

The TEL Program

Teens: Experience & Learning

Year Four:

Am Yisrael – Jewish Peoplehood

Havayot Lesson Plans

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Camp JRF / The Jewish Reconstructionist Movement

Guidance for Using These Materials

A “*tel*” is a hill made of and built upon an archeological site – the remains of previous experiences. The TEL program is designed to enable teens to build upon past learning as congregational communities within a community of congregations and *havurot*, the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement.

The word *havayah* comes from the Hebrew word for experience. *Havayot* are experiential learning sessions. These sessions have been written to enable groups of teens to have a meaningful set of experiences together.

These *havayot* are designed to be implemented between two *kallot* (retreats) for participants in the TEL program, although they can be adapted to stand on their own.

Each TEL group, like each Reconstructionist congregation of which it is a part, will have its own personality and dynamics and interests. In fact, TEL groups meet for different amounts of time and with different levels of frequency. We believe that all teaching resources for teens are most effective when the group leaders feel empowered to shape the *havayot* in whatever manner best suits their personal teaching style and the particular dynamics of the TEL group. Therefore, we fully expect Group Leaders to use this material as a launch pad for the group’s TEL experience; it’s okay to skip things and to add others. (Please let us know if you change something and it works particularly well.)

Each *havayah* is written out in great detail. We have tried to write them out in such a way that a Group Leader could read the text nearly verbatim, if need be. More experienced leaders will likely find it more effective to just paraphrase the “big idea.”

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Text in ~~this font~~ gives instructions for the Group Leader on what to say or how to lead a particular section of the program.

Text in **this font** gives preparation instructions or, in some cases, “stage directions.”

Am Yisrael – Jewish Peoplehood: The Havayot

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Havayah One: Am Yisrael and Our TEL Group

Materials:

- Snack food
- Three large sheets of posterboard, tape, markers
- Signs for Jewish Peoplehood Game
- iPad or computer with internet access
- Video or handout about Operation Moses (if desired)
- Song sheets or posters with lyrics to *Am Yisrael Chai* and *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh*, instruments or recordings to accompany (if desired)
- Reflection Journals (if desired)

Ice Breakers, Name Games, Fall Check-In

Mosh Pits and Lists of How We Believe/Behave/Belong

Read to the group:

Rabbi Darby Leigh, one of the rabbis at Bnai Keshet, wrote the following:

[My daily routine is] not the same as being in the mosh pit. It's not the same as being pressed up against the barricade in front of the stage. It's not the same as watching the house lights grow dim, waiting for the band to emerge and feeling the collective roar as the stage lights go up and the first notes wail. In the crowd you melt into an enormous community, when your voice merges with thousands of others, your individualism and ego are dimmed. For a brief moment, you can lose yourself to a collective consciousness and experience being part of something much greater than your individual self.

<http://www.popjewish.com/2012/07/rock-music-on-shabbat.html>

Ask Teens:

- The theme for TEL this year is Jewish peoplehood. What does Rabbi Darby's description of being in a mosh pit have to do with the idea of Jewish peoplehood?

Possible Answers: sense of connection to people you've never necessarily met, sense of being part of something much greater than yourself, unwritten rules of people helping and supporting each other

Leader provides introduction to the theme:

- These are key aspects of Jewish peoplehood/*Am Yisrael*:
 - Some Jewish people feel connected to other Jewish people because of what they believe.
 - Some Jewish people feel connected to other Jewish people because of how they behave (what they do, how we "be").
 - Still others have a gut-level feeling of belonging and connection that lives in them regardless of what they believe or how they behave – this generally has more to do with the feelings that come from common cultural connections (language, jokes, mannerisms, values).

To Do: Hang three large sheets of paper and label each as follows:

- Beliefs that Connect Me to Jewish People
- Behaviors/Activities/Actions that Connect Me to Jewish People
- Ways I “Just” Feel I “Belong” to Jewish People

Invite teens to share examples of each.

Here are some possible examples:

Beliefs that Connect Me to Jewish People

- I believe in one God.
- I believe in treating other people as I would like to be treated.

Behaviors/Activities/Actions that Connect Me to Jewish People

- I have dinner with my family every Friday night.
- I have visited Israel.
- I do *tikkun olam*.

Ways I “Just” Feel I “Belong” to Jewish People

- I like the same jokes as other Jewish people I know.
- There are certain foods that I love to eat that I think of as Jewish.
- When I hear a Hebrew song I feel proud/happy, etc.
- I look like a lot of the other Jewish people I know.
- I spend the whole school year waiting to go to Camp JRF (or another Jewish camp) every summer.
- My Jewish friends have the same feelings I do about how Christmas is celebrated at our school.

Ask teens:

- Think of a belief you hold that you feel like you share with other Jews or that makes you feel connected to the Jewish People as a whole.
- Think of a behavior that you feel like you share with other Jews or that makes you feel connected to the Jewish People as a whole.
- Think of a way you just feel like you belong to the Jewish People as a whole.
- Could everyone put themselves on at least two lists?

Key points for Leader to touch upon:

- When your primary sense of connection to other Jews is rooted in what you believe, your beliefs will influence your behavior and sense of belonging. These, in turn, reinforce your overall sense of Jewish Peoplehood.
- When your primary sense of connection to other Jews is rooted in how you behave – going to services, doing Tikkun Olam, participating in TEL, these actions will influence what you believe and your overall sense of belonging. These, in turn, reinforce your overall sense of Jewish Peoplehood.

Song: *Am Yisrael Chai*

To Do: Pass out song sheets or display poster with lyrics and translation and sing “*Am Yisrael Chai*.” Chords and recordings are easily accessible on the internet.

Here’s some background to the song, which also suggests why there are two distinct yet common translations:

Many well-known Jewish songs are based on words from the Bible. While a vast majority of them are based on *Tehillim* (Psalms) one of the most famous is almost a direct quote from Genesis: *Od Avinu Chai*, “Our Father Still Lives.” In this song, however, an inferred meaning of the words is utilized, rather than the actual meaning in the Torah.

“*Ha’od avi chai?*” “Is my father yet alive?” (Genesis 45:3) is the question asked by Joseph to his brothers after he reveals his identity. In fact, other than saying “I am Joseph,” these were the first words that Joseph spoke to his brothers after revealing his identity. Twenty-two years earlier, he had been separated from his father when his brothers sold him into slavery.

When the singer/composer Shlomo Carlebach attached a modified version of this verse to the phrase: *Am Yisrael Chai*, “The Nation of Israel Lives,” the understanding of “*avi*,” my father, changed from a reference to Jacob to a reference to God: “The nation of Israel lives! Our Father still lives!” The use of *Avinu* to refer to God as the Father of the Children of Israel is well-known from the prayer *Avinu Malkeinu* (“Our Father, Our God”).

The combined phrases create a powerful image of the essence of the Jewish nation. The Torah refers to the Jewish people as “kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6) whose role it is to be a “light unto the nations” (Isaiah 42:6). Nations have come and gone, negating the “power” of their gods (Babylon, Greece, Rome) but the Jewish people’s belief in God has remained steadfast. Today, rather than being challenged by people who believe in different gods, the Jewish people struggle against a lack of belief in God. Yet the very existence of the nation of Israel for over 3,300 years is, in truth, testimony to God’s might. And so: *Am Yisrael Chai, Od Avinu Chai!*

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Ask Teens:

- Have you ever thought about the English meaning of this song before?
- How does the song change if you think the first line is about God or about our ancestors?
- What are we celebrating here?

Operation Moses (allow longer if you show video)

Ask Teens:

- Operation Moses is one of the most powerful examples of the strength of Jewish peoplehood today. What do you know about Operation Moses (which is also called Operation Solomon or Magic Carpet)?
 - If the teens don’t know much, *TEL* Group Leaders might wish to show perhaps the final third of the video “Beta Israel – The Journey of Ethiopian Jewry” by Rachel Abady. If you show the video, point out to the teens that Rachel Abady made this in 2008 while she

was a high school student and won an American Film Renaissance award. She was the youngest winner in AFR history. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUXB1Ebe8RI&feature=channel&list=UL>)

- Alternatively, an article and some images are appended.
- www.MyJewishLearning.com also has a nice synopsis you could just paraphrase.
- Why did the Israeli government go to Ethiopia to help Beta Yisrael?
Possible Answer: The Israeli government felt compelled to rescue the Ethiopian Jews because of their humanitarian suffering and the fact that they were partially suffering because of their identity as Beta Yisrael. They took considerable political and financial risk in order to save these people whose life experience and culture and education and appearance were entirely different than the Jews in Israel to that point.
- Why did Beta Yisrael get on planes and emigrate to Israel?
Possible Answer: Ethiopian Jews were escaping from famine and civil war. They believed in the biblical prophecies of the Israelites' return to Jerusalem. Because of these factors, they were willing to forego everything they had ever known. They had never seen any type of technology but they boarded a plane. They did not know if they would be together with their families ever again (many were separated for a time and others permanently). They trusted these Israelis who brought the plane for them even though they looked totally different from everyone they had known in Ethiopia □
- How does this conversation about Ethiopian Jews connect back to our discussion of Belonging, Behaving, Believing?
- What did the Ethiopian Jews have in common with the Israeli Jews who went to bring them to Israel?
- What beliefs did they share?
Possible Answer: Biblical tradition of shared ancestry.
- What behaviors?
Possible Answer: Very little in terms of lifestyle or Jewish observances/practices - except perhaps withstanding discrimination.
- What sense of belonging?
Possible Answer: They had a deep, basic sense of mutual trust and responsibility – of belonging to the same people.

Song: Am Yisrael Chai

To Do: Pass out song sheets or display poster with lyrics and translation and sing “Am Yisrael Chai” (written by Noam Katz based on the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda). Chords and recordings are available through http://noamkatz.com/Noam_Katz/Mirembe.html.

Ask Teens:

- Have you heard this version before? Does the song take on special or different meaning when it is based on a different culture?

Say to the group:

We cannot say that it has been easy for the Ethiopian Jews to become integrated into Israeli society. They faced extreme culture shock, while the Israeli society in which they arrived has struggled with its own racism and financial obligations to educate and integrate these Ethiopian Israelis. However, today there are over 100,000 Ethiopians.

However, the fact that it has not been easy for Ethiopian Jews to fit in to the larger Israeli society in some ways makes their story an even better example of Jewish Peoplehood. All the people who see themselves as within the umbrella of Jewish Peoplehood are not actually united in beliefs, or actions, or to what, when, or how they feel a sense of belonging. There are times when some Jewish people’s beliefs conflict with those of others. There are times when our behaviors – especially in terms of Jewish observance – conflict, and there are times when the Jewish community to which we have a deep sense of belonging feels very different than the Jewish community of others who understand themselves as part of Am Yisrael.

Image of a Venn diagram (optional) – three overlapping circles Belonging, Behaving, Believing

Leader may want to suggest the teens picture a Venn Diagram of three overlapping circles (belonging, behaving, believing):

Unlike a traditional Venn Diagram, however, *Am Yisrael* are people in any or all of the circles, and not just the overlapping center part. The lines of who we experience as being part of *Am Yisrael* / Jewish Peoplehood and who experience themselves as being part of it are not always clear and they frequently shift.

