even so, it's cold contact, so it's probably all right either way,"

Shoshana says.

"Cold contact?" I say.

"It's a thing," Shoshana says. "Just forget about it and get up off the floor. Chop-chop." And each of them offers us a hand and gets us standing. "Come, sit back at the table," Shoshana says. So once we're up, we're back down again at the table.

"I'll tell you," Mark says. "That's got to be the number-one most annoying thing about being Hassidic in the outside world. Worse than the rude stuff that gets said is the constant policing by civilians. I'm telling you, everywhere we go, people are checking on us. Ready to make some sort of liturgical citizen's arrest."

"Strangers!" Shoshana says. "Just the other day, down here, on the way from the airport. Yuri pulled into a McDonald's to pee, and some guy in a trucker hat came up to him as he went in and said, 'You allowed to go in there, brother?' Just like that."

"Not true!" Deb says.

"True," Shoshana says.

"It's not that I don't see the fun in that," Mark says. "The allure. You know, we've got Mormons in Jerusalem. They've got a base there. A seminary. The rule is—the deal with the government—they can have their place, but they can't do outreach. No proselytizing. Anyway, I do some business with one of their guys."

"From Utah?" Deb says.

"From Idaho. His name is Jebediah, for real—do you believe it?"

"No, Yerucham and Shoshana," I say. "Jebediah is a very strange name." Mark rolls his eyes at that, and hands me what's left of the joint. Without even asking, he gets up and gets the tin and reaches into his wife's purse for another tampon. He's confident now, at home in my home. And I'm a little less comfortable with this than with the white bread, with a guest coming into the house and smoking up all our son's pot. Deb must be thinking something similar, as she says, "After this story, I'm going to text Trev and make sure he's not coming back anytime soon."

"That'd be good," I say.

"Actually, I'll tell him to come straight home after practice. Or I'll tell him he can have dinner with his friends but that he better be here by nine, not a minute later. Then he'll beg for ten. If I tell him he has to be home no matter what, we're safe."

"Okay," I say. "A good plan."

"So when Jeb's at our house, when he comes by to eat and pours himself a Coke, I do that same religious-police thing. I can't resist. I say, 'Hey, Jeb, you allowed to have that? You supposed to be drinking Coke, or what?' I say it every time. Somehow, I can't resist. People don't mind breaking their own rules, but they're real strict about someone else's."

"So are they allowed to have Coke?" Deb says.

"I don't know," Mark says. "All Jeb ever says back is, 'You're thinking of coffee, and mind your own business, either way.'"

"What happens in Jerusalem, stays in Jerusalem," I say. But they must not have that commercial there, because neither of them thinks that's funny at all.

And then my Deb. She just can't help herself. "You heard about the scandal? The Mormons going through the Holocaust list."

"Like in *Dead Souls*," I say, explaining, "Like in the Gogol book, but real."

"Do you think we read that?" Mark says. "As Hassidim, or before?" He passes me the joint as he says this, so it's both a little aggressive and funny at the same time. And then, because one doesn't preclude the other, he pours himself a drink.

"They took the records of the dead," Deb says, "and they started running through them. They took these people who died as Jews and started converting them into Mormons. Converting the six million against their will."

"And this bothers you?" Mark says. "This is what keeps an American Jew up at night?"

"What does that mean?" Deb says.

"It means—," Mark says.

But Shoshana interrupts him. "Don't tell them what it means, Yuri. Just leave it unmeant."

"We can handle it," I say. "We are interested, even, in handling it. This stuff," I say, pointing in the general direction of the Alroids tin, "has ripened our minds. We're primed to entertain even the highest concepts."

"High concepts, because we're high," Deb says, earnest, not joking at all.

"Your son, he seems like a nice boy."

"Do not talk about their son," Shoshana says.

"Do not talk about our son," Deb says. "This time I reach across and lay a hand on her elbow."

"Talk," I say.

"He does not," Mark says, "seem Jewish to me."

"How can you say that?" Deb says. "What is wrong with you?" But Deb's upset draws less attention than my response. I am laughing so hard that everyone turns toward me.

"What?" Mark says.

"Jewish to you?" I say. "The hat, the beard, the blocky shoes. A lot of pressure, I'd venture, to look Jewish to you. Like say, maybe, Ozzy Osbourne, or the guys from Kiss, like them telling Paul Simon, saying, 'You do not look like a musician to me.'"

"It is not about the outfit," Mark says. "It's about building life in a vacuum. Do you know what I saw on the drive over here? Supermarket, supermarket, adult bookstore, supermarket, supermarket, firing range."

"Floridians do like their guns and porn," I say. "And their supermarkets."

"Oh my God," Deb says. "That's like your 'Goldberg, Goldberg—Atta' thing. Just the same, but different words."

"He likes that rhythm," Shoshana says. "He does that a lot."

"What I'm trying to say, whether you want to take it seriously or not, is that you can't build Judaism only on the foundation of one terrible crime. It is about this obsession with the Holocaust as a necessary sign of identity. As your only educational tool. Because for the children, there is no connection otherwise. Nothing Jewish that binds."

"Wow, that's offensive," Deb says. "And close-minded. There is such a thing as Jewish culture. One can live a culturally rich life."

"Nor if it's supposed to be a Jewish life. Judaism is a religion. And with religion comes ritual. Culture is nothing. Culture is some construction of the modern world. And because of that, it is not fixed; it is ever-changing, and a weak way to bind generations. It's like taking two pieces of metal, and instead of making a nice weld, you hold them together with glue."

"What does that even mean?" Deb says. "Practically?" Mark raises a finger to make his point, to educate. "Do you know why in Israel all the buses and trucks, why all the taxis, even, are Mercedes?"

"Because they give you a big guilt-based discount?" I say. "Or maybe because Mercedes is the best at building vehicles for the transport of Jews—they have a certain knack?"

"Because in Israel we are sound, solid Jews, and so it is nothing, even right after the war, for us to drive German cars and turn on our German Siemens radios to listen to the Hebrew news. We don't need to impose some brand-based apartheid, to busy ourselves with symbolic efforts to keep our memories in place. Because we live exactly as our parents lived before the war. And this serves us in all things, in our relationships, too, in our marriages and parenting."

"Are you saying your marriage is better than ours?" Deb says. "Really? Just because of the rules you live by? That makes a marriage stronger—just between any two random people?"

"I'm saying your husband would not have the long face, worried over if his wife is keeping secrets. And your son, he would not get into the business of smoking without first coming to you. Because the relationships, they are defined. They are clear."

"Because they are welded together," I say, "and not glued."

"Yes," he says. "And I bet Shoshana agrees." But Shoshana is distracted. She is working carefully with an apple and a knife. She is making a little apple pipe, all the tampons done.

"Did your daughters?" Deb says. "If they tell you everything, did they come to you first, before they smoked?"

"Our daughters do not have the taint of the world we grew up in. They have no interest in such things."

"So you think," I say.

"So I know," he says. "Our concerns are different, our worries."

"Let's hear 'em," Deb says.

"Let's not," Shoshana says. "Honestly, we're drunk, we're high, we are having a lovely reunion."

"Every time you tell him not to talk," I say, "it makes me want to hear what he's got to say more."

"Our concern," Mark says, "is not the past Holocaust. It is the current one. The one that takes more than fifty percent of the Jews this generation. Our concern is intermarriage. It is the Holocaust that's happening now. You don't need to be worrying about some Mormons doing hocus-pocus on the murdered six million. You need to worry that your son marries a Jew."

"Oh my God," Deb says. "Oh my God. Are you calling intermarriage a Holocaust? You can't really—I mean, Shoshana. I mean, don't . . . Are you really comparing?"

"You ask my feeling, that's my feeling. But this, no, it does not exactly apply to you, except in the example you set for the boy. Because you're Jewish, your son, he is as Jewish as me. No more, no less."

"I went to yeshiva, too, Born-Again Harry! You don't need to explain the rules to me."

"Did you call me 'Born-Again Harry?'" Mark asks.

"I did," Deb says. And she and he, they start to laugh at that. They think "Born-Again Harry" is the funniest thing they've heard in awhile. And Shoshana then laughs, and then I laugh, because laughter is infectious—and it is doubly so when you're high.

"You don't really think our family, my lovely, beautiful son, is headed for a Holocaust, do you?" Deb says. "Because that would really hurt. That would really cast a pall on this beautiful day."

"No, I don't," Mark says. "It is a lovely house and a lovely family; a beautiful home that you've made for that strapping young man. You're a real *balabusta*." Mark says. "I mean it."

"That makes me happy," Deb says. And she tilts her head

nearly ninety degrees to show her happy, sweet smile. "Can I hug you?" Deb says. "I'd really like to give you a hug."

"No," Mark says, though he says it really, really politely. "But you can hug my wife. How about that?"

"That's a great idea," Deb says. Shoshana hands the loaded apple to me, and I smoke from the apple as the two women hug a tight, deep, dancing-back-and-forth hug, tilting this way and that, so, once again, I'm afraid they might fall.

"It is a beautiful day," I say.

"It is," Mark says. And both of us look out the window, and both of us watch the perfect clouds in a perfect sky. We are watching this and enjoying this, and so we are staring out, too, as the sky darkens in an instant. It is a change so abrupt that the ladies undo their hug to watch, so sharp is the sudden change of light.

"It is like that here," Deb says. And then the skies open up and torrential tropical rain drops straight down, battering. It is loud against the roof, and loud against the windows, and the fronds of the palm trees bend, and the floaties in the pool jump as the water boils.

Shoshana goes to the window. And Mark passes Deb the apple and goes to the window. "Really, it's always like this here?" Shoshana says.

"Sure," I say. "Every day like that. Stops as quick as it starts."

And both of them have their hands pressed up against the window. And they stay like that for some time, and when Mark turns around, harsh guy, tough guy, we see that he is weeping. Weeping from the rain.

"You do not know," he says. "I forget what it's like to live in a place rich with water. This is a blessing above all others."

"If you had what we had," I say.

"Yes," he says, wiping his eyes.

"Can we go out?" Shoshana says. "In the rain?"

"Of course," Deb says. And then Shoshana tells me to close my eyes. To close them tight. Only me. And I swear. I think she's going to be stark naked when she calls, "Open up."

She's taken off her wig is all, and she's wearing one of Trev's baseball hats in its place.

"I've only got the one wig this trip," she says. "If Trev wouldn't mind."

"He wouldn't mind," Deb says. And this is how the four of us move out into the rain. How we find ourselves in the backyard, on a searingly hot day, getting pounded by all this cool, cool rain. It is, with the weather, and the being high, and being drunk, and after all that conversation, it is just about the best feeling in the world. And I have to say, Shoshana looks twenty years younger in that hat.

We do not talk. We are too busy frolicking and laughing and jumping around. And that's how it happens, that I'm holding Mark's hand and sort of dancing, and Deb is holding Shoshana's hand, and also, they're doing their own kind of jig. And when I take Deb's hand, though neither of those two is touching the other, somehow we've formed a broken circle. We've started dancing our own kind of hora in the rain.

It is the most glorious, and silliest, and freest I can remember feeling in years. Who would think that's what I'd be saying with these strict, suffocatingly austere people come to visit our house. And then my Deb, my love, once again she is thinking what I'm thinking and she says, face up into the rain, all of us spinning, "Are you sure this is okay, Shoshana? That it's not mixed dancing? That this is allowed? I don't want anyone feeling bad after."

"We'll be just fine," Shoshana says. "We will live with the

consequences." The question slows us, and stops us, though no one has yet let go.

"It's like the old joke," I say. And without waiting for anyone to ask which one, I say, "Why don't Hassidim have sex standing up?"

"Why?" Shoshana says.

"Because it might lead to mixed dancing."

Deb and Shoshana pretend to be horrified as we let go of hands, as we recognize that the moment is over, the rain disappearing as quickly as it came. Mark stands there staring into the sky, lips pressed tight. "That joke is very, very old," he says. And then he says, "Mixed dancing makes me think of mixed nuts, and mixed grill, and *insalata mista*. The sound of 'mixed dancing' has made me wildly hungry. And I'm going to panic if the only kosher thing in the house is that loaf of bleached American bread."

"You have the munchies," I say.

"Diagnosis correct," he says.

Deb starts clapping at that, tiny claps, her hands held to her chest in prayer. "You will not," Deb says to him, absolutely beaming, "even believe what riches await."

. . .

The four of us stand in the pantry, soaking wet, hunting through the shelves and dripping on the floor. "Have you ever seen such a pantry?" Shoshana says. "It's gigantic," she says, reaching her arms out from side to side. It is indeed large, and it is indeed stocked, an enormous amount of food, and an enormous selection of sweets, befitting a home that is often host to a swarm of teenage boys.

"Are you expecting a nuclear winter?" Shoshana says.

"I'll tell you what she's expecting," I say. "You want to know how obsessed she really is? You want to understand how much she truly talks about the Holocaust? I mean, how serious it is—to what degree?"

"To no degree," Deb says. "We are done with the Holocaust."

"Tell us," Shoshana says.

"She's always plotting our secret hiding place," I say.

"No kidding," Shoshana says.

"Like, look at this. At the pantry, and a bathroom next to it, and the door to the garage. If you just sealed it all up—like put drywall at the entrance to the den—you'd never know. You'd never suspect. If you covered that door inside the garage up good with, I don't know, if you hung your tools in front of it and hid hinges behind, maybe leaned the bikes and the mower and a toilet and all this food. I mean, if someone sneaked into the garage to replenish things, you could rent out the house, you know? Put in another family without even any idea."

"Oh my God," Shoshana says. "My short-term memory may be gone from having all those children—"

"And from the smoking," I say.

"And from that, too. But I remember. I remember from when we were kids, she was always," Shoshana says, turning to Deb, "you were always getting me to play games like that. To pick out spaces. And even worse, even darker—"

"Don't," Deb says.

"I know what you're going to say," I tell her, and I'm honestly excited. "The game, yes? She played that crazy game with you?"

"No," Deb says. "Enough. Let it go."

And Mark—who is just utterly absorbed in studying kosher certifications, who is tearing through hundred-calorie

snack packs and eating handfuls of roasted peanuts from a jar, and who has said nothing since we entered the pantry except "What's a Fig Newman?"—he stops and says, "I want to play this game."

"It's not a game," Deb says.

And I'm happy to hear her say that, as that's just what I've been trying to get her to admit for years. That it's not a game. That it's dead serious, and a kind of preparation, and an active pathology that I prefer not to indulge.

"It's the Anne Frank game," Shoshana says. "Right?"

Seeing how upset my wife is, I do my best to defend her. I say, "No, it's not a game. It's just what we talk about when we talk about Anne Frank."

"How do we play this non-game?" Mark says. "What do we do?"

"It's the Righteous Gentile game," Shoshana says.

"It's Who Will Hide Me?" I say.

"In the event of a second Holocaust," Deb says, giving in, speaking tentatively. "It's a serious exploration, a thought experiment that we engage in."

"That you play," Shoshana says.

"That, in the event of an American Holocaust, we sometimes talk about which of our Christian friends would hide us."

"I don't get it," Mark says.

"Of course you do," Shoshana says. "You absolutely do. It's like this. If there was a Shoah, if it happened again, say we were in Jerusalem, and it's 1941 and the Grand Mufti got his way, what would your friend Jebediah do?"

"What could he do?" Mark says.

"He could hide us. He could risk his life and his family's and everyone's around him. That's what the game is: Would he—for real—would he do that for you?"

"He'd be good for that, a Mormon," Mark says. "Forget

this pantry. They have to keep a year of food stored in case of the Rapture, or something like that. Water, too. A year of supplies. Or maybe it's that they have sex through a sheet. No, wait," Mark says, "I think that's supposed to be us."

"All right," Deb says, "let's not play. Really, let's go back to the kitchen. I can order in from the glatt kosher place. We can eat outside on the grass, and have a real dinner and not just junk."

"No, no," Mark says, "I'll play. I'll take it seriously."

"So would the guy hide you?" I say.

"And the kids, too?" Mark says. "I'm supposed to pretend that in Jerusalem he's got a hidden motel or something where he can put the twelve of us?"

"Yes," Shoshana says. "In their seminary or something. Sure."

Mark thinks about this for a long, long time. He eats Fig Newmans and considers, and you can tell from the way he's staring that he's gotten into it, that he's taking it real seriously—serious to the extreme.

"Yes," Mark says, and he looks honestly choked up. "I think, yes, Jeb would do that for us. He would hide us. He would risk it all."

"I think so, too," Shoshana says, and smiles. "Wow, it makes you—as an adult—it makes you appreciate people more."

"Yes," Mark says. "Jeb's a good man."

"Now you go," Shoshana says to us. "You take a turn."

"But we don't know any of the same people anymore,"

Deb says. "We usually just talk about the neighbors."

"Our across-the-street neighbors," I tell them. "They're the perfect example. Because the husband, Mirch, he would hide us. I know it. He'd lay down his life for what's right. But that wife of his . . ." I say.

"Yes," Deb says, "he's right. Mirch would hide us, but

Gloria, she'd buckle. When he was at work one day, she'd turn us in."

"You could play against yourselves, then," Shoshana says.

"What if one of you wasn't Jewish? Would you hide the other?"

"I'll do it," I say. "I'll be the Gentile, because I could pass best. A grown woman who still has an ankle-length denim skirt in her closet—they'd catch you in a flash."

"Fine," Deb says. And I stand up straight, put my shoulders back, like maybe I'm in a lineup. I stand there with my chin raised so my wife can study me. So she can really get a look in, and get a think in, and decide if her husband really has what it takes. Would I really have the strength, would I care enough—and it is not a light question, not a throwaway question—to risk my life to save her and our son?

Deb stares, and Deb smiles, and gives me a little push to my chest. "Of course he would," Deb says. And she takes the half stride that's between us and gives me a tight hug that she doesn't release. "Now you," Deb says. "You and Yuri go."

"How does that even make sense?" Mark says. "Even for imagining."

"Shhh," Shoshana says. "Just stand over there and be a good Gentile while I look."

"But if I weren't Jewish, I wouldn't be me."

"That's for sure," I say.

"He agrees," Mark says. "We wouldn't even be married."

"We wouldn't have kids."

"Of course you can imagine it," Shoshana says. "Look," she says, and goes over and closes the pantry door. "Here we are, caught in South Florida for the second Holocaust. You're not Jewish, and you've got the three of us hiding in your pantry."

"But look at me!" he says.

"I've got a fix," I say. "You're a background singer for ZZ Top. You know them? You know that band?"

Deb lets go of me, just so she can give my arm a slap.

"Really," Shoshana says. "Try to look at the three of us like that, like it's your house and we're your charges, locked up in this room."

"And what're you going to do while I do that?" Mark says.

"I'm going to look at you looking at us. I'm going to imagine."

"Okay," he says. "Nu, get to it. I will stand, you imagine."

And that's what we do, the four of us. We stand there playing our roles, and we really get into it. We really all imagine it. I can see Deb seeing him, and him seeing us, and Shoshana just staring and staring at her husband.

We stand there so long, I really can't tell how much time has passed, though the light changes ever so slightly—the sun outside again dampening—in that crack under the pantry door.

"So would I hide you?" he says, serious. And for the first time that day, he reaches out, as my Deb would, and puts his hand to her hand. "Would I, Shoshi?"

And you can tell Shoshana is thinking of her kids, though that's not part of the scenario. You can tell that she's changed part of the imagining. And she says, after a pause, yes, but she's not laughing. She says, yes, but to him it sounds as it does to us, so that he is now asking and asking. But wouldn't I? Wouldn't I hide you? Even if it was life and death—if it would spare you, and they'd kill me alone for doing it? Wouldn't I?

Shoshana pulls back her hand.

She does not say it. And he does not say it. And from the four of us, no one will say what cannot be said—that this wife believes her husband would not hide her. What to do? What would come of it? And so we stand like that, the four of us trapped in that pantry. Afraid to open the door and let out what we've locked inside.

Sister Hills

Unit 1 Resource 3.4

Story Analysis

1. Explain the essence of your story.
2. What is the message of your story?
3. What makes this a Jewish story?
4. What examples does your story contain "Jewish Cultural Capital?"

Unit 1 Resource 4.1

Journaling on Jewish Expression: Literature

What is the most important characteristic for a piece to be considered as Jewish literature? (Rank the Following)

- Jewish author
- Jewish content
- [Written in a] Jewish language
- Jewish cultural capital

Does any one characteristic for Jewish literatures outweigh the other three? If so, why, if not, why not?

How would you define Jewish content?

Are there any additional characteristics that would classify a piece as Jewish literature?

Unit 1 Resource 5.1

Jewish Expression: Music Analysis Guiding Questions

1. Song Title:
2. Do you like this song?
3. What is the message of this song?

4. What criteria does this song meet in order for it to be considered, "Jewish Music?"

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Unit 2: How Do Jews Practice Judaism?

This unit explores some models of Jewish practice. The unit looks at the bigger picture of the ideologies of four different Jewish movements in North America. The lessons then focus on the ways in which individuals practice Judaism.

Enduring Understandings

- ✓ Though most Jews identify themselves as part of the Jewish People, one cohesive definition of Jewish Peoplehood remains elusive among Jews.
- ✓ When attempting to define Jewish Peoplehood, a set of common questions is more realistic than a set of common answers to those questions.
- ✓ Jewish practices vary among Jewish individuals, yet despite the difference in practices, Jewish individuals all belong to *Am Yisrael* – the Jewish People.
- ✓ No one Jewish practice is more authentic than any other Jewish practice.

Essential Questions

- ✓ How can the knowledge of different Jewish movements and ideologies be helpful in understanding different models of Jewish practice in North America?
- ✓ In what ways might all Jewish practices be authentic?
- ✓ How can the boundaries of Jewish practice be defined to exclude some practices from the category of Jewish practice?
- ✓ How would you categorize your own Jewish practice at this time?

Authentic Assessment

In lesson 8 of this unit, students will have a chance to write their own personal “I am Jewish” Reflection statement, based on the Daniel Pearl Book¹⁵. The statements can take any shape, be creative or straightforward.

Memorable Moment

Each student will attend an Erev Shabbat visit at a home that exemplifies Shabbat practice as it envisioned by one of the 4 Jewish Movements that the students have been studying.

Knowledge for Unit

- ✓ Common questions regarding Jewish practice(s)
- ✓ Basic understanding of 4 Jewish movements in North America (Chabad, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform)
- ✓ Various Shabbat practices
- ✓ Differing models of Shabbat practice(s)
- ✓ Differing models of Jewish prayer
- ✓ Kobi Oz “Prayer of the Secular” song
- ✓ Statements about what it means to be Jewish

¹⁵ Judea and Ruth Pearl edit., *I am Jewish: Personal Reflections Inspired by the Last Words of Daniel Pearl* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004).

Skills for Unit

- ✓ Students will be able to categorize different Jewish practices by the movements that the practices represent.
- ✓ Students will be able to formulate their own statement of personal Jewish identity/practice.

How Are Jews Jewish?

Lesson 1

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to justify the idea that Jewish practices vary among Jewish individuals.
- ✓ Students should be able to articulate the notion that no one Jewish practice is more authentic than any other Jewish practice.
- ✓ Students should be able to formulate common questions that apply to Jewish People.

Movie/TV Show Clips & Discussion Questions

Clip #1

Glee Season 1 Episode 8 “Mash Up”¹⁶ - 12:50-14:30

TV Show Summary

The show Glee revolves around a high-school Spanish teacher in suburban Ohio who becomes the director of the school's Glee club, hoping to restore it to its former glory. Two of the teen characters featured on the show, Rachel Berry (Lea Michele) and Noah ‘Puck’ Puckerman (Mark Salling), are Jewish. Though before this episode, Puck has bullied Rachel, in this episode the two come together because of their Judaism.

Clip Synopsis

On Simchat Torah, Puck’s family orders in Chinese food (not Kosher) and watches the film “Schindler’s List.” During the film, Puck’s mother declares that Puck is no better than the Nazis because he doesn’t date Jewish girls. Puck then pursues Rachel in this clip.

Guiding Questions for Glee Clip

- ✓ In what ways do the characters in this scene practice their Judaism?
- ✓ Interpret the meaning of Puck’s family eating Chinese food, including pork, and watching “Schindler’s List” in observance of the holiday Simchat Torah. How might this be a commentary on American Jewish life?
- ✓ What is your opinion of the Jewish practices portrayed in this clip?
- ✓ What questions does this clip bring up for you about the how Jews practice Judaism?

Clip #2

Holy Rollers¹⁷ - 11:15-12:20

Movie Summary

In Brooklyn, a youth, Sam Gold (Jesse Eisenberg) from an Orthodox Jewish community, is lured into becoming an ecstasy dealer by his pal who has ties to an Israeli drug cartel. Sam, who in his adolescence and questions his place in the Orthodox community, is vulnerable to the alluring culture of drugs, money, and the secular world. This is a coming of age film with a Jewish twist, while it explores issues of universal morality.

¹⁶ Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk, *Glee: Mashup* (2009; Los Angeles, 20th Century Fox Television), DVD.

¹⁷ Kevin Asch, *Holy Rollers* (2010; Deerfjen Films), DVD.

Clip Synopsis

Sam Gold is set up with a potential wife. During their initial meeting, they sit on opposite ends of the couch, discussing personal issues such as career aspirations, the number of children each of the characters wishes to bring into the world, and the schools that their hypothetical unborn children will attend.

Guiding Questions for Holy Rollers Clip

- ✓ In what ways do the characters in this scene practice their Judaism?
- ✓ Do you believe that marriages have to be arranged in order for them to be Jewish? Why or why not?
- ✓ How do you relate to these characters?
- ✓ What questions does this clip bring up for you about the how Jews practice Judaism?

Movie Clip #3

Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist¹⁸ - 1:08-1:16

Movie Summary

This movie revolves two teens in the New York City area that are looking to find the secret location of their favorite band's concert. The characters Nick O'Leary (Michael Cera) and Norah Silverberg (Kat Dennings) end up finding a romantic spark between them.

Clip Synopsis

Norah wrecks Nick's car, and then the two of them end up at a vintage recording studio where they have a meaningful conversation about the Jewish concept, *tikkun olam*.

Guiding Questions

- ✓ In what ways does Norah practice Judaism?
- ✓ How would you define Norah's level of Jewish religiosity... why?
- ✓ Norah's Judaism is shown through values/ideas, do you believe that living by Jewish values in the secular world constitutes living a Jewish life? Why or why not?
- ✓ What questions does this clip bring up for you about the how Jews practice Judaism?

¹⁸ Peter Sollett, *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist* (2008; Los Angeles, Columbia Pictures), DVD.

Clip #4

Sex & The City Season 6 Episode 4 “Pick-A-Little, Talk-A-Little”¹⁹ – 20:20-23:50

TV Show Background

Four beautiful female New Yorkers gossip about their sex-lives (or lack thereof) and find new ways to deal with being a woman in the 90's.

Episode Synopsis

Charlotte York (Kristin Davis) and Harry Goldenblatt (Evan Handler) have been dating for some time. Earlier in the season, Harry shared with Charlotte that he wouldn't be able to marry her, because she wasn't Jewish. Charlotte decided to convert to Judaism with a Conservative rabbi. In this clip, Charlotte has recently converted to Judaism, and has made Harry, who is still her boyfriend, and not yet her fiancé a traditional Shabbat dinner. Harry puts the TV on in the background, which causes a fight to break out between Charlotte and Harry. Charlotte exclaims to Harry, “I gave up Christ for you and won't even give up the Mets!” The fight escalates, and brings up issues of perceptions and expectations.

Guiding Questions

- ✓ How would you categorize Charlotte's Jewish practice in this clip?
- ✓ How would you categorize Harry's Jewish practice in this clip?
- ✓ Do you believe that Charlotte was justified in getting mad at Harry? Why or why not?
- ✓ Does a Jew have to observe Shabbat with a Shabbat meal on Friday night in order to be a “good” Jew? Why or why not?
- ✓ What questions does this clip bring up for you about the how Jews practice Judaism?

Common Questions

Explain that it's hard to define Jews by their Jewish practices. Some Jews might be observant (meaning that they adhere to the mitzvot – commandments) but not religious, while others might be religious but not observant. There is a plethora of ways to practice Judaism, and therefore be part of the Jewish People. Over the next weeks, we'll be exploring Jewish practice by looking at the ways that different Jewish movements think about Judaism, different ways that Jews observe Jewish holidays, Jewish lifecycle events, Jewish prayer/spirituality, and different ways that Jews incorporate Judaism into their daily lives. I think that we will find that there are a number of common questions, but not necessarily common answers for the ways that Jews practice Judaism. Let's analyze the questions that we already came up with for each clip, and add any that we feel might be missing.

Additional Common Questions May Include:

- ✓ What are different ways that Jews mark Jewish holidays time?
- ✓ How do Jews mark the moments of their life in accordance with Jewish tradition?
- ✓ How do Jews interact with God?
- ✓ How do Jews express their Judaism in their daily lives?

¹⁹ David Frankel, *Sex and the City: Pick-A-Little, Talk-A-Little* (2003; New York, HBO), DVD.

Materials

- ✓ dvd player
- ✓ projector screen
- ✓ *Glee* Simchat Torah clip
 - season 1 episode 8 “Mash Up” - 12:50-14:30
- ✓ *Holy Rollers* clip
 - 11:15-12:20
- ✓ *Nick & Norah’s Infinite Playlist* clip
 - 1:08-1:16
- ✓ *Sex & The City* clip
 - season 6 episode 4 “Pick-a-little, Talk a Little” – 20:20-23:50
- ✓ chalk or dry-erase board & chalk or dry erase marker
- ✓ clip analysis handouts (1 per student)

Resources

- ✓ clip analysis handout – 1.1

4 Jewish Practice Ideologies

Lesson 2

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to define the basic ideology of 4 Jewish Movements (Chabad, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform²⁰).
- ✓ Students should be able to compare and contrast the 4 Jewish Movements (Chabad, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform) to one another.
- ✓ Students should be able to explain why religiosity does not belong to one particular Movement.

Set Induction – Word Association

Write 4 words on the board:

- ✓ Chabad
- ✓ Conservative
- ✓ Reconstructionist
- ✓ Reform

Then ask students to come up to the board to write the first word that comes to mind in association with each of these words. Then, have a short conversation about why the individuals wrote their various words. At the end of the conversation, the instructor will explain that today we will be studying the ideologies of these 4 Movements.

Jewish Ideologies Jig Saw

Part 1

Divide the students into 4 groups. Each group will be given a document that outlines some of the ideologies of 4 prominent Jewish movements in North America.

- ✓ Chabad
 - “What is Lubovitch Chabad” printed from Chabad.org²¹
 - “What is Chassidut?” by Tzvi Freeman²²
- ✓ Conservative Judaism
 - “Conservative Judaism: Covenant and Commitment” by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson²³
- ✓ Reconstructionist Judaism
 - “What is Reconstructionist Judaism” by Rabbi Lester Bronstein²⁴
- ✓ Reform Judaism

²⁰ The order of these words [names of Jewish Movements] are written here in alphabetical order, rather than in order of any perceived level of religiosity.

²¹ “What is Chabad?”, Chabad, accessed March 31, 2013.

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/776104/jewish/FAQ.htm.

²² “What is Chassidut?” by Tzvi Freeman, Chabad, accessed March 31, 2013.

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1600969/jewish/Chassidut.htm.

²³ “Conservative Judaism: Covenant and Commitment” by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, Rabbinical Assembly, accessed March 31, 2013.

<http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/publications/Conservative%20Judaism%20Covenant%20and%20Commitment.pdf>.

²⁴ “What is Reconstructionist Judaism?” by Rabbi Lester Bronstein, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, accessed March 31, 2013. <http://www.rrc.edu/resources/reconstructionist-resources/what-reconstructionist-judaism>.

- “A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism” by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Pittsburgh, 1999²⁵

Give Each Group the Following Guiding Questions:

- ✓ In 3 sentences or less, what is the essence of the Jewish Movement about which you read?
- ✓ What are the most important components of Judaism for this Jewish Movement?
- ✓ In your opinion, what components of Judaism seem to be dismissed in this Jewish Movement?
- ✓ Create a catchy slogan for this Movement.

Part 2

Jig the Students – regroup the students into groups where at least one student from each of the original group will represent the Movement about which they read, and explain it to the rest of the group, referring to the answers to their guiding questions.

Movement Comparison: Chabad/Conservative/Reconstructionist/Reform

Give each student a comparison chart, and instruct him/her to fill it out. Once all of the students have filled out the chart, discuss their answers. (*Which words did you feel most strongly about, which words were you most conflicted about, which words were you surprised about, etc.?*) Then, conclude by looking back at the words that were written on the board in the beginning of the class and ask if the students to edit the list to reflect some of the things that they have learned today.

²⁵ “A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism,” Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed March 31, 2013. <http://www.rrc.edu/resources/reconstructionist-resources/what-reconstructionist-judaism>.

Materials

- ✓ chalk or dry-erase board & chalk or dry erase marker
- ✓ ideologies handouts
 - “What is Lubovitch Chabad?” (enough for group 1)
 - ”What is Chassidut?” (enough for group 1)
 - “Conservative Judaism: Covenant and Commitment” (enough for group 2)
 - “What is Reconstructionist Judaism” (enough for group 3)
 - “A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism” (enough for group 4)
 - Jewish movement guiding questions (1 per student)
- ✓ comparison chart (1 per student)
- ✓ writing utensils

Resources to be included at the end of the Unit

- ✓ ideologies handouts
 - “What is Lubovitch Chabad?” – 2.1
 - ”What is Chassidut?” – 2.2
 - “Conservative Judaism: Covenant and Commitment” – 2.3
 - “What is Reconstructionist Judaism” – 2.4
 - “A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism” – 2.5
 - Jewish movement guiding questions – 2.6
- ✓ comparison chart – 2.7

How Do Jews Celebrate Shabbat? Part 1

Lesson 3 – Scripted Lesson

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to recall key differences in the way that Shabbat is observed among the 4 Jewish Movements that are being studied in this unit.
- ✓ Students should be able to formulate their own ideas about Shabbat observance in their own lives.
- ✓ Students should be able to discern that some form of Shabbat observance is crucial for the Jewish People.

Set Induction

Initiate a discussion about the students' own Shabbat practices, and that of their family, friends, and acquaintances.

Example Questions:

- ✓ How do you celebrate Shabbat?
 - *I don't celebrate Shabbat.*
 - *I have Shabbat with my family.*
 - *I have Shabbat dinner.*
 - *I attend worship services at the synagogue.*
 - *I relax, in my own way, with my friends.*
 - *My family lights the candles, sings kiddush, and makes motzi over challah.*
- ✓ When do you celebrate Shabbat?
 - *Never*
 - *Every week*
 - *Once a month*
 - *When something is going on at the synagogue*
 - *When I feel like it*
 - *When my parents make me*
- ✓ How does your family/friends/acquaintances celebrate Shabbat?
 - *Nobody that I know celebrates Shabbat.*
 - *My Orthodox friends keep Shabbat by not driving or using electricity.*
 - *My parents attend Shabbat services.*
 - *My grandparents make Shabbat dinner.*
 - *They light the candles, sing kiddush, and make motzi over challah.*
- ✓ Why do you celebrate (or not celebrate) Shabbat the way that you do?
 - *I haven't thought about it.*
 - *Because that's what my parents do.*
 - *Because it adds meaning to my life.*
 - *Because I am commanded to celebrate it this way in the Torah.*

Time Table

0:00-0:05	Set Induction
0:05-0:40	Shabbat Text Shopping
0:40-1:00	Preparation for Shabbat Visits

Shabbat Text Shopping

Attach various quotes about Shabbat around the room, with smaller copies of the quote below the (15 example quotes can be found in the resources section). Then instruct the students to take some time to look around the room, and pick up any quotes that resonate with them. Once they have done this, each student should arrange the quotes that s/he chose on a piece of construction paper in a way that makes the most sense to him/her. If there is time, have the class share their creations with each other.

Preparation for Shabbat Visits

Before the class, arrange Erev Shabbat visits for the students at homes, which exemplify Shabbat practice as it envisioned by the 4 Jewish Movements that the students have been studying. (This could be arranged by the instructor calling the leaders of the local Chabad, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform Communities asking for community members who would be willing to host 2-4 students who have exemplary Shabbat practices.) As an example, if I were teaching this class, I might choose the following people to host these Shabbat experiences:

1. The local Chabad rabbi – Kabbalat Shabbat services at the local Chabad, followed by dinner at the Chabad rabbi's home.
2. The home of the United Synagogue Youth Regional President – family Shabbat dinner.
3. A Reconstructionist minyan that takes place in a lay leader's home, followed by a potluck dinner with the attendees of the minyan.
4. Reform Shabbat services followed by a family dinner at the Cheesecake Factory Restaurant.

Once you have secured hosts for the various Shabbat experiences, you should obtain a paragraph long description of what the students should expect, including the timing of the evening, the expected dress, and any other relevant information.

During the class, announce which students will be attending which home for their Shabbat experience. Those students should sit together and read through the descriptions provided by their hosts. Then the students should come up with a list of questions that they would like to have answered during their Shabbat experience. The students should expect that their questions will be answered through a combination of observation and dialogue.

Materials

- ✓ large copies of each Shabbat quote
- ✓ adhesive to hang Shabbat quotes around the room
- ✓ small copies of the Shabbat quotes (enough copies of each quote for each student)
- ✓ blank paper
- ✓ writing utensils
- ✓ glue sticks or tape

Resources

- ✓ Shabbat Quotes – 3.1

How Do Jews Celebrate Shabbat? Part 2

Lesson 4

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to recall key differences in the way that Shabbat is observed among the 4 Jewish Movements that are being studied in this unit.
- ✓ Students should be able to formulate their own ideas about Shabbat observance in their own lives.
- ✓ Students should be able to discern that some form of Shabbat observance is crucial for the Jewish People.

Erev Shabbat Visits **Memorable Moment**

Students will attend their assigned Erev Shabbat experiences and fill out the answer to the guiding questions from the previous lesson. Students will also journal about any aspects of the experience that fell outside of the realm of the anticipated questions.

Shabbat Lunch Discussion

Students will meet at the instructor's home, or at the synagogue for Shabbat lunch. During this lunch they will discuss their experiences. Depending on the size of the class, this discussion can take place as one class, or in smaller groups of students who attended different Erev Shabbat experiences.

Example Guiding Questions for Discussion:

- How would you describe your experience last night?
- What was most memorable about your experience last night?
- What conclusions can you draw about the motives behind the Shabbat practice that you observed last night?
- Was there anything that you disliked about the Shabbat practice that you observed last night?
- Why might a level of Shabbat practice be important for the Jewish People?
- Why might a level of Shabbat practice be valuable in your own life?

Wrap Up

The instructor should wrap up the lunch by explaining that most all Jews are aware of the commandment to observe Shabbat. However, different Jews, even within our own community observe Shabbat differently. Shabbat is just one example of Jewish practice. What's more important for us is the common question – how do Jews practice Judaism? The multiple answers to that common question are infinitely interesting but less important for our purposes as we study Jewish Peoplehood.

Materials

Food for lunch

How Do Jews Mark Life-Cycle Events: Case Study, Ketubot Lesson 5

Objective

- ✓ Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the notion that for any given lifecycle moment, more than one authentic way to Jewishly mark that moment exists.

Journaling

Prompt: What are the necessary components of an *authentic* Bar/Bat mitzvah?²⁶

Ketubot Comparison

The instructor will hand out 6 different English translations of Ketubot (Halakhic, Halakhic with Lieberman Clause, Egalitarian, Brit Ahuvim, Interfaith, Gay). Then, in chevruta pairs, the students will compare and contrast the Ketubot, by filling out the Ketubah Comparisons Chart found in the resources section.

Wrap Up

Go back to the journal entries that the students wrote, and discuss whether or not their minds are changed about the what makes a Jewish lifecycle event observance “authentic”.

Materials

journal handout (1 per student)
writing utensils
ketubah handout (1 per student)
ketubah comparison chart (1 per student)

Resources

journal handout – 5.1
ketubah handout – 5.2
ketubah comparison chart – 5.3

²⁶ You can find more information on the background to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, in the first chapter of *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah* by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin. Jeffrey K. Salkin, *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005), 1-18.

How Do Jews Pray?

Lesson 6

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to identify that within Judaism there are many different forms of set prayers.
- ✓ Students should be able to evaluate alternative ways of talking with/to God.

Set Induction - Living Museum → Various Siddurim

Collect as many siddurim as possible²⁷ and place them throughout the classroom. As students walk in, invite them to explore each siddur with the following directions:

1. Flip through the siddur, take note of any first impressions that you might have.
2. Find the Shema and V'ahavta pages in each prayerbook, write down any differences that you notice.

Talking to God

Read through the following excerpt as a class, and discuss it based on the questions listed below.

Excerpt From Naomi Levy's Book, *Talking to God*²⁸

I like to sit in houses of worship long after the worshippers have gone... I sometimes find myself imagining words that have been passed from the congregants' whispering lips to God's ear. Prayers seem to hover in the air like the smell of a fire long after the flames have died out. These prayers are not the ones that come from books. They are less literate, without rhyme or meter, without fancy embellishment. The ones not printed in black and white, but in all the subtlety and mystery of the human soul. They are the prayers of life and death, joy and mourning, longing and thanksgiving. Prayers shouted in anger or sung out in love. They are daily prayers, once-in-a-lifetime prayers. Prayers of women and men, of the healthy and the ailing, of the young and of the elderly, of the rich and the poor.

Canonized prayers contain ancient and eternal wisdom and are central to religious experience. They are dependable and beautifully written. Often set to sublime music, they link us to our community when we recite them together, and to our history when we remember that these very words were uttered centuries ago. They connect us to future generations as well, for they will continue to inspire for centuries to come. No matter what our religious tradition, established prayers are the framework of our faith. We teach them to our children and turn to them again and again throughout the measure of our days. They instruct us in the articles of our belief, in our unique bond with God, and in the particular expressions of that relationship.

²⁷ Suggested Siddurim:

- Siddur Rinat Yisrael Ashkenazi
- The Complete Artscroll Siddur Sefarad
- The Complete Artscroll Siddur Ashkenaz
- The Koren Siddur Ashkenaz or Sefarad
- Siddur Sim Shalom
- Kol HaNeshamah
- Siddur Erev Shabbat Beit T'fila Yisraeli
- Service of the Heart Ha'avodah She'ba'lev
- The Union Prayer Book
- Gates of Prayer
- Mishkan T'filah
- Siddur Sha'are Zahav

²⁸ Naomi Levy, *Talking to God: Personal Prayers for Times of Joy, Sadness, Struggle, and Celebration* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 1-2.

But what are we to do when the prayer book does not contain the words we are searching for? What do we do when certain feelings well up inside us, but the words to express them are absent from our liturgies?

Prompt Questions:

- ✓ What feelings do you think Rabbi Levy is talking about when she writes, “What do we do when certain feelings well up inside us...”? Have you ever had experienced feelings that could be categorized in this way? If so, when?
- ✓ What do you believe about God?
- ✓ What do you believe about prayer?
- ✓ What value do you believe prayer might have in your life?
- ✓ What makes a prayer(s) Jewish?

Kobi Oz Song & Chevruta Discussions

“Psalms of the Perplexed” by Kobi Oz

Play the song, “Prayer of the Secular” by Kobi Oz, for the student. This song can be found with a translation at <http://makomkobioz.wordpress.com/>. While the students are listening to the song, they should also have a copy of the translation and footnotes that can be found in the resource section. Once you have played the song twice through, talk through the footnotes, making sure that the students understand all of the various cultural capital references. Then, break the students into chevruta pairs, and discuss the following questions²⁹:

- ✓ What is the main message of this song?
- ✓ In what way is this a personal prayer?
- ✓ In what way is this a collective prayer?
- ✓ Do you see the first verse as being critical of this non-religious approach to life?
- ✓ Do current political issues find their way into your prayers?
- ✓ Why might Jewish communal prayer the place for thinking about ‘tough stuff’?
- ✓ Do you think that traditional prayers have more value than spontaneous prayers, why or why not?

Invite the class to come back together, and share their responses. Then go through all of the textual/Jewish historical references found in the song.

²⁹ Questions adapted from “Guiding questions for Prayer of the Secular” Makom on Kobi Oz Mizmorei Nevuchim, accessed on April 4, 2013. http://makomkobioz.wordpress.com/?page_id=62&preview=true.

Materials

- ✓ various siddurim
- ✓ blank paper
- ✓ writing utensils
- ✓ Naomi Levy excerpt (1 per student)
- ✓ “Prayer of the Secular” translation
- ✓ chevruta questions

Resources

- ✓ Naomi Levy excerpt – 6.1
- ✓ “Prayer of the Secular” translation – 6.2
- ✓ chevruta questions – 6.3

How Are Jews Jewish in Their Daily Lives?

Lesson 7

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to internalize the notion that though the identities and practices of individual Jews vary, they remain part of *Am Yisrael* – The Jewish People.
- ✓ Students should be able to begin to formulate their own personal Jewish practice preferences.

I am Jewish Reading, Reflecting, Discussing

Background Information on Daniel Pearl³⁰

The world has come to know Daniel Pearl as the Wall Street Journal reporter who was kidnapped and murdered by terrorists in Pakistan in early 2002, just four months after 9/11. People around the world, along with his pregnant wife and family, prayed for his release. Since then, he has been remembered as a symbol of hope: a man who built bridges between diverse cultures -- as a writer and a gifted musician.

Daniel Pearl's last known words were, "My father is Jewish, my mother is Jewish, I am Jewish." We can consider Daniel Pearl as a modern day martyr. Daniel's parents put together a book to explore the questions begged by their son's brave last words. What does it mean to be Jewish today, and for the future? In this book, Jews of all backgrounds reflect, argue and imagine about their own personal Judaism.

Read this excerpt to the class from the introduction to the book, *I am Jewish*³¹:

History will record a tide of horror and madness that swept our planet in the beginning of the third millennium. The basic rules of civilization were violated, and all theories of cognition, common sense, and human values laid shattered and betrayed.

History will also record that, in the midst of this chaos, there was a young man who, in a moment of extreme crisis, looked straight in the eye of evil, and said: "My father is Jewish, my mother is Jewish, I am Jewish."

He did not say it under duress, nor did he say it with defiance or with gallantry. He said it in his usual matter-of-fact way, slightly irritated, as if saying: "How many times do I have to repeat myself? To plus two equals four, and I am Jewish!"

He was not so naïve as to ignore the venom that drooled from his captors' mouths each time he uttered the words "Jewish." Still, he repeated: "My father is Jewish, my mother is Jewish, I am Jewish."

Then, in small groups, students should read as many of the following excerpts as possible, in any order that they choose, and answer the following questions about each excerpt.

Excerpts

- ✓ Joshua Malina – pp. 10
- ✓ Norman Lear – pp. 34

³⁰ "Daniel Pearl Bio," Daniel Pearl Foundation, accessed on April 4, 2013.

http://www.danielpearl.org/about_us/danielpearl_bio.html.

³¹ Judea and Ruth Pearl edit., *I am Jewish: Personal Reflections Inspired by the Last Words of Daniel Pearl* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004), xx-xxi.

- ✓ Kitty Dukakis – pp. 36
- ✓ Cynthia Ozick – pp. 49
- ✓ David J. Azrieli – pp. 60
- ✓ Sarah Silverman – pp. 66
- ✓ Jackie Mason – pp. 80
- ✓ Rabbi Lawrence Kushner - pp. 120
- ✓ Amos Oz – pp. 131
- ✓ Elie Wiesel – pp. 169
- ✓ Ruth Bader Ginsburg – pp. 201

Discussion Questions

For each essay consider the following questions. Record your answers.

- What is the essence of the author’s Jewish identity/practice?
- In what ways do/don’t you relate to this essay?
- In the first lesson of this unit, we came up with a set of “common questions”, which of the questions that we came up with does this essay address? How does it answer that/those question(s)?

Panel Preparation

For the concluding lesson, there will be a panel of guests representing all different walks of Jewish life. The panelists will all be invited to share their honest viewpoints relating to their personal Jewish identities and practices. Ideally, the panel would include people representing the following groups:

- ✓ Chabad/Orthodox
- ✓ Conservative
- ✓ Reconstructionist
- ✓ Reform
- ✓ Renewal
- ✓ Israeli
- ✓ Ashkenazi
- ✓ Sefardic
- ✓ JewBu (Jewish Buddhist)
- ✓ Kabbalist
- ✓ “Cultural Jew”
- ✓ Persian Jew
- ✓ Atheist Jew
- ✓ Etc.

Divide the class into as many groups as there are panelists for the next session. Instruct the groups to prepare 3 questions for the panel for their specific panel member. These questions should be in line with the “common questions” that we’ve been asking in class thus far. Then, at the end of session, the groups should come back together, share their 3 questions, and come up with 3 general questions to ask all of the panelists.

Materials

- ✓ *I Am Jewish* excerpts (1 packet per student)
- ✓ *I Am Jewish* guiding questions (11 per student)

Resources

- ✓ *I Am Jewish* Excerpts:
 - Joshua Malina – 7.01
 - Norman Lear – 7.02
 - Kitty Dukakis – 7.03
 - Cynthia Ozick – 7.04
 - David J. Azrieli – 7.05
 - Sarah Silverman – 7.06
 - Jackie Mason – 7.07
 - Rabbi Lawrence Kushner – 7.08
 - Amos Oz – 7.09
 - Elie Wiesel – 7.10
 - Ruth Bader Ginsburg – 7.11
- ✓ *I Am Jewish* Guiding Questions – 7.12

Jewish Practice Panel

Lesson 8

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to evaluate the responses of the panelists.
- ✓ Students should be able to create their own statements in regards to their personal Jewish identities and practices at this moment in time.

Panel Discussion

Using the questions that the students generated during the last session, the students should conduct a panel discussion with the guest panelists. The students should ask each panelist 3 general questions, and 3 specific questions. You (the teacher) should be the moderator of the panel. Students should take notes during the panel discussion.

“I am Jewish” Reflection Assignment **Authentic Assessment**

The students should write their own personal “I am Jewish” Reflection statement, based on the Daniel Pearl Book. The statements can take any shape, be creative or straightforward. If time allows, the students who feel compelled can share their statements with the rest of the class.

Materials

- ✓ questions for panelists from previous session
- ✓ blank paper
- ✓ writing utensils

Unit 2 Resource 1.1

Glee Analysis Questions

- In what ways do the characters in this scene practice their Judaism?
- Interpret the meaning of Puck's family eating Chinese food, including pork, and watching "Schindler's List" in observation of the holiday Simchat Torah. How might this be a commentary on American Jewish life?
- What is your opinion of the Jewish practices portrayed in this clip?
- What questions does this clip bring up for you about the how Jews practice Judaism?

Holy Rollers Analysis Questions

- In what ways do the characters in this scene practice their Judaism?
- Do you believe that marriages have to be arranged in order for them to be Jewish? Why or why not?
- How do you relate to these characters?
- What questions does this clip bring up for you about the how Jews practice Judaism?

Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist Analysis Questions

- In what ways does Norah practice Judaism?
- How would you define Norah's level of Jewish religiosity... why?
- Norah's Judaism is shown through values/ideas, do you believe that living by Jewish values in the secular world constitutes living a Jewish life? Why or why not?
- What questions does this clip bring up for you about the how Jews practice Judaism?

Sex & The City Analysis Questions

- How would you categorize Charlotte's Jewish practice in this clip?
- How would you categorize Harry's Jewish practice in this clip?
- Do you believe that Charlotte was justified in getting mad at Harry? Why or why not?
- Does a Jew have to observe Shabbat with a Shabbat meal on Friday night in order to be a "good" Jew? Why or why not?
- What questions does this clip bring up for you about the how Jews practice Judaism?

Printed from **Chabad.org**

What Is Chabad?

Frequently Asked Questions

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All Mankind

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The Annual Conference

What is Chabad-Lubavitch?

Chabad-Lubavitch is a major movement within mainstream Jewish tradition with its roots in the Chassidic movement of the 18th century. In Czarist and Communist Russia, the leaders of Chabad led the struggle for the survival of Torah Judaism, often facing imprisonment and relentless persecution for their activities. After the Holocaust, under the direction of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchaak Schneerson and his successor, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, Chabad became a worldwide movement, caring for the spiritual and material needs of all Jews, wherever they could be found.

Today, over 3,000 Chabad centers are located in more than 65 countries, with a new center opening on the average every ten days. In South Africa, South America, Russia, Australia, the UK, and many parts of the USA, Chabad has become the most dynamic and dominant force within the Jewish community.

What is a Chabad House?

Chabad is influenced by the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, a great Jew of 18th-century Eastern Europe who loved his people with an immeasurable passion. The calamities of his time had created a situation in which there were many simple Jews who had no learning and little knowledge, alongside great scholars who looked askance at the ignorance of these commoners. The Baal Shem Tov taught us to look deeper, beyond the knowledge of a person, beyond his outward behavior, into the depths of his heart, to find there the divine spark and reveal it with unconditional love.

Today things are different and the same. There are not as many simple Jews, but there are plenty of very complicated ones. Our Torah scholars cannot be compared to the scholars of those times, but the chasm remains, this fissure that sometimes lies between the Jews that rest on Shabbat and those who do not yet know its beauty, between those that cherish the wisdom of Torah and those who are looking elsewhere instead.

The approach of Chabad today mirrors that of the Baal Shem Tov in his time: Look past the outward person and trust in the soul deep inside. You may disapprove of everything he does, and his outlook on life may be the opposite of everything you believe. Don't argue with him. Instead, be one with him. Unconditionally. You enjoy Shabbat--enjoy it with him. You find solace and counsel in the wisdom of Torah--talk to your holy brothers and sisters about that wisdom in their own language, on their own terms. And if he

or she does not change one iota, that is irrelevant. You have done your job of love. Two Jews became one and that is all that matters.

A Chabad House, then, is a center established to facilitate all of the above. A Chabad House will generally host classes, lectures, and workshops on Jewish topics; religious services; Shabbat meals; and special events as needed in that community. Counseling services, the Friendship Circle for physically or mentally challenged children, and other volunteer services are common. Most often a Chabad House does not charge membership--if you are Jewish, you are a member. There are exceptions, according to the local situation.

The Jewish People, the Zohar tells, is the heart of all the nations. When there is love and oneness among us, peace and harmony enter the entire world. When our light is pure and focused, the darkness in their hearts is pushed away as well. And so this is the mandate of Chabad: To create light for the sake of light, just by doing good for the sake of doing good, until all the world is filled with the serene light of G-dly wisdom "as the waters cover the ocean floor."

What is Chassidism?

Just as a person is made up of both body and soul, so too the Torah we learn comprises both elements. There are the dos and the don'ts and the historical facts. And then there's the "inner Torah," a system of teachings passed down through the generations that penetrates to the core of reality, discussing the act of Creation, the soul, and how the soul can reconnect itself and its world back to its source.

People today are not satisfied with the do's and don'ts and historical facts. We need a deeper, often mystical understanding. Chabad is unique in that its teachers are trained from youth in the authentic texts of the inner Torah, also known as the Kabbalah and Chassidut.

Chabad thought builds on the wisdom of the great Jewish thinkers and is very much a part of classic Jewish thought. Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad, was a deep thinker and intellectual, fascinated with all aspects of knowledge. He was a prime student and disciple of Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch, known as "the Magid of Mezritch," heir to the Baal Shem Tov. He created a synthesis of Jewish rationalism and esoteric thought using the rich metaphor of the human psyche. His successors and their students continued in the same path, expanding Chabad to a broad and lively school of thought and debate. Chabad philosophy has influenced the thought of many great leaders and movements outside of Chabad as well.

When you leave a typical Chabad class, you don't go away with just knowledge, you go away with a whole new way of knowing, a new pair of eyes. That's one of the main reasons for Chabad's popularity—Chabad teachers are able to provide meaningful answers to critical questions, because Chabad is all about how you use your mind.

The Baal Shem Tov taught, “G-d wants the heart.” Chabad teaches that you can reach the heart through the mind—through questioning, through meditation and deep contemplation, and through reframing your concept of the world.

Is Chabad "Ultra-Orthodox?"

Chabad is referred to as an "Orthodox" Jewish movement because it adheres to Jewish practice and observance within the guidelines of Talmudic law and its codifiers. The prefix “ultra” is commonly used by media broadcasters, but it has no practical meaning. It is used to marginalize a group or to portray them as extremists battling with extremists of other religions.

Mother Theresa was never called “ultra-Catholic.” Albert Schweitzer was never “ultra-Calvinist.” Doctors Without Borders are not ultra-militant New-Agers. When a Chabad couple travel to a community, they are not interested in converts, in battles, or in brainwashing youth. They are only interested in sharing their Shabbat tables and the heritage that belongs to every Jew. A Chabad House is a “Jewish Center” and a Chabad rabbi is a rabbi, period.

If you hear Chabad described in the media as “ultra-Orthodox,” pick up the phone or fire off an email and complain. Tell them Chabad is a Jewish movement, without any labels, and they should describe it as such.

[Click here](#) for a more detailed account of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, its history, its mission, and its achievements.

For more on Chassidism, [click here](#).

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Printed from Chabad.org**Unit 2 Resource 2.2****What Is Chassidut?**

Teachings from the core essence

By Tzvi Freeman

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Everyone agrees that around the middle of the eighteenth century, a movement began in Eastern Europe that had a far-reaching, even revolutionary, impact on Jewish practice and thought. What exactly that movement was (and is) all about, remains rather fuzzy. That's not hard to understand, since the movement itself is by nature enigmatic.

Perhaps the most common description of the Chassidic movement frames it as a kind of social upheaval. Until this time, there was a pecking order in the Jewish world—scholars on top, the simple Jew at the bottom, and the illiterate boor only nominally Jewish. In the minds of many, a great soul and a great mind were practically synonymous. Then the Baal Shem Tov came and uplifted the status of the common man and woman, celebrating the heartfelt earnestness of a simple Jew, declaring that this raised him higher than the cold, intellectual, and often self-infatuated scholar.

Certainly there is truth to this vignette—in fact, letters of the period demonstrate that the principal opposition to this movement was over just this issue: scholars felt their status was being diminished, and that the common people would no longer pay the respect due to the learned man of Torah.¹ Yet it is far from sufficient, because the Baal Shem Tov and his students were themselves erudite scholars who greatly valued study of Torah, both its esoteric and legalistic aspects. Some of the greatest contributions of that era to Talmudic and halachic scholarship are from these men.

Another common description is that the Chassidic movement taught Jews to serve G-d with love and joy rather than fear and trembling, to sing and dance rather than cry and fast. What concerns G-d the most, the Baal Shem Tov would preach, is that you serve Him with your heart. Love G-d, even if you don't always understand His ways; love His Torah, even if you can barely read the words; and most of all, love one another, even if that "other" doesn't measure up to the expectations of G-d and His Torah. And celebrate all of the above.



© Natalia Kadish

It is often said that Chassidut replaced fear and trembling with love and joy.

Yet, taken alone, this is also misleading. For the chassidim were also known for their meticulousness in the details of Jewish ritual and practice, for extending themselves much further than the strict requirements of *halachah*, in consonance with the Talmudic dictum, “Who is a chassid? One who goes beyond the letter of the law.”

Still another narrative describes the Chassidic movement as an outcome of the esoteric teachings of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, “the Arizal,” the great sixteenth-century Kabbalist of Tzfat, whose ideas captured the imagination of much of the scholarly Jewish world. The Arizal’s teachings provided a comprehensive theology of Jewish practice that felt far more native to the Jewish soul than the apologetics of the philosophers. The Baal Shem Tov and his students were all deeply immersed in these teachings.

Yet still insufficient. The teachings of the chassidic masters are not exclusively esoteric and kabbalistic. Kabbalah speaks in abstractions comprehensible only to the most elevated soul. Chassidut can do that as well, but it also speaks in down-to-earth, pragmatic terms for the everyman in his everyday world.

Obviously, the Chassidic movement as it embodies the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov is not a conglomeration of ideas, but one simple concept that shows itself in many facets. That idea is so deep, so essential, that we find ourselves incapable of iterating it directly with words. But perhaps, as the junction of two lines define a point, with some metaphor and explanation we can locate the essence-point of Chassidut.

Chassidut is not a conglomeration of ideas, but one simple essence with many facets.

Life at the core

Let’s start with a metaphor of the human psyche, which also has many facets. A person thinks, feels, speaks, does—and often all these things appear disparate, as though they come from multiple personalities within him. And they do, for a person is comprised of many conflicting forces battling within.

Yet, hiding behind all that a person does throughout his life, there is a common theme, a thrust in a certain direction, an essence struggling to emerge. If he would find that essence and recognize it, all his life could be brought into harmony. He would be recharged, filled with life. Every aspect of his life, his deeds, his words, his thoughts and his emotions would glow brightly, having been wired in to their core, an endless reservoir of energy, and harmonized with every other aspect of his psyche.

So too, the Jewish People—a people as diverse as one could imagine any people to be in temperaments, sentiments, and above all, opinions. And yet, we comprise together a single people, as a single body, with a single essence breathing within.

Torah, as well, has many layers and facets. There are the stories of the scriptures; the laws and rituals

prescribed by them; the homiletical interpretations of the sages; the deeper, esoteric meanings known only to the initiated—yet all this is one Torah, single and united.

There is a tradition that lends significance to the Baal Shem Tov's name. You see, the Baal Shem Tov wasn't born with that name—it simply means “Master of a Good Name,” and was a common title for miracle-workers in those days. He was Israel, son of Eliezer and Sarah. We, too, are Israel, each one of us, at our very core. When a person falls into a coma, tradition tells us, you may whisper his name into his ear to wake him. Why? Because the name of a person touches his essence, and the essence is always awake. At the time when Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov arrived on the scene, it was time for the Jewish People to be revived. Israel Baal Shem Tov's teaching was G-d's way of whispering the name of the Jewish people into their ear.

To put it another way: When we were given a gift of the Torah at Mount Sinai, we were handed a big backpack to take on our hike through history. Over the centuries, we did just that, discovering within this Torah all the guidance and resources we needed for our many sojournings. But then there came a time when the journey had become too wearisome, when the Torah appeared to be weighing us down rather than carrying us through.

It was a time when we stood at a threshold. The violent pillaging of the Cossack revolt had disrupted the infrastructure of the major Jewish settlements. Already, the Jews of Western Europe had begun to assimilate, and the winds of secularization were blowing eastward. It was only a matter of time before Jewish practice and belief would come face to face with its most inexorable challenge, the skeptical, free-thinking, socially mobile world of modernity.

At this point, we needed not just another strategy, not just another secret of the Torah revealed to us. We needed a charge of light from its very core. Our souls had to make contact and bond with the very soul of this Torah that we carried.

**There came a time when
we had to reach to the
essence-core.**

Bonding

This explains what I would say is the signature motif of chassidic teachings. If it is an authentic teaching, and it has been presented in a lucid form, then it resonates as no other teaching does. You absorb it not as “received tradition,” but as one who hears the song singing within his own soul. Through Chassidut, no longer are the Torah and the Jew two separate beings, one instructing and one being instructed, one commanding and the other commanded. Chassidut is life; as the body and soul fuse to become a single living being, so the Jew bonds with these teachings as though they were his own soul—and is carried by them through the most stalwart challenges, as an indefatigable soul carries the body through fire and ice.

Here, too, a significant detail of the Baal Shem Tov's life comes into play: He was born on the eighteenth day of the final month of the year, the month of Elul. Elul is the month when the Jewish soul begins to shine, in preparation for the "Days of Awe" at the beginning of the coming year. Eighteen, in Jewish numerology, stands for life.

Light from the future

There is yet one more reason why the teachings of Chassidut had to be revealed at that time.

The history of our world, the Talmud tells us, has six millennia, corresponding to the six days of the Creation. The seventh day transcends time, and must be preceded by the days of Moshiach, when "the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as water covers the ocean floor."

The Baal Shem Tov moved to Medzhibuzh, where he began spreading his teachings, in the year 1740. On the Jewish calendar, that is the year 5500. Lining up the millennia with the days of Creation, that would be high noon on the eve of Shabbat. At that time, the light of the Moshiach already began to shine.

Today, the teachings of Chassidut have embedded themselves inextricably within most of religious Jewish thought. Not a single major religious thinker since that time has not been deeply influenced by them. At Chabad.org, we attempt to present these teachings both in the form in which they were taught by their original masters, as well as in the language of the contemporary mind. The bonding, the living, the application into real life—that we leave up to you.

In the last quarter of the sixth millennium, the light of the Moshiach began to shine.

"On Rosh Hashanah of the year 5507 (1747)," wrote the Baal Shem Tov in a letter to his brother-in-law, "I ascended higher and higher . . . until I entered the chamber of the Moshiach. I asked of him, 'When, master, will you come?'"

"He replied, 'In the time when your teaching will become public and revealed in the world, and your wellsprings will burst forth to the farthest extremes.'"

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FOOTNOTES

¹ See Mordecai Wilensky, *Hasidim and Mitnagdim*, Bialik Press.

BY TZVI FREEMAN

Rabbi [Tzvi Freeman](#), a senior editor at Chabad.org, also heads our Ask The Rabbi team. He is the author of [Bringing Heaven Down to Earth](#). To



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*Our encounter with God gives
birth to a shutfut (partnership).
Linked in sacred covenant, we
joyfully embrace our privilege to
make the world more holy and
compassionate. Judaism summons us
to a life of Torah and mitzvot,
and a commitment to social justice.
Through study, observance, prayer,
and acts of lovingkindness, we act
as God's partners, embodying
God's passion and involvement
on behalf of all life.*



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Conservative Judaism



*Covenant
and
Commitment*



Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson

“You shall be My People and I shall be Your God.” (Lev. 26:12)

God and the Jewish People share a bond of love and sacred responsibility, which expresses itself in our biblical *brit* (covenant). This *brit* remains a central pillar of Judaism and has come to symbolize the mission of the Jewish People: to be partners in creation with God; to pursue the sacred task of bringing the knowledge of God to the world; to be “a nation of priests, a holy people” (Exodus 19:6). According to the Torah, our purpose is to make the world more just, sacred, and compassionate—in other words, more closely reflecting the image of God. Judaism guides us in this sacred task by inspiring us to work to repair the world. On a personal level, we strive to cultivate sensitivity, learning, and decency. And on a communal level, we work to foster the ideals of *hesed* (lovingkindness), *kashrut* (holiness), and *tzaddik* (justice).

This mission is made concrete through the implementation of *mitzvot* (commandments). Believing that thought without deed is incomplete, *mitzvot* concretize God’s will, thereby connecting us to God. The many *mitzvot*, giving substance to God’s *brit*, reflect divine love in every aspect of the human endeavor. Through *mitzvot*, we have the potential to transform each moment of our lives, even the most prosaic, into an encounter with the divine.

The *mitzvot* evolved through a long process of interpretation and debate into the body of law known as *halakhhah*. Based on the dual pillars of written Torah (the Bible) and

Oral Torah (which includes the Talmud, Codes, *Teshuvot*—legal rulings of later rabbis), *halakhhah* allows us to seek God’s will and apply that will in each generation. Because the *halakhhah* remains the basis for all authentic Jewish practice, Conservative Judaism recognizes that no living body of law can be frozen or fossilized, and holds dear the notion that the Torah is meant to serve us as a road “towards” the knowledge of God, not as a barrier keeping us back. Indeed, the very word *halakhhah* itself is related to the Hebrew word for journey, and it is *halakhhah* that guides and shapes us as a community. While the method of establishing the rules remains constant throughout the ages, the interpretation and application of these rules is shaped anew by emerging realities, innovative technologies, and new insights.

This commitment to Jewish law as the basis of our practice is matched by a commitment to Jewish thought. Together, these inform our learning and our spiritual search so that Judaism itself becomes the physical manifestation of Torah in the lives of Jewish communities across time. These historical influences contribute to the unfolding of God’s covenant. Integrating new insights to elevate the spirit and nurture the mind continues the age-old labor of harvesting the fullness of Torah. This, above all else, remains the cornerstone of the Conservative Jewish worldview.

This conception of an evolving Judaism has its basis in the Talmud. A quick glance at any page of the Talmud reveals a rabbinic passion for open discussion and a willingness to entertain a wide range of opposing viewpoints, with the single condition that all opinions expressed be rooted in abiding faith and in a love of God, learning, and reason. Indeed, the leading sages of the Talmudic era celebrated above all else the inquiring mind as the most valuable of God’s gifts to humanity. These rabbis combined a commitment to the traditions they inherited with a remarkable courage to keep those traditions both relevant and compassionate. To do so, they did not shrink

from offering new insights, or from instituting new rulings, often in contrast with established practice.

It is precisely this traditional approach—which combines fidelity to inherited tradition and the courage to integrate necessary change—which motivates Conservative Judaism today. Whether asserting the equality of women, reaffirming the centrality of *Shabbat* (the Sabbath), *kashrut* (the dietary laws), *tzaddik* (charity/justice), and prayer, or applying timeless wisdom to contemporary issues, Conservative Judaism insists on observance of tradition and respect for visionary change. The Conservative Jewish community places its trust in its rabbis to be interpreters of *halakhhah* and guides to Jewish life and learning. Each rabbi serves as *halakhhic* authority for his or her community, and our rabbis collectively give direction through the Rabbinical Assembly.

In our own century, the partnership between the Jewish People and God has produced a miracle: the restoration of the Jewish People to its ancestral home, Israel. No less miraculous is the restoration of our historical and sacred language, Hebrew, as the living language of today’s Jews—in Israel and in the Diaspora. As Conservative Jews, we pray in Hebrew and promote Hebrew literacy in the Diaspora. We support the State of Israel as a democratic and pluralistic Jewish center and are committed to the ideal of *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) as an important component of contemporary Jewish expression.

Our understanding of Judaism embraces and celebrates the diversity of *Klal Yisrael*, the entire Jewish people. Membership in the Jewish community does not require uniformity of practice or of thought. We hold out an open hand to any Jewish movement or ideology committed to the values of our heritage and to the well-being of our people. At the same time, we aggressively reach out to all Jews—and interested non-Jews wishing to pursue a Jewish path of holiness and meaning. We are happy to provide access to the profound treasures of Jewish texts, history, lifestyle, and spirituality for all those who seek.



Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

בית המדרש לרבנים ליהדות מתחדשת

What Is Reconstructionist Judaism?

In the following article, Rabbi Lester Bronstein draws upon his blend of wit, insight, compassion and humor to address the question, "What is Reconstructionist Judaism?" Rabbi Bronstein serves as rabbi at Bet Am Shalom Synagogue in White Plains, NY.

A Crash Course on Reconstructionist Judaism

If you advertise yourself as a Reconstructionist rabbi, people will inevitably corner you with "the" question: "Can you tell me—in a few words—what Reconstructionist Judaism is all about?"

In formulating a response that I could quickly pull out of my back pocket, I long ago decided not to lead people into the abyss of "two civilizations," "vote-not-a-veto," and other cul-de-sacs of Reconstructionist jargon. Instead, I like to approach the question by mentioning three arms which are vitally central to every form of Judaism, and I try to show people how Reconstructionist Jews (and, truth be told, a myriad of Jews around the world) view these matters in a way that is different from traditional Judaism, but surprisingly close to the *spirit* of that tradition.

My three litmus topics are Torah, prayer and ritual, and *mitzvot*. Here are my few words on each.

Torah: Tradition tells us that the Torah was dictated by God to Moses, and then transmitted through the generations. Reconstructionist Jews see the Torah as the Jewish people's response to God's presence in the world (and not God's gift to us). That is to say, the Jews wrote the Torah. But that is *not* to say that the Torah is merely a human creation. It is a *response* to the sacred. It is an attempt to convince an entire people to view everyday life in a sacred way.

Yes, it is intriguing to apply the tools of history, science and chronology to the

Torah. These vehicles give us the historical and natural *context* of the Torah. But they don't give us the *essence* of the Torah. The essential Torah is neither the tidal explanation for the parting of the sea, nor the geological definition of the primordial flood nor the cosmological identification of "let there be light." The essential Torah consists in the truth deep within these stories, a truth that radiates a picture of a society based on courts of justice and on social empathy. God didn't *write* that Torah, since God does not write per se. But God is everywhere in the details of it.

Prayer and Ritual: On the face of it, the text of the *siddur* suggests that our prayers are direct recitations and petitions to a God who is "other" and who, we hope, is listening and contemplating a favorable response. Reconstructionist Jews retain the traditional language of Jewish prayer, but not the obvious understanding of its meaning and function.

Rather, we understand prayer to help us perform the task of awakening. We need to awaken ourselves to the miracle that is life and to the obligations that inhere in that life. We believe that we are the primary respondents to our own prayers, and that we need prayer to remind us of the Godly values behind our benevolent actions in the world. We also understand prayer as a way of calling out to others in the world, in the hope that they, too, would sign on to the Godly enterprise of healing, caring, and righting injustice.

In sum, prayer and ritual are the Jewish people's way of heightening our awareness of the sacredness of life, of clarifying and reiterating our moral values and of marking time and space in a sacred way.

Mitzvot: The word *mitzvah* means "commandment," and tradition literally understands mitzvot to be direct commandments from God, via the Torah. As such, we might utilize a *mitzvah* as an opportunity for meaningful relationship with God or our own souls, but we are obligated to perform the deed in any case, regardless of any spiritual uplift it may or may not provide.

As you would expect, Reconstructionist Judaism teaches that the *mitzvot* are our own invention. **Mitzvot are our particularly Jewish ways of responding to the universal God.** We perceive God as demanding sacredness in general, and the Jewish *mitzvot* are our people's way of bringing that universal sacredness to the minutiae of daily life in our own specifically Jewish context.

In this system, God does not choose the Jews to be performers of the commandments. Rather, the Jews choose to be called by God by means of a vast network of sacred acts (*mitzvot*) ranging from balancing work and rest (Shabbat), to establishing courts and laws, to sexual fidelity, filial respect, medical ethics and the rhythms of the seasons. (Hence, *asher ker'vanu la'avodato*, "who has called us to your service.") Paradoxically, it is the *mitzvot* that keep us Jewish, but which simultaneously attune us to the greater universe of which we are a tiny part.

How do people respond to these sorts of answers? Clearly, most have never heard them before. They are not the answers they were expecting. Some love the responses, some are skeptical and some know that they simply have to let the information seep in. My hope is that this crash course in Reconstructionist Judaism leads people to see this movement not as a loosely defined "anything goes" religion, but as a serious modern attempt to understand Judaism as a discipline, as a life path and as a *response* to the holiness that fills our world.

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A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism

Oct. 27, 2004

Adopted in Pittsburgh - 1999

**Adopted at the 1999 Pittsburgh Convention
Central Conference of American Rabbis
May 1999 - Sivan 5759**

See Commentary on the Principles for Reform Judaism

Preamble

On three occasions during the last century and a half, the Reform rabbinate has adopted comprehensive statements to help guide the thought and practice of our movement. In 1885, fifteen rabbis issued the Pittsburgh Platform, a set of guidelines that defined Reform Judaism for the next fifty years. A revised statement of principles, the Columbus Platform, was adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1937. A third set of rabbinic guidelines, the Centenary Perspective, appeared in 1976 on the occasion of the centenary of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Today, when so many individuals are striving for religious meaning, moral purpose and a sense of community, we believe it is our obligation as rabbis once again to state a set of principles that define Reform Judaism in our own time.

Throughout our history, we Jews have remained firmly rooted in Jewish tradition, even as we have learned much from our encounters with other cultures. The great contribution of Reform Judaism is that it has enabled the Jewish people to introduce innovation while preserving tradition, to embrace diversity while asserting commonality, to affirm beliefs without rejecting those who doubt, and to bring faith to sacred texts without sacrificing critical scholarship.

This "Statement of Principles" affirms the central tenets of Judaism - God, Torah and Israel - even as it acknowledges the diversity of Reform Jewish beliefs and practices. It also invites all Reform Jews to engage in a dialogue with the sources of our tradition, responding out of our knowledge, our experience and our faith. Thus we hope to transform our lives through (*kedushah*), holiness.

God

We affirm the reality and oneness of God, even as we may differ in our understanding of the Divine presence.

We affirm that the Jewish people is bound to God by an eternal (*b'rit*), covenant, as reflected in our varied understandings of Creation, Revelation and Redemption.

We affirm that every human being is created (*b'tzelem Elohim*), in the image of God, and that therefore every human life is sacred.

We regard with reverence all of God's creation and recognize our human responsibility for its preservation and protection.

We encounter God's presence in moments of awe and wonder, in acts of justice and compassion, in loving relationships and in the experiences of everyday life.

We respond to God daily: through public and private prayer, through study and through the performance of other (*mitzvot*), sacred obligations -- (*bein adam la Makom*), to God, and (*bein adam la-chaveiro*), to other human beings.

We strive for a faith that fortifies us through the vicissitudes of our lives -- illness and healing, transgression and repentance, bereavement and consolation, despair and hope.

We continue to have faith that, in spite of the unspeakable evils committed against our people and the sufferings endured by others, the partnership of God and humanity will ultimately prevail.

We trust in our tradition's promise that, although God created us as finite beings, the spirit within us is eternal.

In all these ways and more, God gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Torah

We affirm that Torah is the foundation of Jewish life.

We cherish the truths revealed in Torah, God's ongoing revelation to our people and the record of our people's ongoing relationship with God.

We affirm that Torah is a manifestation of (ahavat olam), God's eternal love for the Jewish people and for all humanity.

We affirm the importance of studying Hebrew, the language of Torah and Jewish liturgy, that we may draw closer to our people's sacred texts.

We are called by Torah to lifelong study in the home, in the synagogue and in every place where Jews gather to learn and teach. Through Torah study we are called to (*mitzvot*), the means by which we make our lives holy.

We are committed to the ongoing study of the whole array of (*mitzvot*) and to the fulfillment of those that address us as individuals and as a community. Some of these (*mitzvot*), sacred obligations, have long been observed by Reform Jews; others, both ancient and modern, demand renewed attention as the result of the unique context of our own times.

We bring Torah into the world when we seek to sanctify the times and places of our lives through regular home and congregational observance. Shabbat calls us to bring the highest moral values to our daily labor and to culminate the workweek with (*kedushah*), holiness, (*menuchah*), rest and (*oneg*), joy. The High Holy Days call us to account for our deeds. The Festivals enable us to celebrate with joy our people's religious journey in the context of the changing seasons. The days of remembrance remind us of the tragedies and the triumphs that have shaped our people's historical experience both in ancient and modern times. And we mark the milestones of our personal journeys with traditional and creative rites that reveal the holiness in each stage of life.

We bring Torah into the world when we strive to fulfill the highest ethical mandates in our relationships with others and with all of God's creation. Partners with God in (*tikkun olam*), repairing the world, we are called to help bring nearer the messianic age. We seek dialogue and joint action with people of other faiths in the hope that together we can bring peace, freedom and justice to our world. We are obligated to pursue (*tzedek*), justice and righteousness, and to narrow the gap between the affluent and the poor, to act against discrimination and oppression, to pursue peace, to welcome the stranger, to protect the earth's biodiversity and natural resources, and to redeem those in physical, economic and spiritual bondage. In so doing, we reaffirm social action and social justice as a central prophetic focus of traditional Reform Jewish belief and practice. We affirm the (*mitzvah*) of (*tzedakah*), setting aside portions of our earnings and our time to provide for those in need. These acts bring us closer to fulfilling the prophetic call to translate the words of Torah into the works of our hands.

In all these ways and more, Torah gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Israel

We are Israel, a people aspiring to holiness, singled out through our ancient covenant and our unique history among the nations to be witnesses to God's presence. We are linked by that covenant and that history to all Jews in every age and place.

We are committed to the (*mitzvah*) of (*ahavat Yisrael*), love for the Jewish people, and to (*k'lal Yisrael*), the entirety of the community of Israel. Recognizing that (*kol Yisrael arevim zeh ba-zeh*), all Jews are responsible for one another, we reach out to all Jews across ideological and geographical boundaries.

We embrace religious and cultural pluralism as an expression of the vitality of Jewish communal life in Israel and the Diaspora.

We pledge to fulfill Reform Judaism's historic commitment to the complete equality of women and men in Jewish life.

We are an inclusive community, opening doors to Jewish life to people of all ages, to varied kinds of families, to all regardless of their sexual orientation, to (*gerim*), those who have converted to Judaism, and to all individuals and families, including the intermarried, who strive to create a Jewish home.

We believe that we must not only open doors for those ready to enter our faith, but also to actively encourage

those who are seeking a spiritual home to find it in Judaism.

We are committed to strengthening the people Israel by supporting individuals and families in the creation of homes rich in Jewish learning and observance.

We are committed to strengthening the people Israel by making the synagogue central to Jewish communal life, so that it may elevate the spiritual, intellectual and cultural quality of our lives.

We are committed to (*Medinat Yisrael*), the State of Israel, and rejoice in its accomplishments. We affirm the unique qualities of living in (*Eretz Yisrael*), the land of Israel, and encourage (*aliyah*), immigration to Israel.

We are committed to a vision of the State of Israel that promotes full civil, human and religious rights for all its inhabitants and that strives for a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors.

We are committed to promoting and strengthening Progressive Judaism in Israel, which will enrich the spiritual life of the Jewish state and its people.

We affirm that both Israeli and Diaspora Jewry should remain vibrant and interdependent communities. As we urge Jews who reside outside Israel to learn Hebrew as a living language and to make periodic visits to Israel in order to study and to deepen their relationship to the Land and its people, so do we affirm that Israeli Jews have much to learn from the religious life of Diaspora Jewish communities.

We are committed to furthering Progressive Judaism throughout the world as a meaningful religious way of life for the Jewish people.

In all these ways and more, Israel gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

(Baruch she-amar ve-haya ha-olam).

Praised be the One through whose word all things came to be.

May our words find expression in holy actions.

May they raise us up to a life of meaning devoted to God's service

And to the redemption of our world.



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Unit 2 Resource 2.6

Jewish Movement Guiding Questions

In 3 sentences or less, what is the essence of the Jewish Movement about which you read?

What are the most important components of Judaism for this Jewish Movement?

In your opinion, what components of Judaism seem to be dismissed in this Jewish Movement?

Create a catchy slogan for this Movement.

Unit 2 Resource 2.7

Check all of the relevant boxes under which this words fits. If you feel strongly about a word belonging more to one movement than to another, rank the word (1 being the least and 4 being the most).

	Chabad	Conservative	Reconstructionist	Reform
Religious				
Mitzvot (Commandments)				
Kashrut (Jewish Dietary Laws)				
Chosen People				
Tradition				
Shabbat				
God				
Torah				
Israel				
Choice				
Halakha (Jewish Law)				
Jewish Values				
Choice				
Am Yisrael (Peoplehood)				
Brit (Covenant)				

Unit 2 Resource 3.1

Shabbat Quotes

“The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to *holiness in time*. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.”³²

“God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.”³³

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”³⁴

“Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”³⁵

“If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your affairs on My holy day; if you call the Sabbath ‘delight’, God’s holy day ‘honored’; and if you honor it and go not your own ways, nor look to your affairs, nor strike bargains; then you can delight in God.”³⁶

³² Abraham Joshua Heschel, *the Sabbath: its meaning for modern man* (New York: H. Wolff, 1951), 10.

³³ Gen. 2:3

³⁴ Ex. 20:8

³⁵ Deut. 5:12

³⁶ Is. 53:13-14

“The Jewish Sabbath has been called an ‘island of holy time in a sea of secular activity.’ This is a powerful and apt metaphor, but it remains a metaphor, an inexact comparison. Unlike a true island, which is formed by an act of nature, Shabbat is a human construction. It becomes holy in our lives as a result of our own creative endeavor. According to our tradition, we sanctify Shabbat by means of actions that correspond to four separate *mitzvot* [commandments]. We *remember* the Sabbath through our liturgy by the words we say and sing that distinguish this day from all others. We *observe* the Sabbath by refraining from doing “work” on that day. And we *honor* and *delight in* the Sabbath through the foods we eat, the clothes we wear, and the special ends to which we devote the hours of the day that would otherwise be given over to work and the pursuit of material gain. In fulfilling these *mitzvot*, tradition teaches that we build a fence in time, setting Shabbat apart from the other days so that we may experience a kind of life that is wholly different, a ‘foretaste of the World-to-Come.’ It is an exercise in the ‘art of living as it expresses itself through Shabbat.’”³⁷

“More than the Jewish People has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish People.” – Ahad Ha’Am³⁸

³⁷ Mark Washofsky, *Jewish Living: A Guide To Contemporary Reform Practice* (New York: UAHC Press, 2001), 73-74.

³⁸ Elyse D. Frishman, *Mishkan T’filah: A Reform Siddur* (New York: CCAR Press, 2007), 251.

“Every seventh sunset, Shabbat comes. Whether heralded or not, welcomed or not, on the seventh day Shabbat comes. Brushed with the dew of Creation, Shabbat is different from the other Jewish holidays. It does not mark a historical event or a seasonal harvest. It is not dependent upon the phases of the moon, and it existed even before there was a Jewish people. Shabbat is, as it were, God’s holiday, the eternal seventh day of Creation, the day of completion and rest.”³⁹

“Having set aside our weekday distractions, on Shabbat we can devote ourselves fully to the blessings and goodness in our lives.”⁴⁰

“One of the great tragedies of Jewish life in America is the loss of the Sabbath. Jewish life will not be restored to good health unless the Sabbath regains its sanctity and its central place.”⁴¹

“Last in creation, first in intention.”⁴²

“The seventh day is a *palace in time* which we build. It is made of soul, of joy and reticence.”⁴³

³⁹ Nina Beth Cardin, *The Tapestry of Jewish Time: A Spiritual Guide to Holidays and Life-Cycle Events* (Springfield: Behrman House Publishing, 2000), 35.

⁴⁰ Cardin, 36.

⁴¹ Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 54.

⁴² Rabbi Shlomo Alkabez, *Lecha Dodi*

⁴³ Heschel, 14-15.

“The Sabbath is no time for personal anxiety or care, for any activity that might dampen the spirit of joy. The Sabbath is no time to remember sins, to confess, to repent or even to pray for relief or anything we might need. It is a day for praise, not a day for petitions.”⁴⁴

R. Yosi Bar Yehuda said, two *malachim*, one good-one evil – escort a person home from the synagogue on *Erev Shabbat*. If the person arrives home and finds a kindled lamp, a set table, and a made bed, the good angel says, “May it be the will of God that it also be this way next Shabbat”. The evil angel is then compelled to answer “Amen.” But, if the person comes home and finds that his home has not been prepared for Shabbat, then the evil angel says, “May it be the will of God that it also be this way next Shabbat.” The good angel is then compelled to answer “Amen.”⁴⁵

“Every person must carry the holiness of Shabbat to hallow the other days of the week.” (Rebbe Nachman of Braslav)⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Heschel, 30.

⁴⁵ Adapted by Rachel Marks from Talmud Bavli Shabbat 119b.

⁴⁶ “A Shabbat Frame of Mind: Shabbat Quotes” compiled by Rabbi Avi Weinstein, Hillel, accessed April 2, 2013.

http://www.hillel.org/TemplatesHillel/Templates/hillel_general.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEG UID=%7bEFE9AC14-57F5-4DD1-BE7F-FFF4C7FABA0E%7d&NRORIGINALURL=%2fcampus%2fguides%2fshabbat%2fdefault&NRCACHEI NT=NoModifyGuest#quotes.

Unit 2 Resource 5.1

What are the necessary components of an *authentic* Bar/Bat mitzvah?

Unit 2 Resource 5.2

Halakhic Ketubah Text⁴⁷

On the _____ day of the week, the _____ day of the month _____ in the year five thousand seven hundred and _____ since the creation of the world according to the reckoning which we are accustomed to use here in the city of _____ in _____. That _____ son of _____ of the family _____ said to this maiden _____ daughter of _____ of the family _____, “Be my wife according to the law of Moses and Israel, and I will cherish, honor, support, and maintain you in accordance with the custom of Jewish husbands who cherish, honor, support, and maintain their wives faithfully. And I here present you with the marriage gift of virgins, two hundred silver zuzim, which belongs to you, according to the law of Moses and Israel; and I will also give you your food, clothing and necessities, and live with you as husband and wife according to the universal custom.” And _____, this maiden consented and became his wife. The trousseau that she brought to him from her father’s house in silver, gold, valuables, clothing, furniture, and bedclothes, all this _____, the bridegroom accepted in the sum of one hundred silver pieces, making in all two hundred silver pieces. And thus said _____ the bridegroom, “The responsibility of this marriage contract, of this trousseau, and of this additional sum, I take upon myself and my heirs after me, so that they shall be paid from the best part of my property and possessions that I have beneath the whole heaven, that which I now possess or may hereafter acquire. All of my property, real and personal, even the shirt from my back, shall be mortgaged to secure the payment of this marriage contract, of the trousseau, and of the addition made to it, during my lifetime and after my death, from the present and day and forever.” _____ the bridegroom, has taken upon himself the responsibility of this marriage contract, of the trousseau and the addition made to it, according to the restrictive usages of all marriage contracts and the additions to them made for the daughters of Israel, according to the institutions of our sages of blessed memory. It is not to be regarded as an indecisive contractual obligation or as a mere formula of a document. We have followed the legal formality of symbolic delivery (kinyan) between _____ son of _____ and _____ daughter of _____ this maiden and we have used a garment legally fit for the purpose, to strengthen all that is stated above.

AND EVERYTHING IS VALID AND CONFIRMED

Attested to _____ Witness

Attested to _____ Witness

⁴⁷ Anita Diamant, *The New Jewish Wedding* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 90-91.

Lieberman Clause – Conservative Jewish Ketubah⁴⁸

In 1953 the Rabbinical Assembly and the Jewish Theological Seminary accepted an additional clause in the ketubah proposed by Professor Saul Lieberman. The purpose of the Lieberman takana was to help solve the problem of agunot (women whose husbands refuse to grant them a religious divorce and who are thus prohibited from remarrying). The bride and groom agree to recognize the authority of the Bet Din of the Rabbinical Assembly and the Jewish Theological Seminary to summon either party at the request of the other to enable the party so requesting to live in accordance with the Torah. The point of this clause is to exert moral suasion upon a recalcitrant spouse already divorced under civil law to agree to a traditional get .

In 1991, the Joint Bet Din of the Conservative Movement suggested the couple sign a letter of intent in addition to the clause in the ketubah . The wording was worked out in order to ensure its viability in American courts.

The Aramaic and English texts of the Lieberman Clause and the Letter of Intent follow. Please consult with your rabbi about this issue.

This paragraph appears as the penultimate paragraph in the Ketubah :

_____, the groom, and _____, the bride, further agreed that should either contemplate dissolution of the marriage, or following the dissolution of their marriage in the civil courts, each may summon the other to the Bet Din of the Rabbinical Assembly and the Jewish Theological Seminary, or its representative, and that each will abide by its instructions so that throughout life each will be able to live according to the laws of the Torah.