Jewish Peoplehood Game

- Materials:**
- Sign for corners of the room: Agree/True, Disagree/False
 - Signs for teens to wear may include, but are not limited to, the list below:

- Goals:
- To remind teens of the diverse components of the Jewish People
 - To bring to mind the ways that different groups of Jews are united by common beliefs, behaviors, feelings of belonging/cultural connections
 - To highlight some of the tensions and conflicts between Jewish people

Signs for teens to wear may include, but are not limited to:*

Sephardic Jews	Ashkenazi Jews	American Jews	Israeli Jews
Israeli Ethiopian Jews	Zionist Jews	French Jews	Orthodox Jews
Reconstructionist Jews	Reform Jews	Conservative Jews	Secular Humanist Jews
Inter-married Jews	Jews by Choice	Jews of Color	GLBTQ Jews
Children of Holocaust Survivors	Jews who belong to Synagogue	“Unaffiliated” Jews	Anti-Zionist Jews
Chinese Jews			

*As is true of everyone who fits into the broad category *Am Yisrael*, the suggested constituencies are not all parallel or comparable types of categories. Similarly, sometimes the constituencies overlap. *When choosing categories to include, be sure that teens know enough about each group to participate appropriately in the program.*

To Do:

- Designate one corner of a room as “True/Agree,” and the diagonal corner as “False/Disagree.” The space in between is a continuum.
- Give each teen a sign to wear/hold indicating he/she represents a specific Jewish constituency.

Instructions:

- The Group Leader will call out a series of statements.
- Teens keep moving and position themselves as they determine if a statement would generally be true of the Jewish group they represent. Someone who mildly agrees might stand more towards the center and farther from the corner than someone who has a more emphatic feeling. Teens should be in the middle for issues their group is neutral about or does not as-a-group have any kind of likely response.
- Each time the groups shift, the *TEL* Group Leader should call on various teens to explain how they chose where to stand in a given instance. In this way, two positions can be articulated and juxtaposed. Similarly, the *TEL* Group Leader should also foster conversation by pointing out and commenting upon how the groups shift.
- The statements to read to the teens are as follows – feel free to add your own. Think in terms of the three categories of what I believe, what I do, how I feel I belong
 - I believe Jews are the Chosen People.
 - I pray three times a day.
 - I go out for Chinese food on Christmas.
 - My grandparents spoke Yiddish.
 - I do not believe in a supernatural God of any kind.
 - I love chicken soup.
 - I have curly hair.
 - I go to Jewish summer camp.
 - I have experienced anti-Semitism.
 - I say prayers when I go to services.
 - I feel chills when I sing the Israeli national anthem, *Hatikvah*.
 - I believe in one God.
 - I love Jewish jokes.
 - My ancestors spoke Ladino (a mix of Hebrew and Spanish).
 - I have a mezuzah hanging on the front door of my house.
 - I love Israeli folk dancing.
 - I always point out Jewish people on TV and in the movies.
 - I say a blessing over the candles on Friday nights.
 - I believe all people are created equal.
 - I use Yiddish words all the time.
 - I belong to a synagogue.
 - I feel most relaxed around other Jewish people.
 - I believe Israel is an important center of Jewish civilization and culture.
- Follow up game with reflections and observations.

Read the following as a group:

Wear pink and park away from the house. These were simple enough instructions for my sister-in-law's surprise baby shower. Twenty Nepalese women gathered in her friend's home to celebrate our soon-to-be newest family member. Shades of pink kurtas (traditional loose-fitting shirts) sashayed from room to room as echoes of giggles brightly filled the narrow halls. Following my sister-in-law's arrival, she was whisked away for makeup application and a clothing change. When she emerged in a pink dress that gently hugged my growing niece, she blushed and seemed pleased. Her friends set out fried donuts, spicy potato salad dishes, spring rolls and dumplings. This first course was followed by a variety of colorful rice, saucy vegetable and creamy chicken dishes. Since the women spoke mostly in Nepalese, I took on the role of observer. I watched how they interacted, teased and laughed with one another. After sitting on the floor, perched close to one another, eating their spicy food and chatting, they took pictures in the sun-filled garden. They snapped photos of my glowing sister-in-law and eagerly jumped in to pose with her.

As with most baby showers that I have attended, we played baby-themed games, including a game which utilized fruit to mock delivering a baby. Unlike other showers I have been to, there was also a meaningful prayer session. My sister-in-law's friends provided a seat for her and in front of her was a silver tray filled with a deep, rich orange-red powder, referred to as tika. In order to give the prayer or tika, each guest dipped her finger in the crimson powder and placed it gently on my sister-in-law's head. While doing so, each guest recited a prayer for my sister-in-law's health and well-being. As she gave the soft-spoken blessing, each guest also fed her a taste of an Indian sweet, in order to wish her good luck, health and happiness. This custom also includes placing flower garlands around the guest. Flowers are always a part of happy Nepali occasions, as they symbolize positivity and beauty. As I prayed for my sister-in-law, I appreciated the special custom and I felt emotional to be part of this unique tradition.

While I had admiration for my sister-in-law's friends' kindness and for their creativity in blending American baby shower traditions with Nepalese traditions, I could not help feeling a little bit left out. While someone would try to talk to me from time to time in English, I felt guilty for making them include me when I was the only exclusion. I felt uneasy for invading a similar space with shared language, culture and values with my awkward and glaring otherness. Socially, I felt separate and physically, I looked different.

When I arrived home, I told my husband about the food from his homeland. I surprised him with some fried donuts as I confided in him that I felt separate. Surprisingly, he smiled as he curled his lower lip and said he understood. He felt just the same when we lived in Chicago and celebrated Jewish holidays in my family's home. I wondered, how could *he* feel like the other in *our* home? It was comfortable for me and I had always hoped he had felt the same natural ease. The more I reflected, however, it was not any different. In our Jewishness, we share our own world with boundaries that are years in the making and that are hard to understand and penetrate. Without necessarily being conscious of our actions, we are always forming a community.

Community necessitates belonging. Sometimes, in our communities, we define and recognize ourselves by what we are not, which makes exclusion the norm rather than the exception.

Heather Subba, http://www.interfaithfamily.com/relationships/interracial_and_intercultural_relationships/The_Venn_Diagram_of_Backgrounds.shtml

Siyyum and Brief Look Forward

Say to the group:

Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, literally coined the term Jewish peoplehood.

Reconstructionist Judaism has a proud legacy of inclusivity. We tend to trust that Judaism will be enriched when the circles of who is part of our Jewish community is widened. However, part of what we will explore in TEL is how even our commitments to Jewish inclusion and diversity have boundaries. Considering the pull of the value of Jewish peoplehood against the backdrop of our commitment to our personal beliefs, behaviors, and sense of belonging is one of the deeper levels of the topic we will explore in this TEL year.

Later in the year, our TEL Group we will create a project that speaks to the theme of Jewish peoplehood. It could be anything we think of that deepens the levels of inclusion or mutual understanding among Jews today, or something that celebrates Jewish diversity, whatever we think of. It can be a *tikkun olam* project, an art project, a film, whatever we think of...

Before we get to the project though, we are going to explore a number of contemporary issues related to Jewish peoplehood, including: matrilineal and patrilineal descent, the politics of Jewish communal newspapers, and civil liberties in Israel.

Background Information:

An article about Kaplan and the concept of peoplehood, written by Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz, is available online at:

<http://www.reut-institute.org//data/uploads/pdfver/peoplehoodcontact.pdf>

Reflection Journals

To Do:

- Hand out the teens' Reflection Journals. Reflection Journals are a component we include with the *havayot* that some leaders rely on and other leaders skip. Use your best judgment about how they will be received by your group. Since this is the first session of the year, if you aren't sure how your teens will feel or if they will take it seriously, this is the session to give it a try.
- Share with them that these journals are for them and that they won't have to share with the group if they don't wish to. If you as the Group Leader want to be able to look at their writings, tell them that upfront.

When teens finish journaling, you can invite them to share any reflections or keep them private if they wish.

Song: *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh*

Conclude with the song *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh*.

Am Yisrael Chai

עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל חַי
Am Yisrael chai (repeated)

עוֹד אָבִינוּ חַי
Od avinu chai (repeated)

Our God Lives On / Our Forefathers Live On

The people of Israel live on

Our God lives on
[sometimes translated: Our forefathers live on]

Kol Yisrael Am Ekhad

Shlomo Carlebach

כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרֵבִים זֶה לָזֶה

Kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh
kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh
kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh
kol Yisrael akhim (x2)

All of Israel One Nation

All of Israel cares for one another
All of Israel cares for one another
All of Israel cares for one another
All of Israel are siblings. (x2)

Operation Moses

Jewish village in Ethiopia:



Boarding the plane and flying to Israel:



This week in History: Operation Moses begins

Michael Omer-Man, *The Jerusalem Post* (November 19, 2010)

Although Ethiopian aliya has taken over 25 years, it pales in comparison to the 40 years its namesake required to lead Exodus from Egypt.

On November 21, 1984, a seven-week clandestine operation to bring Falash Mura Ethiopian Jews to Israel began. The unprecedented undertaking, code-named "Operation Moses," was a three-way collaboration between the Mossad, the CIA and Sudanese State Security (SSS) to smuggle nearly 8,000 Falash Mura out of refugee camps in Sudan in a massive airlift to Israel. Operation Moses turned out to be the beginning of large-scale, official Israeli efforts to facilitate a Falash Mura aliyah that continues to this day.

The Chief Rabbinate of Israel ruled that Ethiopian Jews had the right to immigrate to the country under the Law of Return in 1975. A few years later, small-scale efforts had already begun to bring individual and small groups of Falash Mura to Israel. However, these efforts, undertaken through semi-official and sometimes illegal channels quickly became impractical and too difficult to continue. A larger-scale covert operation would be necessary.

In 1981, significant numbers of Falash Mura, whose Jewish heritage goes back 3,000 years, began an onerous and often deadly trek, joining several hundred thousand of their countrymen who had already fled to Sudan to escape the virulent famine that was plaguing Ethiopia. However, most of those who would eventually be smuggled out of Sudan in Operation Moses did not make the journey until 1983-84. Conditions on the way to Sudan were particularly brutal and an estimated 4,000 of those hoping to make it to Israel died of malnutrition and disease, never finishing the journey they risked everything to embark on.

When reports began arriving in late 1984 that large numbers of Falash Mura were dying from malnutrition in Sudanese refugee camps, the decision to begin Operation Moses was made. The Mossad and the CIA, which already had a presence in Khartoum, began making arrangements with the semi-autonomous SSS agency for a massive airlift operation. In preparation, the Falash Mura were moved to rented houses in the Sudanese town of Gedaref. From there, they were slowly brought to the Khartoum airport where nearly 8,000 were eventually flown to Israel on charter flights on a Belgian airline. On November 21, 1984, the first flight took off from Khartoum – where the SSS had set aside a special runway for the operation – and landed in Israel. Operation Moses had begun.

Over the following seven weeks, more than 30 flights brought approximately 200 Ethiopian Jews at a time to Israel. The flurry of flights ran without a hitch until Friday January 5, 1985, when then-prime minister Shimon Peres publicly confirmed media reports of the covert operation. Immediately following the Israeli acknowledgment, fearing pressure from other Arab bloc countries, the already-weak Sudanese president ordered a halt to the clandestine emigration. It is not known exactly why news of the operation was leaked, but several sources have speculated that an Israeli government official alarmed by the number of Ethiopian Jews arriving was responsible.

What is known is that some 800 Falash Mura were left behind in Sudan. The Israeli government, however, was determined to finish what it had started. Two months later, with the encouragement of Israeli officials, then-US vice president and recently retired CIA director George H.W. Bush planned and

executed the second half of Operation Moses, known in Israel as Operation Sheba and in the US as Operation Joseph.

In March 1985, Bush personally flew to Sudan to arrange the second half of the airlift. After managing to convince the Sudanese president to allow the US to complete the final stage of the operation, the CIA scouted and prepared a small airfield in al-Azaza near Gedaref, where the Falash Mura had previously been gathered prior to their departure. Mossad agents – Ethiopian Jews who had made aliyah before Operation Moses – located those Falash Mura who remained in refugee camps and drove them to the remote airfield. The soon-to-be-Israelis were rushed onto several US military C-130 Hercules aircraft, landing at the run-down airstrip in 20 minutes intervals, flying them directly to Israel.

Together, Operations Moses and Sheba brought approximately one third of the Ethiopian Falash Mura to Israel. The consequences of the operation, which some estimates put as costing \$300 million, were felt on several continents. In Sudan, news of the government's cooperation with Israel helped lead to the downfall of the president and his Western-aligned regime. As a result, the United States lost an important ally in east Africa and the Arab world. In Israel, the Jewish state had begun to experience yet another aliya and the ensuing difficulties of absorbing members of a Jewish tradition foreign to most Israelis.

The next wave of Ethiopian emigration would not take place for another six years when Operation Solomon (which brought an additional 14,000 Falash Mura) was finally made possible by regime change in Ethiopia in 1991. Only this past week, in November 2010, the government finally approved plans to bring the nearly 8,000 Falash Mura waiting in Ethiopia to Israel. Although the Ethiopian aliya has taken over 25 years thus far, it pales in comparison to the 40 years its namesake required to lead the Exodus from Egypt.

Addendum: As of 2010, over 110,000 people of Ethiopian descent are living in Israel

Havayah Two: Jewish Peoplehood

Materials:

- Copy of Yehuda Amichai's poem "The Jews"
- Copies of Gil Troy's article, "Dimensions Of Peoplehood"
<http://www.reut-institute.org//data/uploads/pdfver/peoplehoodpapers1.pdf>, pp. 51-55
- Signs for each of Troy's ten aspects of Jewish Peoplehood (plenty of blank space on the sign around word): belonging, fate, history, community, memory/identity, ethnicity, family, tribal, spirit, responsibility
- Five stickers per teen (often "dots" are used for this activity)

Values of Spiritual Peoplehood

Introduction:

The Values of Spiritual Peoplehood were developed by Rabbi Jeffrey Schein and Rabbi Jeffrey Eisenstat based on Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan's principles for a reconstruction of Jewish life. They included a category called *ziyonut*, which was loosely translated as "spiritual peoplehood."

Ask teens:

- Does anyone know what *ziyonut* literally means in Hebrew?
Possible answer: Zionism.
- What is Zionism?
Possible Answer: Belief in and support of a Jewish Homeland and/or the State of Israel.
- Kaplan saw Israel as a Jewish homeland that would become a center of Jewish civilization with a centrifugal force uniting Jews in the diaspora and in Israel. Why is love of / support of / connection to Israel not the same as Jewish peoplehood?
Possible Answer: Israel serves in that capacity for lots of Jews, but Jews with no connection to the modern state of Israel can still have a deep connection to one another and their Jewish heritage, culture and religion.
- Notice that there is a difference between *am yisrael* (the people of Israel) and *eretz yisrael* (the land of Israel). When you think of the phrase "Jewish peoplehood," what words come to mind?
Possible Answers: Relationships, connection, culture.

Yehuda Amichai's poem "The Jews"

Read the poem. (see page 19)

Ask teens:

- What is Amichai trying to define?
- What does he believe connects Jewish people?
- What do you think Amichai means by this line: "The Jews are not a historical people / And not even an archaeological people, the Jews / are a geological people with rifts"? What is his definition of Jewish peoplehood?
- Does Amichai think it matters if we know each other? What do you think?

- Does Amichai think it matters what we believe? What do you think?
- Does Amichai think it matters if we do the same things as other Jews? What do you think?
- Does Amichai believe we have responsibilities to each other? What do you think?

This interpretation, from Shlomi Ravid, may be helpful:

Amichai “is telling us that being part of the Jewish People transcends time and personal acquaintance. We are connected whether we know each other or not, regardless of our knowledge of Judaism or degree of faith, and even without the consciousness of being part of the collective. But more than that, if we, a rather random sample (we do not even know each other), are "The People," we both represent it and are responsible for it. This is Amichai's Peoplehood definition.”

<http://www.reut-institute.org//data/uploads/pdfver/peoplehoodpapers1.pdf>

Text Study

To Do: Divide the teens up into *hevruta* (pairs) or small groups, with each group studying one of the ten aspects of Jewish peoplehood in Gil Troy’s article:

- belonging
- fate
- history
- community
- memory/identity
- ethnicity
- family
- tribal
- spirit
- responsibility

<http://www.reut-institute.org//data/uploads/pdfver/peoplehoodpapers1.pdf>, pp. 51-55

Texts can be found at the end of this curriculum. Each pair or group should read aloud and discuss the texts included for their category.

Sharing and Discussion of Aspects of Jewish Peoplehood

Teens should share their category and what they read and discussed with the rest of the group. They should strive to describe their category using only five sentences or bullet points.

Encourage discussion of how the different categories relate to each other; for example:

- What is the difference between believing we share a common fate and have a common responsibility?
- How do the categories of family, community, and tribe relate to one another? Which is closer to you? Why?
- Does it make sense to you that memory is a separate category than history?

Identifying Which Aspects of Jewish Peoplehood Most Resonate With You

To Do:

- Hang signs with the name of each category.
- Give each teen five stickers. Each sticker is a vote.
- Have teens vote for which categories are most compelling to them.
- Let the teens allocate their stickers however they wish (they can put all five towards one category, or five separately, or anything in between).

Return to the group for discussion:

- Discuss which categories received the most, which the least, etc.
- Invite teens to share the rationale they used for deciding how to allocate their votes.
- Ask them to contrast their answers with what they think their parents, or even grandparents, might have selected.
- Invite teens to consider if there are aspects of Jewish peoplehood and identity that are not present or captured by these ten categories.

Take it to the Next Level

These categories are well-suited to creative arts projects. For example, teens could create a piece of art with panels representing each (or any) of these ten aspects of Jewish peoplehood; the assignment of mural panel topics could be based on who voted for which aspects.

The categories might also become the basis of a peoplehood song.

Reflection Journals

Pass out reflection journals and invite teens to share their thoughts privately by writing in their journals. You may invite anyone who would like to share to do so.

The Jews

Yehuda Amichai

The Jews are like photos in a display window,
All of them together, short and tall, alive and dead,
Brides and grooms, bar mitzvah boys and babies.
Some are restored from old yellowed photographs.
Sometimes people come and break the windows
And burn the pictures. And then they start
Photographing and developing all over again
And displaying them again, sad and smiling.

Rembrandt painted them wearing Turkish
Turbans with beautiful burnished gold.
Chagall painted them hovering in the air,
And I paint them like my father and my mother.
The Jews are an eternal forest preserve
Where the trees stand dense, and even the dead -
Cannot lie down. They stand upright, leaning on the living,
And you cannot tell them apart. Just that fire
Burns the dead faster.

And what about God? God lingered
Like the scent of a beautiful woman who once
Faced them in passing and they didn't see her face,
Only her fragrance remained, kinds of perfumes,
Blessed be the Creator of kinds of perfumes.

A Jewish man remembers the sukkah in his grandfather's home.
And the sukkah remembers for him
The wandering in the desert that remembers
The grace of youth and the Tablets of the Ten Commandments
And the gold of the Golden Calf and the thirst and the hunger
That remember Egypt.

And what about God? According to the settlement
Of divorce from the Garden of Eden and from the Temple,
God sees his children only once
A year, on Yom Kippur.

The Jews are not a historical people
And not even an archaeological people, the Jews
Are a geological people with rifts
And collapses and strata and fiery lava.
Their history must be measured
On a different scale.

The Jews are buffed by suffering and polished by torments
Like pebbles on the seashore.
The Jews are distinguished only in their death
As pebbles among other stones:
When the mighty hand flings them,
They skip two times, or three,
On the surface of the water before they drown.

Some time ago, I met a beautiful woman
Whose grandfather performed my circumcision
Long before she was born. I told her,
You don't know me and I don't know you
But we are the Jewish people,
Your dead grandfather and I the circumcised and you the beautiful granddaughter
With golden hair: We are the Jewish people.

And what about God? Once we sang
"There is no God like ours," now we sing, "There is no God of ours"
But we sing. We still sing.

Havayah Three: Patrilineal / Matrilineal Descent

Materials:

- M&Ms
- Texts
- Pens, paper
- Debate props (if desired) – gavel, wig, judges' robes, etc.

Notes:

- Prior to starting this program, it is important for the leader to know his/her congregation's policy and/or rabbi's thoughts on this issue.
- This program is written with a two-heterosexual-parent family in mind (i.e. a mother and a father). Depending on the level of the teens, it is possible to deepen this conversation by discussing issues such as adoption or a child with two fathers. Both of these topics will lead away from the specific issue of matrilineal/patrilineal descent but they will, undoubtedly, provide interesting conversation for the teens.

Ice Breaker

Instructions:

- Invite teens to sit in a circle.
- Pass around a large bag of M&Ms. Encourage teens to take as many M&Ms as they want. Some will take one, while others will undoubtedly take many. Do not tell them what the squares will be used for.
- Once everyone has some M&Ms, introduce the task: going around and sharing family stories. For each M&M that the teens have taken, ask them to share something about their family or family members' relationship to Jewish civilization or Judaism. Examples might include: favorite Jewish holiday traditions, foods that parents or grandparents make for special occasions, places the family likes to travel, etc.
- Observe out loud how the stories from different families resonated with each other – could these all have been stories from one great big family? In what ways?
- When everyone has had a chance to share and used up all their M&Ms, the leader should take some time to talk about how their families' relationship to Jewish peoplehood has influenced the teens' relationships to the Jewish people.

Suggestions for what to say to make the transition to the main activity:

We know that the people you just shared stories about are part of the Jewish community in a broad sense because they are connected to you. There is a sense in which – with you as the starting point – we can understand that these people are all part of a broad extended family of the Jewish people whether or not they as individuals are *halakhically* Jewish or instead understand themselves to be part of a family which has Jewish members like you.

It gets more complicated when you start in the other direction and try to work from our ancestors down to us. Since biblical times, Jews have wrestled with the question of how we

know who is Jewish, who is part of this abstract thing called Jewish peoplehood. The heart of that debate has been the concepts of matrilineal and patrilineal descent.

Advice for the Group Leader:

For many teens, this is likely to be a touchy topic and, as such, it is crucial for the leader to be careful with the language s/he uses. It is important to acknowledge to the teens up front that the topic of matrilineal and patrilineal descent focuses on people who are Jewish by birth and does not address the complexities of people who are adopted or who choose to become Jewish through conversion. It cannot hurt to reiterate to the teens that – no matter what we discuss while studying this topic – our community knows that each and every one of them is Jewish.