Letter of Intent

Each of us has met with Rabbi _____, who has provided us with a copy of the ketubah (a copy of which is attached) and explained to each of us the provisions contained in the ketubah concerning the dissolution of marriage.

Each of us acknowledges and confirms our understanding that this ketubah is a legal contract and shall be binding under both Jewish and civil law concerning the formation and dissolution of our marriage.

⁴⁸ “Lieberman Clause”, Ritualwell: Tradition and Innovation, accessed on April 2, 2013. <http://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/lieberman-clause>.

In particular, each of us acknowledges that according to this ketubah, should our marriage be dissolved in the civil courts, each of us is bound to appear before the Joint Bet Din of the Conservative Movement, or such Bet Din as shall be designated by the Joint Bet Din, if so requested by the other, and to abide by its instruction and decision with respect to the dissolution of our marriage under Jewish law. Each of us intends that the undertaking to appear before and to be bound by the directions of the Bet Din may be enforced by the civil court of law. Each of us acknowledges our agreement to the ketubah and our willingness to be bound by its terms.

Dated _____

Signature of Bride _____

Signature of Groom _____

Explained and signed under the supervision of Rabbi _____

Signature of Rabbi _____

An Egalitarian Ketubah⁴⁹

On the _____ day of the week the _____ day of _____ five thousand seven hundred _____ since the creation of the world as we reckon it here in _____, the bride, _____, daughter of _____ and _____, and the groom, _____, son of _____ and _____, entered into this mutual covenant as equal partners, loving and supportive companions in life.

We consecrate ourselves to one another, establishing a partnership built on the foundation of our love for each other. We promise to share our lives together in joy and hardships, the everyday and the special moments. We promise to contribute to each other's personal and emotional growth, to open ourselves to each other in trust, and to respect one another completely. We promise to fully support one another, considering the other's needs as our own. We will always be honest with one another helping the other to gain perspective on any situation. We promise to bring laughter and comfort into our daily life together, as lovers and friends.

I am my beloved and my beloved is mine. (Song of Songs 6:3)

We promise to establish a loving home among Israel, dedicated to peace, hope, and respect for all people, to be a family filled with love and learning, goodness and generosity, comfort and compassion. We promise to mark the changing seasons and the moments of our lives according to the traditions of our people. We promise to build our home on the foundations of our Jewish values and to work together to do our share to mend the world.

Hear, O Israel! Adonai is our God, Adonai is One. (Deuteronomy 6:4)

The agreement into which we are entering is a holy covenant, like the ancient covenant of our people. It is a covenant of protection and hope, a covenant of distinction, a covenant of devotion, and a covenant of mutual lovingness.

I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish it with you as an everlasting covenant. (Ezekiel 16:60)

All This is Valid and Binding.

Bride _____

Rabbi _____

Witness _____

Groom _____

Cantor _____

Witness _____

⁴⁹ Compiled by Rachel Kaplan Marks and Albert Marks.

Brit Ahuvim⁵⁰

On _____ (day of week), the _____ day of _____ (month), 57__ according to the Jewish reckoning (_____ [month]_____ [day,] _____ [year], according to secular reckoning), in the city of _____ (state or region), _____ (country), _____ (Hebrew name) daughter/son of _____ and _____, whose surname is _____, and _____, (Hebrew name) daughter/son of _____ and _____, whose surname is _____, confirm in the presence of witnesses a lover's covenant between them and declare a partnership to establish a household among the People of Israel.

The agreement into which _____ and _____ are entering is a holy covenant like the ancient covenants of our people, made in faithfulness and peace o stand forever. IT is a covenant of protection and hope like the covenant God swore to Noah and his descendants, saying, "When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures, all flesh that is on earth. That, "God said to Noah, "shall be the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh" (Gen. 9:16-17).

It is a covenant of distinction, like the covenant made with Israel, saying, "You shall be My people, and I shall be your God" (Jer. 30:22).

It is a covenant of devotion, joining hearts like the covenant David and Jonathan made, as it is said, "And Jonathan's soul was bound up with the soul of David. Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself" (1 Sam. 18:1-3).

It is a covenant of mutual lovingkindness like the wedding covenant between God and dZion, as it is said, "I will espouse you forever. I will espouse you with righteousness and justice and lovingkindness and compassion. I will espouse you in faithfulness and shall know God" (Hos. 2:21-22).

The following are the provisions of the lover's covenant into which _____ (Hebrew name), daughter/son of _____ and _____, and _____ (Hebrew name), daughter/son of _____ and _____, now enter:

1. _____ and _____ declare that they have chosen each other as companions, as our rabbis teach: Get yourself a companion. This teaches that a person should get a companion to eat with, to drink with, to study Bible with, to study Mishnah

⁵⁰ Brit Ahuvim by Rachel Adler, found in:

Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer, *The Creative Jewish Wedding Book: A Hands-On Guide to New & Old Traditions, Ceremonies & Celebrations* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004), 70-72.

with, to sleep with, to confide all one's secrets, secrets of Torah and secrets of worldly things. – Avot D'Rabbi Natan 8

2. _____ and _____ declare that they are setting themselves apart for each other and will take no other lover.

3. _____ and _____ hereby assume all the rights and obligations that apply to family members: to attend, care, and provide for one another [and for any children with which they may be blessed] [and for _____ child/children of _____]

4. _____ and _____ commit themselves to a life of kindness and righteousness as a Jewish family and to work together toward the communal task of mending the world.

5. _____ and _____ pledge that one will help the other at the time of dying, by carrying out the last rational requests of the dying partner, protecting him/her from indignity or abandonment and by tender, faithful presence with the beloved until the end, fulfilling what has been written: "Set me as a seal upon you rarm, for love is stronger than death" (Song of Songs 8:6).

To this covenant we affix our signatures.

The partners

Witnessed this day the _____ day of Parashat _____ (Hebrew date).

The witnesses:

Interfaith⁵¹

From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to heaven. And when two souls that are destined to be together find each other, their streams of light flow together and a single, brighter light goes forth from their united being. – Baal Shem Tov

This certificate celebrates before God and all those present that on the _____ day of the week, the _____ day of _____ in the year _____ corresponding to _____ at _____, the holy covenant of marriage was entered into between the Groom, _____, and the Bride, _____. We pledge to each other to be loving friends and partners in marriage, to talk and listen, to trust and appreciate one another, to respect cherish each other's uniqueness, and to support, comfort and strengthen each other through life's sorrows and joys. We further promise to share hopes, thoughts and dreams as we build our life together. May we grow our lives ever intertwined, our love bringing us closer. We shall endeavor to establish a home that is compassionate to all, wherein the flow of the seasons and the passages of life, as witnessed by our mutual traditions, are revered and honored. May our home be forever filled with peace, happiness and love.

⁵¹ From A Good Company as found in: Kaplan-Meyer, 68.

Gay Reform Ketubah Text⁵²

This ketubah witnesses before God and all those present that on the _____ day of the week, the ___th day of the month of _____ in the year 57____, which corresponds to _____, that the grooms, _____, son of _____ and _____, and _____, son of _____ and _____, stood together under the wedding canopy to enter the holy covenant of marriage. With love and reverence, they declared: "With these rings, we consecrate ourselves in marriage according to the traditions of Moses and Israel."

We promise to be equal partners, loving friends, and supportive companions throughout our lives. We value in each other and ourselves qualities of compassion and forgiveness, understanding and wisdom. Our love will provide us with the strength to be ourselves while cherishing our differences. We promise to share in each other's dreams while not forgetting our own. Because we cherish the closeness that allows us to express our innermost thoughts and feelings, we promise to give one another respect, trust, and support throughout our lives together. We promise to support and comfort each other in times of sorrow and to share our joys and triumphs.

We will create a home, where all are welcome, and fill it with laughter, empathy, faith, imagination, trust, friendship, companionship, and love. With our family and in our home, we will celebrate Jewish holidays and honor the traditions of Judaism and devote ourselves to learning, charity, and acts of kindness. If we have children in our new family, we will teach our family courtesy and compassion and we will live the values we teach our children.

Together _____ and _____ declared before God and all present that they have signed their names to this ketubah of their own free will without reservation or restraint and they intend to be bound by this holy covenant so long as they shall live.

Witness _____ Witness _____
Groom _____ Groom _____
Rabbi _____

⁵² "Gay Reform Ketubah Text", Ketubah-Arts accessed on April 3, 2013. <http://ketubah-arts.com/gay-ketubah-text/#.UVx4DqtVQhN>.

Unit 2 Resource 5.3

Ketubah Comparison Chart

	Essence of the Text (No more than 3 sentences)	Elements Unique to this Text	Elements Shared with Other Texts - Indicate Which Texts
Halakhic			
Halakhic w/ Lieberman Clause			
Egalitarian			
Brit Ahuvim			
Interfaith			
Gay			

Unit 2 Resource 6.1

Excerpt From Naomi Levy's Book, Talking to God⁵³

I like to sit in houses of worship long after the worshippers have gone... I sometimes find myself imagining words that have been passed from the congregants' whispering lips to God's ear. Prayers seem to hover in the air like the smell of a fire long after the flames have died out. These prayers are not the ones that come from books. They are less literate, without rhyme or meter, without fancy embellishment. The ones not printed in black and white, but in all the subtlety and mystery of the human soul. They are the prayers of life and death, joy and mourning, longing and thanksgiving. Prayers shouted in anger or sung out in love. They are daily prayers, once-in-a-lifetime prayers. Prayers of women and men, of the healthy and the ailing, of the young and of the elderly, of the rich and the poor.

Canonized prayers contain ancient and eternal wisdom and are central to religious experience. They are dependable and beautifully written. Often set to sublime music, they link us to our community when we recite them together, and to our history when we remember that these very words were uttered centuries ago. They connect us to future generations as well, for they will continue to inspire for centuries to come. No matter what our religious tradition, established prayers are the framework of our faith. We teach them to our children and turn to them again and again throughout the measure of our days. They instruct us in the articles of our belief, in our unique bond with God, and in the particular expressions of that relationship.

But what are we to do when the prayer book does not contain the words we are searching for? What do we do when certain feelings well up inside us, but the words to express them are absent from our liturgies?

⁵³ Naomi Levy, *Talking to God: Personal Prayers for Times of Joy, Sadness, Struggle, and Celebration* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 1-2.



Prayer of the Secular

Words and music by Kobi Oz



הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל
Jewish Agency for Israel

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Father, oh merciful Father
Be to me a trusted soul-mate
Cushion my heart in your faith
Lend to me awe at the sound of your name

אָבא הוּי אָב הַרְחָמֵן
הִיָּה לִי יָדִיד נֶפֶשׁ נֶאֱמָן
רַפֵּד לְבִי בְּאִמוּנָתְךָ
תֵּן בִּי יִרְאָה לְמִשְׁמַע שְׁמִיךָ

I never found myself a teacher
and my laws are improvised
When I am in distress I take a pill
I made great progress
(descendant of monkeys)
And for all my weaknesses
my parents are to blame
And there's no well-ploughed furrow,
it's a multi-lane highway
That leads to the general mall
And if a miracle happens
it's really no big deal
Doesn't happen because of me

לֹא עָשִׂיתִי לִי רַב וְחֻקוֹתַי הֵן
אֶלְתוֹר
כְּשֶׁאֲנִי בְּמִצּוּקָה אֲנִי לֹוֹקֵחַ כְּדוֹר
מֵאֲד הַתְּקַדְמָתִי (מוֹצְאֵי מְקוֹפִים)
וּבְכָל חוֹלְשׁוֹתַי אֲשֵׁמִים הַהוֹרִים
וְאִין אֵיזָה תָּלֵם יֵשׁ כְּבִישׁ מְהִיר רַב
מִסְּלוּלֵי
הַמּוֹבִיל אֶל הַקְּנִיּוֹן הַכְּלָלִי
וְאִם מִתְרַחֵשׁ נִס זֶה לְגַמְרִי לְגַמְרִי
סִתְמִי
לֹא קוֹרָה בְּגִלְלִי

Father, oh merciful Father
Be to me a trusted soul-mate
Cushion my heart in your faith
Lend to me awe at the sound of your name

אָבא הוּי אָב הַרְחָמֵן
הִיָּה לִי יָדִיד נֶפֶשׁ נֶאֱמָן
רַפֵּד לְבִי בְּאִמוּנָתְךָ
תֵּן בִּי יִרְאָה לְמִשְׁמַע שְׁמִיךָ

That's how I prayed at a Jewish minyan
Next to me a Haredi trembled
a volcano of fears
For the sake of G-d he is a systematic robot
Hugely sweaty,
blessed with (many) children
Next to us a National Orthodox
who worships dust
And for all his invasion of the past
He praises battle-dress as if the battle's won
And we all live by his sword
An immigrant and caretaker
decorated in a hunched back
A reform Jew with a brand new cover,
or a different book.
A traditional and his lad
Bar Mitzvah boy
Kuzaris without candies

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

כָּךְ הַתְּפַלְלָתִי בְּמִנְיָן יְהוּדִים
לְצַדִּי חֲרָדִי רַעַד גָּעַשׁ פְּחָדִים
כִּי לְמַעַן הַשֵּׁם הוּא רוֹבֹט שִׁיטָּתִי
מִיִּזְע כְּמוֹתִי, מְכוֹנֵת יְלָדִים
לִידְנוּ דָתִי לְאִמִּי שְׁסוּגֵד לְעַפְרָה
וַיִּמְרַב הַתְּפַלְשׁוֹת בְּעֶבֶר
מִתְהַלֵּל הַחוּגֵר כְּמִשִּׁיל חֲגוּרוֹ
וְכִלְנוּ חַיִּים עַל חֲרָבוֹ
עוֹלָה וְשִׁמְשׁ מְעַטֵּר חֲטוּטָרֵת
רְפוּרְמִי בְּשִׁנוּי גְּבֵרֵת אוֹ בְּשִׁנוּי
הָאֲדָרֵת
מְסַרְתִּי וְנִעְרוֹ
חֲתוּן גִּיל הַמְצָאוֹת
כּוֹזְרִים חֲשׂוּכֵי מִמְתָּקִים

And from behind there is
 a wild rustling and whispering
 Headscarves and wigs and hair-do's
 For on the other side of the divide
 lifts the sensuous sound
 The feminine voice
 Of the non-counted

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai wept from on
 high out of sadness, or maybe happiness
 And the rain fell or he shed a tear
 A sigh escaped my heart
 All are thy students, Powerful Hammer,
 Candle of Israel, Right-hand Pillar.
 Bless thy children of all kinds,
 both religious and also secular

Father, oh merciful Father
 Be to me a trusted soul-mate
 Cushion my heart in your faith
 Lend to me awe at the sound of your name

מֵאַחֲרָיִךְ יֵשׁ רִחַשׁ וְלַחֲשׁ חֲפָשִׁי
 מְטֻפָּחוֹת וְיַפְאוֹת וְעֵצוּב מְסַפְרוֹת
 כִּי מֵעֵבֶר פְּרָגוֹד רָם הַקּוֹל הַחוֹשֵׁי
 קָם הַקּוֹל הַנְּשִׁי
 שֶׁל הֵלֵא נִסְפְרוֹת.

6

רַבֵּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּי בָּכָה מִלְמַעְלָה
 מִצַּעַר, אוֹלֵי מִשְׂמָחָה
 וְהִגִּישׁ יָרֵד אוֹ דְמָעָה הוּא מָחָה.
 מִלְבִּי נִפְלְטָה אֲנָחָה,
 כָּלֵם תְּלַמִּידֶיךָ פְּטִישׁ הַחֲזֵק, גֵּר
 יִשְׂרָאֵל, עֲמוּד הַיְמִינִי
 בְּרַךְ אֶת בְּנֶיךָ מִכָּל הַגּוֹוֹנִים גַּם דְּתִי
 גַּם חִלּוּנִי.

7

אָבָא הוּי אָב הַרְחֵמֶן
 הִיָּה לִי יָדִיד נֶפֶשׁ נֶאֱמָן
 רִפֵּד לְבִי בְּאֲמוּנָתְךָ
 יְתֵן בִּי יְרָאָה לְמִשְׁמַע שְׁמֶיךָ

1. Haredi – Ultra-Orthodox. The literal translation of ‘haredi’ would be ‘quaker’, or ‘trembler’.
2. The phrase “blessed with children” is now, among other things, a political phrase. It recalls the fact that large families are eligible for significant government subsidies, far more per child than small families.
3. Here the reference is to the religious settlers who value the land of the Bible. The continued settlement of Biblical lands on the West Bank is, in this song, blamed for Israel’s continuing wars with her neighbours.
4. Here Kobi Oz raises a question as to whether Reform Judaism has reformed Judaism, or created an entirely different religion.
5. The Kuzari nation, that legend has it converted to Judaism after the persuasions of Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, was a blond nation. Sephardi legends have it that the Ashkenazim are descended from the Kuzaris. The tradition of throwing candies at a Bar Mitzvah is a Sephardi tradition. Hence if you are a descendent of the Kuzaris, you will be without candies...
6. A Jewish prayer quorum requires 10 people to pray together. In orthodox and ultra-orthodox Judaism, this number refers only to men: women are not counted.
7. The story of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai that Kobi Oz draws on is from Kobi Oz draws on is from the Babylonian Talmud Gittin 55b-57a.

When the Romans were besieging Jerusalem, extremists were in control of the population of the Holy City. In order to hasten the coming of the messiah, these zealots even burned all the food stores of Jerusalem.

It was at this point that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai decided to sneak out of the city. The Roman commander Vespasian came upon him, and Yochanan ben Zakkai cried out: "Greetings, Emperor of Rome!" Before Vespasian could explain to ben Zakkai that he was not the Emperor, a messenger from Rome arrived with the decree naming Vespasian Emperor. Vespasian was so impressed with ben Zakkai's prophetic powers, he offered to grant the Rabbi's any request. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai did not ask for Jerusalem to be saved, or for the Holy Temple to be spared destruction. Instead, he asked for "Yavneh and her sages" – the permission to establish a Jewish scholars' academy in the city of Yavneh.

In Yavneh, following the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, these scholars built the Jewish religion anew. This religion would have no centralizing Temple, nor would it be ruled by the hereditary Priestly caste: it would be, in Kobi Oz' words, a privatized religion, interpreted differently in different places. The multi-denominational, multi-customed Judaism that we know today was set in motion – so Kobi would maintain – by the fateful decision of Yochanan ben Zakkai.

8. Kobi Oz sees Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai as something of a 'Patron Saint' of Pluralism. He is so pluralist, suggests Kobi, that he even has three names!

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- In what way is this a personal prayer, in your opinion?
 - In what way is this a collective prayer, in your opinion?
 - Do you see the first verse as being critical of this non-religious approach to life?

Kobi Oz sees Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai as something of a 'Patron Saint' of Pluralism. He is so pluralist, suggests Kobi, that he even has three names! As such, this song offers a vision of pluralism in action. In the song/prayer's minyan, the protagonist prays alongside those with whom he strongly disagrees and even dislikes.

- Do you accept this as an ideal vision of pluralism and tolerance?
- Do current political issues find their way into your prayers?
- Is Jewish communal prayer the place for thinking about 'tough stuff'?
Maybe this is another unexpected consequence of the lack of separation between Religion and State in Israel – not only does religion insert itself into politics, but politics also inserts itself into religion!

Unit 2 Resource 6.3

“Prayer of the Secular” Guiding Questions

What is the main message of this song?

In what way is this a personal prayer?

In what way is this a collective prayer?

Do you see the first verse as being critical of this non-religious approach to life?

Do current political issues find their way into your prayers?

Why might Jewish communal prayer be the place for thinking about ‘tough stuff’?

Do you think that traditional prayers have more value than spontaneous prayers, why or why not?



JOSHUA MALINA was tapped by Aaron Sorkin to fill the shoes of White House speechwriter in the Emmy Award-winning series *The West Wing*.

“Judaism is the foundation of my identity.”

For me the statement “I am Jewish” is no different from the statement “I am.” Judaism is the foundation of my identity, the fixed base upon which all other aspects of my self are balanced—actor, husband, father, American.

“I am Jewish.” It is an assertion of identity that has caused so many of our people throughout history to be hated, exiled, killed. That Daniel Pearl was murdered for embodying the truth of his final statement is a terrible tragedy. But nothing can truly extinguish the light of identity. And in a real way, his statement allows me to say that although I never met him, he was my brother.



IRWIN COTLER is the Canadian Minister of Justice and a professor of law. He is an international human rights lawyer and has defended political prisoners all over the world for the past twenty-five years.

“I am a Jew. My mother is a Jew. My father is a Jew. We all met at Sinai.”

Daniel Pearl’s last words, “My father is Jewish, my mother is Jewish, I am Jewish,” were not just a statement of fact; under the circumstances, they were a courageous assertion of identity. And they have inspired me to reflect upon my own identity—on my parents’ contribution to it—and, most importantly, the values imparted to me that underpin this identity.

My father—of blessed memory—was a lawyer with the soul of a poet, for whom being a lawyer was a *melitz yosher*—a counsel for

strength to act for the benefit of the rest of humanity.

Daniel Pearl's last words testify that he was a man who knew where he came from. He was not alienated from his identity. Only such a man could have been free and brave enough to take upon himself the important and dangerous mission during which he was murdered. The freedom that beat within him, the freedom that came from within his identity, is what gave him the strength to leave his land and his family and to do what he thought was right and important, for the sake of the rest of the world.

NORMAN LEAR is a writer, producer, and social activist.

"A 'cultural Jew' ... total Jew."



I identify with everything in life as a Jew. The Jewish contribution over the centuries to literature, art, science, theater, music, philosophy, the humanities, public policy, and the field of philanthropy awes me and fills me with pride and inspiration. As to Judaism, the religion: I love the congregation and find myself less interested in the ritual. If that describes me to others as a "cultural Jew," I have failed myself. My description, as I feel it, would be: total Jew.

DAVID HOROVITZ is the editor of *The Jerusalem Report* newsmagazine and author of *A Little Too Close to God: The Thrills and Panic of a Life in Israel* and the new *Still Life with Bombers: Israel in the Age of Terrorism*.

"I am Jewish, and it colors everything I've done, do, and will do."



Sometimes I say it differently. Sometimes I say, "I'm a journalist from Israel." But it comes down to the same thing: I am Jewish, and it colors everything I've done, do, and will do.

It means I was born into a family with a rabbinical heritage that my beloved Uncle Markie spent years tracing back through the ages. When my mother was single-handedly raising my sister and me, it gave her the framework on which to construct our lives. It determined the school I went to, and that there would be little punch-ups some days with the kids from the other school down the road, the non-Jewish school, on the way to the underground station after lessons. The Jewish thing, and that unmistakably Jewish name that came with it, Horowitz, meant I knew, very early on, that I wasn't completely English, or that even if I was back then, I was something else as well.

It meant I learned to read Hebrew, and went to Israel for a short school trip, and felt connected, if not immediately at home. It kept me coming back to Israel, the country seeping into me, resonating somewhere within me.

It's because she is Jewish that my wife-to-be was sitting in a political science class at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the fourth daughter of the sole Holocaust survivor of a big, boisterous, decimated Hasidic family from Lodz. My father-in-law, orphaned by the Nazis, had set her life on its course to Jerusalem because he knew that in Israel, like nowhere else on earth, we Jews get to choose our own fate, rather than rely for our survival on the tolerance of others. His family in Poland had depended on such tolerance, and been wiped out.

It's why I've stubbornly insisted, thus far at least, on raising my children here, even through months and years when, simply because we are Jewish and intent on survival, closing the front door in the morning meant entering a grisly lottery: going out into the world in the certainty that today, every day, significant numbers of people were dreaming of killing us, and some of them were going to try. Stubborn. Perhaps, as a father and a husband, even irresponsible. But not irresponsible as a Jew.

I see myself as one of the fortunate heirs to the centuries of Jewish tradition—a tradition of relentless questioning and self-examination. That's why I was drawn to journalism and that's why I was drawn to Israel, where the questions and the constantly reexamined arguments truly matter, where our national destiny is still unresolved and we Jews here, all of us, help shape it.

Not long ago, at an international conference in Jordan, I spotted a white-robed Saudi prince alone on a plump sofa overlooking the Dead Sea. "I'm a journalist from Israel," I told him. "Perhaps we could speak for a while." He looked up and nodded benignly. He had read my nametag, confirmed that I am Jewish, and that was the filter through which he looked at me as we talked. And it was, as ever, the prism through which I looked at him.



KITTY DUKAKIS is a social worker, assisting refugees since 1981, and a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. She is also a dancer and has been a modern dance instructor since 1953.

"More than matzo balls, chopped liver, and chicken soup."

I have felt Jewish since my earliest memories.

My father, a musician who passed away at ninety-four, was born to Russian immigrant parents who arrived in Boston at the turn of the twentieth century. My Poppa (grandfather) was a left-handed tailor and also a conductor on the streetcars in Cambridge and Somerville, where they lived. He was not a very religious man, but proud of his Jewish background. My Bobby (grandmother) was very traditional and went to synagogue until she couldn't walk anymore. In her old age, she would stand on street corners with a *pushke* (charity box) collecting money for Hadassah. I remember when I was very young sitting with her in the balcony of her old *shul* (synagogue) and expressing unhappiness that my male first cousins were allowed to be downstairs.

My mother's biological father was Irish, and her mother was a Hungarian Jew who was the oldest of nine children. She was adopted by wealthy German Jews, who were not religious at all, and she began to learn about Judaism and its traditions after she married my dad.

My immediate family did not belong to a synagogue, so my

understanding of my religion and its traditions came from Shabbat and other traditions at my grandparents' and aunts' homes. Growing up, my neighborhood was mostly Jewish, as were the grammar and high school I attended. When I went to Israel in 1978, bringing a mixed group of Christians and Jews from Massachusetts, I had a profound and spiritual experience.

Being Jewish for me is more than matzo balls, chopped liver, and chicken soup, though food and the generosity that go with it are very much a part of who I am. I love the Jewish traditions and was brought up to believe that fairness with all people was sacred.

JAMIE SISTINO, 19, Charleston, South Carolina

Growing up in an interfaith household, being actively Jewish was a choice for me. Judaism now can be seen throughout all of my actions in my life. Being Jewish is who I am before anything else. Before I am an American, or a girl, or from South Carolina, I am Jewish.



THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN is a three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the *New York Times*. He is the author of *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, and *Longitudes and Attitudes: Exploring the World After September 11*.

"A very important part of my identity, but not the only part of my identity."

I have to confess, I always had a hard time reading the stories about Danny Pearl's abduction. It was just too close to home for me. I did not know Danny. Our career paths never crossed, but it was always clear to me that our dreams and passions must have. We were both American Jewish young men who loved journalism and had a particular passion and interest in the Arab and Muslim worlds. We both

I was eleven when I immigrated to Israel. I was captivated by the blue skies, the Hebrew letters, and sunburnt pioneers. I wanted to resemble them. I was sent to the Ben Shemen Youth Village to study agriculture and make ready to become a *kibbutznik*. I spent some time in two *kibbutzim*, one in the Jezreel Valley and the other in Lower Galilee. I reaped wheat, led herds to pasture, constructed houses, lived, together with my companions, in tents open to the wind, and felt I was a participant in the creation of a state. I saw how a desert assumed a green mantle. My life seemed perfect. Then the riots started, and the war, and I was caught up by them, and into them, drawn into completely new and different worlds.

Of three million Jews who left eastern Europe between 1882 and 1914 (when World War I broke out), only fifty thousand immigrated to Israel. What a historical mistake! And despite everything, even this meager wave of immigration exercised a miracle: For the first time in history, a people who left, or was banished from, their country, was revived and started gathering in the land of their forebears. Never had such an extraordinary event been witnessed until then, nor did it take place since, with any other people.

Eretz Yisrael was desolate, devastated, its land reluctant and tired, land with practically no water. Despite the lack of experience, and infertility of the soil, the standard of agriculture that developed in Israel is today perceived by many to be the highest in the world. Not only did the desert bloom, but new and amazing cooperative frameworks were also built, such as the *kibbutz* and *moshav*, that encapsulated a distinctive type of social phenomenon never previously seen.

And as the barren land was being tilled, war broke out. Israel was attacked by forces that were far superior—both in numbers and in arms—whereas the barely born state was desperately short of arms, and its army practically nonexistent. The land of the Jews was attacked five times, and all five ended in victory. Once again, a people lacking in military tradition, and in the face of an unequal balance of strategic military power, created an army which, in this case as well, is recognized as one of the best in the world.

I saw the ploughs and I saw the rifles. And nowadays, I see modern microscopes in universities that shed light on atoms invisible to the naked eye, making it possible to build a whole new world. What

could be more fulfilling, more riveting, more just, than to be a part of such a people? Truthfully, there were moments when it seemed that all was lost, that everything had vanished. And then there were other instances, when it appeared that all the problems had been resolved. Yet the former did not happen, and neither did the latter. The road ahead is still very long and hard, but inspiring nevertheless. We stopped being slaves in Egypt's house and moved into a home that is independent, democratic, and Jewish—in our land.

What propels us? Not marshals and not religion. We are propelled by tremendous faith that tells us that a new genesis is possible, one that will create a better world inhabited by better people: created in the image of God and lovers of humankind.

I feel like a man who has donned biblical sandals and is moving forward with a people inspired by its faith, part of a process of renewal and revival, walking on without fear. A people that fights without despairing, remembering and advancing at one and the same time.



CYNTHIA OZICK is the author of five novels and seven collections of short stories and essays. She has just completed a new novel to be published in 2004.

"To be a Jew is to be old in history, but not only that."

If we blow into the narrow end of the shofar, we will be heard far. But if we choose to be Mankind rather than Jewish and blow into the wider part, we will not be heard at all.

The Jewish Idea is characterized by two momentous standards. The first, the standard of anti-idolatry, leads to the second, the standard of distinction-making—the understanding that the properties of one proposition are not the properties of another proposition. Together, these two ideals, in the form of urgencies, have created Jewish history. To be a Jew is to be old in history, but not only that; to be a Jew is to be a member of a distinct civilization expressed through an oceanic culture in possession of a multitude of texts and attitudes elucidating these concepts.

For the Jewish intellectual who defines himself as a Jew through the slogan of "I am an outsider"; and for the Jewish intellectual who disbelieves what Mark Twain calls "evil joy," and what biblical metaphor names Amalek, I offer these thoughts: A moment may come when it is needful to be decent to our own side, concerning whom we are not to witness falsely or even carelessly to prove how worse we are. Without such loyalty—not always a popular notion among the global sentimentalists—you may find that you are too weak in self-respect to tell the truth or to commit yourself to the facts. The responsibility of Jewish intellectuals ought to include this recognition, or it is no responsibility at all. Thinkers are obliged above all to make distinctions, particularly in an age of mindlessly spreading moral equivalence. "I have seen the enemy and he is us" is not always and everywhere true; and self-blame can be the highest form of self-congratulation.



RUTH PEARL is a graduate of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology and holds a master's degree in electrical engineering. She has worked as a computer consultant and is currently CFO and secretary of the Daniel Pearl Foundation.

"Empowerment to question, zeal for honesty, reverence for learning, and deep commitment to create a better world for the next generation."

Growing up as a Jewish child in Baghdad left me with recurring nightmares of being chased by a knife-wielding Arab in the school's stairway while two thousand schoolmates screamed hysterically. The screaming was a real and frequent occurrence triggered by sudden noise or a minor accident in a chemistry lab, a consequence of the trauma from the June 1941 looting and massacre of one hundred eighty Jews in Baghdad. I also remember my parents' night vigils waiting for my two brothers to come home after their outings. Indeed, one time my father had to bail them out of jail with a bribe after they were arrested not far from home, just for being Jewish.

All that changed when we left for Israel in 1951. My acclimation to Israel was amazingly easy and natural, though my nightmares continued for many years. In Israel, one does not have to be an observant Jew to feel Jewish, an atmosphere that suited me perfectly. By the time my husband and I arrived in the United States in 1960 for post-graduate studies, I was a proud and secure Jew and did not expect anti-Semitism to ever touch my life.

I was raised in a moderately religious home and community, and I absorbed many of the attitudes and values from my Jewish heritage, such as empowerment to question, zeal for honesty, reverence for learning, and a deep commitment to create a better world for the next generation. I tried to pass along to my children "my" ethical Judaism: a guilt-free, pragmatic religion with open-mindedness at its core.

My security and sense of justice were shattered with the murder of my son, Daniel.

Like many generations before us, we are now embarking on a new war against anti-Semitism and fanaticism. More than ever before, I am conscious of my Jewishness and my obligation to contribute to its preservation, for I feel bonded to people who share my values and my commitments. Driven by the vision of Danny—a proud Jew who continues to inspire people with his values and dignity—we will win this war, as did our ancestors for many generations.



LARRY KING, Emmy Award-winning host of CNN's *Larry King Live*, has conducted more than 40,000 interviews in his broadcasting career. He is the founder of the Larry King Cardiac Foundation, which has raised millions of dollars for needy children and adults, and established a \$1 million journalism scholarship at George Washington University's School of Media and Affairs for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"We are small in number; our impact has been incredible."

First and foremost, I had nothing to do with being Jewish. Fortunately for me, my parents, Eddie and Jennie from Minsk and

for meditation so that they become uniquely Jewish. I love all of my teaching, but it is especially pleasurable for me to feel that I've learned something valuable that I am able to share with my family.



DAVID J. AZRIELI, architect and developer, is president of Canpro Investments Ltd., which develops, builds, and manages shopping centers and office buildings in North America, and established the first enclosed shopping mall in Israel. He won the Prime Minister's Jubilee Award in 1998 for his contributions to the Israeli economy.

“To accept a Jewish identification is to embrace much more than belief alone.”

To accept a Jewish identification is to embrace much more than belief alone—it is to accept responsibility that you are part of something bigger and greater than yourself. It is to accept that you are part of a history, a tradition, and a people that emphasizes learning; a people that is often gifted with talents that contribute to society at large.



MARTIN PERETZ taught social theory and politics at Harvard University for more than three decades. He has been editor in chief of *The New Republic* since 1974.

“This is the lesson of Israel, the lesson that Zionism spoke to the exiles. Jewish meaning is made out of life, not out of martyrdom.”

Would it not have been preferable had Abraham actually consummated the Akedah, the sacrifice of his son, and that his hand had not been stayed by the Angel? Then Isaac would have died, like Jesus later

idea whether that is true or not, but that story has always contextualized my religious practice.

When I was a student at the Yeshiva of Flatbush, my mother, Lola, served the children hamburgers with string beans and butter sauce, a deliberate kosher violation. She told the rabbi's children, who appreciated the sweetness of the beans, that it was really lemon juice. In my childhood mind, I thought a burning bush or flying harp would come through our window in Flatbush at any moment.

And yet, in many ways, those dinners seemed to me at the heart of why I consider myself Jewish. My sense of identity comes directly from the creativity of my mother and her profound sense of family. My mother, who had to be convinced by me to celebrate Passover yearly, used to bang on televisions and tell who exactly was Jewish. I remember distinctly her explaining to me that she didn't care what anybody said, but that Senator Barry Goldwater was Jewish. I didn't even know Jews lived in Arizona at that time.

I am often asked if I consider myself a woman writer or a Jewish writer. I am also often asked if I think my work is "too New York" to be appreciated in the rest of the country, or the world. My answer is: If I am not a Jewish or female writer, then I have no idea who I am. And as for being "too New York," I know what that is a euphemism for. I now have a four-year-old daughter. When I define myself, I am happily now not only a Jewish female writer but also the ultimate form of Judaism: a Jewish mother.



SARAH SILVERMAN is a comic, actress, and writer. She is very pretty.

"Remember the guy who smashed all the idols in the idol store?"

Remember the guy who smashed all the idols in the idol store? His mother had a heart attack when she saw the mess, but I'm sure she bragged about it later. That's us. That's me. I am Jewish.

with freedom and joy. In this sense, being Jewish is to have the possibilities of the world permanently open to the wonder of life. The joy, optimism, and creativity of Jewishness demarcate the horizon of the eternal in time.



JACKIE MASON was raised on the Lower East Side of Manhattan surrounded by rabbis—his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather were all rabbis, as are his three brothers. He rose to be one the hottest comics in America in the early 1960s and continues to entertain his many loyal long-time fans and the legions of new fans he earns each year.

“Everyone knows by now that no one can kill our spirit.”

To be a Jew is to watch with good humor how this planet has treated its Jews, and to remain humorous.

Among the most often thought-of peoples are the Jews, existing by a code of living given to the world and accepted thousands of years ago. In return, those inspired by the Jews reduced our numbers by torture, mass murder, forced conversion or dispersion, assimilation, or intermarriage, to the least number of people—barely thirteen million throughout the planet. Our divine birthright, the continuously embattled nation of Israel, is also among the tiniest nations on the globe, yet she manages to survive. Everyone knows by now that no one can kill our spirit, yet some are still trying.

I told you, it takes a Jew to read this script and stay humorous.



MAURICE LÉVY is chairman and CEO of Publicis Groupe S.A. (the fourth-largest communication group in the world). He is an officer of the French Légion d'Honneur and commander of the French National Order of Merit.

“A sense of belonging, a deeply ingrained attachment to traditions, and, above all, a set of values that guide my actions.”

Jew I am. It is not a source of pride or of embarrassment. It is just a fact. Born in a traditional family, I never had any question about my religion, my origins, or my belonging. I live my Jewishness as I live my “Frenchness,” in a simple way. As a child it happened that I was insulted and assaulted. Things changed later, but not always in people’s eyes. And then there were anecdotes that I prefer to definitely consider just anecdotes.

I’m in the habit of saying that the strength of a company, what makes it stand upright, lies as much in the strength of its values as in the strength of its balance sheet. Those values are the backbone of a company. They guide the actions of its management. They are the benchmark for any decision-making process.

I think the same applies to human beings. I grew up on a staple diet of text wisdom, of respect for others, of old-fashioned honesty to the point of being sometimes stupid, and of continuous references by my grandfather to the Talmud or the Kabbalah. What did I get out of it? A sense of belonging, a deeply ingrained attachment to traditions, and, above all, a set of values that guide my actions.

And finally, the happiness to see that in this environment of globalization, big business, and financial cynicism, it is possible to stay true to oneself and to succeed (more or less).

I do not feel that there are any contradictions in my life as a Jew and my life as a somewhat successful business leader.

I never worked on Yom Kippur, and it never was a problem. I’ve always respected the principles that I was taught (never feeling the

Will our influence continue? Will so many of us choose to assimilate or turn inward that we become a historical curiosity? Will we be destroyed by our current or future enemies, who will soon have the weapons of mass destruction denied to our past enemies? No one can know the answers to these haunting questions. The mystery continues.

Each of us who regards himself or herself as a Jew has a responsibility to do something to maximize the chance that our civilization will not only endure but also thrive. Our survival and continuing influence is a moral imperative for at least two reasons—one positive, the other negative. The positive reason is that Judaism has so much to offer—both to Jews and non-Jews alike. If diversity means anything, it must include a significant Jewish presence and influence. The negative reason is that if the forces of evil that would destroy us are allowed to succeed, it would set a terrible precedent for other vulnerable minorities. We have always been the “miners’ canary”—the litmus test for tolerance in the world. Some see enhancing the positive as their primary role. Others see preventing the negative as their mandate. I see my own role, as a human rights advocate, as including helping to ensure that never again will any Jew be murdered—as Daniel Pearl was—because he was a Jew.



RABBI LAWRENCE KUSHNER, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth El in Sudbury, Massachusetts, for more than twenty-five years, is an author of many books. He is currently the Emanu-El scholar at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco and an adjunct professor at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

“Life in all its forms is sacred; in the face of each creature I see my Creator.”

When I say that I am a Jew, I affirm the following:

1. The sound my God utters is *alef*—the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which has no sound, the sound of Nothing. The Hebrew word for “I,” *Anochi*, begins with *alef*.

2. My God is not visible; my God is not invisible. My God looks like Nothing. There is Nothing to see.
3. The Name of my God is made from the root letters of the Hebrew verb *to be*, which are themselves vowels. It probably meant something like *The One who brings into being all that is*. It is the sound of Nothing—only breathing.
4. One day each week I try to pretend that the universe is done, finished, that it (and I) need nothing more to be complete.
5. My parents are the instruments God used to bring me into being. Through trying to understand and listen to them, I begin to comprehend myself.
6. Life in all its forms is sacred; in the face of each creature I see my Creator.
7. The relationship I share with my life-partner is sacred and ultimate. She is my Only One.
8. You are other than me and your things are extensions of who you are. I may not appropriate your things for myself; they are yours.
9. I respect society’s mechanisms for resolving disputes: I renounce perjury.
10. To the extent that I can rejoice in and want nothing more than what I already have, I begin to resemble my God who has, wants, and is Nothing.

Ich bin a Yid. I am a Jew.



FELICIA LIJEN, 14, Naples, Florida

Being Jewish is not keeping kosher, it’s not going to services every week, and it’s not reading from the Torah daily. Judaism is a decision only you can make. There’s no right or wrong way to be Jewish because no one can tell you how to connect with God. I am a giver, I am a receiver, I am a believer, I am strong, I am proud, and, most important, I am Jewish.

Our Jewish faith is what enables us, despite sunset and darkness, despite terror and war, despite uncertainty and difficulty, despite all our questions, to go on with life and redeem it. It is what enables us to live with mystery and say a blessing over it. Judaism teaches us through words and rituals to kindle the fires that will get us through the night, and to celebrate and rejoice in the new day.

The Rabbis tell us that the fire that God taught Adam to light is the same fire we make at the close of every Shabbat when we kindle the *Havdalah* candle. Every week we remind ourselves that we can get through the night, that we can live with the questions to which there are no answers, and that morning will come again.

And so, we hold in tension our two questions to God—"Will not the Judge of all the earth do justly?" and "I lift up my eyes to the mountains, from where will my help come?" With one hand we shake a fist, demanding a world that is kinder and more just. We cry out to God, outraged at a world unredeemed, torn by war, pained by natural disasters, and devastated by human failings. With the other hand, we reach out to find compassion in the knowledge of God's eternal embrace. We find refuge in the shelter of God, in the belief that we are not alone in the universe and that we can reshape tomorrow.

In a world that seeks single solutions, the Jew asks questions. In a world where people are dangerously preoccupied with finding divine answers, the Jew is more concerned about struggling with the hard questions about life and death, about good and evil, about God and humanity. And so to the young student who wondered whether Judaism gave me the answers to all my questions, I responded, "No, Judaism does not give me the answers to all my questions, but it helps me ask the right questions and enables me to live with those to which there are no answers."



AMOS OZ is the internationally acclaimed author of numerous novels and essay collections that have been translated into thirty languages. He lectures in literature at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev and lives in Arad.

"A Jew, in my unhalakhic opinion, is someone who chooses to share the fate of other Jews, or who is condemned to do so."

I wrote these sentences in 1967. Three and a half decades later as I reread them, I find that I still agree with myself. That does not often happen to me. May I dedicate this quote to the memory of Daniel Pearl, who not only died for being a Jew but also died as a Jew.

I am a Jew and a Zionist. In saying this, I am not basing myself on religion. I have never learned to resort to verbal compromises like "the spirit of our Jewish past" or the "the values of Jewish tradition," because values and tradition alike derive directly from religious tenets in which I cannot believe. It is impossible to sever Jewish values and Jewish tradition from their source, which is revelation, faith and commandments. Consequently nouns like "mission," "destiny" and "election," when used with the adjective "Jewish," only cause me embarrassment or worse.

A Jew, in my vocabulary, is someone who regards himself as a Jew, or someone who is forced to be a Jew. A Jew is someone who acknowledges his Jewishness. If he acknowledges it publicly, he is a Jew by choice. If he acknowledges it only to his inner self, he is a Jew by the force of his destiny. If he does not acknowledge any connection with the Jewish people either in public or in his tormented inner being he is not a Jew, even if religious law defines him as such because his mother is Jewish. A Jew, in my unhalakhic opinion, is someone who chooses to share the fate of other Jews, or who is condemned to do so.

Moreover: to be a Jew almost always means to relate mentally to the Jewish past, whether the relation is one of pride or gloom or both together, whether it consists of shame or rebellion or pride or nostalgia.

Moreover: to be a Jew almost always means to relate to the Jewish present, whether the relation is one of fear or confidence, pride in the achievement of Jews or shame for their actions, an urge to deflect them from their path or a compulsion to join them.

And finally: to be a Jew means to feel that wherever a Jew is persecuted for being a Jew—that means you.



SAMANTHA SCHRAM, 10, West Palm Beach, Florida

When I say I'm Jewish I think of my uniqueness and how lucky I am to be a Jew. I am one of the chosen people and that makes me feel as special as a movie star. Every Saturday I go to temple to pray to G-d and every single night I say the *Sh'ma*.



RABBI ISRAEL MEIR LAU was born in Poland in 1937 and saved from Buchenwald in 1945. He served as chief rabbi of Israel for ten years.

“I am Jewish, and I fear Hashem, the G-d of the Heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.”

The ship was on a journey from Jaffa to Tarshish when a storm suddenly descended upon it, threatening to destroy it. With the fear of death gripping their hearts, the sailors turned to their pagan gods and prayed for a miracle.

The ship's captain descended into the hold and found Jonah the Prophet fast asleep in his bunk despite the chaos and the panic. “How can you sleep so soundly? Arise, call out to your G-d!” he said to Jonah.

The sailors cast lots to see whose sins were responsible for the storm, and it turned out to be Jonah. “What is your trade?” they

asked him. “From where do you come? What is your land? And what nation do you belong to?”

This is when Jonah pronounced his historic declaration: “I am Jewish, and I fear Hashem, the G-d of the Heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.”