Ask the teens:

- Do any of you belong to a club? Which? *[If not, teens should think about the dynamics of their TEL group.]*
- What is the club for, what does it do?
- Who is in the club? Are there rules about who can join?
- Would the club change if different people became members?
- Are there people you would rather not have in your club?
 - Maybe you would prefer there not be younger teens or older teens?
 - Maybe you would prefer it was only boys or only girls?
- Being part of the Jewish People is a lot like being part of a club. Let's keep in mind your answers about being part of a club and think about Jewish peoplehood like a club for a minute:
 - Can anyone be part of the Jewish people?
 - Who decides? Who do you think should be able to decide?
 - Think about how the particular members of a club impact how much you enjoy being part of a club and what the club actually does. Does this make you feel more strongly about who is considered part of the Jewish people?

Say: That's the main focus of this session: who is accepted as Jewish and who should get to decide.

Background for the Group Leader about why being able to quantify Jews is important today:

See the Executive Summary of the United Jewish Federation of New York 2011 Jewish Population Survey: <http://www.ujafedny.org/get/196901>. Each section of the Executive Summary highlights what was learned and then offers a box of implications of the information gleaned from the survey.

Also, a broader discussion: <http://www.shma.com/2010/10/counting-what-matters-a-roundtable>

Lead the teens in a brief text study of three different versions of the first paragraph of the Amidah:

A layer of meaning you probably haven't been aware of when you chant this prayer is that our tradition has long wrestled with the issue of how important it is to trace our lineage, our ancestors, through the female or male lines.

Patrilineal Descent

- The traditional version of the prayer reflects the fact that, in biblical times, Jewish identity was passed from a father to his children. This is called patrilineal descent. It means that if you had a Jewish father, you were automatically considered Jewish no matter who your mother was. *(For example, Jacob actually had some of his children with two "concubines," who were non-Jewish women of a lesser social status than his two wives.)*

Matrilineal Descent

- In the rabbinic period, Jewish tradition was basically inverted. The rabbis who were developing Jewish law may have felt that they could not be absolutely certain who fathered a child – they could be certain only who bore a child. Therefore, Judaism became a matrilineal religion in which Jewishness could only automatically pass from a mother to her children. *(This also made Jewish practice consistent with the Roman citizenship practices of the time.)*

Jewish communities around the world followed matrilineal descent until the Reform and Reconstructionist movements moved away from that beginning in 1947 and 1968, respectively. *(The current Reform position was not actually adopted until 1983).* Now, the Reform and Reconstructionist communities follow ambilineal descent, meaning that at least one parent must be Jewish.

Ask the teens:

- What is problematic about matrilineal descent?
- How does feminism relate to the question of whether Judaism should accept matrilineal descent?
Possible Answers: Egalitarianism is a feminist value, and this makes men unequal to women in a certain way. Some people believe it is offensive and demeaning to women to not trust a mother to honestly identify the father of her baby.
- In what ways did the Reform and Reconstructionist decision to accept patrilineal descent challenge the idea of a unified or united Jewish peoplehood?
 - What values or beliefs were important enough to them to take a position that set them apart from their Conservative and Orthodox counterparts on such a fundamental topic?
Possible Answers: equality, fairness, feminism, acknowledgement of modern science.
- Can you imagine a way that all movements could agree on what defines a Jewish person?

Say:

While important values motivated the Reform and Reconstructionist movements to accept ambilineal descent, it created a significant challenge to the value of Jewish peoplehood. Orthodox and Conservative Jews who believe solely in matrilineal descent now find that there are many people who are considered Jewish according to the Reform and Reconstructionist traditions who are not considered Jewish according to the traditional definition.

The Complete ArtScroll Siddur (traditional)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל
הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חַסְדִּים טוֹבִים, וְקֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבְנֵי
בְּנֵיהֶם, לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

מְלֶכֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה, מְגֵן אַבְרָהָם.

Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God and God of our forefathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob; the great, mighty, and awesome God, the supreme God, Who bestows beneficial kindness and creates everything, Who recalls the kindnesses of the Patriarchs and brings a Redeemer to their children’s children, for His Name’s sake, with love.

O King, Helper, Savior, and Shield. Blessed are You, HASHEM, Shield of Abraham.

- Who are the *avot / avoteinu* in this prayer?
- How is this version different than the version you learned for your *bar* or *bat mitzvah*?

* * * * *

Kol Haneshamah (Reconstructionist)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק אֱלֹהֵי רֵבֶקָה
אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב אֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל
וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה:

הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיוֹן גּוֹמֵל חַסְדִּים טוֹבִים וְקֹנֵה הַכֹּל וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אֲבוֹת וְאֲמוֹת
וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבְנֵי בְּנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה:

מְלֶכֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ הוֹה, מְגֵן אַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה:

Blessed are you, ANCIENT ONE, our God, God of our ancestors,

God of Abraham God of Sarah
God of Isaac God of Rebekah
God of Jacob God of Rachel
and God of Leah;

great, heroic, awesome God, supreme divinity,
imparting deeds of kindness, begetter of all;
mindful of the loyalty of Israel’s ancestors,
bringing, with love, redemption to their children’s children
for the sake of the divine name.

Regal One, our help, salvation, and protector:

Blessed are you, KIND ONE,
the shield of Abraham and the help of Sarah.

- Who are the *imahot / imoteinu*?
- It may seem obvious, but why the change?
- Was there another way that the women could have been taken into account?

* * * * *

Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur (Reform)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי
 אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,
 אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה, אֱלֹהֵי
 רָחֵל וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל
 הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל
 חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקִנְיַת הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר
 חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת וְאִמּוֹת, וּמְבִיא גְאֻלָּה
 לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

מְלַךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמְגַן.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ,
 מְגוֹן אַבְרָהָם וְאַזְרַת שָׂרָה.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai, our God,
 God of our fathers and mothers,
 God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob,
 God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel, and God of Leah,
 the great, mighty and awesome God, transcendent God
 who bestows lovingkindness, creates everything out of love,
 remembers the love of our fathers and mothers,
 and brings redemption to their children's children for the sake of the
 Divine Name.

Sovereign, Deliverer, Helper and Shield,
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Sarah's Helper, Abraham's Shield.

- Compare the two ways the *imahot* are included (here and in *Kol Haneshamah*).
- Which do you prefer?
- Why?

Introduction:

Rabbi Jason Miller is a Conservative rabbi who has served as the rabbi of a Reconstructionist congregation in Michigan.

Read this letter to Rabbi Jason and his response:

Dear Rabbi Jason,

My mother isn't/wasn't Jewish, my father is. I was raised Reform, had a *bat mitzvah*, [was Jewishly educated, celebrated holidays, identify as Jewish, participated in the Jewish community, did not participate in or celebrate any other faith or religion,] etc.

If I have children with a man recognized as fully Jewish, how would they be seen in the eyes of Israel and the American Jewish community (particularly the Conservative movement)? How stable are Israel's laws around this -- could they change in 10 years? What about *Halachah* (Jewish law)?

I would really appreciate an answer, even if it's not what I want to hear. Thank you!

Plonit

Ask the teens:

- What was Plonit concerned about?
- Would you consider her Jewish? What did she say in her letter that makes you feel that way?

Dear Plonit,

There is no question that you have been raised in a family that has embraced Judaism, Jewish culture and Jewish values. You have grown up identifying as a Jewish person and because of your father's Jewish heritage, you have a claim to the birthright of the Jewish people. The Reform denomination of Judaism, in which you have affiliated, acknowledges you as a full-fledged member of the Jewish people for all purposes. Should you marry a man who is Jewish through matrilineal descent, it would be advisable that you undergo a formal conversion so there would be no *Halachic* issues concerning your children's Jewish identity.

Matters surrounding Israel's legal system as it pertains to Jewish identity should not be an issue for you unless you plan to immigrate to Israel and become a citizen. Should that be the case, I would advise you to inquire about those issues at that time and not worry about them now. Like all civil laws, they have the ability to change over time based on Israel's government at the time and the authority and opinion of the Chief Rabbinate.

As you acknowledged, this might not be the answer you want to hear, but at this time it is the reality. A conversion for someone in your situation (raised Jewishly, who identifies as Jewish) is intended to make your Judaism more legitimate from a *Halachic* perspective. It should not be understood as undermining your religious identity throughout your life. It is a

conversion in a different category than an individual becoming Jewish from another religion altogether. Consider it a technicality.

Shalom,

Rabbi Jason

Ask the teens:

- How does Rabbi Jason respond? What are his concerns?
Possible Answers: Plonit's feelings, being honest and having integrity telling her the truth, preserving Jewish tradition.
- Would you have answered differently? What might you have said?

Here's another example of how Rabbi Jason, as a Conservative rabbi, struggles with honoring Jewish tradition while also recognizing how it brings him into conflict with other values that are important to him.

Like many Conservative rabbis this issue hits home with me. I have a first cousin who, by definition, is not considered Jewish according to *Halacha*. That means that according to the Conservative Movement's Rabbinical Assembly, of which I'm a member, I am not permitted to officiate at her wedding should she marry an individual deemed Jewish according to *Halacha*. That marriage would be considered an intermarriage without a formal conversion, and the children of that marriage would not be considered Jewish from a Halachic definition. This cousin has been raised Jewish, attended Hebrew School, became a bat mitzvah in a Reform congregation and considers herself Jewish.

Ask the teens:

- Do you have the same concerns as Rabbi Jason?
- Can you relate to his commitment to honoring Jewish tradition? Why or why not?
- Do you know anyone who is considered Jewish in the Reconstructionist Jewish community but not in the Conservative or Orthodox communities? How would this feel? Have you ever thought of this before?

Continue:

The two situations that Rabbi Jason described are examples of how Jewish people who believe in living according to *halakha*/Jewish law (Conservative, Orthodox) struggle with the ways non-*halakhic* Jewish people (Reform, Reconstructionist) define who is a Jew today.

Rabbi Jason obviously has given this a great deal of thought. He actually created a proposal for how the larger Jewish community could try to address this tension. He published the following proposal in 2012 in The Huffington Post:

Patrilineal Dissent: Solving the Jewish Status Problem

[T]his issue [of matrilineal or patrilineal descent] must be resolved for Jews from the more liberal movements of modern Judaism (Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, Modern Orthodox) whose followers are marrying each other and raising families together.

My proposal is to set a time limit on the status quo. Until the year 2020, matrilineal descent is the only accepted form of passing Jewish status genetically. Jewish individuals who are raised Jewish in a home with a Jewish father and identify as Jewish are to be considered Jewish from a cultural perspective, but must undergo a formal conversion for recognition as Jewish from a *Halachic* understanding.

After the year 2020, it will be understood that because of modern genetic testing (DNA tests) it is now possible to ascertain patrilineality with complete certainty. Therefore, a Jewish individual with at least one Jewish parent will be considered Jewish from a *Halachic* perspective for all matters. While the Orthodox will not agree to this, it will not have the same negative implications as the fissure between the Reform and Conservative movements that has existed for the past three decades.

The leaders of the American Jewish community should begin collaborating on such a partnership agreement. Only if we are on the same page on the matter of Jewish status will we be able to seek harmony among the disparate denominations of liberal Judaism. We cannot allow the ultra-Orthodox to dictate the definition of a Jewish individual, but we also cannot allow ourselves to be fractured by our own differing definitions of Jewish status. There has been far too much controversy and pain for this situation to continue unresolved.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-jason-miller/patrilineal-dissent-solving-the-jewish-status-problem_b_1659620.html

Ask the teens:

- What is the significance of Rabbi Jason's article's title (using "dissent" instead of "descent")?
- From whom/what is he "dissenting"?
- How important does Rabbi Jason think Jewish peoplehood is?
- How does his proposal correspond to that concern? Does it really respond, considering that it keeps out the Orthodox community?