Jonah the Prophet's proud declaration of Jewish identity, which he courageously declared to the world in spite of the dangers surrounding him, became a symbol of Jewish affiliation and belief that would be uttered time and again throughout the millennia of Jewish suffering. With these code words “I am Jewish,” Jonah set an example of Jewish pride for all generations. And it was he who caused the people of Nineveh to repent for their sins.

Before Jonah the Prophet, a historical precedent had already been set by Joseph, when he was imprisoned under harsh and life-threatening conditions in Egypt. Alone, separated from his family, incarcerated in a foreign land for a crime he did not commit, he declared to Pharaoh's butler, “I was kidnapped from the land of the Jews.” He made no attempt to hide his nationality or to assimilate among the Egyptians. He proudly declared he was a Jew.

Our sages, never ones to hide from the truth when it comes to teaching us object lessons, point out a sharp distinction between Joseph and Moses when confronted with similar circumstances. Joseph, who readily admitted his nationality, merited burial in the Land of Israel. Moses, on the other hand, did not. Why was this?

The Midrash tells us that when Moses fled from Egypt and rescued the daughters of Jethro from the Midianite shepherds who were accusing them, the girls told their father, “An Egyptian man saved us.” Moses remained silent and did not reveal his correct identity.

Moses could have been excused for this. In contrast to Joseph, who was born in Israel, Moses was born and raised in Egypt, and the description of Jethro's daughters was accurate. Yet our sages tell us that Moses should have spoken up. Because he did not, he was punished and was buried outside of Israel.

Since the epoch of our forefathers and prophets, the list has grown long of those who have given their lives for the public sanctification of G-d's name. Prominent among them were Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues, known as the ten martyrs. Our sages tell us no



ELIE WIESEL is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, and the author of more than forty books, the latest of which is *Wise Men and Their Tales*. In 1986, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

“For a Jew, Judaism and humanity must go together.”

Daniel Pearl's last words are those of a Jew who was assassinated only for his Jewishness. They will resonate in many hearts. They are meant to be an answer to his murderers' questions: Why are you here? Why do you oppose terrorism? Why do you denounce injustice? "I am Jewish," answered Daniel Pearl.

Did he believe that to be Jewish today means what it meant yesterday and a thousand years ago? I do. It means for the Jew in me to seek fulfillment both as a Jew and as a human being. For a Jew, Judaism and humanity must go together. To be Jewish is to recognize that every person is created in God's image and thus worthy of respect. Being Jewish to me is to reject fanaticism everywhere.

As a Jew I must be sensitive to the pain of all human beings. To remain indifferent to persecution and suffering anywhere, in Afghanistan or in Kiev, is to become an accomplice of the tormentor.



RUTH BADER GINSBURG, associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, was nominated by President Clinton in 1993 and took the oath of office on August 10, 1993. Prior to her appointment to the Supreme Court, she served for thirteen years on the bench of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, and earlier, taught on the law faculties of Rutgers (1963-1972) and Columbia (1972-1980).

“The demand for justice runs through the entirety of the Jewish history and Jewish tradition.”

Former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg once said: “My concern for justice, for peace, for enlightenment stems from my heritage.” Justice Stephen Breyer and I are fortunate to be linked to that heritage and to live in the United States at a time when Jewish people residing here face few closed doors and do not fear letting the world know who we are.

For example, I say who I am in certain visible signs. The command from Deuteronomy appears in artworks, in Hebrew letters, on three walls and a table in my chambers. “*Zedek, zedek, tirdof,*” “Justice, Justice shalt thou pursue,” these artworks proclaim; they are ever-present reminders to me of what judges must do “that they may thrive.” There is also a large silver *mezuzah* mounted on my doorpost. It is a gift from the super-bright teenage students at the Shulamith School for Girls in Brooklyn, New York, the school one of my dearest law clerks attended in her growing-up years.

A question stated in various ways is indicative of what I would like to convey. What is the difference between a New York City garment district bookkeeper and a Supreme Court justice? One generation my life bears witness, the difference between the opportunities open to my mother, a bookkeeper, and those open to me.

I am a judge, born, raised, and proud of being a Jew. The demand for justice runs through the entirety of Jewish history and Jewish tradition. I hope, in all the years I have the good fortune to serve on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, I will have the strength and courage to remain steadfast in the service of that demand.



JONATHAN FREEDLAND is a columnist for *The Guardian* of London. He is currently at work on a book about family, identity, and Jewishness.

“Wherever there is a revolutionary political movement, you will usually find Jews involved in it: We are raised to believe the world can be made better.”

I am Jewish because my parents were Jewish and their parents and their parents and their parents. Yet that hardly contains the truth of it. It is rather more of a choice than that.

Every day we make a choice about how Jewish we want to be. In most places and at most times, that choice is relaxed and entirely voluntary: Should we eat kosher, should we see that new movie about Israel? Sometimes, it is more pointed: Should we stand up to the person who just made an anti-Semitic remark? Occasionally it is a profound choice: Should we change our name to one less overtly Jewish? And, sometimes, very rarely, it is a matter of life and death. As it was for Daniel Pearl.

How do we make these choices? For many Jews, it is a mixture of guilt, sentiment, and obligation to parents and ancestors. Rather

than let down the past, we continue to identify, however weakly, as Jews. We stay Jewish because we feel we ought to; to walk away would be an act of betrayal.

But I am keen to find a more positive reason to say “I am Jewish.” Recently I have begun to look closely at three members of my own family—one from each of the last three generations—and I have seen the different ways Jewishness shaped their lives. Two were immigrants; one was born in Palestine; one died in Israel.

Each one of their stories reveals a different aspect of what it is to be Jewish. For one, Jewishness meant a life of dual identities and allegiances: He was forever with a foot in two different worlds. To say “I am Jewish,” at least in the diaspora, is often to say, “I can belong to two different societies at once. I can be both Jewish and something else.” In the United States, that has become a commonplace, with hyphenated identities—Irish-American, Hispanic-American—quite the norm. On the globalized planet of the twenty-first century, it is how millions now live. But Jews introduced this hybridity into the world a long time ago; it has become absorbed into who we are.

For another relative of mine, a great-uncle, to be a Jew meant to be a force for good in the world. He was not religious, rather an atheist communist, but still he believed he was following an ancient Jewish imperative: *tikkun olam*, repair the world. There is a reason why, wherever there is a revolutionary political movement, you will usually find Jews involved in it: We are raised to believe the world can be made better. That the work of creation is a joint venture, with God and humanity partners—maybe even equal partners.

And finally there is my mother. She is, to be literal, what defines me as a Jew. Her life has crisscrossed continents and known tragedy, but I’m not one of those who sees perennial wandering or a familiarity with suffering as part of the Jewish essence. Rather, her life tells me that ties of family and memory can withstand even the pressure of destruction, and that a version of these ties has bound the Jews to each other for millennia. It may defy rational, intellectual explanation, but kinship is a powerful force, one that can be turned to good or ill—and Jews know a thing or two about it. When I say “I am Jewish,” I say I am connected to my fellow Jews: human beings I will

Unit 2 Resource 7.12

I Am Jewish Guiding Questions

For each essay consider the following questions. Record your answers:

What is the essence of the author's Jewish identity/practice?

In what ways do/don't you relate to this essay?

In the first lesson of this unit, we came up with a set of "common questions", which of the questions that we came up with does this essay address? How does it answer that/those question(s)?

Unit 3: Snapshots of Jewish History(ies) & Present(s)

This unit explores the questions that are associated with the fact that the Jewish People have a shared memory with various narratives, both historical and present. The lessons in this unit focus on how we view history, personally, and how we commemorate historical events. It ends by exploring present disagreements that exist within the Jewish community.

Enduring Understandings

- ✓ A set of shared or common questions, rather than a set of shared or common answers to those questions, provide a helpful framework for thinking about Jewish Peoplehood.
- ✓ Given the profound impact of the society in which Jews live on their expressions of Judaism, Jewish Peoplehood looks differently in the United States of America and in Israel, the two Jewish centers that exist in the 21st century.
- ✓ Jews are commanded to have a common memory, they are not commanded to have a common history.

Essential Questions

- ✓ What is the difference between a shared memory and a shared history?
- ✓ What messages/lessons do you think are valuable to take from the study of the Holocaust?
- ✓ Are you a Zionist?
- ✓ How is it possible for Jews living in the 2 Jewish centers today (Israel and the USA) share a common memory? What factors make it difficult?

Authentic Assessment

- ✓ In lesson 6, students will create their own Yom HaAtzmaut poster. The poster should depict symbolism that reflects their personal feelings about the State of Israel.

Knowledge for Unit

- ✓ An understanding that history is objective and memory is subjective.
- ✓ An appreciation for the differences in the way that the Holocaust is taught in the 2 Jewish centers (Israel and the USA)
- ✓ Knowledge of Israeli culture
- ✓ Knowledge of specific Israelis who fell in the IDF or in acts of terror
- ✓ Knowledge of the Israeli Declaration of Independence
- ✓ Knowledge of different views regarding the role of women in Judaism
- ✓ Knowledge of the disagreement over the question, “Who is a Jew?”

Skills for Unit

- ✓ Students will be able to analyze different perspectives on Jewish history.
- ✓ Students will be able to understand differences in Jewish American and Jewish Israeli cultures.

What is Jewish Memory?

Lesson 1

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to make a distinction between history and memory.
- ✓ Students should be able to describe the concept of Jewish collective memory as shown in the biblical proof texts offered in this lesson.
- ✓ Students should be able to interpret the importance of the notion of memory for the Jewish People.

Background Information for Teacher

The short book, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi explores the relationship between history and memory for the Jewish People. Gerson D. Cohen, a former chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, wrote the following about this book, “[Zakhor is] A brilliant and fundamentally new appraisal of collective Jewish historical memory...It opens up new horizons of thinking in a style that is beautiful and a scholarship that is overwhelming.”

Two specific passages from this book have framed this particular lesson. The first of these passages speaks about the importance of the concept of memory for the Jewish People. It reads, “*Memory is always problematic, usually deceptive, and sometimes treacherous... Yet the Hebrew Bible seems to have no hesitations in commanding memory. Its injunctions to remember are unconditional, and even when not commanded, remembrance is always pivotal. Altogether the verb zakhar appears in its various declensions in the Bible no less than one hundred and sixty-nine times, usually with either Israel or God as the subject, for memory is incumbent upon both. The verb is complemented by its obverse – forgetting. As Israel is enjoined to remember, so it is adjured not to forget. Both imperatives have resounded with enduring effect among the Jews since biblical times. Indeed, in trying to understand the survival of people that has spent most of its life in global dispersion, I would submit that the history of its memory, largely neglected and yet to be written, may prove of some consequence.*”⁵⁴

The second passage upon which this lesson is based is about the Jewish innovation of the idea of God in history. It reads, “*It was ancient Israel that first assigned a decisive significance to history and thus forged a new world-view whose essential premises were eventually appropriated by Christianity and Islam as well. ‘The heavens,’ in the words of the psalmist, might still ‘declare the glory of the Lord,’ but it was human history that revealed his will and purpose. This novel perception was not the result of philosophical speculation, but of the peculiar nature of Israelite faith. It emerged out of an intuitive and revolutionary understanding of God, and was refined through profoundly felt historical experiences. However it came about, in retrospect the consequences are manifest. Suddenly, as it were the crucial encounter between man and the divine shifted away from the realm of nature and the cosmos to the plane of history, conceived now in terms of divine challenge and human response. The pagan conflict of the gods with the forces of chaos or with one another, was replaced by a drama of a different and more poignant order: the paradoxical struggle between the divine will of an omnipotent Creator and the free will of his creature, man, in the course of history; a tense dialectic of obedience and rebellion.... With the departure of Adam and Eve from Eden, history begins, historical time becomes real, and the way back is closed forever.*”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 5.

⁵⁵ Yerushalmi, 8.

Set Induction – Concept Attainment

Write two columns on the board. The first column should contain examples of historical events/conceptual ideas. These should be objective, and thinking about the “big picture”. The second column should contain examples of memory, which are subjective, personal, and from a specific perspective. Have a discussion with the students about the two columns, ultimately asking them what each column represents.

Creating Definitions of Memory and History

Students should create working definitions of the words “history” and “memory”, drawing distinctions between the two. Record the definitions on the board, and point out similarities between all of the definitions. Ultimately, you should drive home the idea that history is objective, and memory is subjective, and furthermore, because memory is subjective, it is personal, and therefore comes from a personal and specific perspective.

Text Study: What do These Texts Have in Common?

In small groups, students should study the following texts, and determine why they have been grouped together, using the directions found on the handout.

- ✓ Ex. 3:16
- ✓ Ex.20:2
- ✓ Deut. 32:7
- ✓ Is. 44:21
- ✓ Deut. 25:17
- ✓ Micah 6:5
- ✓ Deut. 29:13
- ✓ Josh. 4:6-7
- ✓ II Kings 21:2
- ✓ Deut. 6:10-12
- ✓ Ex. 20:8-10

Materials

- ✓ chalk or dry-erase board & chalk or dry erase marker
- ✓ blank paper
- ✓ 1 Tanakh for each small group
- ✓ writing utensils
- ✓ text study handout (1 per student)

Resources

- ✓ Text study handout – 1.1

Jewish Selective Memory

Lesson 2

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to distinguish between objective historical events/facts, and historical timelines that are therefore historical memories.
- ✓ Students should be able to develop their own Jewish historical timeline, as a result of their own personal interpretation of “Jewish collective memory.”
- ✓ Students should be able to analyze a poem/song from the two major Jewish centers (Israel and the United States).

Timeline Exercise

Hand each student a list of historical events, from ancient history to present. Given that the majority of these students have not taken a formal class on Jewish History, you will need to give a brief explanation to each of the historical events that are listed. Once each event is clear, the students will each be given 10-12 post-it-notes. They will write one event from the list on each post it note, and then post their timeline on the board. The instructor will then compare this timeline to the Zionist timeline found in Yael Zerubavel’s book *Recovered Roots*.

Poetry from the 2 Centers

Once it is established that the students came up with a different timeline, as they are American Jews, as opposed to the Zionist timeline proposed by Zerubavel, we will now analyze a poem and a song from the two centers of Judaism as they exist today. The American poem is titled, “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus. The Israeli song is titled, “Jerusalem of Gold”, by Naomi Shemer. As a class or in small groups, watch the youtube video of the “Jerusalem of Gold,” read “The New Colossus,” and answer the following questions:

- Summarize the main idea of the song/poem.
- What can you infer about the poets of each of these poems?
- What conclusions can you draw about the respective Jewish centers that the poets were describing in their poems?

Materials

- ✓ post-it-notes (10-12 per student)
- ✓ chalk or dry-erase board & chalk or dry erase marker
- ✓ historical events handout (1 per student)
- ✓ “The New Colossus” (1 per student)
- ✓ “Jerusalem of Gold” YouTube Clip - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NyqXB6b4c8>
- ✓ Projector and Speakers to show the YouTube clip

Resources

- ✓ Historical Events Handout – 2.1
- ✓ Zionist Timeline Handout – 2.2
- ✓ “The New Colossus” Handout – 2.3

Holocaust Study Inquiry Part 1

Lesson 3

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to distinguish between the differing messages that the communities in the United States and in Israel wish to portray about the Holocaust.
- ✓ Students should be able to draw conclusions about the mission/purpose for Holocaust awareness/education in each Jewish center (Israel and the United States).
- ✓ Students should be able to discern that “Never Again” in Israeli culture refers to a particularistic message, whereas in the culture of the USA it takes on a universalistic message.
- ✓ Students should be able to formulate their own messages that they take away from studying the Holocaust.

Website Comparison

For this exercise, students will work in small groups, with at least 2 laptops/tablets per group. The students will compare the websites of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (<http://www.ushmm.org/>) and of Israel’s Holocaust Museum: Yad Vashem (<http://www.yadvashem.org/>). In their small groups students should fill out the worksheet titled USHMM & Yad VaShem comparisons.

Discussion of Findings

Take the last 10-15 minutes of class to discuss the “Overall Analysis” from each group.

- ✓ What did they notice, overall?
- ✓ How would they characterize the nature of Holocaust commemoration in the United States as opposed to in Israel?
- ✓ What might these differences represent?
- ✓ With which message do they resonate more?
- ✓ Etc.

Materials

- ✓ 2 laptops/Tablets per small group
- ✓ website comparison handouts (1 per student)
- ✓ blank paper (at least 1 page per student)
- ✓ writing Utensils

Resources

- ✓ website comparison handout – 3.1

Holocaust Study Inquiry Part 2

Lesson 4

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to discern the differing messages that the communities in the United States and in Israel wish to portray about the Holocaust.
- ✓ Students should be able to draw conclusions about the mission/purpose Holocaust awareness/education in each Jewish center (Israel and the United States)
- ✓ Students should be able to formulate their own messages that they take away from studying the Holocaust.

Speeches Comparison

In small groups, the students will read, compare, and analyze the speech that President Shimon Peres (Israel) made on Yom HaShoah at Yad Vashem in 2013 with the speech that President Bill Clinton (USA) made at the dedication of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993.

Guiding Questions

- How did Peres and Clinton use first person pronouns in their respective speeches?
 - What might this imply?
- What are the main ideas of each speech?
 - Which three quotations from each speech support the main ideas that you described above?
- Which speech resonates more with you, as an individual? Which speech resonates more with you, as an American? Which speech resonates more with you, as a Jew?
 - Explain any differences in the way that you answered the questions above.

Paper Tear Midrash⁵⁶

Torn paper midrash is an artistic technique that can allow the student to focus on feelings. The process is simple and the results unusually stunning. Give students paper and glue and no scissors and ask them to “tear” and glue images that reflect their answers to the following question: What is the message that most resonates with you from the study of the Holocaust? The process of tearing takes the emphasis off making a perfect image, and allows students to concentrate on interpretations.

⁵⁶ This activity was taken from *The Ultimate Jewish Teacher's Handbook* Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz ed., *The Ultimate Jewish Teacher's Handbook* (Springfield, A.R.E. Publishing, 2003), 389.

Materials

- ✓ copies of 2 presidential speeches (1 per student)
- ✓ copies of speech comparison handout (1 per student)
- ✓ writing utensils
- ✓ construction paper (1 piece per student, with additional pieces for the tear & glue aspects)
- ✓ glue sticks (1 per student)

Resources

- ✓ Shimon Peres Speech – 4.1
- ✓ Bill Clinton Speech – 4.2
- ✓ speech comparison handout – 4.3

Yom HaZikaron Inquiry

Lesson 5 – Scripted Lesson

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to identify the ways in which Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, and Yom HaAtzmaut are a set of Jewish holidays rather than a set of solely Israeli holidays.
- ✓ Students should be able to identify with the narratives of at least one of the five individuals that we remember on Yom HaZikaron.
- ✓ Students should be able to feel a sense of gratitude for the sacrifices made in order that the Jewish People can have a sovereign state.

Time Table

0:00-0:05	Set Induction
0:05-0:30	“9 Days of We”
0:30-0:55	Jig Saw
0:55-1:00	<i>Magash Hakesef</i>

Set Induction – You Tube Clip of Cars stopping for sirens⁵⁷

Show a clip of cars on the highway in Israel stopping for the sirens that sound on Yom Shoah and Yom HaZikaron.

Nine Days of We⁵⁸

In this wonderful short interview, Avram Infeld, who currently serves as the president of the Chais Family Foundation and is the President Emeritus of Hillel International. He resides in Israel and is viewed by many different Jewish movements as a leader and teacher for the entire Jewish People,⁵⁹ lays out a vision for understanding Yom Ha’atzmaut as part of a process that begins on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, 9 days before Yom Ha’atzmaut.

Show the clip titled, “Nine Days of We” to the class, and ask them to write down answers to the following guiding questions, aimed at making sure that the students comprehend the main ideas of the clip. You may want to show the clip twice, as there is a lot of information in a small amount of time.

Guiding Comprehension Questions and Scripted Answers for “Nine Days of We” Clip:

- ✓ To which “processes” in the Jewish calendar does Avram Infeld refer?
 - *Rosh HaShanah* → *Yom Kippur*
 - *Tisha Ba’Av* → *9 days & 3 weeks leading up to it*
 - *Pesach (Exodus)* → *Shavuout (Receiving of Torah)*
- ✓ To which days are Yom HaAtzmaut intricately related?
 - *Yom HaShoah*
 - *Yom HaAtzmaut*
- ✓ What is Infeld’s argument for why Yom HaShoah is commemorated in Israel?

⁵⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAa54oIrbq4>.

⁵⁸ “9 Days of We,” Makom. Israel. In Real Life., accessed on April 20, 2013. <http://makomisrael.org/educational-material/materials-for-campus/nine-days-of-we-2/>

⁵⁹ “Avraham Infeld” Greater Stamford New, New Canaan, Darien United Jewish Federation, accessed on April 21, 2013. <http://www.ujf.org/page.aspx?id=131885>.

- *It's a profoundly Jewish event*
- ✓ What does Infeld say is the essence of Yom HaZikaron?
 - *Yom HaZikaron is a holiday to honor and remember those who gave their lives for our state and our independence, and for the Jews who sacrificed to obtain sovereignty and power for the Jewish People.*
- ✓ What does Infeld say is the essence of Yom HaAtzmaut?
 - *It is a celebration of the sacrifice that was made in order that we should have a state, so that what we remember on Yom HaShoah will never happen again.*
- ✓ What noun went along with the adjective Jewish prior to Infeld's birth?
 - *Refugee.*
- ✓ How can Yom HaAtzmaut be viewed as a Jewish holiday in addition to being an Israeli holiday?
 - *Yom HaAtzmaut, Yom HaZikaron, and Yom HaShoah all need to be related to the rest of the holidays on the Jewish calendar.*
- ✓ To what does the phrase "10 Days of Teshuvah" refer?
 - *Rosh HaShanah → Yom Kippur*
- ✓ To what does the phrase "9 Days of Redemption" refer? Why does Infeld use the word "Redemption" to define those 9 days?
 - *Yom HaShoah → Yom HaZikaron → Yom HaAtzmaut*
 - *The sacrifices made by Jews in order so that the State of Israel can exist for the Jewish People as a sovereign state ensures that the Holocaust can never happen to the Jewish People again. Therefore, the Jewish People have been redeemed from the destruction that took place during the Holocaust.*
- ✓ Infeld states, "There are moments when Jews live as I, and there are moments when Jews live as we. It's only the combination of both of those periods being of importance to both sides of the Jewish People that can create that I-we relationship." Re-state this statement in your own words, then reflect on whether or not this sentiment resonates with you.
 - *Infeld is saying that it's important to have holidays where the focus is on the self, such as Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, in addition to holidays where the focus is on the collective Jewish People.*
 - *I agree with Infeld's assessment because I think it is impossible to be a Jew without being a part of the Jewish People.*
 - *I disagree with Infeld's assessment because I am part of the Jewish People, but have never observed these holidays before.*

Jig Saw

Divide the students into small groups, and give each group one of the five narratives of real people who are remembered on Yom HaZikaron.

- ✓ Sarah Aaronsohn (1890-1917)⁶⁰
- ✓ Eli Cohen (1924-1965)⁶¹
- ✓ Yonatan (Yoni) Netanyahu (1946-1976)⁶²
- ✓ Michael Levin (1984-2006)⁶³
- ✓ Marla Bennett (1978-2002)⁶⁴

In the small groups students should read about the person, and then practice retelling the narrative about the person's life. After each group is prepared, the students should be broken up into new groups, with one person from each original group represented. In their new groups, each student should present on the person that he/she has just studied.

Closing – Magash HaKesef & Mourner's Kaddish

As a class, read the poem, “*Magash HaKesef*” by Nathan Alternman, then light 5 *Yartzeit* candles and recite the Mourner's *Kaddish*.

Materials

- ✓ narratives for 5 people remembered on Yom HaZikaron
- ✓ “9 Days of We” clip - <http://makomisrael.org/educational-material/materials-for-campus/nine-days-of-we-2/>
- ✓ computer
- ✓ projector/speakers
- ✓ “Nine Days of We” bandout (1 per student)
- ✓ writing utensils
- ✓ Magash HaKesef Handouts (1 per student)
- ✓ *siddurim* (1 per student)
- ✓ 5 *yizkor* candles

Resources

- ✓ Nine Days of We Handout – 5.1
- ✓ narrative Information for:
 - Sarah Aaronsohn – 5.2
 - Eli Cohen – 5.3
 - Yonatan (Yoni) Netanyahu – 5.4
 - Michael Levin – 5.5
 - Marla Bennett – 5.6
- ✓ *Magash HaKesef* Handout – 5.7

⁶⁰ Yossi Katz, *A Voice Called: Stories of Jewish Heroism* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2010), 35-40.

⁶¹ Katz, 111-116.

⁶² Katz, 137-143.

⁶³ Katz, 195-201.

⁶⁴ “Marla Ann Bennett”, The Berkley Bayit Cooperative Jewish Living, accessed on April 20, 2013. <http://berkeleybayit.net/MarlasGarden/garden/marlabennett.html>.

Yom HaAtzmaut Inquiry

Lesson 6

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be connect emotionally to the creation of the State of Israel.
- ✓ Students should be able to recognize the complex and nuanced nature of the history of the Modern State of Israel.

YouTube Clip, Amos Oz Excerpt & Journal Activity

The teacher should show the YouTube clip titled, “November 29, 1947: The Story of a Vote” posted by ToldotYisrael⁶⁵. Then the teacher should read aloud an excerpt describing the night of November 29, 1947 from Amos Oz’s *A Tale of Love and Darkness*⁶⁶

After watching the YouTube Clip and listening to Amos Oz’s description of the UN vote on November 29, 1947, ask the students to journal on the following prompt. What do you think it would have felt like to be present in the land of Israel on the night of November 29, 1947. What might have been your hopes, your dreams, and your fears?

Poster Tales⁶⁷

Part 1 – Poster Museum & Short Discussion

Spread all of the laminated posters on tables throughout the room, in chronological order. Instruct the students to walk around the room, and pick up one poster that resonates with them. Once all of the students have picked a poster, ask each of them to describe what they were drawn to in the poster. Then, the teacher should relate what was going on in Israel and in Jewish history for each of the posters selected. The teacher can also spark discussion with the following questions:

- What is the meaning behind the “Shalom” poster for the 1978 Independence Day?
 - *This is the first Yom Haatzmaut after Anwar Saadat’s historic visit in Jerusalem that gave the citizens of Israel much hope for a future peace between the Israelis and their neighbors.*
- Why the “heart” shape on the 32nd Atzmaut poster?
 - *32 in Hebrew letters make the word “Lev” which is “heart” in Hebrew.*
- What’s the meaning behind the 1968 poster with the Jerusalem lions?
 - *It was the first Yom Haatzmaut after the liberation of Jerusalem in the six day war.*
- On the 44th Atzmaut poster (1992) there are writings in a language that is different and the perspective is from an ancient looking window. Why?
 - *That Independence Day was dedicated to the 500 year commemoration of the Edict of Expulsion.*
- What are the building on the 61st Azmaut poster in 2009?
 - *In celebration of 100 year for the founding of Tel Aviv, it is the Azriely Towers.*
- Why was the theme for the 2005 Independence Day “unity and love”?
 - *Israel was getting ready for the July disengagement from Gaza and Israel was full of tension between Jews of different opinions.*

⁶⁵ “November 29, 1947: The Story of A Vote” ToldotYisrael on YouTube, accessed on April 21, 2013. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrIjzUK0FKg>.

⁶⁶ Amos Oz, Nicholas de Lange trans., *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2004), 355-358.

⁶⁷ This activity was adapted from the following program:

“Israel Independence Day Posters,” Ask Herzl: Your Hub for Israel Programs and Strategies, accessed on April 21, 2013. <http://www.askherzl.com/programs/227-israel-independence-day-posters>

Part 2 – Creation of Yom HaAtzmaut Poster – ****Authentic Assessment****

In small groups, the students should create their own Yom HaAtzmaut poster. The poster should depict symbolism that reflects their personal feelings about the State of Israel.

Materials

- ✓ YouTube clip: “November 29, 1947: The Story of a Vote”
- ✓ computer
- ✓ projector & speakers
- ✓ excerpt from “A Tale of Love and Darkness” (1 per student)
- ✓ journal prompt handout (1 per student)
- ✓ Laminated Independence Day Posters⁶⁸
- ✓ Poster Boards (1 per small group)
- ✓ Paint
- ✓ Paint Brushes

Resources

- ✓ “A Tale of Love and Darkness” excerpt – 6.1
- ✓ journal prompt handout – 6.2

⁶⁸ Links to all of the Independence Day Posters can be found with the program write up. (<http://www.askherzl.com/programs/227-israel-independence-day-posters>.)

How Might Zionism Matter to Me?

Lesson 7

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to recall the concept of cultural capital from Unit 1, and apply it to contemporary Israeli life.
- ✓ Students should be able to reflect about their own feelings towards Zionism.
- ✓ Students should be able to evaluate Israel's Declaration of Independence (Megillat Atzmaut).

Set Induction – Israeli Cash Cab

Students will watch the following YouTube clip:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrtZJx_UUzU of an Israeli grandmother playing the TV game show, Cash Cab. The clip highlights the Israeli woman's knowledge of Jewish and Israeli cultural capital, and also highlights Israeli culture to a tee. In other words, the grandmother and the cab driver are pushy, direct, and simply put full of *chutzpah*. However, you can also tell that they are both honest and kind. The interaction between the two of them is humorous, entertaining, and telling of Israeli culture at large. Given that the clip is in Hebrew, each student should follow along with the clip using the translation handout. After the clip, pose the following question to the students: In what ways does this clip depict Israeli culture?

Human Thermometer

On the longest wall of the room place signs with the numbers 1-10, evenly spread out. The number one should read, "Strongly Disagree;" number ten should read, "Strongly Agree;" and in between the numbers five and six, there should be a sign that reads, "Neutral." The instructor should read the following statements aloud to the class, and for each statement, ask the students to place themselves along the human thermometer in the place that best aligns with their feelings about the statement that is read. In between each statement, ask students to share their views.

- ✓ The word Zionism makes me uncomfortable.
- ✓ As a Jew, I feel connected to the land of Israel.
- ✓ Israel is important because it is a refuge for Jews in times of trouble.
- ✓ As an American, I don't need Israel in order to be a part of the Jewish People.
- ✓ I plan to visit Israel some time in my life.
- ✓ Even though I am not an Israeli citizen, I feel that I am a stakeholder in Israel's future.
- ✓ I am a Zionist.
- ✓ Actions that the Israeli government sanctions, such as building in the territories, and only funding Orthodox Judaism, make it difficult for me to call myself a Zionist.
- ✓ I can best be a Zionist by holding Israel up to the prophetic vision – as a "Light Unto the Nations"⁶⁹
- ✓ The land of Israel and the Israelis who live in the land enhance my personal Jewish identity.

⁶⁹ Isaiah 49:6

Analyze the Declaration of Independence

Background Information

*Shivat Zion – Returning To Zion*⁷⁰

[This] narrative is the emergence of a modern movement in the late 19th to early 20th century for physical return of the Jewish people to its ‘homeland.’ The pre-Zionists (Hess, Kalischer) and the Zionists (Herzl, Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky, A.D. Gordon, and Rav Kook) weaved a narrative that proposed that Jews could only find haven, creativity, sustainability, and dignity by physically returning to their ancestral homeland. The phrase was always “to return” and the methods were political, economic, and practical. This movement regarded the Jewish people not as a group of outsiders invading foreign territory but as an indigenous people returning to its original home. The pinnacle of this narrative is the establishment of a Jewish State, recognized by the world community on May 5, 1948.

As a class, read aloud the Israeli Declaration of Independence (*Megillat Atzmaut*). Then, ask each student to journal about the following prompt: The authors of this document carefully crafted it to reflect a fine balance of ideologies and values of the different factions of the Jewish People who were all deeply committed to the Zionist dream. What compromises can you detect in this document? Who might those compromises represent? In what ways were the hopes and dreams of this document realized? In what ways have some of these hopes and dreams yet to be realized? If time permits, discuss what the students wrote in their journal responses.

Materials

- ✓ Israeli Cash Cab translation handout (1 per student)
- ✓ Israeli Declaration of Independence (1 per student)
- ✓ 11 numbered and labeled signs/tape

Resources

- ✓ Israeli Cash Cab translation handout – 7.1
- ✓ Israeli Declaration of Independence – 7.2

⁷⁰ Barry Chazan, “Lenses and Narratives for Teaching Israel” in *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education* (Chicago: The iCenter), 5.

What Role Do Women Have in Judaism?

Lesson 8

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to evaluate both the classical view of the role of women in Judaism and a contemporary view of women in Judaism.
- ✓ Students should be able to articulate their own feelings about the role of women in Judaism.

Create a Talmud Page

Print large copies of each “Talmud Page” from the resource section (One containing the text of Proverbs 31:10-31, “Woman of Valor,” in the center, and the other containing excerpts from Rachel Adler’s *Engendering Judaism*⁷¹). Split the class into two groups, and give each group one of the two “Talmud Pages.” Ask the students to read the text in the center, and then to comment on the text in the space around it. Students can use the guiding questions found on the bottom of the “Talmud Page”, or they can make their own comments. Once all of the students in each group have commented on the first page, have the groups switch pages, and this time instruct the students to comment on the text and the comments of the previous group. At the end of this activity, share the completed “Talmud Pages.”

Women of the Wall Clip & Discussion

Watch the following clip, and discuss the issues it brings forth:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=3A0vDE5Y5Ao

Guiding Questions

- What does the Kotel represent for the Jewish People?
- What is the purpose of Women of the Wall?
- Have you ever encountered religious discrimination in your own life?
- How did you feel when you learned that the authorities at the Western Wall, and even the law discriminate against women?
- What might possible solutions be to make everybody who prays feel comfortable at the wall?

⁷¹ Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 27-28.

Materials

- ✓ Woman of Valor “Talmud Page” (1 large copy)
- ✓ *Engendering Judaism* “Talmud Page” (1 large copy)
- ✓ writing utensils
- ✓ computer
- ✓ projector & speakers
- ✓ Women of the Wall guiding questions (1 per student)

Resources

- ✓ Woman of Valor “Talmud Page” - 8.1
- ✓ *Engendering Judaism* “Talmud Page” – 8.2
- ✓ Women of the Wall guiding questions (1 per student) – 8.3

Who Is Jewish?

Lesson 9

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to recognize that there is dissonance within the Jewish community regarding the question, “Who is Jewish?”
- ✓ Students should be able to assess their own beliefs about who should be considered Jewish.

Prepare for Debate

Divide the students into two groups. One group will be pro-patrilineal descent, and the other will be pro-matrilineal descent. The students will have the first half of this session to prepare for their debate. In order to prepare, they can use the following resources:

- ✓ Pro-Patrilineal Descent
 - CCAR Responsa: 59. Three Generations of Mixed Marriage⁷²
 - CCAR Responsa: Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent⁷³
 - CCAR Responsa: Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent on the Status of Children of Mixed Marriages⁷⁴
- ✓ Pro-Matrilineal Descent
 - “Judaism: Who is a Jew?” by Rebecca Weiner⁷⁵
 - “Who is a Jew?: Issues of Jewish Status and Identity and Their Relationship to the Nature of Judaism in the Modern World” by David Ellenson⁷⁶

Debate

You should serve as the moderator as the students debate the merits of patrilineal v. matrilineal lineage. At the end of the debate, highlight the synagogue’s policy on “Who is Jewish.”

⁷² “Three Generations of Mixed Marriage,” CCAR Responsa: Contemporary American Reform Responsa, accessed on April 23, 2013. <http://ccarnet.org/responsa/carr-95-96/>.

⁷³ “Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent,” CCAR Responsa: Contemporary American Reform Responsa, accessed on April 23, 2013. <http://ccarnet.org/responsa/carr-61-68/>.

⁷⁴ “Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent on the Status of Children of Mixed Marriages,” CCAR Responsa: Contemporary American Reform Responsa, accessed on April 23, 2013. <http://ccarnet.org/responsa/arr-appendix/>.

⁷⁵ “Who is a Jew” by Rebecca Weiner, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed on April 23, 2013. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/whojew1.html>.

⁷⁶ David Ellenson, “Who is a Jew?: Issues of Jewish Status and Identity and Their Relationship to the Nature of Judaism in the Modern World,” in *Beit Mila in the Reform Context*, ed. Lewish M. Barth (Los Angeles: *Beit Mila* Board of Reform Judaism, 1990), 69-79.

Materials

- Debate resources (several copies per team)

Resources

- ✓ CCAR Responsa: 59. Three Generations of Mixed Marriage – 9.1
- ✓ CCAR Responsa: Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent – 9.2
- ✓ CCAR Responsa: Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent on the Status of Children of Mixed Marriages – 9.3
- ✓ “Judaism: Who is a Jew?” by Rebecca Weiner – 9.4
- ✓ “Who is a Jew?: Issues of Jewish Status and Identity and Their Relationship to the Nature of Judaism in the Modern World” by David Ellenson – 9.5

Directions: Compare and contrast each of these texts. Write down the things that you notice that the texts have in common, and any questions that you have about these texts. For your reference, you can use a TaNaKh to read for context around each text.

Exodus 3:16

לֵךְ וְאַסְפֹּף אֶת־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם נִרְאָה אֵלַי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר
פָּקֵד פְּקֻדֹתַי אֵתְכֶם וְאֶת־הָעֲשׂוּי לָכֶם בְּמִצְרָיִם:

Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: Adonai, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me and said, 'I have taken note of you and of what is being done to you in Egypt...

Exodus 20:2

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

I Adonai am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage:

Deuteronomy 32:7

זְכוֹר יָמֹת עוֹלָם בֵּינוּ שָׁנוֹת דוֹר־דָּוָר שָׁאֵל אָבוֹתָי וַיִּגְדְּךָ וַיִּקְנִיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָךְ:

Remember the days of old, Consider the years of ages past; Ask your father, he will inform you, Your elders, they will tell you:

Isaiah 44:21

זְכֹר־אֵלֶּה יַעֲקֹב וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל כִּי עֲבָדִי־אָתָּה וַיִּצְרַתִּיךָ עֲבָד־לִי אֶתָּה וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:

Remember these things, O Jacob For you, O Israel, are My servant: I fashioned you, you are My servant - O Israel, never forget Me.

Deuteronomy 25:17

זְכוֹר אֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לָּךְ עַמְלֵק בְּדַרְךָ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם:

Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt —

Micah 6:5

עַמִּי זְכֹר־נָא מַה־יַעַץ בְּלֵק מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב וּמַה־עָנָה אֹתוֹ בַּלְעָם בֶּן־בְּעֹוֹר מִן־הַשְּׂטִיִּים
עַד־הַגִּלְגָּל לְמַעַן דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה:

“My people, Remember what Balak king of Moab Plotted against you, And how Balaam son of Beor Responded to him. [Recall your passage] From Shittim to Gilgal — And you will recognize The gracious acts of Adonai.”

Deuteronomy 29:13

וְלֹא אֶתְכֶם לְבַדְכֶם אֲנֹכִי פֹרַת אֶת־הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הָאֲלֵה הַזֹּאת:

I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone...

Joshua 4:6-7

לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה זֹאת אוֹת בְּקִרְבְּכֶם כִּי־יִשְׁאַלּוּן בְּנֵיכֶם מִחֵר לֵאמֹר מֶה הָאֲבָנִים הָאֵלֶּה לָכֶם:
לָהֶם אֲשֶׁר נִכְרְתוּ מִיַּמֵּי תִירְדוֹן מִפְּנֵי אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה בְּעַבְרוֹ בַּיַּרְדֵּן נִכְרְתוּ מִי תִירְדוֹן וְהָיוּ
וְאָמַרְתֶּם הָאֲבָנִים הָאֵלֶּה לְזִכְרוֹן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד־עוֹלָם:

This shall serve as a symbol among you: in time to come, when your children ask, 'What is the meaning of these stones for you?' You shall tell them, 'The waters of the Jordan were cut off because of the Ark of Adonai's Covenant; when it passed through the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' And so these stones shall serve the people of Israel as a memorial for all time."

II Kings 21:2

וַיַּעַשׂ הַרְעָה בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּהוֹעֵבֶת הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִישׁ יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

He did what was displeasing to Adonai, following the abhorrent practices of the nations that Adonai had dispossessed before the Israelites.

Deuteronomy. 6:10-12

וְהָיָה כִּי יָבִיאֲכֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר וְלִיִּצְחָק
לָתֵת לָךְ עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת וְטֹבֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־בְנִיתָ: וּבָתַיִם מְלֵאִים כָּל־טוֹב אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מְלֵאתָ וּבְרִית חֲצוּבִים
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־חָצַבְתָּ כְּרַמִּים וְנִיחַיִּים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִטְעַתָּ וְאֲכַלְתָּ שְׂבַעְתָּ:

When Adonai your God brings you into the land that He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to assign to you — great and flourishing cities that you did not build, houses full of all good things that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant — and you eat your fill, take heed that you do not forget Adonai who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage.

Exodus 20:8-10

זְכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעֵשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלַאכְתְּךָ:
וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל־מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וּבָתְּךָ עַבְדְּךָ
וְאִמְתְּךָ וּבְהֵמְתְּךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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.

After you have taken your general notes, answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think all of these texts have been grouped together?
2. What do these texts tell you about the relationship of the Jewish People to the concept of memory?

Specific Events/People

God Makes a Covenant with Abraham

God's Covenant with the Jewish People on Mt. Sinai

King Solomon Builds the First Temple in Jerusalem c.10th century BCE

The Destruction of the 1st Temple in Jerusalem & the Exile of the Jewish People to Babylonia 586 BCE

Cyrus Decree 539 BCE

Building of the 2nd Temple in Jerusalem c.516 BCE

Yochanan Ben Zakai Moves Academy to Yavneh – c. 68CE

Destruction of the 2nd Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans c. 70CE

Masada c. 73 CE

Bar Kochba Rebellion – 132-135 CE

Masoretes codify the Hebrew Bible - c. 930

Life of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki) – the most important biblical and Talmudic commentator 1040-1105CE

Life of Maimonides – prolific philosopher and commentator 1135-1204 CE

Jews Expelled from England – this is the first time that the Jews are expelled from a European nation – 1290

Edict of Expulsion is signed in Spain, all Jews must either convert or leave the land – 1492

Joseph Karo writes the law code *Shulkhan Arukh* in Safed – 1563

Jews win the right to settle in New Amsterdam and establish a Jewish community – 1655

Jews permitted to hold public office in the USA – 1788

Hochschule fur die Wissenschaft des Judentums (Higher Institute for Jewish Studies) established, Berlin – 1872

Specific Events/People Continued

Hebrew Union College established, Cincinnati – 1875

Dreyfus Affair, France – 1894/First Zionist Congress – 1897

Protocols of the Elders of Zion is Published - 1905

Louis Brandeis, a secular Jew and leader of the Zionist Movement in the USA becomes a member of the Supreme Court – 1916

Balfour Declaration - 1917

Bolshevik Revolution – 1917

Dead Sea Scrolls discovered - 1947

State of Israel Founded – 1948

Operation Magic Carpet – 1949

Nostra Aetate, an official Catholic statement on Jews issued as a part of Vatican II – 1965

Six Day War – 1967

Association for Jewish Studies founded in the USA – 1969

Sally Priesand, the first woman rabbi is ordained – 1972

Yom Kippur War – 1973

Israel Makes Peace with Egypt – 1979

First Palestinian Intifada – 1988-1992

Mass immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel (950,000) – 1989-2003

Fall of Soviet Union - 1991

Yitzhak Rabin Assassinated - 1995

Second Palestinian Intifada – 2000-2005

Sen. Joseph Lieberman nominated for the vice presidency of the USA – 2000

General Periods

The Great Sanhedrin c. 57 BCE – c.30 CE

Codification of the Mishnah c. 200CE

Codification of the Babylonian Talmud c. 600-750 CE

Academies in Babylonia c. 6th-11th centuries

Golden Age for Spanish Jewry c.8th-11th centuries

8 Crusades - 1096-1270

Council of the 4 Lands, Autonomous Jewish Body Governs in Poland – c.16th-18th Century

Jewish Enlightenment, Jews begin to react to modernity with the rise of movements such as the Proto-Reform Movement and Hassidut – c. 1770-1890

Russian Jews forced to live within the Pale of Settlement – 1835-1917

Russian Pogroms - 1880's-1920's

Mass Eastern European Jewish immigration to the United States – 1881-1924

First 5 Aliyot to Israel (445,000 Jews) – 1882-1929

Nazi Holocaust in Europe, 6,000,000 Jews are murdered– 1933-1945

guage devoid of spiritual depth and artistic qualities. As Ahad Ha-Am, the proponent of cultural Zionism, emphasized, only the Hebrew language could function as the tongue through which Jews could connect again with their national past and would be able to achieve a full literary and spiritual renaissance.⁷²

Like other Zionist reconstructions of the Jewish past, this extremely dichotomized view ignored developments that did not fit its model. After all, Aramaic competed with Hebrew as the language spoken by Jews during the later part of Antiquity. Conversely, Hebrew did not remain constrained to the sacred domain during centuries of Exile but was also a language of poetry and writing, and served as the lingua franca for Jews who came from different countries.⁷³ Thus, the concept of the "revival of the Hebrew language" is not accurate, nor is the celebration of the "rebirth" of modern Hebrew in conjunction with Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's immigration to Palestine in 1881. That this event became a temporal marker of rebirth is an example of how collective memory reconstructs the past by selecting a symbolic "event" to represent a gradual process of transition. In spite of Ben-Yehuda's remarkable contribution to the development of modern Hebrew, efforts to expand the use of Hebrew as a spoken tongue actually predated his immigration to Palestine. Indeed, the decisive turn in the status of Hebrew in Palestine came later, during the second decade of this century.⁷⁴

Like other aspects of the Zionist collective memory, the association of Hebrew with Antiquity and the negative attitude toward other Jewish languages associated with Exile predated the rise of Zionism. Yet Zionism presented a new insistence upon a full-scale "revival" of the ancient tongue with a more pronounced nationalist bent, and adjusted the perception of the past accordingly. The anecdote told by the archeologist Yigael Yadin of Ben-Gurion's reproach when he saw letters from the Bar Kokhba period that were written in Aramaic is quite revealing: "Why did they write in Aramaic and not in Hebrew?" was [Ben-Gurion's] immediate angry reaction, as if the scribes had been members of his staff."⁷⁵

The attitude toward the exilic languages and the commitment to turn Hebrew into an everyday language was not uniform, however, even among the Zionists. The emergence of Hebrew as the Yishuv's national language was a complex process that entailed a struggle on both ideological and practical grounds. The 1913 "Languages War" marked the success of the pro-Hebrew teachers and students, supported by the Socialist Zionist settlers of the Second Aliya, in abolishing the use of European languages in Jewish schools and establishing Hebrew as the main language of instruction.⁷⁶ For most Jewish immigrants, Hebrew was not a native tongue but a newly acquired spoken language. While its vocabulary was rich in some

quired an ongoing effort to find (or construct) appropriate words, idioms, and concepts.