We are now going to debate Rabbi Jason's proposal.

Advice for the Group Leader:

- It is important to note that the issue of matrilineal and patrilineal descent deals with Jewishness as a religious identity, and we have discussed previously how the category of Jewish peoplehood includes, but is not limited to, religious identity. In both the United States and Israel, there are many people who consider themselves secular Jews. They generally view their Jewish identity as a matter of culture, heritage, nationality, or ethnicity.
- Because this debate takes place with teens who are used to patrilineal descent, it may strengthen the quality of the debate if you bring in a rabbi or another knowledgeable adult to help the Conservative/Orthodox team.
- It is important to acknowledge that teens may end up in a group that they totally disagree with, but for the sake of debate, everyone needs to work to defend their group's point of view.

Debate instructions for the Group Leader:

1. Divide into four groups (or five, depending if you want to incorporate the 1947 Reform position) representing Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist rabbis.
2. Give each group a text representing “their” point of view to read and discuss.
3. Combine the Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis into one group and the Conservative and Orthodox rabbis into another group.
4. Each group of rabbis should teach each other what they learned from the original text about “their” position. There may be nuances that are different, but you will end up with two cohesive, larger groups.
5. Prepare for the Debate
 - a. Teens representing the Conservative and Orthodox rabbinic perspectives will formulate reasons why they are opposed to Rabbi Jason’s proposal.
 - b. Teens representing the Reform and Reconstructionist rabbinic perspectives will formulate reasons why they support Rabbi Jason’s proposal.
6. Directions for each group are on page 31.
7. Convene the debate by briefly summarizing Rabbi Jason’s proposal again.
8. Each team makes an opening statement.
9. After opening statements, the groups should confer with their members and then present their best argument.
10. The opposing group has one minute to respond, and then moves on to present its own best argument.
11. This cycle can repeat as long as major points are still being made and as long as teens appear engaged.
12. Have fun with this – ham it up!
 - a. Use props – gavel, costumes, etc.
 - b. If witnesses are called, they can be cross-examined.
 - c. If evidence is presented, exculpatory evidence or contradictory evidence may also be presented.
13. “Winning the debate.” There are a few ways you could handle this:
 - a. You could appoint some teens to serve as moderators and judges.
 - b. You could invite a rabbi to serve as a judge.
 - c. You could teach them that the debate is the epitome of a debate *leshem shamayim*, for the sake of heaven and that – by definition – all of us are winners when everyone engages in a thoughtful and respectful debate about core values related to Jewish identity and peoplehood.

Directions for the Reform and Reconstructionist Rabbis

1. Explain to each other what you learned from the texts each of you studied in your smaller groups.
2. Develop an opening statement answering the following question:

How is Jewish peoplehood supported by Rabbi Jason's proposal that all Jews should accept both matrilineal and patrilineal descent by 2020?

3. Consider why the Conservative and Orthodox group might object and begin to formulate arguments to respond to such objections.
4. Consider how to present your case/argument most persuasively.
 - a. Do you want to call a witness?
 - b. Do you want to bring in any evidence?

Directions for the Conservative and Orthodox Rabbis

1. Explain to each other what you learned from the texts each of you studied in your smaller groups.
2. Develop an opening statement answering the following question:

How would Jewish peoplehood be undermined if we began to accept patrilineal descent after 2020?

3. Consider why the Reform and Reconstructionist group might disagree and begin to formulate arguments to respond to such objections.
4. Consider how to present your case/argument most persuasively.
 - a. Do you want to call a witness?
 - b. Do you want to bring in any evidence?

Text One: Traditional Orthodox Jewish Understanding of Matrilineal Descent

Historically, rabbis offered the following interpretation of *Tanakh* to explain how the rabbis in the rabbinic period determined that Jewish status should be based on the Jewish status of mothers.

The Torah does not always state every law explicitly. In the case of matrilineal descent, the practice is derived from Deuteronomy 7:4, "Because he will lead astray your son from before Me" To understand this verse, look at the preceding verse, which states: "And you shall not intermarry with them, your daughter you shall not give to his son and his daughter you shall not take for your son". Verse 4 should have stated "Because SHE will lead astray your son," for the non-Jewish girl that your son married ('your' meaning Jewish) should be the one that would lead your son astray. So who is the 'HE'? It might be the girl's father, but in general, women leave their father's house and live in their husband's house; they would then not be living with her father. Hence, it would not make sense for the girl's father to lead "your son" astray if your son doesn't live with him.

The Rabbis concluded that 'HE' is the man that your daughter married, and 'your son' mentioned in verse 4 is your grandchild, meaning Jewish grandchild. Thus, verse 4 is referring back to the middle section of verse 3. It reads like this, "your daughter you shall not give to his son because he will lead astray your son" This shows that the child of a Jewish girl and a non-Jewish boy will be Jewish. It is not uncommon for the Torah to refer to a grandchild as an actual child. For instance, I Kings 15: 11 states, "And Asa did that which was correct in the eyes of God just like David his father." David was not Asa's father. He was his great-great-grandfather.

Additionally, 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.

<http://www.shamash.org/lists/scj-faq/HTML/faq/10-11.html>

* * * *

Today, Orthodox Jews can still point to this interpretation of the Biblical texts OR they can refer to the more straightforward *Mishnaic* text, which they understand as part of the Oral Torah, which was given to the Jewish People orally at Mount Sinai at the same time as they believe we received the Written Torah. Remember that Orthodox Jews believe they must live according to *halakha*/Jewish law, as handed down to them in the Written and Oral Torahs and as codified and articulated by the rabbis.

To be a Jew, one must be either the child of a Jewish mother or a convert to Judaism (*ger tzedek* / "righteous convert").

Mishnah (Kiddushin 3:12)

- What is the traditional Jewish understanding of how to determine if a child is born Jewish, as embodied today by Orthodox Jews?
- Do you agree? Why or why not?
- How does your answer reflect your own relationship to the concept of Jewish peoplehood?

Text Two: Reconstructionist Resolution Regarding Children of Mixed Marriages

(Adopted by the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships at its 9th Annual Conference, May 5, 1968, in Great Neck, Long Island.)

For several years now the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships has studied the problem of children of mixed marriages, where the mother has not converted to Judaism before the child's birth. A survey on the subject published in *Reconstructionist* this year revealed a wide variety of attitudes and practices in regards to the status of these children. In order, therefore, to guide the members of our congregations and those affiliated with our Movement, we hereby recommend the following procedures: That parents of such children should be informed that in many parts of the Jewish world, their children would not be recognized as Jews without undergoing the traditional forms of conversion.

We should further inform the parents that the Reconstructionist Movement and its affiliated institutions will consider these children Jews if the parents have committed themselves to rear their children as Jews, by providing circumcision for boys, Jewish education for boys and girls, and if the children fulfill the requirements of *bar* and *bat mitzvah* or confirmation.

The Reconstructionist, Volume 34, No. 8, May 31, 1968

- What is the Reconstructionist approach to ambilineal (patrilineal or matrilineal) descent?
- Why do you think the Reconstructionist movement felt it could make this change and accept children of Jewish men as full Jews?

Text Three: Final Text of 1983 Report of the Reform Movement's Resolution on Patrilineal Descent

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 parent 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.

- Are there ways in which the 1983 Reform position is stricter than the traditional Orthodox position?
- According to this text, would a child of a Jewish mother and a Catholic father who is educated in Catholic tradition be considered Jewish by the Reform movement?

Text Four: Patrilineal Descent and the Conservative Movement

Julie Wiener, *The Jewish Week* (November 30, 2009)

When Reform rabbis voted in 1983 to accept as Jewish the children of Jewish fathers and gentile mothers, many leaders, Orthodox and Conservative, worried the policy would irrevocably divide the Jewish world.

They were concerned that it might create a class of people who believed they were Jews, but who other Jews could not recognize as such — and thus could not marry or include in ritual acts in which participants must be Jewish.

A generation later, many — including Rabbi Irving “Yitz” Greenberg, who in 1985 wrote a *Moment* magazine essay entitled “Will There Be One Jewish People in the Year 2000?” — believe that the Jewish community has in fact split.

But whatever chasm has emerged is less Reform Jews versus everyone else than it is Orthodox Jews versus everyone else.

While the Conservative movement sided with the Orthodox on patrilineal descent —and continues to adhere to traditional “Who is a Jew” definitions — patrilineal descent has not divided Conservative and Reform Jews greatly, at least not recently.

In fact, whereas a decade ago the Conservative movement publicly affirmed its policy of not allowing “patrilineal” Jews into its Ramah camps without a conversion, today most Conservative leaders I contacted about this issue seemed eager to downplay the issue’s importance and to emphasize their commitment to reaching out to (and converting), rather than excluding, “patrilineal” Jews.

That may be because the Conservative movement — whose leaders long argued that it was impossible to welcome the intermarried without condoning intermarriage — is making a greater effort these days to reach out to interfaith families. It may also be because, regardless of movement policies, rank-and-file Conservative Jews have never been particularly rigid about the traditional definitions. A 1986 study done by sociologist Steven M. Cohen found that only 10 percent of Conservative Jews were both strongly opposed to their children marrying “patrilineal” Jews and upset with Reform rabbis for advancing the new view of “who is a Jew.”

To be sure, patrilineal descent has created some dilemmas for Conservative rabbis and institutions, particularly when families with a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother want to enroll their child in a Conservative Hebrew school or in one of the movement’s Ramah camps and don’t realize that, unlike Reform, the movement does not recognize the child as Jewish.

Some families have found Conservative requirements of conversion off-putting — particularly when they’re communicated in an insensitive manner. “I can’t tell you how many times people have to come to me and said they’ve been accepted to a religious school in another movement and then a year before the bar mitzvah they were told, ‘Oh, by the way you’re not Jewish,’” says Rabbi Robert Levine of Congregation Rodeph Sholom, which is Reform.

Nonetheless, many Conservative rabbis insist that their conversion requirements pose little barrier, especially when applied to infants and children, for whom conversion to Judaism is very simple.

“What we require is that both parents be on board, obviously, and that both agree to the child being raised and educated as a Jew; that they assure us there will be no religious ambiguity in the house,” says Rabbi Gordon Tucker of Temple Israel Center of White Plains, who says he’s performed “a reasonable number” of conversions for children and infants.

The process has been fairly conflict-free, Rabbi Tucker says, noting that “in the overwhelming majority of cases, they say ‘OK, tell us what we have to do.’ It helps that we have a mikveh in the shul, and I can go down the hall and show them what’s involved.”

Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, the executive director of the Conservative movement’s Rabbinical Assembly, argues that the Conservative requirement that children of gentile mothers and Jewish fathers undergo a conversion in order to be considered Jewish, is not all that different from the Reform movement’s saying that acceptance of such children is contingent upon “appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people.”

“The Conservative movement is also asking for public affirmation of Judaism,” explains Rabbi Schonfeld. “The public affirmation that we’re asking for is conversion, with mikveh. It’s two different affirmations.”

Rabbi Charles Simon, executive director of the Conservative movement’s Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs — long an advocate for welcoming interfaith families — says that most Conservative synagogues “handle this well,” welcoming “patrilineal” children up until about age 10, then explaining “they need to go to the mikveh before they can get a bar mitzvah date.”

Karen Kushner, executive director of the Jewish Welcome Network, a San Francisco group that consults with Jewish institutions that wish to be more inclusive, says, “What I like to encourage them to do is take the entire class to the mikveh and make it an affirmation for those who have Jewish mothers and serve as a conversion for the children of the Jewish fathers, so they don’t feel singled out.”

The situation is more complicated for “patrilineal” adults, both because adult conversion to Judaism is a more involved process than child or infant conversion, and because people who have grown up considering themselves Jewish often feel insulted to have anyone even gently question their status. “There’s a struggle to develop appropriate rhetoric,” says Rabbi Simon. “Often [Conservative rabbis] say, you are Jewish but there is one technicality.”

“The Conservative response to patrilineal descent is compassionate and understanding, not rejecting,” he adds, noting that “a person who has been raised Jewish all his or her life and is Jewishly knowledgeable but hasn’t gone to the mikveh would have to go through a symbolic conversion. They wouldn’t have to study 40 weeks. We would say this is a technicality and would take care of it as quickly as possible.”

- What is the Conservative movement’s position?
- What concerns do Conservative rabbis and leaders acknowledge and try to address in the article?

If desired, this text could be given to each group as another possible "solution" to the issue.

Committee on Mixed Marriage and Inter-marriage

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

- How did the Reform movement propose to identify Jewish children in 1947?
- Is this different from the CCAR's 1983 policy outlining "appropriate and timely" acts of identifying with the Jewish community?
- Can you imagine any problems with this plan working?
- Why did they reference Talmudic texts as part of their explanation?

Reflection Journals

Pass out reflection journals and invite teens to share their thoughts privately by writing in their journals. You may invite anyone who would like to share to do so.

Havayah Four: A Jewish Community Newspaper

Materials:

- Large die, list of words related to the *havayot* so far, play doh, paper, pens
- Posterboard / whiteboard
- Copies of local Jewish newspaper (if community has one)

To Do (in advance):

- Contact your local Jewish newspaper and ask what their policy is about listing same sex wedding and commitment ceremony announcements. It will be helpful for you to know this before you teach the lesson.
- A number of articles related to the story on which the simulation is based are attached and it will be helpful for you to have read them in advance.
- Copy and cut up slips of the pages of testimonials included in the simulation.
- For the simulation, it might be helpful to position teens around a board room table or to imitate that arrangement in your classroom.

Expansion idea: Invite someone from your local Jewish paper to come speak to the teens about the mission and values of the paper.

Ice Breaker

Instructions:

- This is based on the board game Cadoo (a cross between pictictionary, sculptictionary and charades).
- Before the game, prepare a list of words related to the *havayot* that we've worked on so far (e.g. peoplehood, chosenness, patrilineal descent).
- Divide the group into four teams and give each team a tray of play-doh, some paper and some pens.
- Each team sends a volunteer up to the leader who's running the game. Each player rolls the giant dice in turn.
- Designate two numbers to each type (i.e. 1, 2 = Charades / 3,4 = Pictionary / 5,6 = Sculptictionary).
- Read the first word from the list to all players.
- The players will then go back to their group and act, draw or sculpt out the word, depending on what number they rolled.
- Once someone in their group guesses the word correctly, they go up and roll the dice again and receive the next word.
- The first team to get through the complete list of words wins!

Simulation

Note about simulation:

Some participants (especially those from New Jersey congregations) may recognize this story. Even if this happens, encourage teens to focus on how they wish to handle the situation rather than on what they know did or did not happen in real life.

Say:

1. I have asked you all to come here today as representatives of the local Jewish community. I am going to open a new Jewish newspaper in our community. I will be the owner and editor, and you will be the board.
2. The first thing we need to do is choose a name for the newspaper.
3. Next, we need to formulate our official mission statement. To expedite this process, I have compiled examples from other community Jewish newspapers for us to consider and/or modify as we see fit. Once we agree that we have incorporated everything that we think is important, we will vote to make this the newspaper's official mission statement.

Actual sample Jewish communal newspaper mission statements to hand out are on page 42.

Make sure mission statement has either language about representing the whole community or being independent of any particular denominations or organizations within the Jewish community.

4. Now that we have established our name and mission statement, I am pleased to tell you we have already begun receiving life cycle announcements from the community. I will pass a few of them out for board members to read aloud so you get a sense of the announcements and the people we are serving. (Actual announcements from Jewish community newspapers are on pages 43.) Great! We've accomplished a lot for our first meeting. We'll reconvene next week.

At this point, take a break – have a snack, do something else for a few minutes, then get up and return to a "new" meeting.

5. Board members, I am so happy to see you again. We have a pretty serious agenda tonight, because things with the first edition of the paper did not go as smoothly as I had hoped. Let me catch you up on what happened and what I have done so far and see what you think we should do next.

Our first edition of the paper was published last Friday, after we met. People from every segment of the Jewish population bought it. People from the Reconstructionist congregations and people from Chabad and the Orthodox community, people who support the Israeli government no matter what, and people who believe it is their obligation to speak up when Israel does something that conflicts with their understanding of good Jewish values, in other words – very diverse types of Jews read the paper.

I immediately got an angry letter from a group of Orthodox rabbis about those life cycle announcements I shared with you. They were deeply offended by the fact that we had included an announcement of the marriage of two men. Their letter said that I, as editor, had failed to take into account the deep sensitivities within the traditional/Orthodox communities to issue of same sex marriage.

I was just mortified.

I immediately issued an apology, sharing with the community at large that we got these complaints from Orthodox rabbis but not listing their names. I said that our paper strives to draw the community together, rather than drive its many segments apart. I announced that, based on the feedback from the Orthodox rabbis and our commitment to bringing the community together, our newspaper would not print any more same-sex marriage announcements. At the end of my letter I specifically apologized for having caused pain to the Orthodox members of our community.

Now I am afraid I might have handled that wrong. The apology I issued on behalf of the newspaper led to an avalanche of outraged letters by readers, including dozens of non-Orthodox rabbis, who support the publication of same-sex announcements. The Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly issued a statement saying "no single sector of the Jewish community may decide for all what is an acceptable practice." There was even an actual petition from the Reconstructionist Jews in this area.

Ask teens:

- What do you think I as the editor should have done?
- What do you think we as the newspaper's board should do now?

6. I invited people with strong feelings on the subject to share their feelings and perspectives on the situation I have gotten us into. I will pass out their testimonials for board members to read aloud. (Actual reactions are on pages 44 through 46 – hand them out on slips of paper for teens to take turns reading aloud.)

7. Here is the central question before the board:

When it comes to the role of a Jewish newspaper, in addition to practicing quality journalism, there are two principles here. One is to be as inclusive as possible, building community and seeking out and appealing to all types of Jews, strengthening bonds between them. The other principle is to uphold and transmit Jewish values and traditions.

But what happens when those two admirable goals clash? Is it the primary duty of the paper to reflect the community as it is, or to set standards for it?

Gary Rosenblatt (Editor and Publisher, *The Jewish Week*, New York)

8. Now that we have heard some voices from our community, let us look at the mission statement that we agreed upon at our first meeting and determine what we should do now. Do we need to apologize for having apologized? Maybe you need to fire me and find a new editor? Most importantly, I think it is clear that you as the board of the newspaper must create a formal policy about same-sex wedding announcements to share with the community. We will also need an explanation of our rationale – for example, how our policy attempts to preserve different Jewish values, including Jewish peoplehood.

Sample Jewish Community Newspaper Mission Statements

The aims and principles of the *Washtenaw Jewish News* [Ann Arbor, MI] are:

- To provide the Jewish community of Washtenaw County with a quality newspaper that will present news of Jewish interest with a priority on local news.
- To offer commentary, interpretation and authentic background on events of the day, as a means of stimulating the concern and response vital to the fulfillment of our responsibilities as members of the Jewish community.
- To enrich the life of both individuals and the community through the presentation of features, articles, reviews and other material of Jewish content and interest.
- To provide a forum for comment by members of the community wishing to express their viewpoints on matters of Jewish interest.

The *Washtenaw Jewish News* is completely independent and is not affiliated with any one program, organization, movement or point of view within Jewish life, but endeavors to give expression to all facets of that life.

The mission of the Crescent City Jewish News (CCJN) is to provide continuous coverage of news that will inform, support and promote the Greater New Orleans Jewish community and all extended families located throughout the United States, Israel and the world.

The mission of The Jewish News weekly is:

1. To connect, enlighten and strengthen the multi-faceted Jewish community of Northern California.
2. To be a forum for news, information, ideas and opinions affecting Jews locally, nationally and internationally.
3. To enrich the cultural, religious and social life of the community through articles, interviews, reviews and features.

The Hamilton Jewish News [Hamilton, ON, Canada] is the only locally published newspaper serving Greater Hamilton's Jewish community. It delivers the Jewish perspective on contemporary issues with a vibrancy that reflects the lives and Jewish involvement of its more than 1,800 subscribers and approximately 5,000 readers out in the community.

The Hamilton Jewish News keeps Hamilton Jewry in touch through a variety of features, opinions, debates and news stories. It also includes opinion pieces, life cycle and other items of interest throughout the paper. The Hamilton Jewish News takes a great deal of pride in serving the needs of Greater Hamilton's Jewish community, helping companies and non-profit organizations reach consumers with advertising and venue opportunities.

Jewish Life Cycle Announcements

(to be cut out and handed to teens to read aloud)

Marne and Matt Friedman of Brooklyn, N.Y., announce the birth of their son Henry Bennett (Baruch Hillel) on June 11. He is named after his maternal great-uncle Herbert Altman and maternal great-grandfather Bertram Loveman. Maternal grandparents are Mikki and Jim Loveman of Beachwood. Paternal grandparents are Jacki and Steve Friedman of New York City. Maternal great-grandmother is Malveen Malik of Lyndhurst. Paternal great-grandmother is Estelle Rothenberg of New York City.

On Saturday, June 23rd, 2012 (3rd Tammuz 5772), Eli and Emerson Karsh-Lombardo, sons of Sam Lombardo, Kim Karsh and Dan Goldberger will be called to the Torah as B'nai Mitzvah with the Adventure Rabbi. Eli and Emerson will be reading from Parashat Korach.

Erin and Benjamin Willcher of Rockville, Md., announce the birth of their daughter Emma Jordy on June 8 (18 Sivan). She is named after her grandfather Ernest Willcher and great-grandfather Jack Ross. Maternal grandparents are Michele and Tom Sudow of Shaker Heights. Paternal grandmother is Shirley Willcher of Gaithersburg, Md. Maternal great-grandparents are Joy and Richard Sager of Glenview, Ill., and Phyllis Ross of Dayton.

Avichai David Smolen, son of Robert Smolen and Barbara Schneider of New Milford, and Justin Taylor Rosen, son of Keith and Elizabeth Rosen of Coram, N.Y., plan to be married next month by Rabbi Joshua Gruenberg at North Shore Synagogue in Syosset, N.Y. Smolen, 23, is a development and communications associate at the Manhattan office of Keren Or, the Jerusalem Center for Blind Children with Multiple Disabilities. The two met as counselors at Camp Ramah in Nyack, N.Y. The engagement notice stated that Smolen's parents live in New Milford, N.J., and identified his father as the principal of a local Jewish day school.