Yet the emergence of Hebrew as the primary and official language of the Yishuv was ultimately seen as a critical link to the ancient past, as constructed in Zionist collective memory. For this reason too, the eastern European settlers wished to adapt the Sephardi Hebrew pronunciation which, they believed, follows the ancient Hebrew accent. Thus, although Palestinian Hebrew actually formed a new system of pronunciation, drawing selectively on both the Sephardi and the Ashkenazi Hebrew,⁷⁷ it was seen as an adaptation of the Sephardi accent and therefore as closer to ancient Hebrew. That this was a new synthesis meant, however, that for both the eastern European Zionist settlers and the Middle Eastern Jews the new Palestinian Hebrew provided a further ritualized expression of change. This transformation thus symbolized the cultural transition from exilic to Palestinian Hebrew, from a primarily sacred and literary language to a secular language of everyday use and the official language of the revived Hebrew nation.⁷⁸

Historical Continuity/Symbolic Discontinuities

The Zionist collective memory produces a master commemorative narrative that outlines three periods—Antiquity, Exile, and the modern National Revival. Within this semiotic framework, as it developed in the national Hebrew culture in Palestine, the meaning of each period is largely determined by its relations to the other periods. The following graphic display (figure 1) represents the Zionist vision of symbolic continuities and ruptures within Jewish history.

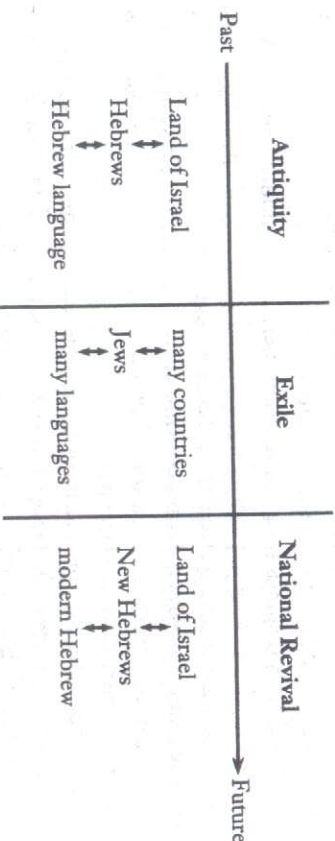


Figure 1

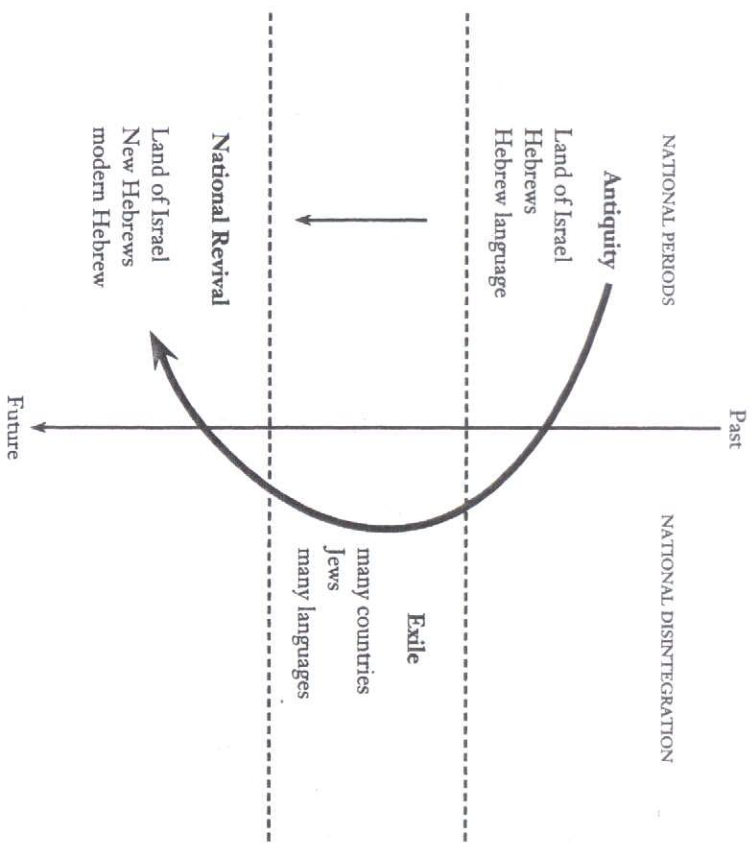


Figure 2

This semiotic system presents a basic conception of linear progression through historical time. But its segmentation into three periods also suggests some notion of historical recurrence that transcends this linearity. This does not imply a fully circular movement through time, but rather a spiral thrust forward to the future with a symbolic incorporation of certain features of the ancient past, as is demonstrated by figure 2.

Figure 2 thus displays how the national periods (Antiquity and the National Revival) became separated by a period of national disintegration. From a nationalist perspective, then, Exile is represented by blank space, a "historical detour" which denies continuity of national life. This gap, however, is not constructed by history, but rather by memory, imposing its ideological classification of the past.

To compensate for this disruption, the Zionist commemorative narrative constructs a *symbolic bridge* between Antiquity and the modern period, emphasizing their affinity and distancing both from Exile. The New Hebrews' renewed bond with land and nature as well as the revival of the Hebrew language help construct this bridge. This is clearly expressed in

the Hebrew literature written for children. Nature is often described as supporting the Zionist efforts to bridge over Exile, thereby constructing the symbolic continuity that history denies. Thus, for example, the writer Ya'akov Hurgin informs his young readers that the ancient rebels' story had never left Zion to Exile and was, therefore, transmitted to him by the waves of the Sea of the Galilee.⁷⁶ The waves thus provide the symbolic bridge that makes it possible to "wave" the ancient past into the modern National Revival, skipping over the discredited exilic past. The result is an appearance of seamless continuity between Antiquity and the modern National Revival.

The alignment of the national periods on the one hand and Exile on the other plays up the positive images of the first and third periods against the highly negative image of the middle period. Even though Zionist memory acknowledges Exile as a very long period (often marked by the formulaic reference to "two thousand years"), it defines it by its lack, as if it were "empty" in substance. As a result, Hebrew education expanded greatly on Antiquity, with a special emphasis on the two centuries of national revolts against the Romans, and devoted relatively little time to the history of Exile.⁸⁰ Among his protests against Jewish history, Yudelke, Hayim Hazaz's fictional hero, complains that Jewish history is boring because it consists of an endless recurrence of persecution and martyrdom.⁸¹ Commemorative time created by the Zionist master commemorative narrative thus differs from historical time considerably, reflecting the different significance it attributes to each of the periods.

Historical Turning Points: Liminality and Transitions

The Zionist reconstruction of symbolic continuities and discontinuities in Jewish history was clearly designed to support the ideology of national revival. The dramatic contrast between the repudiation of Exile and the glorification of Antiquity accentuated the appeal of the future national era and highlighted the notion of a new beginning. The resettlement of Palestine represented a *national rebirth*. The Zionist settlers regarded themselves as engaging in the work of Creation, secularizing religious metaphors and drawing upon biblical images to highlight their own contribution to the formation of a new national era.⁸²

While the early pioneering period symbolized the process of national rebirth, it was the 1920 battle of Tel Hai that provided the commemorative marker of a new beginning. Tel Hai was a sign that the expected historical transition was taking place. But a new beginning presupposes the end of the preceding period: The commemorative sequence strives to portray the

transition as consisting of an end, a great divide, and a new beginning. The reality, however, is more complex and does not offer a clear-cut sequence. Jews lived in Palestine prior to the “first” Zionist immigration, and Jews continued to live in exile even after the beginning of the Zionist immigration and appeared to flourish more than their brethren in Palestine. To legitimize the delineation of a new beginning and reinforce their periodization, the Zionist settlers referred to the pre-Zionist Jewish population in Palestine as the “old Yishuv” (the “old settlement”) and regarded it as a symbolic extension of Exile, thereby highlighting its distinction from the new Zionist Yishuv.⁸³

The prestate period nonetheless continued to represent a highly ambiguous situation with regard to the end of Exile. Indeed, it was only with the Holocaust that the Zionist commemorative narrative was able to draw a clear boundary indicating the end of Exile. The fate of European Jewry sealed that period of misery and persecution and affirmed that the future belonged to the Zionist national revival in Palestine. It is not surprising, therefore, that the national Hebrew educational discourse emphasized this view of the Holocaust, implying a critique of the Holocaust victims for failing to understand that historical lesson in time and to join the Zionist effort.⁸⁴

Thus, the master commemorative narrative allows for a liminal period in the transition between eras, beginning with the early pioneering period, culminating in the battle of Tel Hai. During this intermediate period of betwixt and between, historical forces shaped the emergent nation, but this process was still imbued with ambiguity as life in exile continued. The Holocaust, followed by the foundation of the State of Israel, provided a definitive boundary between the ending of Exile and National Revival. The representation of this symbolic order in the Israeli annual cycle of memorial days further affirms this commemorative sequence.⁸⁵ Within this semiotic system, then, the foundation of the state provides a symbolic compensation for the trauma of the Holocaust. This view, which the commemorative order suggests, is sometimes articulated explicitly in Hebrew textbooks that present the foundation of the state as a “happy end” for the Holocaust.⁸⁶

Moreover, since Jewish life outside the State of Israel has continued to challenge this construct, a new term emerged following the foundation of the State of Israel to refer to Jewish communities abroad as “Dispersion” (*tefutzot*). This concept conveys that the State of Israel is the center of world Jewry and the Jews who live outside of Israel are defined in relation to it, namely, dispersed in its periphery. Furthermore, this new term reinforces a cognitive distinction between Exile as a past that preceded the foundation of the state and Jewish life in exile following 1948.⁸⁷

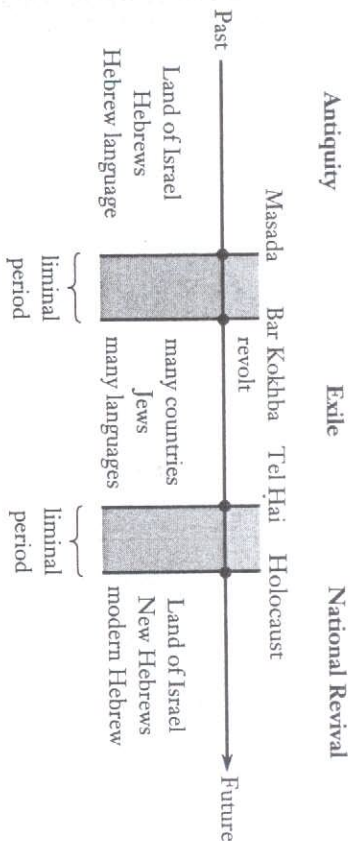


Figure 3

the Zionist National Revival, the Zionist master commemorative narrative constructs a similar liminal period that separates Antiquity from Exile. Although Masada was seen as a key turning point in Jewish history that indicates the conclusion of the Jewish revolt against the Romans in A.D. 73, this end did not actually represent a full transition from Antiquity to Exile. After all, Jews remained in Judaea under Roman rule while others continued to live in various diasporas throughout the Roman Empire. It was the outbreak of the Bar Kokhba revolt sixty years later that provided the Zionist commemorative narrative with an event to mark the conclusion of that transition: the Bar Kokhba revolt symbolized the final outburst of the ancient Jewish activist spirit, and its defeat ended the liminal period that had begun with the Great Revolt of the preceding century. Figure 3 represents the introduction of these turning points as temporal markers, signalling the entry to and exit from those liminal periods of transition. The three historical events that this book explores are thus located in the liminal periods of transition that the Zionist master commemorative narrative constructs. This commemorative location helps us understand why they emerged as major symbolic events in the national Hebrew culture and why they later became subjects of intense controversies over their meaning.

The designation of Masada and the Bar Kokhba revolt as major turning points that mark the transition from Antiquity to Exile and the emergence of Tel Hai as a symbolic marker of the onset of the Zionist National Revival were part of the Yishuv's attempt to shape its collective identity in relation to the past as well as the Jewish society outside of Palestine. While the division of the past into Antiquity and Exile continued the periodization constructed by traditional Jewish memory, the reinterpretation of Masada and Bar Kokhba as highly valued events marking the ending of Antiquity was a Zionist innovation. Jewish tradition emphasized the destruction of the Second Temple as the critical turning point ending this

Unit 3 Resource 2.3

The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus⁷⁷

**Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"**

Unit 3 Resource 3.1

⁷⁷ "Statue of Liberty National Monument", Liberty State Park, Liberty Science Center, The Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island Website, accessed April 14, 2013. <http://www.libertystatepark.com/emma.htm>.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum & Yad Vashem Website Comparisons:

On a separate piece of paper, please answer the following prompts:

1. Homepage. Go to the following websites: <http://www.ushmm.org/> and <http://www.yadvashem.org/>. Once there, look at all of the aspects of each of the homepages, and answer the following question:
 - a. What do you notice about each homepage?
 - b. What message(s) are most prominent on each of the homepages?
2. About Us. On the USHMM site, click on “Museum” and then “About the Museum”. On the YVS site, click on “About Us”. Read the text on both pages, and then watch all of the 3 video clips. (“What You Do Matters,” “The Power of Truth,” and “Remembering the Past Shaping the Future”)
 - a. What is the main message of each video? In what ways are these messages similar to one another, in what ways are they different from one another?
 - b. Judging from the text and the videos, what is the main purpose/mission of each museum?
3. Education & Research.
 - a. Compare and Contrast the Education & Research sections of both websites.
 - i. What similarities do you notice?
 - ii. What differences do you notice?
 - iii. In what ways might the differences reflect the purpose/mission of each museum?
4. General Site Comparison.
 - a. At this point, explore as much as you can on each website. Write down any similarities and differences that you notice between the websites.
5. Overall Analysis.
 - a. How would you describe the differences between the websites for the 2 Holocaust museums?
 - b. Which museum would you rather visit... why?
 - c. What conclusions can you draw about the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem from studying their respective websites?
 - i. What evidence did you find to support those conclusions?



SHARE    ...

Speech by President Peres at Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day

7 Apr 2013

“The history of the Holocaust is not just a lesson from the past, it is also a lesson for the future. That we will know to defend ourselves against dangers and intercept them before time.”



President Peres speaking at Yad Vashem. Photo: Amos Ben Gershom/GPO

(Communicated by the President's Spokesperson)

Chairman of the Directorate of Yad Vashem, Avner Shalev,

Righteous Among the Nations,

Honored guests,

The Holocaust will not sink into the dark hole of history. It is here with us, burning, real.

It resonates as we step on the stones of the ghettos.

It floats like a ghost in the barracks of the camps.

It cries from the prayer shawls, the hair, the shoes that we see with our own eyes.

It whispers from the tears that dried before we said goodbye.

It is reflected in the photographs of the babies in their mothers' arms.

The noise of those murderous trains which have ceased stills rings in our ears.

The smoke which has not faded as it drifted into the sky above.

Survivors walk among us, the Holocaust and its horrors are with them every day.

Their blood flows through our veins.

Their bravery accompanies every step of our lives.

There was no greater horror in the history of mankind.

Nothing can remove the greatest darkness that mankind has known

The 74 years which have passed are more biography than history.

Millions of names are still missing, of parents and children, of whole Jewish communities who were murdered. There is no substitute for the culture, for the values, for the talents which were and are no longer. They remain as an open wound.

We will not stop searching for every scrap of information, for a name yet to be identified, for a photograph that has been blurred. A third of our people, six million, were murdered with no reason.

The Jewish people today are fewer in number than on the eve of World War Two.

We decreased in number, but not in spirit.

We are working with all our might to fill the void. Physically and spiritually.

To grow out of the ashes, to create out of nothing, to build protection.

To build a new independence, and not tire from working for a better world, for Tikkun Olam

The Holocaust is an orphan with no comfort and a moral responsibility without compromise. It does not permit us, the Jewish people, to turn a blind eye. It must always be a warning to the entire human family.

The map of Europe still contains local stains of anti-Semitism. Racism erupted on that land in the last century and dragged it down to its lowest point. Ultimately the murder which came from her, damaged her.

To our shame, there remain some who learnt nothing.

Young skinheads. False scientists dressed in false suits.

Yes! There remain those who forget the Holocaust, those who deny it.

Not all the flames have been extinguished. Crises are once again exploited to form Nazi parties, ridiculous but dangerous. Sickening anti-Semitic cartoons are published allegedly in the name of press freedom.

The journey for justice and freedom is not yet over. When I hear the four words, 'Let My People Go' I feel again and again that the journey out of the house of slavery, which began in our people and has not yet ended, must not stop. It must not stop until slavery, in all its forms, is stopped. In every place, in every situation. Until the winds of freedom blow away the stench of racism and decimate the evil smoke.

The civilized world must ask itself how in such a short space of time after the crematoria were extinguished, after the terrible death toll that the allied powers endured to put an end to the Nazi devil, it is still possible for the leadership, like that of Iran, to openly deny the Holocaust and threaten another Holocaust.

Whoever ignores the threat against one nation, must know that the threat of a Holocaust against one nation is a threat of a Holocaust against all nations.

The Jewish people are a small nation in number but large in spirit. That spirit cannot be burned in the ovens. From the ashes of the Holocaust rose spiritual redemption and political rebirth. We rose and we built a state of our own.

We lost possessions, but retained our values.

We returned to our ancient homeland. We renewed our moral legacy.

We returned to independence.

We returned to creating, to educating and we returned to hope.

We built a defensive force capable of dealing with dangers, new and old.

The Israel Defence Forces, which was formed in response to the attempt to annihilate the

Jewish State which had just been created, is also the right lesson from the Holocaust. It is founded upon the bravery of Jews in the Holocaust.

Today, Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day is also the memorial day for 70 years since the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. There was a never a rebellion like it. They were so few and their bravery remained as a model for so many. From now and forever. Today we salute their bravery with the flags flying in the wind of freedom. These are flags of exaltation, not only of grief.

A clear line exists between the resistance in the ghettos, in the camps and in the forests and the rebirth and bravery of the State of Israel. It is a line of dignity, of renewed independence, of mutual responsibility, of exalting Gods name. As a ray of hope which was not extinguished even during terrible anguish. The ghetto fighters sought life even when circumstance screamed despair.

A few days ago Peretz Hochman passed away. The small tobacco seller who became a great hero. Peretz Hochman came home to Israel and fought in Israel's wars with the courage which typified him. He passed away only a few days before he was meant to stand with us, here today, on this stage and light the torch. His light will continue to illuminate.

Raising the heroism of the fighters is not just a matter of doing justice to their bravery. It is an existential need, for each of us, for all us as a people. It is time. We did not always listen to the beat of their hearts. To the health. The time has come to repair.

The history of the Holocaust is not just a lesson from the past, it is also a lesson for the future. That we will know to defend ourselves against dangers and intercept them before time.

That we can rely on ourselves.

That we must maintain our moral legacy, which withstood even impossible situations. That we can maintain friendship with friends, and work with them to foster a better future, for every person, for every nation, for all nations.

And to guard against humanity ever losing its humanity again.

We'll ensure that every person will have the right to be different, different and equal.

We will never despair. After all, we were commanded; "Do not fear, my servant Jacob" because "The Lord will give strength to his people."

REMARKS OF PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON AT THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES FOR THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM, APRIL 22, 1993



President Clinton at the Museum's dedication ceremonies. —Bill Fitzpatrick(*Photo #N07084*)

Mr. Vice President, Mrs. Gore, President and Mrs. Herzog, distinguished leaders of nations from around the world who have come here to be with us today, the leaders of our Congress and the citizens of America, and especially to Mr. Meyerhoff and all of those who worked so hard to make this day possible, and even more to those who have spoken already on this program whose lives and words bear eloquent witness to why we have come here today.

It is my purpose on behalf of the United States to commemorate this magnificent museum, meeting as we do among memorials within the site of the memorial to Thomas Jefferson, the author of our freedom. Near where Abraham Lincoln is seated, who gave his life so that our nation might extend its mandate of freedom to all who live within our borders. We gather near the place where the legendary and recently departed Marian Anderson sang songs of freedom, and where Martin Luther King summoned us all to dream and work together.

Here on the town square of our national life, on this 50th anniversary of the Warsaw uprising, at Eisenhower Plaza on Raoul Wallenberg Place, we dedicated the United States Holocaust Museum, and so bind one of the darkest lessons in history to the hopeful soul of America.

As we have seen already today, this museum is not for the dead alone, nor even for the survivors who have been so beautifully represented; it is perhaps most of all for those of us who were not there at all. To learn the lessons, to deepen our memories and our humanity, and to transmit these lessons from generation to generation.

The Holocaust, to be sure, transformed the entire 20th century, sweeping aside the enlightenment hope that evil somehow could be

permanently vanished from the face of the earth; demonstrating here is no war to end all war; that the struggle against the basest tendencies of our nature must continue forever and ever.

The Holocaust began when the most civilized country of its day unleashed unprecedented acts of cruelty and hatred abetted by perversions of science, philosophy, and law. A culture which produced Goethe, Schiller, and Beethoven, then brought forth Hitler and Himmler. The merciless hordes who, themselves, were educated as others who were educated stood by and did nothing. Millions died for who they were, how they worshiped, what they believed, and who they loved. But one people--the Jews--were immutably marked for total destruction. They who were among their nation's most patriotic citizens, whose extinction served no military purpose nor offered any political gain, they who threatened no one were slaughtered by an efficient, unrelenting bureaucracy, dedicated solely to a radical evil with a curiously antiseptic title: The Final Solution.

The Holocaust reminds us forever that knowledge divorced from values can only serve to deepen the human nightmare; that a head without a heart is not humanity.

For those of us here today representing the nations of the West, we must live forever with this knowledge, even as our fragmentary awareness of crimes grew into indisputable facts, far too little was done. Before the war even started, doors to liberty were shut. And even after the United States and the Allies attacked Germany, rail lines to the camps within miles of military significant target were left undisturbed.

Still there were, as has been noted, many deeds of singular courage and resistance. The Danes and the Bulgarians, men like Emmanuel Ringelbaum, who died after preserving in metal milk cans the history of the Warsaw ghetto. Janusz Korczak, who stayed with children until last breaths at Treblinka. And Raoul Wallenberg, who perhaps rescued as many as 100,000 Hungarian Jews. And those known and those never to be known, who manned the thin line of righteousness, who risked and lost their lives to save others, accruing no advantage to themselves, but nobly serving the larger cause of humanity.

As the war ended, these rescuers were joined by our military forces who, alongside the allied armies, played the decisive role in bringing the Holocaust to an end. Overcoming the shock of discovery, they walked survivors from those dark, dark places into the sweet sunlight of redemption, soldiers and survivors being forever joined in history and humanity. This place is their place, too. For them as for us, to memorialize the past and steel ourselves for the challenges of tomorrow.

We must all now frankly admit that there will come a time in the not-too-distant future when the Holocaust will pass from living reality and shared experience to memory and to history. To preserve this shared history of anguish, to keep it vivid and real so that evil can be combatted and contained, we are here to consecrate this memorial and contemplate its meaning for us; for more than any other event, the Holocaust gave rise to the universal declaration of human rights, the charter of our common humanity. And it contributed, indeed, made certain the long overdue creation of the nation of Israel.

Now, with the demise of communism and the rise of democracy out of the ashes of former communist states, with the end of the Cold War we must not only rejoice in so much that is good in the world, but recognize that not all in this new world is good. We learn

again and again that the world has yet to run its course of animosity and violence.

Ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia is but the most brutal and blatant and ever-present manifestation of what we see also with the oppression of the Kurds in Iraq, the abusive treatment of the Baha'i in Iran, the endless race-based violence in South Africa. And in many other places we are reminded again and again how fragile are the safeguards of civilization.

So do the depraved and insensate bands now loose in the modern world. Look at the liars and the propagandists among us, the skinheads and the Liberty Lobby here at home; the Afrikaaners resistance movement in South Africa; the Radical Party of Serbia, the Russian blackshirts. With them we must all compete for the interpretation and the preservation of history of what we know and how we should behave.

The evil represented in this museum is incontestable. But as we are its witness, so must we remain its adversary in the world in which we live. So we must stop the fabricators of history and the bullies as well. Left unchallenged, they would still prey upon the powerless; and we must not permit that to happen again.

To build bulwarks against this kind of evil, we know there is but one path to take. It is the direction opposite that which produced the Holocaust, it is that which recognizes that among all our differences, we still cannot ever separate ourselves one from another. We must find in our diversity our common humanity. We must reaffirm that common humanity, even in the darkest and deepest of our own disagreements.

Sure, there is new hope in this world. The emergence of new, vibrant democratic states, many of whose leaders are here today, offers a shield against the inhumanity we remember. And it is particularly appropriate that this museum is here in this magnificent city, an enduring tribute to democracy. It is a constant reminder of our duty to build and nurture the institutions of public tranquility and humanity.

It occurs to me that some may be reluctant to come inside these doors because the photographs and remembrance of the past impart more pain than they can bear. I understand that. I walked through the museum on Monday night and spent more than two hours. But I think that our obligations to history and posterity alike should beckon us all inside these doors. It is a journey that I hope every American who comes to Washington will take, a journey I hope all the visitors to this city from abroad will make.

I believe that this museum will touch the life of everyone who enters and leaves everyone forever changed; a place of deep sadness and a sanctuary of bright hope; an ally of education against ignorance, of humility, against arrogance, an investment in a secure future against whatever insanity lurks ahead. If this museum can mobilize morality, then those who have perished will thereby gain a measure of immortality.

I know this is a difficult day for those we call 'survivors.' Those of us born after the war cannot yet fully comprehend their sorrow or pain. But if our expressions are inadequate to this moment, at least may I share these words inscribed in the Book of Wisdom: 'the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the eyes of fools they seem to die. They're

passing away was thought to be an affliction. And their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace.

On this day of triumphant reunion and celebration, I hope those who have survived have found their peace. Our task, with God's blessing upon our souls and the memories of the fallen in our hearts and minds, is to the ceaseless struggle to preserve human rights and dignity. We are now strengthened and will be forever strengthened by remembrance. I pray that we shall prevail.

Unit 3 Resource 4.3

Speech Comparison Guide

How did Peres and Clinton use first person pronouns in their respective speeches?

What might this imply?

What are the main ideas of each speech?

Which three quotations from each speech support the main ideas that you described above?

Which speech resonates more with you, as an individual? Which speech resonates more with you, as an American? Which speech resonates more with you, as a Jew?

Explain any differences in the way that you answered the questions above.

Unit 3 Resource 5.1

Guiding Questions for “9 Days of We”

To which “processes” in the Jewish calendar does Avram Infeld refer?

To which days are Yom HaAtzmaut intricately related?

What is Infeld’s argument for why Yom HaShoah is commemorated in Israel?

What does Infeld say is the essence of Yom HaZkikaron?

What does Infeld say is the essence of Yom HaAtzmaut?

What noun went along with the adjective Jewish prior to Infeld’s birth?

How can Yom HaAtzmaut be viewed as a Jewish holiday in addition to being an Israeli holiday?

To what does the phrase “10 Days of Teshuvah” refer?

To what does the phrase “9 Days of Redemption” refer? Why does Infeld use the word “Redemption” to define those 9 days?

Infeld states, “There are moments when Jews live as I, and there are moments when Jews live as we. It’s only the combination of both of those periods being of importance to both sides of the Jewish People that can create that I-we relationship.” Re-state this statement in your own words, then reflect on whether or not this sentiment resonates with you. (Answer on the back of this page.)

SARAH AARONSOHN AND THE NILI SPIES

Sarah Aaronsohn (1890-1917)

- Sabra (native-born Israeli)
- Together with her brother, led Nili spy organization
- 1917 Committed suicide after being arrested and tortured by Turks

"Netzach Yisrael lo yishaker."

(The Eternity of Israel will not deceive)



In 1915 a group of young Jews in Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) had a dream. They envisioned a day when Israel would be free from the oppressive rule of the Ottoman Turks and when the Jewish people would have their own independent homeland. Knowing that dreams are realized only through action, they founded the Nili spy organization and set out on a road of danger and sacrifice.

Israel, at the turn of the century, was part of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The Turks were vehemently opposed to Zionism and treated the Jewish Yishuv (community) in Israel with brutality. Many Jews, having witnessed the Turkish genocide of the Armenian people, feared a similar fate. In 1914 World War I broke out with the Turks and Germans aligned against England and the Western powers. It was within this atmosphere that Nili was created.

Nili was a secret spy organization founded by young Jews in Eretz Yisrael in 1915. It numbered about sixty members, most of whom were native-born Israelis ("sabras") from the First Aliyah moshavot (Jewish

agricultural settlements in Eretz Yisrael built by Zionist pioneers between 1882 and 1904) of Zikhron Yaakov, Hadera and Rishon LeZion. Their primary aim was to supply British intelligence with information about the Turkish military presence in Palestine with hopes that the British would oust the Turks from Eretz Yisrael and grant the Jews an independent homeland.

The original founders of Nili were Dr. Aaron Aaronsohn, a world-famous agronomist from Zikhron Yaakov, and Avshalom Feinberg, who from the age of twelve dreamed of liberating Eretz Yisrael for the Jewish people. Aaronsohn ran an experimental agricultural station on the Mediterranean coast at Atlit (near Haifa) where he carried out his renowned research on strains of wheat and other crops. Feinberg served as the assistant at the agricultural station and later became engaged to Aaron's sister, Rivka. (Feinberg would later write Rivka a beautiful love letter with the phrase "*elef neshikot* (a thousand kisses)" made famous years later by Israeli songwriter and singers Zvika Pik and Yehoram Gaon.)

At first Avshalom suggested a Jewish military operation against the Turks but Aaron's view, that espionage would be more effective and practical, prevailed. Aaronsohn and Feinberg recruited members and their spy organization began to grow. Meanwhile a plague of locusts struck the Middle East and the Turks appointed Dr. Aaron Aaronsohn as inspector general of the war on the locusts. This gave Aaronsohn and his "assistants" free entry into Ottoman government offices and Turkish military camps throughout Palestine. In this manner Nili was able to easily acquire great amounts of valuable intelligence information.

Convincing the British of Nili's value, though, was not to be as easy. Aaronsohn sent his brother Alex and later Feinberg to speak with British officials in Cairo about Nili but both emissaries met with failure. Only in the summer of 1916 did the Nili spy organization receive official approval when Aaronsohn met with British officials in London. They became impressed with Nili's work and sent Aaron to British headquarters in Cairo where he was to advise the British officers planning the invasion of Ottoman-held Palestine.

Feinberg, unaware of Aaron's success in London, tried to reach British lines in Egypt with Nili member Yosef Lishansky. The two tried to cross the Sinai Desert on foot but were attacked by Bedouins near Rafah. Avshalom Feinberg was killed but Lishansky, who was wounded in the attack, made his way to Cairo where he found Aaronsohn. Avshalom Feinberg's body was discovered after the 1967 Six-Day War when Sinai Bedouins showed Israeli troops his grave. A palm tree had grown out of dates that Feinberg had in his pocket when he was murdered. The Bedouins called the spot "the Grave of the Jew" and considered it holy because of the palm tree. Avshalom Feinberg's remains were brought to Jerusalem in November 7, 1967, and were reburied in the National Military Cemetery on Mount Herzl.

Lishansky returned to Israel in February 1917 and along with Aaronsohn's sister, Sarah, ran the espionage ring at Atlit. Several times over the next nine months the British Royal Navy yacht *Mengem* anchored off the coast at Atlit and received intelligence reports from the Nili spies. On one occasion Aaron sailed on the *Mengem* and secretly met one of his spies, Liova Schneerson, a relative of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Aaronsohn asked Liova if he could think of a good name for their clandestine undertaking. Schneerson took out of his pocket the Tanakh (Bible) he had been given as a gift by Avshalom Feinberg and randomly opened the holy book to I Samuel 15:29. The biblical verse "*Netzach Yisrael lo yishaker* (the Eternity of Israel will not deceive)" caught his eye and the acronym for it, Nili, became the group's name and secret password.

In the spring of 1917 the Turks expelled the Jews from Jaffa and Tel Aviv. Nili sent this information to Aaron Aaronsohn in Cairo who publicized the deportation around the world. Aaronsohn was able to organize worldwide protests against the Turks and raised two thousand English pounds in gold coins for the Jewish Yishuv in Israel. Nili's efforts brought much relief to the Yishuv at this troubled time.

When the *Mengem* was no longer able to approach the coast at Atlit, Nili began sending intelligence reports to Cairo by carrier pigeon.

In September of 1917, the Turks caught one of these pigeons and this provided clear proof of a Jewish espionage network in Palestine. A week later they captured Nili spy Naaman Belkind, who after being tortured gave his interrogators information about Nili and its operations.

The leaders of the Jewish Yishuv in Israel denounced Nili before the Turks. Though they may have agreed with Nili's goals, they were fearful that Nili would bring Turkish retribution on the entire Yishuv. On October 1, 1917, the Turks surrounded Zikhron Yaakov and although Yosef Lishansky succeeded in escaping, Sarah Aaronsohn was arrested.

Sarah Aaronsohn was a sabra, born in Zikhron Yaakov in 1890. In 1914 she married a Bulgarian Jew and moved to Constantinople. Her marriage was unhappy and a year later, she returned home to Israel. In April 1917 she visited her brother Aaron in Cairo and he tried to convince her to stay there for her own safety. Sarah would hear nothing of this. She returned to Atlit and from there directed Nili's operations while Aaron remained in Cairo.

When the carrier pigeon was discovered she ordered all Nili spies to disperse but she remained in Zikhron Yaakov to facilitate their escape. After her arrest the Turks demanded that she divulge the whereabouts of Lishansky and the other Nili spies. Sarah refused. First the Turkish police tortured her father and brother Zvi before her eyes. Their screams were heard all throughout the terrified village. Then for the next four days Sarah Aaronsohn was put through the most terrible tortures the Turks could invent. They burned her all over her body and beat the soles of her feet with a whip called a *falaka*. Sarah still refused to talk. Her heroic stand saved many lives in Zikhron Yaakov and throughout the Yishuv.

On October 4 Sarah was transferred to a Turkish prison in Nazareth for more intensive interrogation. Sarah requested to change her bloodied clothes before departing. All of Zikhron Yaakov's Jewish inhabitants watched through their window shutters as Sarah was marched up the main street of the village to the Aaronsohn home by Turkish soldiers. Though her feet were swollen from the *falaka* beatings and

caused her excruciating pain, she walked erect and proud. She knew the townspeople were watching and she didn't want to show any weakness. Sarah entered the house and went into the bathroom alone where she jotted down the following letter:

[...] I was beaten murderously, and they bound me with ropes. Do remember, to describe all our suffering to those who shall come after we have passed away. I do not believe that we shall survive after having been betrayed, and the whole truth about us probably exposed. The news of victory must eventually come, and, as you will be seeing my brothers, tell them about our martyrdom, and let them know that Sarah has asked that each drop of her blood be avenged measure for measure... that no mercy shall be shown, just as they have shown no mercy to us. Believe me, I have no more strength left to endure, and I prefer to kill myself than to be tortured any more at their bloodstained hands. They say they will send us away to Damascus; there they will surely hang me. I shall try to get hold of some small firearm or poison. I do not want them to maul my body. My sorrow is the greater for seeing my father suffering in innocence. But there will come a day of reckoning; we have died as warriors, and have not given way.... They have come, and I can write no longer.¹³

Then Sarah Aaronsohn pulled out a pistol she had hidden earlier in the house, put the barrel in her mouth and pulled the trigger. When the Turks heard the shot they burst open the bathroom door and found her mortally wounded on the floor. Sarah lay suffering for two days while the Turks tried to save her for "further investigation." Her last wish was for the villagers to look after her elderly and beaten father. She died on October 9, 1917, and was buried in the Zikhron Yaakov Cemetery.

Yosef Lishansky tried to make his way on foot to Egypt but was caught, and along with Naaman Belkind, was transferred to a Turkish prison in Damascus. The two were sentenced to death by hanging and were executed on December 5, 1917. Aaron Aaronsohn survived the war

13. Quoted in Shmuel Katz, *The Aaronsohn Saga* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2007), 333-34.

but died in a mysterious plane crash over the English Channel in 1919. Many believe he was killed by the very British he had helped, for their fear that one day he might demand fulfillment of the English wartime promises to Nili and the Jews.

With Aaron's death, Nili finally disbanded but by then the British had liberated Eretz Yisrael and signed the Balfour Declaration, calling for an independent Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Until this day the Nili saga is surrounded by debate and controversy. There are those who claim Nili was irresponsible in acting on its own and could have brought tragedy to the Yishuv. Nili's accomplishments, however, are impressive. Nili reported to the world about the Turks' deportation of Tel Aviv and Jaffa's Jews and the protests that followed helped put an end to the Turkish brutality. Nili raised thousands of dollars for the Jewish Yishuv in Eretz Yisrael at a time when poverty and starvation were rampant. Finally, Nili played a major role in the British conquest of Palestine and was an important consideration in the giving of the Balfour Declaration. Sarah Aaronsohn and the Nili spies were the precursors and inspiration for a new generation that grasped Jewish destiny in its hands and helped to bring about the liberation of the Jewish homeland and Israel's independence. Their sacrifice was not in vain.



RAHEL AND SHELLY MY HERO AND MY FRIEND

Rahel the Poetess (1890-1931)

- 1909 Moved to Israel on "Second Aliyah"
- Became *halutzah* (pioneer) and Hebrew poetess
- 1931 Died of tuberculosis, buried at Kinneret

"Only a tree have my hands planted..."



Rahel (Rahel) Bluwstein was born in czarist Russia on September 20, 1890. She grew up in a traditional Jewish home, the granddaughter of an Orthodox rabbi. Rachel, or "Rahel," as she was known in Hebrew, studied first at a traditional Jewish elementary school and later at a Russian high school and developed a deep love of poetry and painting. At the age of seventeen she moved to Kiev and began studying painting but those were the days of murderous pogroms (organized attacks on the Jewish community) in Russia. While

over two and a half million Russian Jews fled the pogroms to America in the early 1900s, Rahel was one of the few ardent Zionists who chose a different path. In 1909 she made Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) as part of the wave of Zionist immigration called the "Second Aliyah."

Some forty thousand Russian Jews came to Eretz Yisrael between 1904 and 1914 as part of the "Second Aliyah." These highly motivated immigrants sought to build a new life for their people, not in a new Diaspora like America, but in the Jewish people's ancient homeland, Eretz Yisrael. These immigrants were known as *halutzim* (Zionist pioneers)

ELI COHEN

THE SPY WHO SAVED A NATION

Eli Cohen (1924–1965)

- Early 1960s Israeli espionage agent in Damascus, Syria
- Rose to prominence in Syrian government
- Supplied Israel with vital intelligence that helped it win the 1967 Six-Day War
- 1965 Captured, tortured and executed by Syria

“Against the Arabs you mustn’t defend yourself.

You have to attack...”



“I would like to have been like all other children. I would have liked my father to be a simple man and not a hero. Then he would be alive today and I would have a father who lived with us like all the other fathers. I have read everything about my father’s life and what he did for our country. I have collected all the books, articles and photographs but I have hesitated to talk about him until now because I know that it still hurts my mother when his name is mentioned. I will now make my vow. I promise you, Father, that in my life I will never fail you. I will do my duty with all my strength and devotion for the Nation of Israel. I will be a faithful son of an admired hero. I will try to be like you, Father. That is my pledge.”

With these moving words, thirteen-year-old Shai Cohen concluded his bar mitzvah speech on July 29, 1977. He, along with one hundred

other thirteen-year-old boys whose fathers had fallen in Israel's wars, celebrated his bar mitzvah that day at Kfar Chabad near Tel Aviv in Israel. There, every year, a communal bar mitzvah ceremony for Israeli war orphans is held. Twelve years earlier, on May 18, 1965, Shai's father, Eli Cohen, was hanged in Damascus as an Israeli spy. He was one of the greatest heroes in Israel's history and was a spy who saved a nation.

Eli Cohen was born on December 26, 1924, in Alexandria, Egypt, and lived there until he was thirty-two years old. His father emigrated in 1914 from Aleppo, Syria, to Egypt where Eli was born and received a rich Jewish education. As a young boy, he dreamed of being a rabbi and teaching in the local synagogue but he was destined to serve the Jewish people in a different way.

Like many young Jews in Egypt during that period, Eli was active in the local Zionist movement. In 1954 he was contacted by the Mossad, Israel's intelligence organization, and asked to give assistance to an Israeli spy ring operating in Egypt, which Eli willingly did. The Israeli spy ring was caught in 1955 and Eli was also arrested and interrogated by the Egyptian police. Two of the Israelis, Shmuel Azar and Moshe Marzuk, were tortured and subsequently executed but Eli was released for lack of evidence. In 1957 Eli Cohen was expelled from Egypt and made Aliyah to Israel. Two years later he married a beautiful Sephardic woman named Nadia and began to work as an accountant for the Hamashbir chain of retail stores, but after several months he was laid off from his job. All this time, without him knowing it, the Mossad had been keeping an eye on him.

Eli Cohen's potential as a Mossad agent was enormous. He had lived all his life in an Arab country and spoke fluent Arabic. He was bright and had rudimentary training in intelligence work from his days in Egypt. The Mossad was in need of an espionage agent to infiltrate the upper echelons of the Syrian army and government and turned to Eli Cohen. Eli accepted the mission and immediately began a year of arduous training with the Mossad. He had to erase his identity as an Egyptian Jew and as an Israeli and adopt a new one as a wealthy Syrian

Moslem businessman. His new name was to be Kamal Amin Tabet and, according to the biography prepared for him by the Mossad, he was born in Beirut to Syrian parents who immigrated to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where there existed a large Syrian community. The plan was for Eli to move to Syria from Argentina with the Syrian connections he had made in Buenos Aires and this meant that he had to learn Spanish as well as the Syrian dialect of Arabic.

In early 1961, he finished his training and arrived in Buenos Aires where he set up a successful import-export business which prospered with the financial help of the Mossad. Soon Eli had influential friends in the Argentinean Syrian community including important members of Syria's ruling Baath Party. They were impressed with the handsome and charismatic Kamal Amin Tabet (Eli) and the patriotic way in which he spoke of his "beloved" Syria. These Syrian vips convinced him to return to the "fatherland," telling him that Syria needed loyal sons like him.

In January 1962, Eli arrived in Damascus and went right to work on his dangerous secret mission. He rented an apartment near the Syrian military command and for the next three years transmitted vital information nightly to Israel. (Proximity to Syrian army headquarters in Damascus was dangerous but also gave excellent cover to his nightly radio transmissions which were undetected in the radio-busy neighborhood.)

Using his unique capabilities, Eli befriended leading Syrian army officers and politicians. He invited them to swinging parties at his home and used his new friends to gather important information. When the Syrians planned to divert the waters of the Jordan River so that Israel would be pumped dry, it was Eli Cohen who relayed to the Mossad every detail of their deadly plan. This intelligence data was immediately translated into Israeli military action which on November 13, 1964, destroyed the Syrian diversion project.

Eli discovered and revealed to Israel the precise nature and caliber of all new Soviet weapons received by Damascus, the number of Syrian pilots capable of flying Russian MiGs, the exact hour that Syrian pilots

ate breakfast and were not sitting battle-ready in their planes, and the precise Syrian order of battle; and he accurately reported and predicted the upheavals and events in Syrian politics. Cohen even sent a letter bomb to Franz Rademacher, a Nazi war criminal living in Syria who had been an assistant to Adolf Eichmann in the Holocaust. Perhaps his most important contribution was the sketching and photographing of the entire Syrian fortifications on the Golan Heights. It was this very data that enabled Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War to conquer the seemingly impregnable Golan Heights and free northern Israel from years of Syrian shelling.

Among Eli's closest friends were the commander of the Syrian forces on the Golan Heights and a Baath political leader he had met in Argentina, Amin al-Hafez, who on March 8, 1963, became Syria's president. Eli was sent by President Hafez on important political missions and there was talk that perhaps one day he would replace Hafez as Syria's president. Eli Cohen, the Israeli spy, was just a heartbeat away from becoming the next president of Syria. No espionage agent has ever risen so far in the ranks of the enemy country he was spying on.