Sarah Greenberg, daughter of Mary Kay and Neil Greenberg of Westlake, celebrated her bat mitzvah Saturday, June 23, at Beth Israel—The West Temple. For her mitzvah project, she collected donations for hospitalized children at the Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital.

Linda and Shai Katz of Orange Village announce the engagement of their daughter Tali to Guy Vaknin, son of Alice Tal and Eli Vaknine of Jerusalem, Israel. Ms. Katz is the granddaughter of Miriam and Mayer Katz of Hertzliya, Israel, and the late Irene and Philip Mark. She works as a senior catering sales manager at a catering company in Manhattan. Mr. Vaknin is an executive chef in New York, and he is opening an organic, vegetarian sushi restaurant in Manhattan in July. A 2013 wedding is planned in Israel.

Debbie Opper Avner, beloved mother of Rachel (Gideon) Torrance, Heather Avner (Adam) Ogle of Las Vegas, Nev., and Max (Allison) of Delaware, Ohio; loving grandmother of Jacob Benjamin and Madalyn Sara Torrance and Henry Miles Avner; dear sister of Vicki (Steve) Zwelling of Lewis Center, Ohio; devoted friend and teacher to all, died July 11 at age 62.

**Testimonials from Jewish Community Members in Response to Jewish Newspaper
Publishing Same Sex Marriage Announcement and Apologizing For Doing So**

(to be cut out and handed to teens to read aloud)

Rabbi Yosef Adler, rosh yeshiva of the Torah Academy of Bergen County and rabbi of the Orthodox Congregation Rinat Yisrael in Teaneck said: "Most people who I spoke to were appalled that this would be highlighted. The feeling was that the overwhelming majority of the [Orthodox] community was not pleased with that type of announcement."

Justin Rosen, one half of the ... [same-sex] couple [whose engagement announcement set off the controversy], said: "What bothers me most is that this is supposed to be a community newspaper and a community institution, and it's not clear to me what the litmus test is for having one's voice as part of [that] institution."

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin, a past president of the Rabbinical Council of Bergen County, an Orthodox rabbi warned the paper that its same-sex wedding announcement might alienate Orthodox readers. "Sometimes people feel that they have the right to make their choices and then to obligate others to celebrate their choices," he said. "We believe that we cannot celebrate these choices."

"We are taught to respect each other," wrote Rabbi Steven Wernick, executive vice president and CEO of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. "We know that children are born gay, straight, or somewhere in between on the scale, and gayness cannot be taught or learned. We also know that there is nothing shameful in being gay. That is what religion teaches us."

Edward Zizmor, a Teaneck resident and member of a Conservative congregation, said: "Everybody's livid over this. I think that the real issue here isn't the gay marriage thing; it's the idea that a group of unnamed Orthodox rabbis can dictate policy to a community paper."

An unnamed Orthodox spokesperson said, Orthodox viewpoints on homosexuality are derived from the Torah, which is clear in its condemnation of male gay sex, and Orthodox leaders almost uniformly oppose celebrating gay identity. The dilemma for Orthodox leaders is how to condemn anti-gay violence and harassment without being seen as endorsing the 'mainstreaming of the homosexual lifestyle.' For many that means not addressing the issue at all. For others it means addressing the issue only when pressed or absolutely necessary.

Dan Savage, a nationally syndicated sex columnist, wrote an editorial in which he described the initial apology as: "... cringing, craven, spineless, [and] bigoted."

150 Orthodox men and women signed a statement of principles articulating how they think about GLBTQ people and unions as a result of this situation. It says, "Halakhic Judaism cannot give its blessing and imprimatur to Jewish religious same-sex commitment ceremonies and weddings, and halakhic values proscribe individuals and communities from encouraging practices that grant religious legitimacy to gay marriage and couplehood. But communities should display sensitivity, acceptance and full embrace of the adopted or biological children of homosexually active Jews in the synagogue and school setting, and we encourage parents and family of homosexually partnered Jews to make every effort to maintain harmonious family relations and connections."

<http://statementofprinciplesnva.blogspot.com/>

As a rabbi serving the Northern New Jersey Jewish community who recently celebrated my own engagement to another woman, my congregants and rabbinic colleagues alike have responded first and foremost with expressions of joy and support. What has often followed these congratulations, however, has been the question: how will my partner and I go about planning our wedding in a state that does not recognize full marriage equality for same-sex couples? Until now, the legal barrier of NJ state civil unions has been the one looming challenge to our simcha. With the Jewish Standard's decision to retreat from the inclusion of LGBT Jews in the wedding and engagement announcements, the newspaper eviscerates progressive Judaism and effectively doubles the burden of Jewish same-sex couples in NJ who wish to sanctify their relationships within the framework of their own religious tradition.

The place of LGBT Jews within our community must be cherished, protected and celebrated. It should come as no surprise that LGBT Jews have as authentic and meaningful connections to Jewish ritual and tradition as the group of traditional/Orthodox rabbis who spurred this misguided act of discrimination. Therefore, it must be the obligation of those institutions and leaders who serve the Jewish community to uphold and respect the dignity and humanity of all Jews, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Rabbi Jarah Greenfield
Reconstructionist Temple Beth Israel, Maywood, NJ

<http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/46506/all-the-happy-couples>

To the Publishers of this Jewish Newspaper:

We the undersigned write to urge you to change the current policy of your paper and to accept announcements of weddings of same-sex couples.

The Reconstructionist movement has endorsed *kiddushin*—Jewish wedding ceremonies—for same-sex couples for two decades, long before the issue of civil marriage became prominent in American society. We recognize the holiness that is manifest in a loving committed relationship, irrespective of the couple's gender or sexual orientation, and we believe that Jewish values are best upheld when Jewish communities recognize, honor, and support such relationships. Most Reconstructionist rabbis officiate at such ceremonies of *kiddushin*, and Reconstructionist communities are proud of our many LGBT members—singles, couples, and families. We make no distinction between LGBT and straight Jews.

At least 5% of Jews in this area, using the most conservative estimates, are LGBT. If you add their families and friends, as well as those who see them as part of the community, the paper's failure to recognize their life-cycle events is a blow to most Jews in the Delaware Valley [of Pennsylvania].

As you know, many Reform and Conservative rabbis officiate at commitment ceremonies. The stance of this Jewish newspaper is thus an affront to the religious sensibilities of the majority of Delaware Valley rabbis.

We understand that you will soon be reviewing this policy. We urge you to welcome and include all Jews, without making distinctions on the basis of sexual orientation.

written by Rabbi Jacob Staub

Insights from Other Jewish Newspapers

"On the surface, the furor ... pits the Orthodox community versus gay rights advocates. But the problem is wider and deeper, reflecting the bitter divisions and serious misperceptions in our community, the fuzziness and dynamic nature of our identities nowadays, and the complex role of a Jewish newspaper that seeks to serve that community."

My almost 40 years of observing and covering the Jewish community tells me that this issue, too, shall pass. But what is different about the same-sex commitment announcements is that it reveals a level of fear, even repulsion, among some elements of the Orthodox community, and a failure among liberal Jews to appreciate why listing a gay union as a simcha — a cause for communal celebration — is seen as particularly offensive to traditionalists because it seems to flaunt the very behavior that is proscribed by Jewish law.

Gary Rosenblatt
Editor and Publisher
New York, The Jewish Week

Mr. Smolen and Mr. Rosen have felt more than a bit of whiplash, but they figure that, in a distinctly Jewish way, maybe controversy could lead to greater understanding, particularly of the way being marginalized or excluded can have tragic consequences. "We're very happy about the conversation this has engendered," Mr. Rosen said "and think it's incredibly important both inside the Jewish community and without."

Peter Applebome
New York Times

"I can only imagine the pressures they came under from Orthodox leaders. [I think the newspaper should have published the names of the complaining Orthodox rabbis.] It's important for the people who have such objections to identify themselves and explain their objections."

[My newspaper] published its first same-sex wedding announcement in January. "Our policy reflects the fact that same-sex marriage and commitment ceremonies are sanctioned and blessed by the Reform and Reconstructionist movements, that Conservative rabbis are permitted to perform such ceremonies, and that the role of a Jewish community newspaper is to reflect the largest possible range of practices and beliefs."

Andrew Silow-Carroll, editor in chief of the New Jersey Jewish News

"Jewish newspapers appear to have broadly divergent policies on the publication of announcements of gay weddings and commitment ceremonies. The Philadelphia Jewish Exponent published its first announcement of a gay wedding last year; the New Jersey Jewish News did so this year. The Long Island-based 5 Towns Jewish Times, which serves a mostly Orthodox community, said that it would not publish a gay wedding announcement. Florida's Jewish Journal and Boston's Jewish Advocate said that they had never been asked to do so.

The Jewish Daily Forward, a national Jewish newspaper

Reflection Journals

Pass out reflection journals and invite teens to share their thoughts privately by writing in their journals. You may invite anyone who would like to share to do so.

A Final Note:

Teens may be interested to know that this actually happened at the *New Jersey Jewish Standard* in October 2011. There are numerous articles about it available online. The community responses are from newspaper articles covering the conflict.

There is no information available on the *New Jersey Jewish Standard's* current policy.

Havayah Five: “Exclusion of Women” in Israel

Materials:

- Images accompanying this *havayah*
- Digital camera (if desired)
- iPad or computer with internet access
- Signs that indicate “backstage” (maybe the hallway outside the room you meet in), dressing rooms, and stage/catwalk. Another nice touch would be a poster with the name of the fashion show, “TEL Teen Fashion Extravaganza” or something you come up with.
- Signs / poster with “dressed appropriately” and “dressed *in*appropriately”
- Signs for various contexts

To Do (in advance):

- Tell the teens to each come to TEL with an assortment of outfits to be worn in a fashion show.
- If your TEL group is large enough, teens can take turns being in the fashion show and being the audience.
- Prepare signs that each refer to a certain context in which an outfit might be worn, such as the following (or add your own choices). *It is important that you have signs in multiples of three contexts.*
 - A college interview
 - A day working as a camp counselor
 - A wedding guest
 - Job interview at the gym
 - First day of school
 - Shabbat services
 - Running a car wash
 - A teen-only bar/bat mitzvah party
 - A sleepover party
 - A camping trip
 - A funeral participant
 - Visit to a nursing home
- Set up for the fashion show.

The Fashion Show

Instructions:

- When the teens arrive, greet them and tell them to put on one of the outfits they brought that they are comfortable modeling.
- If a teen is not comfortable modeling for any reason, give him/her another role. Teens could help you with signage, work as the “emcee,” be a backstage hand giving time updates. If a teen is technologically-inclined, invite him/her to add some lighting or mics to make the show more “real.”
- Once the fashion show participants are all backstage, hang three of the prepared signs on the stage horizontally.

Advice for the Group Leader:

Vary your selection of three contexts in such a way that every teen is likely to be deemed “dressed appropriately” in at least one of the three contexts. Keep everyone’s comments on the outfits and, if necessary, point out that whether or not the audience thinks of the outfit as appropriate or inappropriate in a particular context is very different than saying whether it is a nice outfit or not.