In the beginning of 1965, Eli returned to Israel for a short vacation to see his family and to meet his newborn son Shaul (Shaul was originally named for Eli's father; he was renamed Shai or "gift" after Eli's execution as he was Eli's last gift to Nadia). He promised his wife, who believed he was working as an arms procurer for the Israeli Ministry of Defense in Europe, that he would make only one more trip abroad. His words would tragically prove to be prophetic. Eli returned for one last time to Syria but, by then, the Syrians knew there was a clever spy working in their midst. In mid-1965, using advanced Soviet electronic tracking devices, the Syrians located the elusive spy during one of his transmissions to Israel. They burst into his apartment and were shocked to learn that the spy they were searching for was Kamal Amin Tabet - Eli Cohen.

Eli was arrested and went through months of long interrogations and horrible torture but revealed nothing to his captors. His trial was

a farce and at the end he was sentenced to death. On Tuesday, May 18, 1965, Eli was hanged in Damascus before a crowd of over ten thousand. His last words were the "Shema Yisrael" prayer. In a final letter to his beloved wife, Nadia, Eli sent his love and kisses and asked her to remarry and to go on with her life, but she never remarried, remaining faithful to the memory of her late husband.

Sadly, Cohen's remains were never returned to Israel and his family continues to long for the day when they can say "Kaddish" by his grave. Two years after Cohen's execution, the State of Israel was threatened with extinction by the combined armed forces of Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, but Israel won a lightning victory in what became known as the 1967 Six-Day War. Israeli pilots destroyed most of the Syrian Air Force on the first day of the war at the exact hour Eli had suggested. Israel climbed and liberated the Golan Heights in just two days of fighting despite estimates by western military sources that Israel could not take the strategic heights. It was the information supplied to Israel years earlier by Eli Cohen that enabled Israel to achieve this miraculous victory.

One of Eli's greatest accomplishments in the early 1960s was convincing the Syrian military on the Golan Heights to plant trees around top-secret Syrian gun emplacements and bunkers as camouflage against Israeli attacks. In 1967 these trees were the beacons that led the Israel Defense Forces to their objectives. Israel was saved from annihilation in 1967 by the work of one man - perhaps his nation's greatest hero - Eli Cohen. He was the spy who saved a nation.

Twelve years after his father's execution and ten years after Israel's amazing victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, Shai Cohen would read his bar mitzvah speech to a select crowd at Kfar Chabad -- an audience that included newly elected prime minister Menachem Begin. The young boy proved to be no less heroic than his father when he pledged to do everything he could for his people and his country. No nation has ever faced greater threats to its existence than the State of Israel but heroes like Eli Cohen and his son, Shai, ensure that Israel's future is even brighter than its glorious past.

To learn more about Eli Cohen and to sign a petition asking the Syrian government to return Eli's remains to Israel, go to www.elicohen.org.



JACOB BIRNBAUM AND NATAN SHARANSKY

"LET MY PEOPLE GO"

Jacob Birnbaum (1926-)

- Father of movement to liberate Soviet Jewry
- 1964 Founded Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ)

Natan Sharansky (1948-)

- Soviet Jewish refusenik and Prisoner of Zion
- Spent nine years in Soviet gulag (labor camp)
- Feb 11, 1986 Released by Soviets; made Aliyah to Israel

"Fear no evil!"



SHARANSKY

Soviet persecution and oppression.

As a thirteen-year-old Jewish student in 1969, I was cognizant of the suffering of my Soviet Jewish brothers and sisters but could not imagine that one day, the great Soviet Empire would be brought to its knees by proud, courageous Jews on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Yet, in 1989 the Berlin Wall collapsed and two years later, in December 1991, the Soviet Union was dissolved. Three million Soviet Jews were now free and during the 1990s over one million immigrated to their ancestral homeland in Israel, where they now live in freedom and dignity. Two of

heroism. As Morris requested in his final letter, we should hold our heads up high and be proud Jews. And may his life be an inspiration to us all.

“Yizkor – may the loyal and valiant heroes of freedom and victory be sealed forever within the heart of Israel.” (From the *Yizkor* prayer for the fallen of the Israel Defense Forces)



YONI A HERO IN WORDS AND DEEDS

Yonatan (Yoni) Netanyahu (1946–1976)

- Israeli soldier and commander of Sayeret Matkal (top Israeli commando unit)
- Hero of 1976 Entebbe rescue mission
- Personal letters collected and published in *Self-Portrait of a Hero*

“Tzahal is the only thing that stands between us and the slaughter of our people as in days gone by.”



“I remembered we stormed in two groups, Yoni’s on the right and mine on the left. When I reached the top of the hill, I saw a kind of crevice farther ahead where several Syrians were firing at us. I shouted to Yoni to cover us so we could attack the position but before I could move, Yoni had already taken his men and in a matter of seconds stormed the position. I had nothing left to do but to cover him and the picture I always remember is that of Yoni running ahead of his eight men and destroying the enemy force. When I arrived I saw ten Syrian commandos; they were all dead.”⁵⁰

This is how an Israeli army officer remembers one of the decisive battles in the Golan Heights during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The hero in that battle was Yonatan (Yoni) Netanyahu – a man of both words and deeds.

⁵⁰ Jonathan Netanyahu, *Self-Portrait of a Hero: The Letters of Jonathan Netanyahu, 1963–1976* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1980), 224.

Yoni was born on March 13, 1946, in New York City, where his parents, Benzion and Cela Netanyahu, were working as emissaries of the Zionist movement trying to create a Jewish state in Israel. In 1948 the family returned to their homeland in Israel and Yoni grew up in Jerusalem. Yoni was active in the Israeli scouting movement and in eleventh grade he was elected president of his high school's student council. At the age of seventeen Yoni returned to the United States with his family. His father, a professor of Jewish history, was the editor of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and came to the United States on sabbatical to teach at Dropsie College in Philadelphia. Yoni lived in the affluent Elkins Park suburb of Philadelphia and studied at Cheltenham High School where he was a classmate of former New York Yankees star Reggie Jackson. In the summer of 1963 Yoni worked as a camp counselor at Camp Young Judea in New Hampshire. It was during this period in his life that Yoni began to write letters to his friends and family back in Israel. We learn much about Yoni's heart and soul from these letters. In one he writes to a friend:

[...] I live outside Philadelphia. My school has about 1,500 students who don't know what they're doing there. It looks more like the Tel Aviv Sheraton than a school (beautiful even by American standards, brand new, and it cost 6.5 million dollars to build). My house is "terribly" nice, surrounded by lawns and trees and empty, meaningless life.

The only thing people talk about is cars and girls. Life revolves around one subject – sex; I think Freud would have found very fertile soil here. Bit by bit I'm becoming convinced I'm living among apes and not human beings.⁵¹

Perhaps Yoni was a bit harsh on his fellow students but one of his Cheltenham High School classmates told an interviewer: "All we cared about in high school were cars, parties and football games, but Yoni

51. Yonatan Netanyahu, *The Letters of Jonathan Netanyahu, the Commander of the Entebbe Rescue Force* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2001), 10.

had broader horizons. We just didn't understand Yoni's depth at the time. So we dismissed him as different."⁵²

On his return to Israel, Yoni was drafted into Tzahal (the Israel Defense Forces) where he volunteered for the elite paratroops unit. Yoni became an outstanding soldier and was sent to officers' training school where he graduated at the top of his class. During the 1967 Six-Day War, Yoni took part in several battles in the Sinai and in the Golan Heights and on the last day of the war he was wounded in his arm, while reaching out to help a wounded comrade. He managed to crawl back to the Israeli lines, and upon reaching them, fainted. Yoni was evacuated to a hospital, where he was operated on twice and released from the army as a disabled veteran. His left elbow remained permanently disabled.

Like his father, Yoni was a scholar by nature. He was accepted to Harvard University as a philosophy major and excelled in his studies. It was during this time, however, that the pro terrorist organization began to carry out murderous terrorist attacks against innocent Jewish civilians. Yoni felt compelled to return to Israel and reenlist in the army. He prayed for the day when he could return to his studies but for now he had to lend a hand in the defense of his people. In a letter to his father, Yoni explained his reasons for leaving his studies at the university and reenlisting in the army:

I am not at all reconciled to being a civilian. Not only am I restless, but I feel that by continuing with my present way of life I'm being untrue to myself. I have been torn between my desire to go on with my present life and my conviction that my duty to my country, to my people, and above all to myself dictates that I go back to serve in the army. It would be an evasion in the full sense of the word if I went on with my current way of life, an evasion well camouflaged by all kinds of considerations and arguments. Not that these considerations

52. "Yoner in the Class: Classmate Remembers Hero of Entebbe," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 30, 1983, A23.

and arguments are groundless. They may have a solid enough foundation, but to me they don't constitute sufficient reason not to rejoin Zahal. I won't be faithful to myself, and I will betray that inner summons that calls me forward, if I fail to do so. Your argument, Father, that if they needed me they'd call me is wrong. You have no idea how badly Zahal needs good officers now. Things have come to such a pass that in the newspapers and even in the cinema newsreels appeals are made for young men to reenlist for active service.

When I talk about this with friends, they all agree that we ought to enlist, but most don't do so. How can I also say that, and yet not do anything about it?

[...] Zahal is the *only* thing that stands between us and the slaughter of our people as in days gone by. Our state exists and will go on existing as long as we can defend ourselves. I feel that I must lend a hand in this defense *by force* against the Arab states. In two years I'll know where to turn. I hope with all my heart that I'll be able to resume my studies. Perhaps there won't be any need for me to stay in the army. It is essential for us to have educated people in all spheres, and in the future they'll be the ones who will determine the direction of our country; but at this moment, now, the problem is far more fateful. It's a question of life or death, and I opt for life!

I hope you'll understand me. I'm not listing all the reasons that have brought me to this decision. I deliberated hard for months before reaching the conclusion that I must return to the army. It will be hard for you to imagine the sense of relief that came over me when I finally arrived at this decision. I know I'm doing the right thing!⁵³

Yoni joined the elite Israeli commando unit "Sayeret Matkal" and served there with his two brothers, Benjamin (who would eventually become

53. *Ibid.*, 173-74.

Israel's prime minister) and Iddo. He later would become the unit's commander and his missions behind enemy lines remain classified till this day. On October 6, 1973, Israel was surprised attacked by Egypt and Syria on the holiest day in the Jewish calendar in what became known as the Yom Kippur War. Yoni took an active part in the fighting in the Golan Heights. During a fierce tank battle with the Syrians, an Israeli tank commander, Yossi Ben-Hanan, was wounded behind enemy lines. When Yoni heard Ben-Hanan's radio call for help he rushed into action, fought Syrian commandos and rescued the Israeli officer. Netanyahu was awarded the Israeli Medal of Distinguished Service for this action and Ben-Hanan later named his daughter, Yonit, in honor of the man who saved his life.

Though Yoni was a hero long before July 4, 1976, it was the raid he led on that date which brought his name and legend out in the open.

On Sunday, June 27, 1976, an Air France plane en route from Tel Aviv to Paris was hijacked by a group of PLO terrorists with 256 passengers aboard. On June 28, the plane landed in Entebbe Airport in Uganda where the terrorists were greeted by Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. The Christian passengers were freed and the 106 Jewish passengers and crew aboard were held as hostages. The terrorists demanded the release of fellow terrorists being held in Israeli jails, or they would kill all the hostages. When no nation in the world would lift a finger to help these Jewish hostages, the Israeli government decided to act. On July 4, 1976, the Israel Defense Forces (Tzahal) mounted the most remarkable rescue mission in history.

Flying thousands of miles over hostile territory, Israeli commandos took off from Sharm el-Sheikh, at the southern tip of the Sinai Desert, heading for Africa in four Hercules transport planes. Yoni's unit was flown in three of these planes, with the lead plane carrying Yoni and his initial assault party of twenty-nine men. At the stroke of midnight, Ugandan time, on July 4, 1976, the first plane landed at Entebbe Airport. Yoni and his men, driving in a black Mercedes and two Land Rovers, which were camouflaged to look like Idi Amin's limo and Ugandan military cars, got off the plane and proceeded to the Old Terminal,

where the hostages were held. A battle developed with the Ugandan soldiers and the Arab terrorists, following which the terrorists in the building were killed and the hostages freed. The hostages say they will never forget the voice of an Israeli officer telling them, "We are Israelis and we've come to take you home!"

During the battle, Yoni was hit in the chest, as he commanded the action, and lay critically wounded outside the main hall where the hostages were held. The efforts of the medical team to revive Yoni were unsuccessful and he died at the entrance to the evacuation plane, as the hostages were being herded aboard. Yoni was the only man of the rescue force to die in the battle. (Three out of the 106 hostages were killed during the exchange of fire and a fourth, seventy-four-year-old Dora Bloch, was later murdered by Idi Amin's men.) Yoni's body was placed inside the plane, which then took off to safety in Kenya. From there it proceeded to Israel. Only a few of the hostages may have realized that the fallen soldier lying at the front of their plane was the commander of the force responsible for saving their lives.

Yoni died as he had lived, at the head of his men, leading by example. He saw himself as an inseparable link in the chain of Jewish history, an heir to the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba. His life was dedicated to ensuring Israel's independence and Jewish freedom. When Yoni was a teenager at Cheltenham High School in Philadelphia, he wrote a letter to a girlfriend back in Israel on the occasion of her sixteenth birthday. He closed that letter with a reflection on life that would prove to be prophetic:

Death – that's the only thing that disturbs me. It doesn't frighten me; it arouses my curiosity. It is a puzzle that I, like many others, have tried to solve without success. I do not fear it because I attribute little value to a life without a purpose. And if I should have to sacrifice my life to attain its goal, I'll do so willingly.⁵⁴

54. Ibid., 13.

Yoni lived and sacrificed his life for his ideals and values. He died defending his people and nation and left a legacy that would inspire generations to come. In 1978, just two years after Yoni fell in Entebbe, I made Aliyah to Israel and a dear friend gave me a book of Yoni's personal letters as a going-away gift. The book, entitled *Self-Portrait of a Hero: The Letters of Jonathan Netanyahu*, became the most inspiring book I would ever read in my life. It gave me a window into Yoni's soul and enriched mine beyond description. Lovers of freedom everywhere should make it their second Bible. Yonatan Netanyahu lies at rest now in the National Military Cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. His memory and legacy will forever light our way through the darkest nights. He was a hero in his words and, most importantly, in his deeds.



are, of course, many issues that need to be investigated and lessons that must be learned so that we can continue to preserve our freedom in Israel. While our prime minister, defense minister and chief of staff all earned poor grades for their leadership in the war, the soldiers in the field proved that they are among the finest generations of young Jews in two thousand years. It would be wise for us to honor the courage of our youth and the memories of our fallen heroes so that their legacy will never die. From Akiva to Roi Klein, it is that very legacy that has been the secret of our survival.



MICHAEL LEVIN

“AHARAV!”

Michael Levin (1984-2006)

- Born in Philadelphia; made Aliyah to Israel in 2003
 - Joined Israeli paratroops, fulfilling a personal dream
 - Rushed back to Israel to rejoin fellow soldiers in battle when Israel was attacked
 - Fell in battle against Hizbullah terrorists on August 1, 2006
- “You can’t fulfill your dreams unless you dare risk it all!”*



Michael Levin grew up like most American Jewish kids. Born on February 17, 1984, and raised in Philadelphia, he graduated from Council Rock High School in 2002. Michael’s maternal grandparents were survivors of the Holocaust and passed on to him a legacy of pride and strength in his Jewish heritage. As a teenager Michael was active in the HaGeshet Region of United Synagogue Youth (USY) and attended Camp Ramah in the Poconos. He loved sports and was an avid fan of Philly teams, especially the Philadelphia Phillies.

In February 2001, Michael came to Israel for two months to study the four-thousand-year history of the Jewish people at the Alexander Muss High School in Israel (AMHSI). While in Israel Michael expressed his desire to make Aliyah (move to Israel and become an Israeli citizen) and serve in Tzahal, the Israel Defense Forces. Michael proved to be an outstanding student at AMHSI and was especially moved by the stories of Jewish heroes like Judah the Maccabee, Shimon Bar Kokhba, Rabbi Akiva, Hannah Senesh, Eli Cohen, Avigdor Kahalani and Yonatan “Yoni” Netanyahu.

The most moving moment at AMNSI for Michael was on the last day of the program when his class visited the grave of Yoni Netanyahu, hero of the 1976 Entebbe rescue mission, at Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. Michael looked up to Yoni as a role model and a hero and was touched by Yoni's words from a 1975 letter:

By "past" I mean not only my own past, but the way in which I see myself as an inseparable part, a link in the chain of our existence and Israel's independence.⁶⁰

Like Yoni, Michael also saw himself as a link in the chain of Jewish history, and felt an obligation to defend his people. He dreamed of serving in the Israel Defense Forces.

After graduating high school, Michael attended "Nativ," usy's year-long course in Israel, and in his "Nativ" yearbook wrote the words that would become his motto: "You can't fulfill your dreams unless you dare risk it all!"

Michael was neither a daredevil nor a gambling man. He was a sweet, funny, humble, kind, loving human being who relished life and lived it to the fullest.

He simply believed that life wasn't worth living unless there was some ideal you loved so much that you'd be willing to sacrifice your life for it. For Michael, that ideal was Israel.

In 2003 Michael made Aliyah to Israel and began studying Hebrew at an upan (intensive course in speaking Hebrew) on Kibbutz Yavne. Like all Israelis, Michael was drafted into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and reported to the Army Induction Center at Tel Hashomer. As he was being processed, the officer in charge noticed his papers had not been finalized due to his new status in the country. The officer told him that he couldn't be drafted at this time. Undeterred, Michael went outside the Army Induction Center and climbed up a trash dumpster, sneaking into the second floor of the building. When the officer discovered

him, he hollered at Michael and said, "No one can get through the front door here without papers," to which Michael smiled and replied, "What makes you think I came through the front door?" The officer pulled some strings and arranged for Michael to be processed as an Israeli soldier. He later remarked: "I've been here at the Army Induction Center for twenty years. Some kids don't want to be here and look for ways to get out, but Michael was the first kid I ever met who 'broke in' to be inducted into Tzahal!"

Once in Tzahal, Michael volunteered for the IDF's finest combat unit, the red-bereted paratroops. During his basic training Michael learned to parachute. Small in size, five foot six and weighing only 118 pounds, Michael was blown off course on his first jump. Afterwards his officers had to tie weights to his parachute to keep him from drifting. Despite his small size, Mike was a fierce fighter with a lion's heart. At the end of their basic training the paratroops go on a ninety-kilometer (fifty-five-mile) march to Jerusalem where they receive their red berets at Ammunition Hill, a famous battle site from the 1967 Six-Day War. In 2001, while at AMNSI, Michael had learned about the heroism of the paratroops in that battle from one of the surviving veterans who spoke to his class. Now he was receiving his red beret on that hallowed ground. Michael described that day as one of the happiest in his life!

Mike was not only a brave soldier but he remained a loving son and brother. He once said, "I'm not worried about dying! I'm just worried about what it would do to my family." Michael held a special status in Tzahal called *chayal boded*, given to lone Israeli soldiers whose parents do not live in the country. Military service is tough enough for most young Israelis but they are comforted knowing they will come home on their Shabbat leaves to a warm and loving family. Michael had none in Israel, making his service that much tougher.

In June 2006, Mike received a thirty-day leave from the IDF to visit his family back in Philadelphia. Michael, who had a great sense of humor, wanted to surprise his mom and dad and worked out a cute prank with his older sister, Elisa. When he arrived in Philadelphia that

60. Jonathan Netanyahu, *The Letters of Jonathan Netanyahu: The Commander of the Entebbe Rescue Force* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2001), 265.

summer he had Elisa put a gigantic cardboard box with real Fed-Ex markings on the front steps of their home. Michael got into the box and had his sister tape it up and ring his parents' doorbell. When Mrs. Levin saw the package, she tried to carry it into the house, but it was too heavy. Suddenly Michael jumped out of the box and screamed, "Surprise!" This story is indicative of Michael's loving heart and playful spirit.

Michael spent quality time with his family and visited friends at Camp Ramah in the Poconos. When some friends expressed their worries to Michael about his safety in an elite combat unit of the Israeli army, he responded philosophically, "I'm doing exactly what I want to do and going exactly where I want to be, and if God should decide to call me home, I'm fine with that." During his visit to Philadelphia, Michael told his parents that if anything ever happened to him, he wanted to be buried on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. On July 12, 2006, the Lebanese terrorist organization Hizbullah attacked Israel and kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. The Hizbullah, dedicated to Israel's destruction and armed by Iran, began shelling Israel's northern cities. Michael heard that his unit was sent into battle and he promptly told his family that he had to cut his visit short to rejoin his comrades at arms. He rushed back to Israel and re-joined his unit, the 890th battalion of the Paratroopers Brigade, then fighting inside Lebanon.

Michael's unit was on a mission in the Lebanese village of Aita al-Shaab, a Hizbullah stronghold, when they came under heavy missile- and gunfire. Held up in a house, Michael fought bravely but on August 1, 2006, he was tragically killed by a Hizbullah sniper. His fellow soldier and friend, Shlomi Singer, described Michael's last moments:

I heard a round of gunfire and saw Michael lying on his stomach. I knew in my heart he was dead. I lifted him to one of the houses where I tried to revive him, but there was no chance. I said quietly in English, "I love you, Michael, and I

am so sorry." He was wearing a big green *kippah* and before we went into Lebanon, I put his *kippah* on my head and said the "Shema" . . . praying that we all come back safely. After Michael was killed we placed his body on a stretcher and carried him for several kilometers between the cliffs and rocks to bring his body to safety. It was the final honor and respect that we could give him.

Michael's family was notified in Philadelphia of his death in battle and they immediately flew to Israel for his funeral. One of their biggest worries was whether they'd be able to find a minyan (a quorum of ten necessary for communal prayer) for the ceremony, as they had no family in the country. They arrived at Ben-Gurion Airport on August 3, 2006, and drove right from the airport to the National Military Cemetery on Mount Herzl. When the car arrived at the cemetery, the Levins saw thousands of people gathered there. Michael's father was confused by the large crowd and thought there were ten or fifteen other funerals taking place at the same time. The soldiers escorting the family told them that Michael's was the only funeral being held at this time and all the thousands of people in attendance, most of whom had not known Michael, were there to honor their fallen son. Immersed in their shock and grief but embraced by a loving and grateful nation, the Levins buried their son on the hills of Jerusalem, the city he loved with all his heart . . . just a few yards from the grave of his hero, Yoni Netanyahu.

Michael's mother, Harriet, at first had wanted her fallen son buried near her home in Philadelphia but her rabbi convinced her that it was Michael's last wish to be buried in the land he loved. She said that when she and her husband, Mark, saw all the people who had come to honor Michael, they knew they had made the right decision.

Harriet said that about a month after the funeral, a friend of hers from Philadelphia went to visit Michael's grave on Mount Herzl. When the friend reached the burial site, she was shocked to see there was an Israeli soldier sitting on the grave drinking a cup of coffee with a small

gas burner and finjan (coffee pot) next to him. Thinking he was acting improperly in the cemetery, the woman asked him what he was doing there. The young warrior answered softly, "Michael was my best friend in the army and every Friday afternoon just before Shabbat, we'd sit down and drink a cup of coffee together and shmooze about life. Now, just like before, I come visit Michael every week just before Shabbat and drink a cup of coffee and chat with my best friend."

Harriet Levin said that if Michael had been buried in Philadelphia, probably only a handful of family would visit his grave but at rest at home in Israel, hundreds come every week to pay their respects to the young hero from Philly with the contagious smile and the heart of a lion.

Michael was buried on the afternoon of Tisha b'Av on August 3, 2006. Tisha b'Av is a fast day where we commemorate the many tragedies that have befallen our people on this black date in our history, notably including the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, the fall of Betar during the Bar Kokhba revolt, the expulsion of the Jews of Spain in 1492 and the transportation of over 300,000 of Warsaw's Jews to the gas chambers in Treblinka in July 1942. As a sign of mourning we do not wear tefillin during the morning service on Tisha b'Av but we do put on tefilin during the afternoon service that day as a sign that life must continue and we must move on from destruction and mourning to comfort and rebirth.

It is fitting that Michael was buried on the afternoon of Tisha b'Av and not in the morning. His death was a tragedy that tore into the hearts and souls of all who loved him; but Michael's legacy to us is one of hope and commitment. As he smiles down on us from above, his memory will best be honored not by remembering so much how he died but more importantly how he lived. The motto of the Israeli paratroops is "*Aharai* (Follow me)!" Michael set a *dugma ishit* (personal example) of how to live a life as a committed Jew with passion and pride dedicated to the Jewish people, to the Torah and to Israel. His legacy commands us all, "*Aharai!*"

POSTSCRIPT: Michael Levin's mother, Harriet Levin, once told this author that Michael was a normal American Jewish kid. She said he was just like you and me and added, "You know he wasn't always an angel...at times he made mistakes and could get into trouble." In many ways, though, that makes Michael even more inspiring. He wasn't a "superhero"! He was just the kid from down the block, but when his people and Israel needed him - he was there!

A moving documentary film by Sally Mitlas has been made about Michael Levin called "A Hero in Heaven." For more information on the film go to: www.aheroinheaven.com.





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Marla Ann Bennett (April 5, 1978- July 31, 2002) **Bayitnik 1997-2000**



Marla Bennett '00 Killed in Bombing at Hebrew University

Marla Bennett, 24, grew up in San Diego and was completing the second year of a three-year master's program in Judaic Studies at Hebrew University. She had been at the university to take a final exam in her sole Hebrew University class of the semester, Hebrew language. She was to have returned home on Friday for the wedding of close friends.

She received a BA in political science from the University of Berkeley at California in 2000. She was very active in Berkeley Hillel, particularly in the Conservative minyan and Hillel's women's group. She was the first recipient of the Berkeley Hillel award, Hineni . The award goes to a student who, "whenever there was something that needed to be done, their response was 'here I am,'" which perfectly exemplified Marla. She was also a leader at the Berkeley Bayit where she lived for two years.

In 1998 she attended the Rothberg School's One Year Program for her junior year abroad and decided to return after graduation in 2000. She was very much aware of the situation she was living in. "This question may seem inconsequential, but the events of the past few months in Israel have led me to believe that each small decision I make, by which route to walk to school, whether or not to go out to dinner, may have life-threatening consequences," Bennett wrote in a May 10 column in a newspaper in her hometown of San Diego. (see below)



"Marla was incredibly bright, top of her class. She was extremely outgoing, a bubbly young lady, very seriously involved in investigating her Judaism. She was interested in human beings, and finding a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict," family spokesmen Norman Greene said.

"My friends and family in San Diego ask me to come home, it is dangerous here," she wrote. "I appreciate their concern. But there is nowhere else in the world I would rather be right now. I have a front-row seat for the history of the Jewish people. I am a part of the struggle for Israel's survival.

Paying for my groceries is the same as contributing money to my favorite cause."

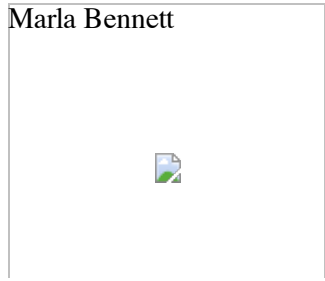
(Sources include The Israel Line, Daily Californian, San Francisco Chronicle, SF Jewish Bulletin)

'This Struggle Is Worthwhile'

BY MARLA BENNETT

Each morning when I leave my apartment building, I have an important question to contemplate: Should I turn left or should I turn right? This question may seem inconsequential, but the events of the past few months in Israel have led me to believe that each small decision I make--by which route to walk to school, whether to go out to dinner--may have life-threatening consequences.

I have been living in Israel for a year and a half; I arrived just a month before the current wave of violence and horror began. And for about that same period of time, I have been receiving calls each week from various friends and family members who



subtly, or less than subtly, suggest I think about coming home. My friends and family talk about how dangerous it is here, and I have to agree with them. It is dangerous. But I remain unconvinced that the rest of the world is such a safe place. At least if I am here I can take an active role in attempting to put back together all that has broken. I can volunteer in the homes of Israelis affected by terrorism, I can put food in collection baskets for Palestinian families, I can see what goes on each day with my own eyes instead of with the eyes of CNN. Beyond all of the brutality, in most places in Israel life goes on.

Three weeks ago, I went to Prague for the weekend. One of the perks of living in Israel is easy (and cheap!) travel to Europe, and as the stress of living in Israel continued, my friend Amanda and I decided to take a break for a few days. Indeed, it was a break: We felt free to walk in large, crowded areas without looking over our shoulders. We went to cafes and drank coffee without constantly eyeing the door for anyone in bulky clothing, we used public transportation without second-guessing our choice. But as we sat in shul on Friday night, an announcement was made that a rally for the Palestinians was being held in a square nearby and we should be careful to take a different route home. With the rising anti-Semitic violence in Europe, no one was sure that the night would end peacefully. Could we feel carefree anywhere?

During Pesach this year, while terror attacks within Israel were a nearly daily occurrence, an acquaintance [noted] that though she does not always feel safe going to public places in Jerusalem, she still feels safe to walk alone on the streets at 1 in the morning. I question which way I will walk to school in the morning, but I too feel secure walking the streets of Jerusalem alone at night—even the small side streets I frequent now to avoid the popular thoroughfares. I never felt safe enough to do that while I lived in the United States.

My friends and family in San Diego are right when they call and ask me to come home. It is dangerous here. I appreciate their concern. But there is nowhere else in the world I would rather be right now. I have a front-row seat for the history of the Jewish people. I am a part of the struggle for Israel's survival. Paying for my groceries is the same as contributing money to my favorite cause. Since traveling to Prague and feeling the fear of the Prague community as they faced possible violence, I know that this struggle is worthwhile.



Jerusalem: There's Nowhere Else I'd Rather Be **BY MARLA BENNETT**

I've been living in Israel for over a year and a half now, and my favorite thing to do here is go to the grocery store. I know, not the most exciting response from someone living in Jerusalem these days. But going grocery shopping here—deciphering the Hebrew labels and delighting in all of the kosher products—as well as picking up my dry cleaning, standing in long lines at the bank, and waiting in the hungry mob at the bakery—means that I live here. I am not a tourist; I deal with Israel and all of its complexities, confusion, joy and pain every single day. And I love it.

I got the “Israel bug” during my junior year, when I studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I had traveled in Israel before, but living here was a qualitatively different experience. I left knowing I would return. I was not sure whether I would study or work, but I knew that my love for Israel, my desire to understand this country, and my desire to learn more about Judaism were not yet satiated.

I came back to Israel a year and a half ago . . . and what a year and a half it has been. In September 2000, I began studying at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, where I have been learning traditional Jewish texts from master teachers, with other students who represent a broad range of Jewish backgrounds and perspectives. I have learned more in my year and a half of study at Pardes than I learned during my entire undergraduate career.

But my learning is a result not only of the hours I spend pouring over material in the Beit Midrash (Jewish house of study), but also of my life in Jerusalem... Here in Jerusalem I've found a community of seekers: people who like me who want to try living in another country, who want to know more about Judaism; people who are trying to figure out exactly what they want their lives to look like. The air is charged with our debates and discussions as we try to assimilate into our lives all that we've learned. Life here is magical.

I have learned more in my year and a half of study at Pardes than I learned during my entire undergraduate career.

It's also been difficult. Just a month after I arrived the current “Intifada” began. My time here has been dramatically affected by both the security situation and by the events happening around me. I am extremely cautious about where I go and when; I avoid crowded areas and alter my routine when I feel at all threatened. But

I also feel energized by the opportunity to support Israel during a difficult period. This is undoubtedly an important historic moment for both Israel and for the Jewish people—I have the privilege of reporting to my friends and family in the U.S. about the realities of living in Israel at this time and I also have the honor of being an American choosing to remain in Israel, and assist, however minimally, in Israel's triumph.

I remain in Israel this year as part of the Pardes Educators Program, a joint program between Pardes and the Hebrew University. At the Hebrew University I am completing a Master's Degree in Jewish Education while I continue to study classical Jewish texts at Pardes. I receive a stipend each month from The AVI CHAI Foundation, which is funding the program, and after I complete the degree in June 2003, I have made a commitment to teach in a Jewish school in North America for three years.

As I look ahead to the next year and a half that I will spend in Israel, I feel excited, worried, but more than anything else, lucky. I am excited that I can spend another year and a half in a place that truly feels like home, a home in which I am surrounded by an amazing community of bright and interesting friends who constantly help me to question and define myself. I am worried for Israel—a historic moment this is, but also difficult and unpredictable. I feel lucky because the excitement always wins out over the worry. The exhilaration of Torah and Talmud study, close friendships and a lively community far outweigh the fears. Stimulation abounds in Jerusalem—and I need only go to the supermarket to be struck once again by how lucky I am to live here. There is no other place in the world where I would rather be right now.

Other Stories:

[San Diego Jewish Journal](#)

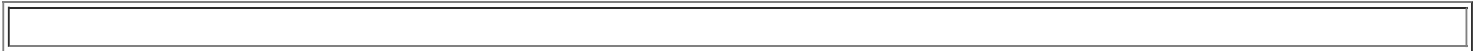
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מגש הכסף¹ מילים: נתן אלתרמן

והארץ תשקוט, עין שמיים אודמת
תעמעם לאיטה על גבולות עשנים
ואומה תעמוד - קרועת לב אך נושמת
...לקבל את הנס, האחד, אין שני

היא לטקס תיכון, היא תקום למול הסהר
ועמדה טרם יום עוטה חג ואימה
אז מנגד יצאו נערה ונער
ואט אט יצעדו הם אל מול האומה

לובשי חול וחגור וכבדי נעליים
בנתיב יעלו הם, הלוך והחרש
לא החליפו בגדם, לא מחו עוד במים
את עקבות יום הפרך וליל קו האש

עיפים עד בלי קץ, נזירים ממרגוע
...ונוטפים טללי נעורים עבריים
דם השניים יגשו ועמדו עד בלי נוע
ואין אותם חיים הם או אם ירויים

אז תשאל האומה שטופת דמע וקסם
ואמרה: "מי אתם?", והשניים שוקטים
יענו לה: "אנחנו מגש הכסף
"שעליו לך ניתנה מדינת היהודים"

כך יאמרו ונפלו לרגלה עוטפי צל
והשאר יסופר בתולדות ישראל

¹ "Magash HaKesef," eYront, accessed on April 21, 2013.
<http://shironet.mako.co.il/artist?type=lyrics&lang=1&prfid=743&wrkid=4982>.

The Silver Platter by Nathan Alterman
Translator: David P. Stern²

...And the land will grow still
Crimson skies dimming, misting
 Slowly paling again
 Over smoking frontiers
 As the nation stands up
 Torn at heart but existing
 To receive its first wonder
 In two thousand years

 As the moment draws near
It will rise, darkness facing Stand straight in the moonlight In terror and joy

 ...When across from it step out
 Towards it slowly pacing In plain sight of all A young girl and a boy
 Dressed in battle gear, dirty
 Shoes heavy with grime
 On the path they will climb up
 While their lips remain sealed
 To change garb, to wipe brow
They have not yet found time Still bone weary from days And from nights in the field
 Full of endless fatigue
 And all drained of emotion
 Yet the dew of their youth
 Is still seen on their head
 Thus like statues they stand
Stiff and still with no motion And no sign that will show If they live or are dead

 Then a nation in tears
And amazed at this matter Will ask: who are you? And the two will then say
 With soft voice: We--
 Are the silver platter On which the Jews' state Was presented today

 Then they fall back in darkness
As the dazed nation looks And the rest can be found In the history books.

² "The Sacrifices Made in Israel for Independence," Shalom Hartman Institute, accessed on April 21, 2013.
http://www.hartman.org.il/SHINews_View.asp?Article_Id=117&Cat_Id=303&Cat_Type=shinews.

or at looki resen d of a good- e female rep- e against the partition plan, even though her government had promised the Jews their support. "But at once," Mr. Kolodny, the proprietor of Kolodny's Printing Press, chuckled, "they sent a clever Jew to spill the beans to the infatuated diplomat's husband, and a clever Jewess to spill the beans to the diplomatic Don Juan's wife, and in case that doesn't do the trick, they've also arranged . . ." (here the conversation switched to Yiddish, so I wouldn't understand).

On Saturday morning, they said, the General Assembly would convene at a place called Lake Success and there they would determine our fate. "Who is for life and who for destruction," said Mr. Abramski. And Mrs. Tosia Krochmal fetched the extension cord from the sewing machine in her husband's dolls' hospital to enable the Lembergs to bring their heavy black radio receiver outside and set it up on the table on the balcony. (It was the only radio in Amos Street, if not in the whole of Kerem Avraham.) They would put it on at full volume, and we would all assemble in the Lembergs' apartment, in the yard, in the street, on the balcony of the apartment upstairs and on the balcony opposite, and so the whole street would be able to hear the live broadcast, and learn the verdict and what the future held for us ("if indeed there is a future after this Saturday").

"The name Lake Success," Father remarked, "is the opposite of the Sea of Tears that symbolizes the fate of our people in Bialik. Your Highness," he continued, "will be allowed to take part on this occasion, as befits his new role as devout newspaper reader and as our political and military commentator."

Mother said:

"Yes, but with a sweater on: it's chilly out."

But on Saturday morning it turned out that the fateful meeting due to take place that afternoon at Lake Success would start here only in the evening, because of the time difference between New York and Jerusalem, or perhaps because Jerusalem was such an out-of-the-way place, so far from the great world, over the hills and far away, that everything that happened out there only reached us faintly, and always after a delay. The vote, they worked out, would be taken when it was very late in Jerusa-

lem, close to midnight, an hour when this child tucked in bed, because we have to get up for school.

Some rapid sentences were exchanged between a short exchange in shchphzhenic Polish and yiddish, the end of which Mother said:

"It might be best after all if you go to bed as usual, sit outside by the fence and listen to the broadcast on the balcony, and if the result is positive, we'll wake you at night and tell you. We promise."

After midnight, toward the end of the vote, I woke up underneath the window that looked out on the street, I kneel and peer through the slats of the shutters. I

Like a frightening dream, crowds of shadows slipped silently by the yellow light of the street lamp, in corridors, boring yards, on balconies, in the roadway, like ghosts. Hundreds of people not uttering a sound, stances, and strangers, some in their nightclothes, and tie, occasional men in hats or caps, some women in dressing gowns with scarves around their necks, carrying sleepy children on their shoulders, and on I noticed here and there an elderly woman sitting on an old man who had been brought out into the street.

The whole crowd seemed to have been turned into a frightening night silence, as if they were not real, of dark silhouettes painted onto the canvas of the night. As though they had died on their feet. Not a word, a cough or a footstep. No mosquito hummed. Only the volume and made the night air tremble, or it made the voice of the president of the Assembly, the Brazilian C after another he read out the names of the last countries in English alphabetical order, followed immediately by the representative. United Kingdom: abstains. Union of Soviet Republics: yes. United States: yes. Uruguay: yes. Venezuela: yes. Yugoslavia: abstains.

or at
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resen
partit.
even though her government had promised the Jews
their support. "But at once," Mr. Kolodny, the proprietor of Kolodny's
Printing Press, chuckled, "they sent a clever Jew to spill the beans to the
infatuated diplomat's husband, and a clever Jewess to spill the beans to
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they've also arranged . . ." (here the conversation switched to Yiddish, so
I wouldn't understand).

On Saturday morning, they said, the General Assembly would convene at a place called Lake Success and there they would determine our fate. "Who is for life and who for destruction," said Mr. Abramski. And Mrs. Tosia Krochmal fetched the extension cord from the sewing machine in her husband's dolls' hospital to enable the Lembergs to bring their heavy black radio receiver outside and set it up on the table on the balcony. (It was the only radio in Amos Street, if not in the whole of Kerem Avraham.) They would put it on at full volume, and we would all assemble in the Lembergs' apartment, in the yard, in the street, on the balcony of the apartment upstairs and on the balcony opposite, and so the whole street would be able to hear the live broadcast, and learn the verdict and what the future held for us ("if indeed there is a future after this Saturday").

"The name Lake Success," Father remarked, "is the opposite of the Sea of Tears that symbolizes the fate of our people in Bialik. Your Highness," he continued, "will be allowed to take part on this occasion, as befits his new role as devout newspaper reader and as our political and military commentator."

Mother said:

"Yes, but with a sweater on: it's chilly out."

But on Saturday morning it turned out that the fateful meeting due to take place that afternoon at Lake Success would start here only in the evening, because of the time difference between New York and Jerusalem, or perhaps because Jerusalem was such an out-of-the-way place, so far from the great world, over the hills and far away, that everything that happened out there only reached us faintly, and always after a delay. The vote, they worked out, would be taken when it was very late in Jerusa-

d of a good-
e female rep-
e against the

lan, close to midnight, an hour when this child ought to be long since tucked in bed, because we have to get up for school in the morning. Some rapid sentences were exchanged between Mother and Father, a short exchange in shtetlchke Polish and yanikhachuk Russian, at the end of which Mother said:

"It might be best after all if you go to bed as usual tonight, but we'll sit outside by the fence and listen to the broadcast from the Lembergs' balcony, and if the result is positive, we'll wake you up even if it's midnight and tell you. We promise."

After midnight, toward the end of the vote, I woke up. My bed was underneath the window that looked out on the street, so all I had to do was kneel and peer through the slats of the shutters. I shivered.

Like a frightening dream, crowds of shadows stood massed together silently by the yellow light of the street lamp, in our yard, in the neighboring yards, on balconies, in the roadway, like a vast assembly of ghosts. Hundreds of people not uttering a sound, neighbors, acquaintances, and strangers, some in their nightclothes and others in jackets and ties, occasional men in hats or caps, some women bareheaded, others in dressing gowns with scarves around their heads, some of them carrying sleepy children on their shoulders, and on the edge of the crowd I noticed here and there an elderly woman sitting on a stool or a very old man who had been brought out into the street with his chair.

The whole crowd seemed to have been turned to stone in that frightening night silence, as if they were not real people but hundreds of dark silhouettes painted onto the canvas of the flickering darkness. As though they had died on their feet. Not a word was heard, not a cough or a footstep. No mosquito hummed. Only the deep, rough voice of the American presenter blaring from the radio, which was set at full volume and made the night air tremble, or it may have been the voice of the president of the Assembly, the Brazilian Oswaldo Aranha. One after another he read out the names of the last countries on the list, in English alphabetical order, followed immediately by the reply of their representative. United Kingdom: abstains. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: yes. United States: yes. Uruguay: yes. Venezuela: yes. Yemen: no. Yugoslavia: abstains.

At that the voice suddenly stopped, and an otherworldly silence descended and froze the scene, a terrified, panic-stricken silence, a silence of hundreds of people holding their breath, such as I have never heard in my life either before or after that night.

Then the thick, slightly hoarse voice came back, shaking the air as it summed up with a rough dryness brimming with excitement: Thirty-three for. Thirteen against. Ten abstentions and one country absent from the vote. The resolution is approved.

His voice was swallowed up in a roar that burst from the radio, overflowing from the galleries in the hall at Lake Success, and after a couple more seconds of shock and disbelief, of lips parted as though in thirst and eyes wide open, our faraway street on the edge of Kerem Avraham in northern Jerusalem also roared all at once in a first terrifying shout that tore through the darkness and the buildings and trees, piercing itself, not a shout of joy, nothing like the shouts of spectators in sports grounds or excited rioting crowds, perhaps more like a scream of horror and bewilderment, a cataclysmic shout, a shout that could shift rocks, that could freeze your blood, as though all the dead who had ever died here and all those still to die had received a brief window to shout, and the next moment the scream of horror was replaced by roars of joy and a melody of hoarse cries and "The Jewish People Lives" and somebody trying to sing Hatikvah and women shrieking and clapping and "Here in the Land Our Fathers Loved," and the whole crowd started to revolve slowly around itself as though it were being stirred in a huge cement mixer, and there were no more restraints, and I jumped into my trousers but didn't bother with a shirt or sweater and shot out our door, and some neighbor or stranger picked me up so I wouldn't be trampled underfoot, and I was passed from hand to hand until I landed on my father's shoulders near our front gate. My father and mother were standing there hugging one another like two children lost in the woods, as I had never seen them before or since, and for a moment I was between them inside their hug and a moment later I was back on Father's shoulders and my very cultured, polite father was standing there shouting at the top of his voice, not words or wordplay or Zionist slogans, not even cries of joy, but one long naked shout like before words were invented.

Others were singing now, everyone was singing, but my father, who couldn't sing and didn't know the words of the popular songs, did not

stop but went on with his long shout to the end of his lungs *aaahhh*, and when he ran out of breath, he inhaled like a drowning man and went on shouting, this man who wanted to be a famous professor and deserved to become one, but now he was all just *aaahhh*. And I was surprised to see my mother's hand stroking his wet head and the back of his neck, and then I felt her hand on my head and my back too because I might unawares have been helping my father shout, and my mother's hand stroked the two of us over and over again, perhaps to soothe us or perhaps not, perhaps out of the depths she was also trying to share with him and me in our shout and with the whole street, the whole neighborhood, the whole city, and the whole country, my sad mother was trying to participate this time—no, definitely not the whole city but only the Jewish areas, because Sheikh Jarrah, Katamon, Bakaa, and Talbieh must have heard us that night wrapped in a silence that might have resembled the terrified silence that lay upon the Jewish neighborhoods before the result of the vote was announced. In the Silwan's house in Sheikh Jarrah and in Aisha's home in Talbieh and the home of the man in the clothes shop, the beloved man Gepetto with the bags under his compassionate eyes, there were no celebrations tonight. They must have heard the sounds of rejoicing from the Jewish streets, they may have stood at their windows to watch the few joyful fireworks that injured the dark sky, pursing their lips in silence. Even the parrots were silent. And the fountain in the pool in the garden. Even though neither Katamon, Talbieh, nor Bakaa knew or could know yet that in another five months they would fall empty, intact, into the hands of the Jews and that new people would come and live in those vaulted houses of pink stone and those villas with their many cornices and arches.

Then there was dancing and weeping on Amos Street, in the whole of Kerem Avraham and in all the Jewish neighborhoods; flags appeared, and slogans written on strips of cloth, car horns blared, and "Raise the Banner High to Zion" and "Here in the Land Our Fathers Loved," so far blasts sounded from all the synagogues, and Torah scrolls were taken out of the holy arks and were caught up in the dancing, and "God Will Rebuild Galilee" and "Come and Behold How Great Is This Day," and later, in the small hours of the morning, Mr. Auster suddenly opened his

shop, and all the kiosks in Zephaniah Street and Geula Street and Chancellor Street and Jaffa Road and King George opened, and the bars opened up all over the city and handed out soft drinks and snacks and even alcoholic drinks until the first light of dawn, bottles of fruit drink, beer, and wine passed from hand to hand and from mouth to mouth, strangers hugged each other in the streets and kissed each other with tears, and startled English policemen were also dragged into the circles of dancers and softened up with cans of beer and sweet liqueurs, and frenzied revelers climbed up on British armored cars and waved the flag of the state that had not been established yet—~~but~~ tonight, over there in Lake Success, it had been decided that it had the right to be established. And it would be established 167 days and nights later, on Friday, May 14, 1948, but one in every hundred men, women, old folk, children, and babies in those crowds of Jews who were dancing, reveling, drinking, and weeping for joy, fully one percent of the excited people who spilled out onto the streets that night, would die in the war that the Arabs started within seven hours of the General Assembly's decision at Lake Success—to be helped, when the British left, by the regular armed forces of the Arab League, columns of infantry, armor, artillery, fighter planes, and bombers, from the south, the east, and the north, the regular armies of five Arab states invading with the intention of putting an end to the new state within one or two days of its proclamation.

But my father said to me as we wandered there, on the night of November 29, 1947, me riding on his shoulders, among the rings of dancers and merry-makers, not as though he was asking me but as though he knew and was hammering in what he knew with nails: Just you look, my boy, take a very good look, son, take it all in, because you won't forget this night to your dying day and you'll tell your children, your grandchildren, and your great-grandchildren about this night when we're long gone.

And very late, at a time when this child had never been allowed not to be fast asleep in bed, maybe at three or four o'clock, I crawled under my blanket in the dark fully dressed. And after a while Father's hand lifted my blanket in the dark, not to be angry with me because I'd got into bed with my clothes on but to get in and lie down next to me, and he was in

his clothes too, which were drenched in sweat from the crush of the crowds, just like mine (and we had an iron rule: you must never, for any reason, get between the sheets in your outdoor clothes). My father lay beside me for a few minutes and said nothing, although normally he detested silence and hurried to banish it. But this time he did not touch the silence that was there between us but shared it, with just his hand lightly stroking my head. As though in this darkness my father had turned into my mother.

Then he told me in a whisper, without once calling me Your Highness or Your Honor, what some hoodlums did to him and his brother David in Odessa and what some Gentile boys did to him at his Polish school in Vilna, and the girls joined in too, and the next day, when his father, Grandpa Alexander, came to the school to register a complaint, the bullies refused to return the torn trousers but attacked his father, Grandpa, in front of his eyes, forced him down onto the paving stones in the middle of the playground and removed his trousers too, and the girls laughed and made dirty jokes, saying that the Jews were all so-and-sos, while the teachers watched and said nothing, or maybe they were laughing too.

And still in a voice of darkness with his hand still losing its way in my hair (because he was not used to stroking me), my father told me under my blanket in the early hours of November 30, 1947, "Bullies may well bother you in the street or at school someday. They may do it precisely because you are a bit like me. But from now on, from the moment we have our own state, you will never be bullied just because you are a Jew and because Jews are so-and-sos. Not that. Never again. From tonight that's finished here. Forever."

I reached out sleepily to touch his face, just below his high forehead, and all of a sudden instead of his glasses my fingers met tears. Never in my life, before or after that night, not even when my mother died, did I see my father cry. And in fact I didn't see him cry that night either: it was too dark. Only my left hand saw.

A few hours later, at seven o'clock, while we and probably all our neighbors were asleep, shots were fired in Sheikh Jarrah at a Jewish ambulance that was on its way from the city center to Hadassah Hospital on Mount

Unit 3 Resource 6.2

What do you think it would have felt like to be present in the land of Israel on the night of November 29, 1947. What might have been your hopes, your dreams, and your fears?

Unit 3 Resource 7.1

Driver: Hello

Lily: Hello to you. To Shlom Tzion HaMalka

Driver: Certainly. Which number?

Lily: I think #9.

Driver: Shlom Tzion Hamalkah 9, I will take you.

Lily: I am certain of this. Nu⁷⁸, I am making a mistake (messing with her umbrella)

Driver: Hello, my lady – You have come on “Cash Cab”

Lily: What does this mean?

Driver: Oh! What does this mean!? “Cash Cab” this is a trivia game, that is filmed here in the cab. I will take you to Shlom Tzion HaMalkah

Lily: This is certain.

Driver: On the way I will ask you trivia question about general knowledge.

Lily: What will be?

Driver: What will be? You tell me. You can earn money.

Lily: First go.

Driver: What is your name?

Lily: Lily.

Driver: Lily.

Lily: Yes.

Driver: My name is Idon, nice to meet you. We are a kilometer and a half from...

Lily: First things first, give me a break, go.

Driver: I am going Lily. But if you make three mistakes

Lily: Because I will be late to this doctor that I...

Driver: Which doctor? Here, I am driving – so, it’s ok. Please the first question for NIS⁷⁹ 250, Lily

Lily: No, No, No, No, For me, no...without money.

Driver: I give to you, you don’t loose money.

Lily: Ok, Nu – What is this? I did not ride... this is nonsense, Nu.

⁷⁸ The Hebrew phrase “Nu” is not one that translates well. It can sometimes mean “well...” but it is usually just expressive.

⁷⁹ NIS is the abbreviation for New Israeli Shekel.

Driver: You never rode on a cab like this in your life.

Lily: Good, ok.

Driver: That gives you money, Lily.

Lily: Good, I don't believe in all of this nonsense.

Driver: Why not?

Lily: That direction, suddenly you were so kind?

Driver: But this is a television program, Lily.

Lily: I... television program, that's at home. There's a television, there's also a telephone and but what's this, suddenly in a cab?

Driver: That's the idea... Nu? You've never seen a cab in your life. First time.

Lily: Not really.

Driver: Lily, what does it look like to you? What? What is this?

Lily: A belt, a seat belt.

Driver: No, this, this, this thing. This, what is this? What is this?

Lily: Ah, what is this?

Driver: What is this?

Lily: I have no idea what you are doing with this.

Driver: Camera, Lily, Camera.

Lily: So, what are you taping for?

Driver: For television, the trivia game.

Lily: Aha, Good. Where is your license for television?

Driver: Television license? First question, Lily. I ask you not, you answer.

Lily: Nu, good, ok.

Driver: The Shalosh Regalim (The Three Pilgrimage/Festival Holidays) are: Passover, Sukkot, and...

Lily: Shavuot

Driver: Shavuot, Very Nice. You have NIS 250 already Lily –

Lily: That's something.

Driver: Even though you don't believe that you have.

Lily: No, ok, good.

Driver: Continue with the next question. For another NIS 250. What will a calf turn into when it grows up?

Lily: Into a cow.

Driver: Very true.

Lily: That's something.

Driver: Very nice, NIS 500.

Lily: Also a child from kindergarten can answer this for you.

Driver: Come on, Ok....This is how it is, Lily? This is how it is? Of which city is Amram Mitznah the standing mayor?

Lily: Haifa.

Driver: Haifa, see NIS 750.

Lily: Nu, that's something.

Driver: 1,200 meters until we arrive, Lily. Concentrate. I will continue.

Lily: Continue, Continue, because I am late.

Driver: In which city is there a neighborhood called Meiah She'arim?

Lily: In Jerusalem, the holy.

Driver: In holy Jerusalem – NIS 1,000 you have already.

Lily: Good. This is an account book now?

Driver: Yes.

Lily: **Good, only a little more.**

Driver: Phase of questions for NIS 500, Lily. Good – In which field does Ilana Dayan have a doctoral degree?

Lily: Law and Justice.

Driver: Justice... very nice. Lily, what is that, here? Wow! 600 Meters until we arrive, Lily. We will continue. Which role in the Kneset⁸⁰ that also plays an active role as president of the country?

Lily: The one who sits at the head of the Knesset.

Driver: Good! Lily, you have NIS 2,000 already.

Lily: That's something!!

Driver: We are on the questions for NIS 500. And we are very close to the target. 400 meters until we arrive. Lily, you will arrive to the doctor. You will tell him.

⁸⁰ Israeli government

Lily: So I must arrive quickly.

Driver: Exactly. Who wrote the article “I Accuse” following the Dreyfus trial? One moment, that was...

Lily: No, I know. That was the... he wrote “I Accuse”. It was very well known.

Driver: Tue --.

Lily: I forgot.

Driver: You forgot?

Lily: I knew, yes.

Driver: Not bad. This is not important. Emile Zola⁸¹.

Lily: Emile Zola, very true.

Driver: Emile Zola. You still have NIS 2,0000. And nothing happened.

Lily: Good. Next question. In general, I do not play for money.

Driver: I am playing for money. Me, Me! Even, if you don't want it, I will give you the money.

Lily: The main thing is that I will arrive on time.

Driver: Take you to the doctor, and give him the money.

Lily: Good.

Driver: What was Shalom Rabinowitz's pen name?

Lily: The pen name of... Shalom Aleichem.

Driver: Very nice! We are very close.

Lily: What do I owe you?

Driver: Soon. Lily.

Lily: Yes.

Driver: Tell me in a second. How many times can a person tell you, here you don't pay money?

Lily: No, that's not logical. It took you good time.

Driver: True.

⁸¹ Emile Zola was a famous author who published “J'Acuse – The Accused” After the Dreyfus Affair, which brought attention to the trial, and led to the agitation of Theodore Herzl, whereby he then wrote Der Judenstat – The Jewish State, and became the father of modern political Zionism.

Lily: Because you were simply being entertained a little. And you are not bored, you aren't looking just now Wait, this is #3? A little further. I don't want to ride for free.

Driver: Don't worry, you won NIS 2,500, Lily. You won.

Lily: Nonsense, Nu, what...

Driver: You won, Lily, Here, this is your money. Ok?

Lily: No, No No, I am not taking... I will pay you the fare.

Driver: Don't pay me anything, Lily.

Lily: There's no such thing.

Driver: I am telling you.

Lily: What's your name?

Driver: What's my name? I don – I don – Lily, this is your money.

Lily: I will not take it.

Driver: But you won it. You answered the questions.

Lily: No, No, No, No, No, hold on, excuse me.

Driver: No Lily, you are not paying. What, you deserve it?

Lily: First of all, what, you deserve it?

Driver: I don't deserve it but, I am not a cab driver Lily.

Lily: Oh, what are you?

Driver: I am a television program.

Lily: Wait, 1, 2...

Driver: Lily, you don't pay, I am explaining to you. I am forbidden to take money.

Lily: Ok – 4

Driver: This is not... this is not a game...Wait, hold on a second, I will take the money.

Lily: No, no, no, hold on, excuse me. Let me out.

Driver: I am not allowed to take money, Lily. Take it, Lily.

Lily: I am not taking the money.

Driver: I am also not taking money, like you are not taking, Lily.

Lily: What is this? But where is it written that you are a television [program

Driver: They will tell you, it's written outside.

Lily: Where? I want to see.

Driver: You want to see? Let's go, I will show you that it is written.

Music – I loved you and all the world, I loved you and all the world, flower in front of my eye, that grew so maybe... that grew so maybe...My Lily, What were you for me? What will be without or with or with or without – **Music**

Driver: Please, Lili'la.

Lily: Good...But this, this isn't so clearly understood.

Driver: This isn't clear, but that's how it is in life.

Lily: You know what? I have grandchildren today, I have five grandchildren. Each of them will receive NIS 30.

Driver: Very Nice.

Lily: Aside from this, I always give to them.

Driver: Slang – Very Large.

Lily: No, this is, really, I am completely shocked. Thank you very much. You are a nice guy. There's nothing else to say. But I am totally shocked, and that's it I don't know what to tell you. I don't know, I am very grateful to you. And I don't know what to say. Thank you.

Israel's Declaration of Independence¹



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

¹ "Declaration of Independence" in Makom. Israel. In Real Life. Last accessed April 14, 2013. <http://makomisrael.org/conceptual-frames/declaration/>.

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).

David Ben-Gurion

Daniel Auster

Mordekhai Bentov

Yitzchak Ben Zvi

Eliyahu Berligne

Fritz Bernstein

Rabbi Wolf Gold

Meir Grabovsky

Yitzchak Gruenbaum

Dr. Abraham Granovsky

Eliyahu Dobkin

Meir Wilner-Kovner

Zerach Wahrhaftig

Herzl Vardi Rachel Cohen

Rabbi Kalman Kahana

Saadia Kobashi

Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin

Meir David Loewenstein

Zvi Luria

Golda Myerson

Nachum Nir

Zvi Segal

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hacohen Fishman

David Zvi Pinkas

Aharon Zisling

Moshe Kolodny

Eliezer Kaplan

Abraham Katznelson

Felix Rosenblueth

David Remez

Berl Repetur

Mordekhai Shattner

Ben Zion Sternberg

Bekhor Shitreet

Moshe Shapira

Moshe Shertok

Woman of Valor – Proverbs 31:10-31

Prov. 31:10 What a rare find is a capable wife! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies. 11 Her husband puts his confidence in her, And lacks no good thing. 12 She is good to him, never bad, All the days of her life. 13 She looks for wool and flax, And sets her hand to them with a will. 14 She is like a merchant fleet, Bringing her food from afar. 15 She rises while it is still night, And supplies provisions for her household, The daily fare of her maids. 16 She sets her mind on an estate and acquires it; She plants a vineyard by her own labors. 17 She girds herself with strength, And performs her tasks with vigor. 18 She sees that her business thrives; Her lamp never goes out at night. 19 She sets her hand to the distaff; Her fingers work the spindle. 20 She gives generously to the poor; Her hands are stretched out to the needy. 21 She is not worried for her household because of snow, For her whole household is dressed in crimson. 22 She makes covers for herself; Her clothing is linen and purple. 23 Her husband is prominent in the gates, As he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes cloth and sells it, And offers a girdle to the merchant. 25 She is clothed with strength and splendor; She looks to the future cheerfully. 26 Her mouth is full of wisdom, Her tongue with kindly teaching. 27 She oversees the activities of her household And never eats the bread of idleness. 28 Her children declare her happy; Her husband praises her, 29 "Many women have done well, But you surpass them all." 30 Grace is deceptive, Beauty is illusory; It is for her fear of the LORD That a woman is to be praised. 31 Extol her for the fruit of her hand, And let her works praise her in the gates.

What are your initial reactions to this text?

If you are a woman, how would you feel if your future spouse sang this text to you?

If you are a man, would you feel comfortable singing this text to your future spouse, or to an important woman in your life? Why or why not?

What does this text imply about a woman's role in Judaism?

Excerpt from *Engendering Judaism* by Rachel

The secular values of equal respect, inclusivity, diversity, and pluralism obligate citizens to recognize and protect one another's integrity and well-being. Jews have obvious cause to espouse these values. At the same time, classical halakhah is committed to the subordination and exclusion of women in communal life. The inability of classical halakhah to resolve this dissonance is the paradigmatic example of its inadequacy as a praxis for Jews in modernity...

...The problems actually raised in the feminist critique, however are *systemic* wounds too deep for liberal Band-Aids. As one of the originators of this critique, I have contended that members of a Jewish male elite constructed the categories and method of classical halakhah to reflect their own perspectives and social goals and have held a monopoly on their application...

What are your initial reactions to this text?

What is Rachel Adler arguing in this text?

What might some alternatives be to classical halakhah?

What does this text imply about a woman's role in Judaism?

Unit 3 Resource 8.3

Women of the Wall Guiding Questions

What does the Kotel represent for the Jewish People?

What is the purpose of Women of the Wall?

Have you ever encountered religious discrimination in your own life?

How did you feel when you learned that the authorities at the Western Wall, and even the law discriminate against women?

What might possible solutions be to make everybody who prays feel comfortable at the wall?

CCAR RESPONSA¹
Contemporary American Reform Responsa
59. Three Generations of Mixed Marriage

QUESTION: A young man who grew up in the South is the product of three generations of mixed marriage. His great grandfather was Jewish and his great grandmother was Christian. His grandmother was raised as a Christian, but married a Jew. Both of his parents come from mixed marriages, and have provided him with no formal religious education. He would now like to claim his Jewish heritage and feels that the recent decision of the Central Conference of American Rabbis would make this easier for him. (H. S., Washington, DC)

ANSWER: The resolution of the Central American Rabbis, passed in 1983, has stated:

"The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish descent. This presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people. The performance of these *mitzvot* serves to commit those who participate in them, both parents and child, to Jewish life.

"Depending on circumstances, *mitzvot* leading toward a positive and exclusive Jewish identity will include entry into the covenant, acquisition of a Hebrew name, *Torah* study, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and *Kabbalat Torah* (Confirmation). For those beyond childhood claiming Jewish identity, other public acts or declarations may be added or substituted after consultation with their rabbi."

This resolution deals with the current generation and cannot be applied retroactively. In any case, there was no Jewish education or commitment in the previous generations. This young man has been raised in a secular fashion which has been colored by Christian traditions. Although there was very little formal Jewish education for three generations, some Jewish heritage survived. Otherwise, the young man in question, who now lives in a slightly larger town, would not be interested in reclaiming his Jewish identity. From a traditional Jewish point of view, he would not be considered Jewish as the link was broken in the second generation in which the father was Jewish and the mother non-Jewish. Had this not been the case, traditional Judaism might consider him as a Jew in accordance with the view of Solomon ben Simon of Duran (Rashbash, *Responsa* #89). He was concerned with the offsprings of Marranos and considered them Jewish indefinitely if the female Jewish lineage remained unbroken. Most authorities would insist on some form of *haverut* to mark a formal re-entry into the Jewish community (*Shulhan Arukh* Yoreh Deah 268.10 f; Ezekiel Landau, *Noda Biyehudah*, #150, etc.) We, however, feel that there must be a strong educational component which will create a positive identity, and so would demand more regardless of matrilineal or patrilineal descent. As this young man and his forefathers had no Jewish education or contact, we should treat him as a convert to Judaism and welcome him to Judaism. In the process of conversion and the final ceremony, we should stress his links to a Jewish past which he now wishes to establish firmly for himself and for future generations.
September 1983

¹ <http://ccarnet.org/responsa/carr-95-96/>.

CCAR RESPONSA¹
Contemporary American Reform Responsa
38. Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent

QUESTION: What are the origins of matrilineal descent in the Jewish tradition; what *halakhic* justification is there for the recent Central Conference of American Rabbi's resolution on matrilineal and patrilineal descent which also adds various requirements for the establishment of Jewish status?

ANSWER: We shall deal first with the question of matrilineal and patrilineal descent. Subsequently we shall turn to the required positive "acts of identification."

It is clear that for the last two thousands years the Jewish identity of a child has been determined by matrilineal descent. In other words, the child of a Jewish mother was Jewish irrespective of the father (Deut. 7.3, 4; M. Kid. 3.12; Kid. 70a, 75b; Yeb. 16b, 23a, 44a, 45b; A. Z. 59a; J. Yeb. 5.15 (6c), 7.5 (8b); J. Kid. 3.12 (64d); *Yad Issurei Biah* 15.3 f; etc.). The Talmudic discussion and that of the later codes indicate the reasoning behind this rule.

The rabbinic decision that the child follow the religion of the mother solves the problem for offspring from illicit intercourse of unions which are not recognized, or in which paternity could not be established, or in which the father disappeared. This practice may have originated in the period of Ezra (Ezra 10 3; Neh. 13.23 ff) and may parallel that of Pericles of Athens who sought to limit citizenship to descendants of Athenian mothers (G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, Vol. 1, p. 20). It may also have represented temporary, emergency legislation of that period. We hear nothing about such a permanent change till early rabbinic times, then the union between a Jew and a non-Jew was considered to have no legal status (*lo tafsei qiddushin*). At one stage in the Talmudic discussions, an authority, Jacob of Kefar Neburya, considered a child of such a union Jewish, but subsequently retracted his opinion when faced with a verse from Ezra quoted by R. Haggai (*J. Kid.* 64d; *J. Yeb.* 4a; see Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Origin of the Matrilineal Principle in Rabbinic Law," *Judaism*, Winter, 1984, note 54). R. Judah in the name of R. Assi considered a union between a Jew and non-Jew valid in "his time" as the non-Jew might be a descendent of the lost ten tribes (*Yeb.* 16b). Many authorities considered children of all such unions as *mamzerim*. They felt that the danger lay with non-Jewish women who could not be trusted to establish the Jewish paternity of their child, though that was contested by others.

The statement which grants the status of the mother to the child saves that child from the status of *mamzerut* or other similar disabling category. There was considerable disagreement before the decision later universally accepted was reached (*Kid.* 66b ff; *Shulhan Arukh* Even Haezer 4.19 and commentaries). The discussions demonstrate that this decision represented rabbinic reaction to specific problems.

We should contrast the rabbinic position to the view of the earlier Biblical and post-Biblical period. Patrilineal descent was the primary way of determining the status of children in this period. The Biblical traditions and their early rabbinic commentaries take it for granted that the paternal line was decisive in the tracing of descent, tribal identity, or priestly status. A glance at the Biblical genealogies makes this clear. In inter-tribal marriage paternal descent was likewise decisive (*Nu.* 1.2, *l'mishpehotam l'veit avotam*); the line of the father was recognized while the line of the mother was not (*mishpahat av keruyah mishpahah, mishpahat em enah keruyah mishpahah*, B. B. 109b; *Yeb.* 54b; *YadHil.* Nahalot 1.6, etc.).

We should also recognize that later rabbinic tradition did not shift to the matrilineal line when conditions did not demand it. Therefore, the rabbinic tradition remained patrilineal in the descent of the priesthood; it was and remains the male *kohen* who determines the status of his children. The child is a *kohen* even if the father married a Levite or an Israelite. Thus lineage was and continues to be determined by the male alone whenever the marriage is otherwise proper (*M. Kid.* 3.12; *Kid.* 29a; *Shulhan Arukh* Yoreh Deah 245.1).

If a marriage is valid but originally forbidden, (marriage with someone improperly divorced, etc.), then the tainted parent, whether mother or father, determines lineage (*Kid.* 66b; *Shulhan Arukh* Even Haezer 4.18). The same rule applies to children born out of wedlock if both parents are known.

¹ <http://ccarnet.org/responsa/carr-61-68/>

Matrilineal descent, although generally accepted for the union of a Jew and a non-Jew, has rested on an uncertain basis. Some have deduced it from Deuteronomy 7.4, others from Ezra 9 and 10. Still others feel that the dominant influence of the mother during the formative years accounted for this principle. A few modern scholars felt that the rabbinic statement followed the Roman Paulus (*Digest* 2.4 f), who stated that the maternity was always known while paternity was doubtful; this, however, could be extended to the offspring of any parents. Shaye Cohen has also suggested that the rabbis may have abhorred this type of mixture of people as they felt negatively toward mixtures of animals and materials. A full discussion of this and other material may be found in Aptowitzer's "Spuren des Matriarchats im jüdischen Schriftum," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vols. 4 and 5 and Shaye J. D. Cohen's "The Origin of the Matrilineal Principle in Rabbinic Law," *Judaism*, Winter, 1984.

We should note that the Karaites considered the offspring of a Jewish father and a Gentile mother to be a Jew. It is, however, not clear from the sources available to me whether the conversion of the mother to Judaism may not have been implied (B. Revel, "The Karaite Halakhah," *Jewish Quarterly Review* III, pp. 375 f.) The matter continues to be debated.

These discussions show us that our tradition responded to particular needs. It changed the laws of descent to meet the problems of a specific age and if those problems persisted, then the changes remained in effect.

The previous cited material has dealt with situations entirely different from those which have arisen in the last century and a half. Unions between Jews and non-Jews during earlier times remained rare.

Furthermore, the cultural and sociological relationship with the people among whom we lived did not approach the freedom and equality which most Jews in the Western World now enjoy.

We in the twentieth century have been faced with an increasing number of mixed marriages, with changes in the structure of the family, and with the development of a new relationship between men and women. This has been reflected in the carefully worded statement by the Committee on Patrilineal Descent (W. Jacob, *American Reform Responsa*, Appendix).

We may elaborate further with the following statements which reflect the previously cited historical background, the introduction to the resolution as well as other concerns. We shall turn first to the question of descent and then to the required "acts of identification."

1. In the Biblical period, till the time of Ezra or beyond, patrilineal descent determined the status of a child, so the children of the kings of Israel married to non-Jewish wives were unquestionably Jewish. This was equally true of other figures. Furthermore, our tradition has generally determined lineage (*yihus*) through the father, i.e., in all valid but originally forbidden marriages. This was also true for priestly, Levitical and Israelite lineage which was and continues to be traced through the paternal line (Nu. 1.2, 18; *Yad* Hil. Issurei Biah 19.15; *Shulhan Arukh* Even Haezer 8.1) . If a marriage was valid, but originally forbidden, then the tainted parent (mother or father) determines status (Kid. 66b; *Shulhan Arukh* Even Haezer 4.18). The same rule applies to children born out of wedlock if both parents are known.

Yihus was considered significant, especially in the Biblical period, and long genealogical lines were recorded; an effort was made in the time of Ezra and, subsequently, to guarantee pure lines of descent and precise records were maintained (Ezra 2:59 ff; genealogies of I, II Chronicles). An echo of that practice of recording genealogies remained in the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* despite the difficulties caused by the wars of the first and second century which led to the destruction of many records (M. Kid. 4.1; Kid. 28a, 70a ff). In the Biblical period and in specific later instances, lineage was determined by the father.

2. Mishnaic and Talmudic authorities changed the Biblical laws of descent, as shown earlier in this responsum, as well as many others when social or religious conditions warranted it. Family law was changed in many other ways as demonstrated by the laws of marriage. For example, the Talmudic authorities validated the marriage of Boaz to Ruth, the Moabites, despite the strict ruling against such marriages (Deut. 23.4); they indicated that the Biblical rule applied only to males, not to females (Yeb. 76b ff). Earlier the *Mishnah* (*Yad*. 4.4) claimed that the various ethnic groups had been so intermingled by the invasion of Sennacherib that none of the prohibitions against marriage with neighboring people remained valid. In this instance and others similar to them, we are dealing with clear Biblical injunctions which have been revised by the rabbinic tradition. We have followed these examples in our own twentieth century revision.

3. The Reform movement has espoused the equality of men and women, virtually since its inception (J. R. Marcus, *Israel Jacobson*, p. 146; W. G. Plaut, *The Rise of Reform Judaism*, pp. 252 ff). As equality has been applied to every facet of Reform Jewish life, it should be applied in this instance.

4. We, and virtually all Jews, recognize a civil marriage between a Jew and a Gentile as a marriage although not *quidushin*, and have done so since the French Sanhedrin of 1807 (Tama, *Transactions of the Parisian Sanhedrin* - Tr. F. Kerwan, p. 155 f; Plaut, *op. cit.*, p. 219). We are morally obliged to make provisions for the offsprings of such a union when either the father or mother seek to have their children recognized and educated as a Jew.

5. We agree with the Israeli courts and their decisions on the matter of status for purposes of *leam*, the registration of the nationality of immigrants and the right to immigrate under the Law of Return. Such rulings are secular in nature and do not bind the Israeli rabbinic courts or us, yet they have far reaching implications for all Jews. In the Brother Daniel case of 1962, this apostate was not judged to be Jewish although he had a Jewish mother (1962 - 16 - P.D. 2428). The court decided that a Jew who practiced another religion would not be considered Jewish despite his descent from a Jewish mother. "Acts of religious identification" were determinative for secular purposes of the State of Israel. The court recognized that this had no effect on the rabbinic courts; nonetheless, it marked a radical change which deals with new conditions.

Earlier in March, 1958, the Minister of Interior, Israel Bar-Yehuda, issued a directive which stated that "any person declaring in good faith that he is a Jew, shall be registered as a Jew." No inquiry about parents was authorized. In the case of children, "if both parents declare that the child is Jewish, the declaration shall be regarded as though it were legal declaration of the child itself" (S. Z.

Abramov, Perpetual Dilemma, p. 290; *Schlesinger v. Minister of Interior* 1963 - I - 17 P.D. 225; *Shalit v. Minister of Interior* 1968 - II - 231P.D.477-608). This was for the purposes of immigration and Israeli registration. It represented the farthest stance away from *halakhah* which any official body in the State of Israel has taken in this matter. It remained law until challenged and later legislation replaced it. There have been a number of other decisions which have dealt with this matter.

The current law, passed in 1970 after a government crisis over the question of "Who is a Jew," reads, "for the purpose of this law, Jew means a person born to a Jewish mother, or who has become converted to Judaism, and who is not a member of another religion" (Law of Return -Amendment, March, 1970, #4b; M. D. Goldman, *Israel Nationality Law*, p. 142; *Israel Law Journal*, Vol. 5, #2, p. 264). Orthodox efforts to change this to read "converted according to *halakhah*" have been defeated on various occasions. We should note that although the definition of a Jew was narrowed, another section of the law broadened the effect of the Law of Return and included "the child and grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew and the spouse of the child and grandchild of a Jew - with the exception of a person who was a Jew and willingly changed his religion" (*Law of Return Amendment #2, #4a*, March, 1970). This meant that a dual definition (descendants from Jewish mothers or fathers) has remained operative for immigration into the State of Israel.

The decision of an Israeli Court is a secular decision. It is, of course, not determinative for us as American Reform Jews, but we should note that their line of reasoning is somewhat similar to ours. We also see flexibility to meet new problems expressed in these decisions.

For the reasons cited in the introduction to the Resolution, those stated above and others, we have equated matrilineal and patrilineal descent in the determination of Jewish identity of a child of a mixed marriage.

Now let us turn to the section of the resolution which deals with "positive acts of identification." There are both traditional and modern considerations for requiring such acts and not relying on birth alone.

The clause which deals with the "appropriate and timely acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people..." has gone beyond the traditional requirements for consideration as a Jew. Here we have become stricter than traditional Judaism. We have done so as the normal life of Jews has changed during the last two centuries.

In earlier periods of our history, individuals whose status was doubtful were limited in number. The question became significant only during the period of the Marranos. When such individuals identified themselves and lived as part of the Jewish community, they joined a semi-autonomous corporate community largely cut off from the surrounding world. Its entire way of life was Jewish. Emancipation changed this condition. It is difficult for those of doubtful status to integrate in an effortless way as was possible in earlier periods of our history. They and virtually all Jews live in two worlds.

We are dealing with a large number of individuals in our open American society as well as in all western lands. The Jewish status of a potentially large number of immigrants from the Soviet Union is also doubtful.

In order to overcome these problems as well as others, we now require "appropriate and timely public and formal acts..." The requirement has been worded to permit some flexibility for individual circumstances. With time and experience, custom will designate certain acts as appropriate and others not. It would be wrong, however, to set limits now at the beginning of the process.

We are aware that we have made more stringent requirements than our tradition. We believe that this will lead to a firmer commitment to Judaism on the part of these individuals and that it will enable them to become fully integrated into the Jewish community. We have taken this step for the following additional reasons:

1. We do not view birth as a determining factor in the religious identification of children of a mixed marriage.
2. We distinguish between descent and identification.
3. The mobility of American Jews has diminished the influence of the extended family upon such a child. This means that a significant informal bond with Judaism which played a role in the past does not exist for our generation.
4. Education has always been a strong factor in Jewish identity. In the recent past we could assume a minimal Jewish education for most children. In our time almost half the American Jewish community remains unaffiliated, and their children receive no Jewish education.

For those reasons the Central Conference of American Rabbis has declared: "The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish descent. This presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people. The performance of these *mitzvot* serves to commit those who participate in them, both parents and child, to Jewish life.

"Depending on circumstances, *mitzvot* leading toward a positive and exclusive Jewish identity will include entry into the covenant, acquisition of a Hebrew name, *Torah* study, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, and *Kabbalat Torah* (Confirmation). For those beyond childhood claiming Jewish identity, other public acts or declarations may be added or substituted after consultation with their rabbi."

October 1983

CCAR RESPONSA¹

American Reform Responsa

APPENDIX

Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent on the Status of Children of Mixed Marriages

Adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis
at its 94th Annual Convention, March 15, 1983

The purpose of this document is to establish the Jewish status of the children of mixed marriages in the Reform Jewish community of North America.

One of the most pressing human issues for the North American Jewish community is mixed marriage, with all its attendant implications. For our purpose mixed marriage is defined as a union between a Jew and a non-Jew. A non-Jew who joins the Jewish people through conversion is recognized as a Jew in every respect. We deal here only with the Jewish identity of children born of a union in which one parent is Jewish and the other parent is non-Jewish.

This issue arises from the social forces set in motion by the Enlightenment and the Emancipation. They are the roots of our current struggle with mixed marriage. "Social change so drastic and far reaching could not but affect on several levels the psychology of being Jewish.... The result of Emancipation was to make Jewish identity a private commitment rather than a legal status, leaving it a complex mix of destiny and choice" (Robert Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 544). Since the Napoleonic Assembly of Notables of 1806, the Jewish community has struggled with the tension between modernity and tradition. This tension is now a major challenge, and it is within this specific context that the Reform Movement chooses to respond. Wherever there is ground to do so, our response seeks to establish Jewish identity of the children of mixed marriages.

According to the *Halacha* as interpreted by traditional Jews over many centuries, the offspring of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father is recognized as a Jew, while the offspring of a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father is considered a non-Jew. To become a Jew, the child of a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father must undergo conversion.

As a Reform community, the process of determining an appropriate response has taken us to an examination of the tradition, our own earlier responses, and the most current considerations. In doing so, we seek to be sensitive to the human dimensions of this issue.

Both the Biblical and the Rabbinical traditions take for granted that ordinarily the paternal line is decisive in the tracing of descent within the Jewish people. The Biblical genealogies in Genesis and elsewhere in the Bible attest to this point. In intertribal marriage in ancient Israel, paternal descent was decisive. Numbers 1:2, etc., says: "By their families, by their fathers' houses" (*lemishpechotam leveit avotam*), which for the Rabbis means, "The line (literally: 'family') of the father is recognized; the line of the mother is not" (*Mishpachat av keruya mishpacha; mishpachat em einah keruya mishpacha*; Bava Batra 109b, Yevamot 54b; cf. *Yad, Nachalat* 1.6).

In the Rabbinic tradition, this tradition remains in force. The offspring of a male *Kohen* who marries a Levite or Israelite is considered a *Kohen*, and the child of an Israelite who marries a *Kohenet* is an Israelite. Thus: *yichus*, lineage, regards the male line as absolutely dominant. This ruling is stated succinctly in *Mishna Kiddushin* 3.12 that when *kiddushin* (marriage) is licit and no transgression (*ein avera*) is involved, the line follows the father. Furthermore, the most important parental responsibility to teach *Torah* rested with the father (*Kiddushin* 29a; cf. *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De-a* 245.1).

When, in the tradition, the marriage was considered not to be licit, the child of that marriage followed the status of the mother (*Mishna Kiddushin* 3.12, *havalad kemotah*). The decisions of our ancestors thus to link the child inseparably to the mother, which makes the child of a Jewish mother Jewish and the child of a non-Jewish mother non-Jewish, regardless of the father, was based upon the fact that the woman with her child had no recourse but to return to her own people. A Jewish woman could not marry a non-Jewish man (cf. *Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha-ezer* 4.19, *la tafsei kiddushin*). A Jewish man could not marry a non-Jewish woman. The only recourse in Rabbinic law for the woman in either case was to return to her own community and people.

Since Emancipation, Jews have faced the problem of mixed marriage and the status of the offspring of mixed marriage. The Reform Movement responded to the issue. In 1947 the CCAR adopted a proposal made by the Committee on Mixed Marriage and Intermarriage:

With regard to infants, the declaration of the parents to raise them as Jews shall be deemed sufficient for conversion. This could apply, for example, to adopted children. This decision is in line with the traditional procedure in which, according to the *Talmud*, the parents bring young children (the *Talmud* speaks of children earlier than the age of three) to be converted, and the *Talmud* comments that although an infant cannot give its consent, it is permissible to benefit somebody without his consent (or presence). On the same page the *Talmud* also speaks of a father bringing his children for conversion, and says that the children will be satisfied with the action of their father. If the parents therefore will make a declaration to the rabbi that it is their intention to raise the child as a Jew, the child may, for the sake of impressive formality, be recorded in the Cradle-Roll of the religious school and thus be considered converted.

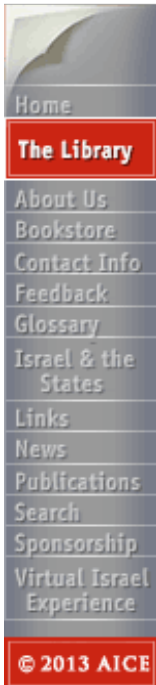
Children of religious school age should likewise not be required to undergo a special ceremony of conversion but should receive instruction as regular students in the school. The ceremony of Confirmation at the end of the school course shall be considered in lieu of a conversion ceremony.

Children older than confirmation age should not be converted without their own consent. The Talmudic law likewise gives the child who is converted in infancy by the court the right to reject the conversion when it becomes of religious age. Therefore the child above religious school age, if he or she consents sincerely to conversion, should receive regular instruction for that purpose and be converted in the regular conversion ceremony." (CCAR *Yearbook*, Vol. 57)

This issue was again addressed in the 1961 edition of the *Rabbi's Manual*:

¹ <http://ccarnet.org/responsa/arr-appendix/>

Judaism: Who Is A Jew?

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A PROJECT OF THE AMERICAN-ISRAELI COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE

Judaism: Who Is A Jew? by Rebecca Weiner*

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[Judaism](#) is considered to be both a religion as well as a nation and culture. Approximately 13 million people worldwide identify as [Jewish](#), with the vast majority living in either the United States or Israel.

[Jews](#) come in all shapes, sizes, ethnicities and nationalities. There are black [Jews](#) from [Ethiopia](#), Chinese [Jews](#) from Shanghai and Indian [Jews](#). There are Jews from [Morocco](#) and [Iran](#), Jews from [South America](#) and [Oceania](#). The practices and beliefs held by Jews range from those who openly identify as Orthodox and strictly observe ancient precepts to those that have nothing to do with the religion or culture.

Today, Judaism is comprised of four major movements: [Orthodox](#), [Conservative](#), [Reform](#) and [Reconstructionist](#). Most Israelis are often described as "secular," but the majority observe [Jewish holidays](#) and are very knowledgeable about Jewish history and culture, which is taught in public school. The Conservative and Reform movements are particularly strong in the United States, but have yet to make significant inroads in Israel. Reconstructionism is a small and relatively new movement. Orthodoxy has grown in recent years in the United States and remains the strongest movement in Israel. The Orthodox, more so than the other movements, are also divided among different sects.

The Jewish movements have different interpretations of the [Torah](#), which lead to different [rituals](#), spiritual practices and beliefs. The diversity of beliefs and practices has led to different definitions of "[Who is a Jew](#)." This question is not just philosophical, it has political and legal

ramifications. In Israel, questions of Jewishness have implications for immigration, conversion, marriage, divorce and the allocation of government money.

Origins of the Words "Jew" and "Judaism"

*The original name for the people we now call **Jews** was Hebrews. The word "Hebrew" (in Hebrew, "Ivri") is first used in the **Torah** to describe **Abraham** (**Gen. 14:13**). The word is apparently derived from the name Eber, one of Abraham's ancestors. Another tradition teaches that the word comes from the word "eyver," which means "the other side," referring to the fact that Abraham came from the other side of the Euphrates, or referring to the fact Abraham was separated from the other nations morally and spiritually.*

*Another name used for the people is Children of Israel or Israelites, which refers to the fact that the people are descendants of **Jacob**, who was also called Israel.*

*The word "Jew" (in Hebrew, "Yehudi") is derived from the name Judah, which was the name of one of Jacob's twelve sons. Judah was the ancestor of one of the **tribes of Israel**, which was named after him. Likewise, the word **Judaism** literally means "Judah-ism," that is, the religion of the Yehudim.*

*Originally, the term Yehudi referred specifically to members of the tribe of Judah, as distinguished from the other tribes of Israel. However, after the death of **King Solomon**, the nation of Israel was split into **two kingdoms**: the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel (**I Kings 12**; **II Chronicles 10**). After that time, the word Yehudi could properly be used to describe anyone from the kingdom of Judah, which included the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, as well as scattered settlements from other tribes. The most obvious biblical example of this usage is in **Esther 2:5**, where Mordecai is referred to as both a Yehudi and a member of the tribe of Benjamin.*

*In the 6th century **B.C.E.**, the kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria and the ten tribes were exiled from the land (**II Kings 17**), leaving only the tribes in the kingdom of Judah remaining to carry on Abraham's heritage. These people of the kingdom of Judah were generally known to themselves and to other nations as Yehudim (**Jews**), and that name continues to be used today.*

*In common speech, the word "Jew" is used to refer to all of the physical and spiritual descendants of Jacob/Israel, as well as to the patriarchs Abraham and **Isaac** and their wives, and the word "Judaism" is used to refer to their beliefs. Technically, this usage is inaccurate, just as it is technically inaccurate to use the word "Indian" to refer to the original inhabitants of the Americas. However, this technically inaccurate usage is common both within the Jewish community and outside of it, and is therefore used throughout this site.*

Who is a Jew according to *Halacha* (Jewish Law)?

According to [Jewish law](#), a child born to a Jewish mother or an adult who has [converted](#) to Judaism is considered a Jew; one does not have to reaffirm their Jewishness or practice any of the laws of the Torah to be Jewish. According to [Reform Judaism](#), a person is a Jew if they were born to either a Jewish mother or a [Jewish father](#). Also, Reform Judaism stresses the importance of being raised Jewish; if a child is born to Jewish parents and was not raised Jewish then the child is not considered Jewish. According to the [Orthodox](#) movement, the father's religion and whether the person practices is immaterial. No affirmation or upbringing is needed, as long as the mother was Jewish.

Besides for differing opinions on [patrilineal descent](#), the various streams also have different [conversion](#) practices. Conversion done under the auspices of an Orthodox rabbi, entails Jewish study, [brit milah](#) (for men), mikvah (for both men and women) and a stated commitment to follow the laws of the Torah. [Conservative](#) conversions use the same requirements as the Orthodox do; however, conversions by the [Reform](#) movement and other streams do not have the same requirements. Since the conversion practices are not uniform, many [Orthodox Jews](#) do not recognize Reform or Conservative conversions as valid and, hence, do not consider the converts [Jews](#). Once a person has [converted](#) to Judaism, he is not referred to by any special term; he is as much a Jew as anyone born Jewish.

About Matrilineal Descent

Many people have asked why traditional Judaism uses matrilineal descent to determine Jewish status, when in all other things (tribal affiliation, priestly status, royalty, etc.) [patrilineal descent](#) is used.

The [Torah](#) does not specifically state anywhere that matrilineal descent should be used; however, there are several passages in the [Torah](#) where it is understood that the child of a Jewish woman and a non-Jewish man is a Jew, and several other passages where it is understood that the child of a non-Jewish woman and a Jewish man is not a Jew.

In [Deuteronomy 7:1-5](#), in expressing the prohibition against intermarriage, G-d says "he [ie, the non-Jewish male spouse] will cause your child to turn away from Me and they will worship the gods of others." No such concern is expressed about the child of a non-Jewish female spouse. From this, we infer that the child of a non-Jewish male spouse is Jewish (and can therefore be turned away from Judaism), but the child of a non-Jewish female spouse is not Jewish (and therefore turning away is not an issue).

[Leviticus 24:10](#) speaks of the son of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian man as being "among the community of Israel"

(i.e., a Jew).

On the other hand, in [Ezra 10:2-3](#), the [Jews](#) returning to Israel vowed to put aside their non-Jewish wives and the children born to those wives. They could not have put aside those children if those children were [Jews](#).

Several people have asked how King David could be a Jew given that one of his female ancestors, Ruth, was not a Jew. This conclusion is based on two faulty premises: first of all, Ruth was a Jew, and even if she wasn't, that would not affect David's status as a Jew. Ruth converted to Judaism before marrying Boaz and bearing Obed. See [Ruth 1:16](#), where Ruth states her intention to convert. After Ruth converted, she was a Jew, and all of her children born after the conversion were Jewish as well. But even if Ruth were not Jewish at the time Obed was born, that would not affect King David's status as a Jew, because Ruth is an ancestor of David's father, not of David's mother, and David's Jewish status is determined by his mother.

Implications on Israeli Society

Immigration:

In 1950, the [Law of Return](#) was passed in Israel stating that every Jew has the right to immigrate to Israel, and granting automatic citizenship and benefits to any Jew who makes aliyah. Jewish immigrants receive better benefits than non-Jewish immigrants, including guaranteed housing, ulpan (Hebrew language study), full tuition for graduate degrees, and other benefits including discounts on major purchases, such as cars and appliances. The absorption process is more arduous for non-Jews and may take many years, during which they might not have health insurance and other government services.

Three famous cases tested the Law of Return and a Jew's right to immediate citizenship. The first example involved Brother Daniel (born Oswald Rufeisen), a Jew who converted to Christianity during the [Holocaust](#) and had become a Carmelite Monk. During his youth, Rufeisen was active in a Zionist youth movement and fled to Vilna, Lithuania at the start of World War II. There he worked as a slave laborer and escaped to Mir where he worked for the police as a translator. Rufeisen took advantage of his position and smuggled arms to his Jewish friends and helped drive the police out from Mir before it was liquidated, saving nearly 300 [Jews](#). Rufeisen hid in the forest and later a convent, where he decided to

convert to Christianity. In 1962, Rufeisen, now Brother Daniel, applied to immigrate to Israel and, after being denied, he appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled that despite the fact he was born to a Jewish mother, he had since converted and should not be recognized as a Jew by the State of Israel.

Following the Brother Daniel case, a new regulation was adopted stating that individuals registered as [Jews](#) for the "nationality" and "religion" section of their identity cards must be [Jews](#) according to [halacha](#) and they must not practice another religion. The Shalit case challenged this new ruling. Benjamin Shalit married a non-Jewish Scottish woman. Since he was an Israeli, she and their children automatically received Israeli citizenship. The two considered themselves atheists, but part of a Jewish nation and wanted their children's identity cards to state Jewish for the nationality designation and to remain blank for religion. The Ministry of Interior wanted to keep both designations blank, so the case was appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled in the Shalits' favor.

The decision sparked controversy and, in 1970, an amendment to the [Law of Return](#) passed stating that only persons born to a Jewish mother or who had [converted](#) to [Judaism](#) were allowed to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return. This amendment did not specify what type of conversion is needed, thereby allowing different interpretations. Since the amendment was passed, religious parties in the [Knesset](#) have tried to change it to apply only to [Orthodox](#) conversions, a move that angered the [Reform](#) and [Conservative](#) movements in the United States, which felt that it was an attempt to delegitimize their movements.

The Shoshanna Miller Case in 1980 tested the new amendment. She applied for citizenship under the Law of Return as a Reform convert. Initially her petition was refused and she appealed to the Supreme Court, which ruled that she should be granted citizenship, in what became known as the Miller precedent.

Conversion:

Non-orthodox [conversions](#) done outside Israel are allowed; however, in Israel, only Orthodox conversions are accepted by the government and the Rabbinate. While the issue of conversion had sparked controversy in Israel for many years, the need for a comprehensive

conversion policy was heightened after the arrival of 800,000 [Russian immigrants](#) in the late 1980's. They immigrated under the Law of Return, however, about 200,000 -300,000 were not Jewish according to halacha. To find a solution acceptable to Orthodox and non-Orthodox streams, the [Neeman Committee](#) was formed. In February 1998, Finance Minister [Yaakov Neeman](#) recommended that conversions should be done according to halacha through a special Conversion Court, and that a special institute would be created to prepare applicants for conversion, in which they could take courses offered by all streams of Judaism. The [Neeman Committee's](#) proposal was endorsed by the Cabinet and the [Knesset](#), however it was not accepted by the Chief Rabbinate. Lacking the support of the Rabbinate, the Neeman Committee's proposals were never implemented.

In December 1998, Jerusalem District Court Judge Vardi Zeiler ruled that Conservative and Reform converts are allowed to be registered at the Interior Ministry as [Jews](#), regardless of where the conversion took place. Following this case, appeals were expected and legislation has been proposed to allow only Orthodox conversions. The conversion issue has yet to be resolved.

The issue of conversion also became controversial after the arrival of thousands of [Jews](#) from Ethiopia. [Ethiopian Jews](#) did not practice any rituals or laws pertaining to the Oral Torah and, instead, practice a purer form of Biblical Judaism, which is different than mainstream [Ashkenazic](#) and [Sephardic](#) Judaism. Because of these differences and for other ritual purposes, the Rabbinate proposed a symbolic conversion of all [Ethiopian Jews](#) to be done before they married. The Ethiopians refused stating that it delegitimized them as [Jews](#). Eventually the issue was circumvented as a rabbi sympathetic to their cause was able to register their marriages. [Ethiopian rabbis](#) still have difficulty gaining legitimacy for their marriages and divorces performed in Israel.

Marriage and Divorce:

[Marriage](#) ceremonies and [divorce](#) proceedings are not allowed to be performed or issued by [Conservative](#) or [Reform](#) rabbis in Israel. In fact, only [Orthodox](#) rabbis are allowed to marry [Jews](#) and many secular Israelis travel to Cyprus and other foreign countries to have a civil ceremony,

which they can not receive in Israel. Israel does recognize marriages performed abroad by the Conservative and Reform movements; however, divorces issued abroad by rabbis from these movements are not recognized by the Rabbinate in Israel.

One of the reasons why issues of conversion, marriage and divorce are so important to religious Jews is because of the possibility of mamzerim (illegitimates). In a Jewish divorce, a get must be signed by the husband. If he does not sign, then the divorce is not official and the couple is still legally married according to Jewish law. If the get is not issued, the woman is not free to remarry and have children, and if she does remarry and have children, then those children are considered to be bastards according to Jewish law. (There is no biblical injunction against multiple wives, however, it has been ruled illegal according to the Rabbis.) The bastard child cannot be issued a Jewish identity card and will not be permitted to marry another Jew in Israel. The illegitimate child is only permitted to marry other illegitimate children. Hence, many Orthodox Rabbis claim the reason they want to retain control over conversions, marriage and divorce is to avoid the problem of mamzerim.

Allocation of Funding:

In Israel, another political implication for the "Who is a Jew" question is the allocation of government funds. The government of Israel sets aside part of their annual budget for religious purposes, much of these funds are then distributed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In 1994, the High Court of Justice ordered the allocation of funds to non-Orthodox institutions in Israel. The Ministry of Religious Affairs agreed to abide by the ruling of the court, however, officials decided that they would not earmark funds for non-Orthodox supplementary religious education or for non-Orthodox Torah culture funds.

In 1995, the Ministry of Religious Affairs gave less than a half of a percent of the available funds to Hebrew Union College (HUC), the Reform Rabbinical Institute in Israel. Angered by the poor funding, petitions were sent to High Court to request increased funding for HUC and other Reform institutions.

Funding is also determined by local religious councils. Until recently, non-Orthodox rabbis were unable to sit in religious councils, which

control funds to local institutions.

Alternative sources of funding have been found by the Conservative and Reform movements for their schools and programs. Funding for non-Orthodox schools, such as the Tali schools (run by the Masorti movement in Israel) has received funds from foundations, non-governmental organizations and the Jewish Agency.

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NOTES

1. René Girard, *The Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore, 1986).
2. Alan Dundes, *Interpreting Folklore* (Bloomington, 1980), pp. 93-133.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
4. Israel G. Hyman, "The Halachic Issues of Mezizah," in *Proceedings of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists*, vol. 8-9 (5747-1987), p. 17.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
13. See Hyman E. Goldin, *Hamadrith, The Rabbi's Guide*, rev. ed., (New York, 1939), pp. 30, 35-36: the Hebrew, the English translation of which is omitted in Goldin's edition, prescribes that "after the exposure [of the glans] and the sucking the mohel takes the cup and says the benediction" (p. 35).
14. Dundes, *Interpreting Folklore*, p. 103.

"Who Is a Jew?"

Issues of Jewish Status and Identity and Their Relationship to the Nature of Judaism in the Modern World

David Ellenson

Debate and controversy over the question "Who is a Jew?" have come to occupy a dominant place on the public agenda of the contemporary Jewish community. Within Israel, disputes rage forth annually in the Knesset as to whether persons converted to Judaism under non-Orthodox auspices are to be considered Jews under the Law of Return. In the Diaspora, threats of withdrawal of American Jewish communal support for Israel should the Law be amended so as to exclude such converts are increasingly common. In addition, there exist throughout the world many persons who fulfilled the traditional Jewish legal requirement (i.e., birth from a Jewish mother) for consideration as Jews, but who display neither commitment to nor consciousness of their Jewishness. Conversely, there are others who affirm their identity as Jews, but whose halachic (Jewish legal) status as Jews is, at best, uncertain. Further, in an era where intermarriage is frequent and where the overwhelming majority of conversions are conducted by Reform and Conservative rabbis, the Orthodox maintain a principled refusal to regard such conversions as valid.¹ Finally, recent decisions by the Reform and Reconstructionist Movements in favor of patrilineality (i.e., the notion that descent from a Jewish father, and not just a Jewish mother, may qualify one as a Jew), as well as articles, statements,

and responsa by several leading Conservative rabbis in favor of this principle,² have given rise to tremendous controversy and discussion.³

This paper proposes to explore a variety of historical and sociological factors that have propelled these issues of status and identity to the forefront of modern Jewish communal concerns. In so doing, it hopes to explain how different understandings of these matters emerge within different sectors of the contemporary Jewish community as well as the significance these understandings hold for comprehending the pluralistic nature of modern Judaism.

At the outset, it should be noted that the question "Who is a Jew?" involves matters of both status and identity, and while the meanings of these two terms may overlap, they are two distinct referents that are not necessarily identical. Status, stemming as it does from the Latin word meaning "standing," refers to the condition of a person in the eyes of the law. When employed in regard to a person's relationship to a group, the person's own definition of that relationship may be totally irrelevant. Authorities either external to the group or within the group itself may well make such status designations with absolutely no regard for the individual's own sense of self-definition. For example, there were Christians living in Nazi Germany who were defined as Jews under the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. Similarly, a person born of a Jewish mother who swore allegiance to another religious faith would still be considered Jewish by most traditional Jewish legal authorities. Conversely, despite an individual's own sense of identification and belonging, a group might well deny her legal status as one of their own. Here one need only think of the child of a woman converted to Judaism under Conservative auspices being denied status as a Jew by Orthodox rabbinical authorities. In sum, "status" is essentially a legalistic term.

Identity, in contrast, embraces a more subjective and personalistic component. Its etymological root, derived from the ancient Greek *idios*, means "private" or "individual." When the term "identity," as opposed to "status," is utilized to refer to a person's relationship to a group, it may simply signify the psychological orientation of that individual towards the group. Simply put, it reflects the individual's autonomous understanding of who she is. A person born to a non-Jewish mother who participates in the life of a given Jewish community might well identify herself as a Jew despite having failed

to undergo any formal rite of conversion to Judaism. Identity, in this instance, would simply not address the issue of the Jewish legal relationship that obtains between this woman and the Jewish community. It would rather reflect a personal definition of self in reference to a group.⁴

The question "Who is a Jew?" is a complex one precisely because it involves considerations of status and identity. Furthermore, as the examples cited above illustrate, the individual, the group itself, or bodies external to the group who possess authority over it may all be involved, depending upon the particular case, in determining the answer to a given person's status and identity as a Jew. The relevance these distinctions and factors hold for the issue of "Jewishness" is apparent when we reflect upon the nature of Jewish existence in the pre-modern world and contrast it with that of Jewish life in a country like the United States today.

Within the context of a pre-modern feudal political order, status was corporate. Individual citizenship in a nation-state, as a modern western model would have it, was essentially unknown. Furthermore, the Jewish community itself was either politically autonomous or semi-autonomous in governing the lives of its members and it provided these members with a sense of cultural identity. There was thus little or no dissonance between public and private spheres, individual and collective realms, over who was a Jew. The halachic definition of Jewishness, where one is defined as a Jew by virtue of birth to a Jewish mother or conversion into Judaism through the agency of a qualified *beit din* (rabbinical court), is based upon and entirely suitable to a corporate world where pluralism was controlled politically in such matters and where individualism and voluntarism had not yet arisen to the degree they have in the modern world.⁵ When an individual was born of a Jewish mother or converted into the community, it was more than a case of religious affiliation. It was a matter of that person's political status and cultural identity. Only in rare instances could a conflict have arisen between the individual and public political bodies as to a person's status and identity as a Jew. Status and identity in the medieval setting were virtually one and the same in almost every case. An individual who defined herself as a Jew could have done so only with the assent of a politically self-governing Jewish community as well as the Gentile authorities who permitted the Jews to enjoy a semi-autonomous political status.

With the advent of "modernity" in the West, the situation began to change. The traditional halachic definition of Jewishness—essentially a status one—was in many ways too narrow to deal with the full parameters of this issue. Modernity largely transformed the matter of Jewishness from a question of status into one of identity. Changes in the political and religious realms reduced the community from its previous position as a political corporation possessing legal authority over its membership into a pluralistic and voluntaristic association. Several varieties of non-Orthodox Judaism as well as secular Zionism arose. This fragmentation not only signaled a diversity of religious viewpoints within the community. It was also marked by a tendency among each of these denominations to arrogate for itself the right to determine who was a Jew. Furthermore, because the political structure and authority of the community was dismantled by the emergence of the modern nation-state, no one denomination within the community could legally impose its definition of Jewishness upon the entire community. In addition, these political and religious changes granted the individual the right to participate in the community and affirm her identity as a Jew or, if she chose, elect not to participate in it. In short, by creating conditions which have made "Jewishness" a matter of option for many individual Jews, modernity has altered the traditional understanding of Jewishness. It is now, in many instances, not a matter of predestined fate, but a question of assumed identity.

As Peter Berger, the famed sociologist of religion, has phrased it:

In the situation of the ghetto, . . . it would have been absurd to say that an individual *chose* to be a Jew. To be Jewish was a taken-for-granted given of the individual's existence, ongoingly reaffirmed with ringing certainty by everyone in the individual's milieu . . . There was the theoretical possibility of conversion to Christianity, but the social pressures against this were so strong that it was realized in very few cases. . . . The coming of emancipation changed all this. For more and more individuals it became a viable project to step outside the Jewish community. Suddenly, to be Jewish emerged as one choice among others. . . . The fullest development was reached in America in the twentieth century. Today, within the pluralistic dynamic of American society, there must be very few individuals for whom being Jewish has the quality of a taken-for-granted fact.

Yet those who affirmed an orthodox or even a moderately orthodox version of Jewish identity continued to define the latter as such a fact. Their problem is that they must affirm it in the face of empirical evidence to the contrary. The orthodox precisely defines Jewish identity as destiny, while the social experience of the individual reveals it as an ongoing choice. This dissonance between definition and experience is at the core of every orthodoxy in the modern world. . . . The orthodox defines himself as living in a tradition; it is of the very nature of tradition to be taken for granted; this taken-for-grantedness is continually falsified by the experience of living in a modern society. The orthodox must then present to himself as fate what he knows empirically to be a choice. This is a difficult feat. It goes far to explain the attraction of such movements as that of Lubavitcher Hasidism, which constructs an artificial *shetl* for its followers. The difference from the old *shetl* is quite simply this: All the individual has to do to get out of his alleged Jewish destiny is to walk out and take the subway. Outside, waiting, is the emporium of life-styles, identities, and religious preferences that constitute American pluralism.⁶

Berger's observations reveal that what was formerly a matter of fate and destiny has now been transformed into an issue of option and choice. The answer to the query "Who is a Jew?" has evoked a furor in so many Jewish quarters precisely because it speaks to the heart of the struggle that has marked Judaism in the West in its transition from the pre-modern to the modern world. A look at the ferocity of the debate between Orthodox and Reform Jewish leaders surrounding the issue of patrilineality will reveal why this is so. Moreover, the arguments over this issue provide an accurate barometer for measuring how different denominations conceptualize Judaism in the modern setting.

At the 1983 convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Los Angeles, a resolution was passed declaring that "the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish descent" and that "this presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people." While the wording of the resolution has been sharply criticized for its ambiguity,⁸ one thing is clear. The framers of the resolution and the CCAR as a whole envision Judaism, in some measure, as a voluntaristic enterprise. The resolution, no matter how

interpreted, affirms a modern notion of choice. Jewishness is not automatically accorded the offspring of one Jewish parent.⁹ Rather, given the wording of the resolution, "Jewishness" is awarded an individual only when there are "appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people." The "birth dogma" of traditional Judaism,¹⁰ whereby an individual born of a Jewish mother is automatically accorded the status of Jew, is seemingly discarded by the intent of the resolution. Berger's contention about the transformed nature of the modern setting, and his observation that Jewish identity is now a matter of choice and not a given, immutable legal status, is not simply acknowledged as a description of contemporary social reality. Rather, it is enshrined as a foundational premise of liberal Judaism and, consequently, Jewish identity.¹¹

It is this conceptualization of Judaism as a matter of choice, of the autonomy accorded individuals in determining their religious identity, which provokes the bitter reaction of the Orthodox. As Rabbi Binyamin Walfish, the executive Vice-President of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America has written,

Although the patrilineal descent resolution enacted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis is certainly not the first, or only resolution passed by the Reform rabbinate which breaches *halakha*, nor is it necessarily the most serious violation of halakha principle, it has evoked more reaction and comment than prior resolutions since Reform's initial break with halakha and Jewish tradition. The question is, therefore, what is there about this particular issue which calls forth so much comment and analysis?¹²

Walfish's colleague, Rabbi Walter Wurzburger, the editor of the Orthodox academic journal *Tradition*, echoes those thoughts. He states,

At first sight it seems strange that acrimony should have developed from what seems only one more in a long series of violations of fundamental halakha principles. . . . Since its very inception, Reform openly and unabashedly declared its independence from the authority of the *Halakha*. Why, then, should what amounts merely to another link in the long chain of categorical repudiations of halakha principles send such shock waves through the Jewish community? Can it really be claimed that the rejection of halakha criteria for the

determination of Jewish status constitutes a more blatant violation of Jewish law than the sanctioning of *hillul shabbat* abolition of *kashrur* and *Taharat Hamishpachah*, or the substitution of a civil divorce for the *Get*?

Indeed, Wurzburger continues,

Patrilineal descent is far from being the most serious threat to Jewish unity. It does not even compare with the irreparable damage to Jewish unity that resulted from the Reform policy of sanctioning remarriage without a *Get*. If a woman were to remarry solely on the basis of a civil divorce, her off-spring would be a *Manzer*, permanently disqualified from marrying any other individual who is not similarly stigmatized. There is no possibility of remedying this unfortunate condition. On the other hand, the consequences of the patrilineal descent resolution are not quite so drastic. Although the offspring of a non-Jewish mother would be regarded as a non-Jew by traditional Jews, there still remains the option of a subsequent conversion to Judaism which would remove obstacles to marrying other Jews¹³

Why then the sharpness of the reaction to the issue of patrilineal descent and the subsequent affirmation of the individual's Jewish identity that flows from it? Wurzburger answers in the following way:

To appreciate fully the revolutionary nature of a patrilineal descent resolution, it is essential to bear in mind that the new Reform policy amounts not merely to a revision of the procedures required to gain admission to the ranks of the Jewish people, but it constitutes the rejection of the biological, ethnic dimension of the covenantal existence of the Jew. It strikes at the very root of Jewish existence. According to the classical conception, Jewish identity is not a matter of a Jew's voluntary choice, but is imposed upon those who qualify by birth for membership in the Jewish people. . . . Jewishness ceases to be acquired simply by birth. It becomes a matter of voluntary self-identification. . . .

The paramount importance assigned to voluntary self-identification as a criterion for children of mixed marriages amounts to a rejection of the ethnic, "tribal" component of Jewish identity. . . . Judaism has always operated with the premise that the accident of birth imposes upon an individual the irrevocable responsibilities and obligations

associated with Jewish identity. Once required, be it by birth or by conversion, one cannot renounce one's Jewish identity. . . . "Once a Jew always a Jew."¹⁴

The Orthodox critique of the Reform position on patrilineality, as articulated here by Rabbi Wurzburger, reflects a status approach to the issue of Jewishness. In so doing, it contrasts sharply with the more voluntaristic stance towards this question adopted by Reform and reveals an entirely different conceptualization of Judaism in the present situation. For Orthodoxy, while it may be forced to concede the empirical correctness of some of Berger's insights about the nature of the Jewish condition in the modern world, refuses to accord them normative status. The issue of Jewish status and identity, the question "Who is a Jew?" has been elevated to such a paramount position on the contemporary Jewish scene because it reflects the ongoing divisions that divide different Jewish groups' approaches to Judaism in the current world. The Orthodox continue to view Judaism and the Jewish community in the traditional way that it has been conceptualized for over two millennia. In so doing, the Orthodox reject the "right" of modernity to alter the nature of the Jewish religion and its community. Reform, in contrast, is informed by many of the values of the modern world and legitimates their place in a contemporary approach to Judaism. In sum, Reform affirms voluntarism and choice as integral parts of modern Judaism. The battle between Reform and Orthodoxy over Jewish status and identity, when seen from this perspective, is the reflection of a deeper controversy over the nature of Judaism itself in the modern world.

The practical consequences flowing from these differences in approach to the question of Jewish identity is that Reform, in general, is willing to accept the "Jewishness" of large numbers of individuals whose halachic status as Jews would be denied by the Orthodox. Cases such as this are too numerous to document. Yet, it should be noted that the considerations involved in this question of "Jewishness" can sometimes lead in the opposite direction. In Los Angeles, for instance, where nearly twenty Reform *mohalim/or* have been trained and certified during the last few years, a case was reported in which a Jewish mother who had affirmed a belief in Jesus as the Messiah desired to have her son ritually circumcised as a Jew in a *berit mila* ceremony. The Reform *mohel*, feeling that the

mother's decision in the realm of belief obviated her right to hold such a ceremony, declined to perform the ritual circumcision. Subsequently, the mother approached an Orthodox *mohel* who, satisfied that the mother was indeed Jewish, performed the ceremony. Or, to cite another instance, a Reform rabbi was approached to officiate at the marriage of a Jewish man to a woman who, though born of a Jewish mother, was raised as a Christian. When the Reform rabbi refused to officiate at the wedding unless the bride receive formal instruction in Judaism, the couple went to an Orthodox rabbi who agreed to perform the ceremony.

These two examples simply highlight how complex and paradoxical the issue of Jewish status and identity may be in the modern world where no governmental body legally authorized to adjudicate these cases exists. However, the cases also illuminate something of the distinction that often separates the Orthodox from the Reform approach in these matters. For the Orthodox officiants in these cases, Jewishness is ultimately a question of status alone. To be Jewish is to be part of a covenantal community one enters through birth. No action on the individual's part can alter that fact. In contrast, the Reform officiants' decisions in these instances reveal their resolve to reject birth alone as the decisive criterion in assigning Jewish status and identity to an individual.

Before concluding, it is vital to note that this picture of Reform and Orthodox positions towards issues of Jewish status and identity is somewhat overdrawn for the heuristic purpose of defining what is significantly distinctive about each of them. In this sense, it is hoped that the paper has not only succeeded in illuminating the nature of each movement's contemporary stance towards Judaism. Rather, inasmuch as these stances do reflect the distinctive attitude each denomination holds in regard to the nature of Judaism in the modern world, a comprehension of them aids in explaining the extreme hostility and bitterness this matter has engendered on the modern Jewish scene.

Yet, it would be equally misleading not to acknowledge that the social reality surrounding the matter of Jewish status and identity does not entirely conform to the theoretical postures advanced by each of these movements. In many instances within local communities, there is a shared consciousness among both liberal and traditionalistic Jewish leaders that permits them to adopt something of the posture advanced by the other's movement concerning this

matter. Thus, most modern Orthodox leaders, while not ready to concede the halachic status of a person converted to Judaism under non-Orthodox rabbinical auspices, will nevertheless facilitate these persons' entry into the Orthodox community should they express such a desire. There is a recognition on the part of these men that such persons, and many others, affirm a sense of Jewish identity and, consequently, share in a Jewish fate.¹⁵

Conversely, the resolution on patrilineality aside, virtually no Reform leader sees Jewishness simply as a matter of personal choice and affirmation. Indeed, the Reform Movement's 1983 decision on patrilineal status elevated what had been the de facto practice of the Reform Movement for nearly half a century into an official status that children born of non-Jewish mothers and Jewish fathers could now claim de jure. Concern with status is thus hardly alien to Reform. Moreover, questions of wording and logic aside, the intent of the resolution and the way in which it has been interpreted have allowed the offspring of many different types of unions—endogamous Jewish marriages, marriages in which the mother is Jewish—as well as marriages in which the father is Jewish, the right to have their "Jewishness" affirmed by the Reform Jewish community in an overwhelming majority of cases. In short, few Reform leaders are prepared to reject the traditional notion that a person is born into the Jewish community and, as such, shares in a covenantal faith.¹⁶

This last observation is not meant to obscure the real differences that divide liberal and traditional Jewish camps on these matters. Reform does adopt a socio-psychological posture more in accord with the voluntaristic and pluralistic spirit of the modern world while Orthodoxy continues to affirm a pre-modern approach to Judaism and Jewish existence as a community of destiny and fate. Even if unity in such matters was a *desideratum*, in a country like the United States, where the pre-modern political structure of the community can never be resurrected, it is impossible that this breach could ever be fully healed. And in Israel, the pluralistic nature of Israeli culture makes this unlikely. Nevertheless, these differences, real as they are, should not obscure the fact that the approaches taken to Judaism and Jewishness by adherents and leaders within the various denominations of Judaism in the modern world reflect an admixture of these two world views. As such, they offer a hope that while full-scale consensus over these matters may not be achieved, a

total division of the Jewish People into two warring camps may yet be avoided.

(This chapter was originally delivered at the Annual Convention of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion in Louisville, Kentucky, on October 30, 1987.)

NOTES

1. On this point, see the article by Orthodox Rabbi J. David Bleich, "Parameters and Limits of Communal Unity from the Perspective of Jewish Law," *Journal of Halakha and Contemporary Society* (Fall, 1983), pp. 13-14. For a general survey of contemporary Orthodox attitudes on this issue, see David Ellenson, "Representative Orthodox Responsa on Conversion and Inter-marriage in the Contemporary Era," *Jewish Social Studies* (Summer-Fall, 1985), pp. 209-220.
2. For a sample of such Conservative opinions, see Solomon Goldfarb, "Who Is a Jewish Child?," *Conservative Judaism* (Fall, 1976), pp. 3-10; Philip Sigal, "Children of Mixed Marriages, Are They Jewish: A Symposium on Patrilineal Descent," *Judaism* (Winter, 1985), pp. 89-96; Seymour Siegel, *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly*, 1986, Vol. XLVIII, p. 318; Harold Schulweis, *Israel Today* (January 17, 1980), p. 10; and Wolfe Kelman, "Reaching In, Reaching Out: A Comment," *Moment* (March, 1979), p. 24.
3. A sampling of this literature is found in David Ellenson, "The Integrity of Reform Within Kהל Yisrael," *CCAR Yearbook* (1986), Vol. XCVI, pp. 30-31. Also see the many articles contained in the Winter, 1985, issue of *Judaism* cited above.
4. Of course, modernity also creates the obverse situation in which a segment of the community may well refuse to affirm the Jewish identity of a person who may have halachic claim to such status—e.g., a person born of a Jewish mother who is raised in another religion. As the practical locus of the current debate over matters of Jewish status and identity tends to center around the issue of whether the individual's right to affirm her identity and, hence, status as a Jew ought to be confirmed by the group, these obverse cases are not highlighted at this point in the discussion.
5. This is not to assert that individualism was unknown in the pre-modern world. I thank my colleague Michael Signer for sensitizing me to this point.
6. Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative* (Garden City, New York, 1979), pp. 29-30.
7. From the Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent adopted by the CCAR at its annual convention, March 15, 1983.
8. See Howard Apothaker and Mark Washofsky, "Patrilineality and Presumption," *Journal of Reform Judaism* (Summer, 1984), pp. 39-46; as well as Sol Roth, "Children of Mixed Marriages, Are They Jewish: A Symposium on Patrilineal Descent," pp. 69-70.
9. Indeed, Joseph Edelheit, Chair of the CCAR Committee on Patrilineal Descent which offered the resolution that was passed at the CCAR's 1983 convention, advocates precisely this position in his, "Children of Mixed Marriage: A Non-Lineal Approach," *Journal of Reform Judaism* (Winter, 1983), pp. 37-42.
10. This term is taken from Alvin Reines, "Birth Dogma and Philosophic Religious Faith," *Hebrew Union College Annual* Vol. XLVI, (1975), pp. 297-330.
11. On the notion of choice as a Reform Jewish principle, see, for example, the many works of Eugene Borowitz.
12. Binjamin Walfish, "Children of Mixed Marriages, Are They Jewish: A Symposium on Patrilineal Descent," p. 107.

13. Wurzbarger, *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
15. See, for example, Albert Ehrman and C. Abraham Fensler, "Conversion and American Orthodox Judaism," *Jewish Journal of Sociology* (June, 1968), p. 53, for a description of the lenient way in which modern Orthodox rabbis often interpret Jewish law to include persons within the community whose halachic status is doubtful. Also see J. Simcha Cohen, "The Conversion of Children Born to Gentle Mothers and Jewish Fathers," *Tradition* (Winter, 1987), pp. 1-17.
16. I am grateful to Rabbi Patricia Karlin-Newman of UCLA Hillel for helping me to formulate this point.

How Am I Am Yisrael? A Concluding Lesson

Objectives

- ✓ Students should be able to apply Kaplan's philosophical ideas about Judaism as a civilization to the ideas that they have been learning about all year long.
- ✓ Students should be able to articulate what they have learned about Jewish Peoplehood in the 21st Century.
- ✓ Students should be able to explain how they are part of Am Yisrael.

Do You Hear What I Hear⁸² – Kaplan's Philosophy of Judaism as a Civilization

- ✓ Two times in a row, read the two excerpts about Mordechai Kaplan's philosophy from the book, *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought: A Partisan Guide* by Eugene Borowitz⁸³. Instruct the students to take detailed notes.
- ✓ Instruct the students to get into chevruta groups and review their notes together. One student puts the notes aside, while the other coaches him/her to a complete summary of the excerpts. Then the students switch roles.
- ✓ Pose the following guiding questions (At this point, you may want to hand out the Kaplan philosophy excerpts to each student, so that the students who are inclined as visual learners can use the excerpts as a tool):
 - What is the main idea of each excerpt?
 - Kaplan wrote his ideas two generations ago, how do they still apply today? In what ways might they need to be updated?
 - In what ways have the things that we learned in this class reflected Kaplan's main ideas? In what ways have the things that we learned in this class contradicted Kaplan's main ideas?
- ✓ Come back together as a class, and share the answers to the guiding questions that each chevruta group generated.

Revisiting The Journal Activity From the Introduction Lesson

Ask the students to fill out the same set of questions from the first session. After they have done so, return their original forms to them. As a class, discuss any changes from the first time that they filled out the questions until now.

Materials

- ✓ Kaplan Philosophy Excerpts (1 Per Student)
- ✓ Blank Journaling Handout (1 Per Student)
- ✓ Completed Journaling Handout from Session 1

Resources

- ✓ Kaplan Philosophy Excerpts

⁸² Adapted from Harvey F. Silver, Richard W. Strong, Matthew J. Pereni, *The Strategic Teacher: Selecting the Right Research-Based Strategy for Every Lesson* (Alexandria: ASCD Publications, 2007), 233.

⁸³ Eugene Borowitz, *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought: A Partisan Guide* (Springfield: Behrman House, 1983), 104-107.

as common to humanity as is the human nature on which religion is ultimately based.

A social emphasis pervades Kaplan's philosophy. He has a passionate commitment to folk existence. Since a civilization can survive many generations, its death can be compared only to the death of an individual. Similarly, Kaplan can conceive of all religions one day having the same theology and ethics. He denies that this would mean the end of separate peoples, for they are an enduring feature of human existence.

Defining Judaism as a Civilization

Following the theories of the renowned sociologist Sumner, Kaplan boldly identifies Judaism as the Jewish people's civilization. Religion is not its only or even dominant content. A civilization is the organic unity of the people and its land, its language, its literature, its mores, its folkways, its laws, its sanctions, its arts, its religion—in sum, the social forms through which a folk expresses itself. Previous liberal Jewish thinkers erred by identifying Judaism in church-like terms. Kaplan's ethnic perspective leads to a far broader conception of the rebuilding of Jewish life. Following the usage of the social pragmatists of the 1930's, Kaplan called his theory Jewish Reconstructionism. Its creative implications emerge from a consideration of its uncommonly far-ranging component aspects.

A people generally comes into being by virtue of living in a certain territory. Its land then becomes a critical factor in the development of its civilization. The Jews are no exception to this pattern. The Torah speaks continually of the importance of the Land of Israel to the Jewish people and of the life it must create because of the Land. When the Jews were dispersed, they prayed for a return to their Land and celebrated festivals based on its agricultural cycle. An other-worldly religion might be able to dispense with its tie to a specific country. Judaism, as the civilization of a people, cannot.

Kaplan can now make a strong case for the identity of Judaism and Zionism. A civilization as contrasted to a religion requires a place

where it can be fully lived and only its homeland will do. Were Kaplan's social philosophy a simple nationalism, land and language would take precedence over culture and only *diyukh*, immigration, would be the preeminent Jewish duty. Kaplan's theory of peoples and their culture does not require him to "negate the Exile" but allows him to hope for a positive Jewish existence in the Diaspora. Like Ahad Ha-Am, Kaplan argues that once the folk center has been established, Jews elsewhere will benefit from its civilization, thereby perpetuating their Jewishness.

With a land goes a language. Hebrew never died as the Jewish tongue *par excellence*. Of all the ancient languages that modern national movements have sought to resuscitate, it alone is truly alive. Worldwide Jewish civilization is increasingly united by it. On this score, too, Kaplan's teaching is in full accord with Zionism.

Once Judaism is seen as the civilization of the Jewish people, the arts, too, have a significant place in it. Religious interpreters of Judaism have been puzzled by Jewish folk songs and dances. Secular theoreticians have been embarrassed by the largely ritual concern of Jewish art and poetry. Both sorts of thinkers fail to grasp the breadth of Jewish self-expression. To the contrary, Kaplan argued, everyone should have been shocked at the lack of Jewish artistic expression in the 1930's or its limit to ritual activities.

Social habits form the bulk of a civilization. Jewish life possesses abundant folkways, ranging from ethical customs to honored recipes. In pre-modern days the major folk acts were authorized as religious duties. They were *mitzvoth*, "commandments (given by God)." For modern Jews with their this-worldly orientation, the term *mitzvoth* can only be a metaphor, testifying that these acts arouse or articulate a Jewish religious mood. We are far more likely to perform *mitzvoth* when they are freed from any connection with a commanding God and seen instead as our ethnic ways to self-fulfillment and folk-survival. This humanistic view of "commandments" has the added advantages of allowing them to be changed as needed or created as seems fitting. In a democratic society, Jewish law must be the community's participatory legislation of its standards. The folk creates "law" as another facet of its civilization; against tradition, the law is not the criterion of

creator of the people. Kaplan is that liberal in his reinterpretation of Judaism.

Any group is obligated to manifest high ethical standards. When it does not reflect these universal values, individuals lose their humanity and the group, its rationale. The glory of Judaism has been its exemplary ethical concern, personal and communal as well. Nothing less will do today. Here too Kaplan follows Ahad Ha-Am. He is so committed to ethics that he limits the right of a people to develop its civilization as it sees fit only by this ethical consideration.

The People Takes Precedence Over All Else

If modern Jews are to live as a full-scale civilization they require an appropriate pattern of community organization. Kaplan suggests creating an American version of the European Jewish community structure, the *kehillah*. Abroad, it was an autonomous, governmentally authorized body. Here it might be a voluntary association of all Jews and Jewish institutions committed to the people's survival. All Jews should have their basic loyalty to the community. It, in turn, should be responsible for meeting the diverse needs of Jews in the community. Thus, congregations should no longer be independent entities, as if religion were not another part of Jewish civilization. In Kaplan's "organic community," they would be maintained for the groups desiring them. Rabbis, too, would be retained by the community to serve its various religious needs.

A fully integrated organizational structure makes the Jewish people itself, not any single facet of its culture, the focus of Jewish loyalty. Operating democratically, the organic community would develop our modern Jewish equivalent of law. With the people legislating for themselves, the living relationship between the folk and the law would be reestablished. This would bridge the present-day gap between the rigidity of the traditional requirements and the permissiveness of modern Jewish living.

The secret of Jewish survival has now become clear. The Jews continue from generation to generation not as bearers of an idea of God or because they have a mission (*à la* Cohen and Baeck), Kaplan does not conceive of the "essence" of Judaism as an idea. He is not that sort of rationalist. Judaism's essence is its social base, its ethnicity. The Jews survive because they are a people. Jewish culture changes; the Jewish folk endures. Peoplehood has provided Jewish identity over the centuries; if properly understood and reinvigorated, it will do so today. Kaplan is certain that the Jewish people can survive the present age of transition. Its civilization may adopt many of the ideas of the surrounding society, but as long as it remains a healthy, self-affirming people it will express them in an authentic Jewish civilizational form. Kaplan therefore dedicated himself to "reconstruct" Jewish peoplehood.

Religion has thus far been omitted from this discussion of Kaplan's theory only to emphasize how radically he had departed from traditional and liberal philosophies of Judaism. Kaplan does not deny the central role of religious belief and practice in Jewish life over the centuries. He is determined, however, to put them into proper sociological perspective.

As Durkheim demonstrated, all civilizations have a religion at their core. It integrates the people's way of life. It gives cosmic authority to the values it cherishes. It empowers the institutions and laws that effectuate these goals in people's everyday lives. The religion also inspires and motivates individuals to strive for these ends. Religion, while only one element in a civilization's variegated activities, is the most important of them, "the first among equals." For Kaplan, Judaism must be a *religious civilization*. He did not substantially alter that position during the next forty years in which he continued to write.

Kaplan's Response to the Changing Social Mood

Since Kaplan wrote his magnum opus, the intellectual climate of Western civilization has lost much of its previous reliance on science

Annotated Bibliography

Books

On Teaching

Matthew J. Perini, Harvery F. Silver, Richard W. Strong, *The Strategic Teacher: Selecting the Right Research-Based Strategy for Every Lesson* (Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007), 103-104.

- ✓ This book was extremely helpful for coming up with a range of activity ideas.

Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz ed., *The Ultimate Jewish Teacher's Handbook* (Springfield, A.R.E. Publishing, 2003), 389.

- ✓ This book had some wonderful activities geared specifically towards Jewish pedagogic content knowledge.

Fiction

Nathan Englander, “What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank” in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank: Stories* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

- ✓ This book of short stories is a wonderful read. It was helpful for me to have a book that felt Jewish, but was not specifically about Jewish history, halakha, liturgy, rituals, etc. nor was it written originally in Hebrew or any other Jewish language.

Sholom Aleichem, “Modern Children” in *Tevye the Dairyman* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009).

- ✓ This book of short stories is also a wonderful read. It provided easily accessible literature that was originally written in Yiddish.

S.Y. Agnon, Ed. Anne Golomb Hoffman and Alan Mintz, trans. Baruch Hochman “Agunot” in *A Book that was Lost and Other Stories* (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1995) 35-47.

- ✓ S.Y. Agnon is a classic modern Israeli author. It was difficult to pick just one of his stories for this curriculum guide. I suggest taking the time to read more of his work, if you have the time. An entire curriculum could probably be written on his stories.

Non-Fiction

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *the Sabbath: its meaning for modern man* (New York: H. Wolff, 1951), 10.

- ✓ This was a wonderful source for quotes and wisdom about Shabbat.

Amos Oz, Nicholas de Lange trans., *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2004), 355-358.

- ✓ This is one of my favorite books. It vividly describes life in Jerusalem for Oz at the birth of the State of Israel. Oz's words make that time period come to life. I used this book to help describe the UN vote that took place on November 29, 1949.

Anita Diamant, *The New Jewish Wedding* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 90-91.

- ✓ This is a wonderful resource for Jewish wedding rituals of all sorts. This book proved helpful in compiling the ketubah handout.

David Ellenson, “Who is a Jew?: Issues of Jewish Status and Identity and Their Relationship to the Nature of Judaism in the Modern World,” in *Berit Mila in the Reform Context*, ed. Lewish M. Barth (Los Angeles: *Berit Mila* Board of Reform Judaism, 1990), 69-79.

- ✓ This is a book about Berit Milah in the Reform context. This particular chapter proved extremely helpful in the lesson about the differing views in the Jewish community as to who is a Jew, and who is not.

Elyse D. Frishman, *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur* (New York: CCAR Press, 2007), 251.

- ✓ This is the Reform Movement's *Siddur*.

Eugene Borowitz, *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought: A Partisan Guide* (Springfield: Behrman House, 1983), 104-107.

- ✓ Given that Mordechai Kaplan's book, *Judaism as a Civilization* is long and dense, Borowitz provides a fantastic summary of some of Kaplan's central views about Jewish Peoplehood.

Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer, *The Creative Jewish Wedding Book: A Hands-On Guide to New & Old Traditions, Ceremonies & Celebrations* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004), 70-72.

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 5.

- ✓ This is another book that proved to be very helpful in compiling the ketubah handout.

Jeffrey K. Salkin, *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005), 1-18.

Jeffrey Veidlinger, *The Moscow State Yiddish Theater* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

- ✓ The introduction of this book has a fantastic section about how to classify a creative expression as Jewish. This informed much of the first unit of this curriculum guide.

JPS TaNaKH: The Jewish Bible (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991).

Judea and Ruth Pearl edit., *I am Jewish: Personal Reflections Inspired by the Last Words of Daniel Pearl* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004).

- ✓ This is an amazing collection of different perspectives on what it means to be Jewish and part of the Jewish People, written by Jews from all walks of life.

Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 54.

- ✓ This is a wonderful resource in terms of looking up rituals and traditions for the traditional-orthodox communities.

Mark Washofsky, *Jewish Living: A Guide To Contemporary Reform Practice* (New York: UAHC Press, 2001), 73-74.

- ✓ This is a wonderful resource in terms of looking up rituals and traditions for the Reform Movement.

Naomi Levy, *Talking to God: Personal Prayers for Times of Joy, Sadness, Struggle, and Celebration* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 1-2.

- ✓ This is an important book about spontaneous Jewish prayer.

Nina Beth Cardin, *The Tapestry of Jewish Time: A Spiritual Guide to Holidays and Life-Cycle Events* (Springfield: Behrman House Publishing, 2000), 35.

- ✓ This book provides both traditional and contemporary spins on the Jewish calendar and life-cycle events.

Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 27-28.

- ✓ Given that I wrote a lesson about the role of women in Judaism, it seemed necessary to use this book, as it is groundbreaking in terms of Jewish feminist theology.

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

- ✓ Though this book is dense, it is truly insightful. It informed most of my choices in the third unit of this guide.

Yossi Katz, *A Voice Called: Stories of Jewish Heroism* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2010).

- ✓ This book is a nice resource for teaching Israel, as it is framed in personal narratives of Jewish heroes.

Websites

<http://www.askherzl.com>

- ✓ I used this website as a resource for Israeli activities. The activity “Poster Tales” came from here.

<http://www.ccarnet.org>

- ✓ This is the website for the Central Conference of American Rabbis. There was a great deal of information on this website concerning Reform Responsa and the Reform Movement’s ideology, both past and present.

<http://www.chabad.org>

- ✓ Given that a fair amount of this curriculum studied the Chabad movement, this website proved helpful for resources about the movement itself. It is important to note that these resources are not objective.

<http://www.icenter.org>

- ✓ The icenter website has a wealth of materials for Israel education.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

- ✓ The Jewish Virtual Library is a fantastic resource for reliable miscellaneous information about Judaism and Israel.

<http://www.makomisrael.org>

- ✓ This website is sponsored by the Jewish Agency. They have some fantastic educational materials concerning Israel and Jewish Peoplehood.

<http://www.MyJewishLearning.com>

- ✓ This website is a great resource for quick Jewish facts.

Miscellaneous Resources

Essays

“Conservative Judaism: Covenant and Commitment” by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, Rabbinical Assembly, accessed March 31, 2013.

<http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/publications/Conservative%20Judaism%20Covenant%20and%20Commitment.pdf>.

- ✓ This is a wonderful and concise essay about the essence of Conservative Judaism.

“What is Reconstructionist Judaism?” by Rabbi Lester Bronstein, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, accessed March 31, 2013. <http://www.rrc.edu/resources/reconstructionist-resources/what-reconstructionist-judaism>.

- ✓ This is a wonderful and concise essay about the essence of Reconstructionist Judaism.

DVD Resources

“About the Film,” The Tribe, accessed on April 23, 2013. <http://tribethefilm.com/about-the-film/>.

David Frankel, *Sex and the City: Pick-A-Little, Talk-A-Little* (2003; New York, HBO), DVD.

Kevin Asch, *Holy Rollers* (2010; Deerfjen Films), DVD.

Peter Sollett, *Nick and Norah’s Infinite Playlist* (2008; Los Angeles, Columbia Pictures), DVD.

Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk, *Glee: Mashup* (2009; Los Angeles, 20th Century Fox Television), DVD.

RHSOE Curriculum Guides

Deana Sussman, “Wherever You Go, There’s Always Someone Jewish: *Exploring Jewish Identity Through Culture*”, 2012, pp. 71-72.

iCenter Resources

Barry Chazan, “Lenses and Narratives for Teaching Israel” in *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education* (Chicago: The iCenter), 5.

Leonard Saxe, “Jewish Identity Development: The Israel Dimension,” *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education*: 2.

- ✓ This is the essay from which I drew the concept of Jewish cultural capital that is threaded throughout this curriculum guide