- When the first teen comes out and struts around, ask him/her to stand under each of the three signs for a moment. As this happens, have him/her stand and pose in front of each sign.
- Once s/he is in front of each sign, the audience “votes” on whether the person is “dressed appropriately” for the particular context.
 - Each member of the audience could have two signs – one that says “dressed appropriately” and the other that says “dressed inappropriately” – ideally on two different color papers. Alternatively, you could have one big poster with each word.
- After the audience indicates if an outfit is appropriate for one context, have the teen step over to the second and third contexts.
- Thank the teen for modeling his/her ensemble, and then ask if the teen agreed with the three opinions of the audience.
 - For example, would that teen feel good wearing that outfit in any of the contexts in which the audience thought it would be inappropriate?
 - Would the teen have been uncomfortable wearing the particular outfit in a context in which the audience suggested it would be appropriate?
 - Make sure the audience applauds each person as s/he leaves the stage.
- If there are both boys and girls in the group, you might opt to keep the same three signs up and have a person of a different gender come up and have everyone determine which of the same three contexts are appropriate for that second person. After you thank the second person and get his/her personal “votes” or assessments of appropriateness, you might want to highlight any difference between what is acceptable for males vs females, etc., or how the issues (i.e. what people are evaluating) differ.
- When you have used one set of three context signs with a male and a female – or with one person if all the participants in your *TEL* group are one gender – switch the signs to three new contexts.
- This should be fast paced and fun. If it starts to drag at all, you should try to end it promptly after each person in the show has been able to model at least one outfit.

Debrief:

- What did we learn about teen fashion today in terms of appropriateness?
 - Key points to bring out:
 - What is “appropriate” varies depending on the context.
 - Not everyone necessarily agrees on what is and isn’t appropriate all the time.
 - There are often different rules for boys and girls.
 - Possible examples of different concerns for males and females: for teen girls appropriateness may more often have to do with how sexy something appears/how low cut/how high-heeled. For teen boys it may have to do with how sloppy or casual or formal clothes appear.
- Was there a time your opinion differed from that of the audience? Were you surprised by that?

- How did it feel to have other people stating opinions about whether or not your outfit was appropriate?
- Most mornings, you get up and decide what to wear on your own – just like you decided what to wear to TEL today/tonight. Are there times in your real life in which other people tell you your clothes are appropriate or inappropriate?
Possible Answers: School principal in cases where school has dress code, parents or grandparents might insist on certain things on special occasions...
- Are there times when you dress differently than you really want to because you know an authority figure has an expectation that you will dress according to his/her definition of “appropriateness” – even when s/he hasn’t said anything to you?
- Do you mind dressing according to his/her definition a little less when s/he does not actually remind you of the dress expectation but you choose to honor it on your own?

Introduce the theme:

The reason we have shared this Fashion Show experience is so that we can apply what we have learned through our experience to understanding the situation many women in Israel are dealing with every day.

Although Israel is a Democracy and 75% of its citizens consider themselves secular, the *Haredi*/ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel have a disproportionate amount of influence on social policy – mostly coming from the particular way the government is structured. Secular Jewish teens in Israel – and their parents – are inclined to choose very much the same kinds of clothes you have modeled for us here today.

Unfortunately, it is deeply offensive to *Haredim*/ultra-Orthodox for secular women not to dress the way *Haredi*/ultra-Orthodox women and girls dress – hair, arms, legs, chests fully covered, dresses and skirts rather than pants. [Sample images of “modest” dress in *Mea Shearim* to pass around are on page 52.]

Ask the teens:

- Look at the teen girls gathered here. How many of you would be considered “dressed appropriately” according to those expectations?
- How many have even one piece of clothing on that would fit the definition (e.g. long skirt or long sleeve shirt with high collar)?

In Jerusalem, there is a neighborhood called *Mea Shearim* whose residents are overwhelmingly *Haredim*/ultra-Orthodox. The custom has been for all women who venture through that area to dress modestly and actually walk separately from men through those streets – even women who are not at all religious.

Ask the teens:

- Have any of you ever been to *Mea Shearim*?
 - If so, what was the experience like?
- Do you think you would dress in clothes that the *Haredim*/ultra-Orthodox would consider “appropriate” if you knew you were going to have to walk through that neighborhood? Why or why not?

- Why do you think non-*Haredi* and secular Jewish women might dress “modestly” when they walk through *Mea Shearim*?

Possible Answer: We discussed earlier how we tend to feel differently about “dressing appropriately” depending on whether we get to decide for ourselves. In this case, non-Haredi women might feel comfortable dressing in a way that is more modest or traditional when they are going to walk through Mea Shearim than how they would dress elsewhere as a way of showing respect to the Haredi/ultra-Orthodox community. This goes along with treating people the way you want to be treated.

Unfortunately, the *Haredi*/ultra-Orthodox Jewish community has been increasingly unwilling to treat non-*Haredi* Jews with respect. Instead, they have increasingly tried to change the larger Israeli society so that it reflects their idea of the proper role of women.

Think back to our discussion of the way your feelings about “dressing appropriately” change if you are being told to use someone else’s definition of “appropriateness.”

Ask the teens:

- How would you feel if you went to Israel and members of the *Haredi*/ultra-Orthodox Jewish community were trying to control how you dressed?

This topic actually has to do with much more than how women dress – it is actually about how women exist in Israeli society, and now it is about much more than one neighborhood in Jerusalem.

People concerned with this issue describe everything that fits into the broad category of *Haredim*/ultra-Orthodox Jews imposing their ideas about the “proper” role of women on the larger Israeli society as “The Exclusion of Women.”

“Israel Issues”

Women at the Western Wall	page 53
Segregation on Public Buses	page 54
Images of Women in Advertising	page 57

There are three ways to proceed with the program:

1. You can choose one of the three “Israel Issues” below to explore with your teens; or
2. You can divide into three groups with each group learning about one of the “Israel Issues” and reporting back to larger group; or
3. You can present the three choices and let the teens decide which to learn more about.

Please be sure to conclude the *havayah* with the discussion / activity on page 61.

Resources and background material can be found at the following websites:

New Israel Fund	www.nif.org
Israeli Religious Action Center	www.irac.org
Women of the Wall	http://womenofthewall.org.il

Images of *Haredim*/ultra-Orthodox Jews' modest dress in *Mea Shearim*



Introduction:

“The Western Wall, also known as the *Kotel*, is a most important historical and spiritual place for Jews. The Western Wall was originally a retaining wall of the Second Temple, built by King Herod in the first century of the Common Era. When the rest of the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE and the Jewish people were sent out of the Land of Israel into exile, the Western Wall remained as a symbol of Jewish religious freedom. The following statement was made by the Union for Reform Judaism’s President – Rabbi Eric Yoffie – in relation to the Western Wall: *“Throughout the generations, the Kotel has been a source of inspiration to Jews everywhere. It is a concrete symbol of our love for Jerusalem and our common Jewish destiny.”*

Today, the Western Wall is like a synagogue – a holy place of prayer and gathering for Jews from around the world. But not all Jewish customs are accepted at the Western Wall – for example, women are not allowed to pray out loud, nor are they allowed to carry a Torah.”

<http://www.iraq.org/userfiles//Wow%20Teen%20Program.pdf>

Show videos:

Show the following video from Women of the Wall, which features compelling comments from female American rabbis and outlines the issues and what the organization hopes to achieve:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-xiZWX5rIE&feature=related>

Where do things stand today? What are women’s rights at the Western Wall?

Show the following video, in which Anat Hoffman (chair of Woman of the Wall) is arrested carrying a Torah and praying at the Western

Wall: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEftn2uYCII>

Show one of the following:

Overview of the issue of segregated buses and division between Jews, within the context that this concern is part of a “slippery slope” of *Haredim*/ultra-Orthodox Jews excluding women from public life in Israel.

<http://www.irac.org/AdditionalResources.aspx?SubheadingID=82>

An ABC News video explaining the issue of segregated buses in a succinct and clear manner, within the context of a larger struggle between “religious” and “secular” Jews, as well as in the context of the larger topic of women being (im)modest.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBuyCqlv4jE>

Alternate option:

There is a newspaper article on page 55 describing a female soldier’s experience being pushed to go to the back of a bus. The article could also be used as a conversation “trigger” (discussion questions are on page 56).

Israeli female soldier accosted for rebuffing Haredi bus segregation

Oz Rosenberg, *Haaretz* (December 28, 2011)

Jerusalem resident Doron Matalon says ultra-Orthodox man, 45, chided her for not moving to back of bus, calling her 'gentile' and 'prostitute.'



A day after a massive rally in central Israel protested gender segregation and discrimination in Israel, a female Israel Defense Forces soldier reported being accosted by a Haredi man on Wednesday over her refusal to move to the back of a segregated bus in Jerusalem.

According to the soldier, Doron Matalon, a 45-year-old man asked her to move to the back of the bus, threatening her, and calling her "prostitute."

"I didn't want to move back, both on principle and because there wasn't any room. It's always stuffy and disgusting in the back," Matalon said, adding that "everything was fine, I was almost at my stop, and then the conductors came on."

At that point, the IDF soldier said, the ultra-Orthodox man chastised a woman who had come over to the front of the bus to have her ticket checked, saying: "You don't have to come up front to check your ticket, a woman shouldn't move to this side of the bus."

"And then he turned to me," Matalon said, and said "'you too soldier, move back,' and then he called me a prostitute." According to the IDF soldier, the man was soon joined by other religious men in the bus, who proceeded to yell out "prostitute," and "Shikse" (gentile woman).

Matalon said that at that point she "felt threatened and a huge commotion began. I yelled out for the conductor to come quick, and two male conductors rushed in. They pushed him away from me and said: 'Why are you shouting, she's a soldier,' but he continued to be abusive."

The bus was ordered to stop in the city's Levi Eshkol Blvd, where the conductors called the police. Eyewitnesses reported that the Haredi man continued his disruptive behavior even after a police officer arrived at the scene.

All those involved were taken to questioning, with the ultra-Orthodox man the only one to be arrested following the incident.

"This isn't the first time this has happened, I just asked for help this time," Matalon said, adding that she had experienced "worse incidents on this line," including one in which she was shoved off the bus when her stop arrived.

"I'm slowly calming down, but I'm not over it yet," the IDF soldier said.

Police sources indicated that the suspect was to be held until Thursday, at which point he will face a court remand hearing.

Ask the teens:

- What is this young woman's role in Israeli society?
Possible Answer: She is a soldier whose life is devoted to protecting the country.
- Have you ever felt that you were being disrespected by a stranger like this?
- Have you ever felt threatened by someone while trying to go about your daily life?
- What would you have done if you were Doron (the young woman)?
- Does this story remind you of anything in American history? (*Answer: Rosa Parks*) What are the similarities and differences?

Show video:

Show video of CNN coverage of gender segregation issues in Israel and the New Israel Fund's "women should be seen and heard campaign." There is a specific reference to advertisements at 1:30.

http://www.nif.org/get-involved/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1271:gender-segregation-in-jerusalem&catid=12:general

Show print advertisements:

After watching the video, show the defaced image of a woman's face from the advertisement on the 58. Then, show the two versions of an advertisement for a movie with women actors on pages 59 and 60.

Defaced Face of a Woman on an Advertisement in Jerusalem



סרטי יונייטד קינג - מובי פלוס תצוגים

הדילרים

סרט של עודד דוידוף

רמי דוידוף איתי תורג'מן אלון אבוטבול צחי גראד יובל שרף מיכל גבריאלוב

הפקה של מובי פלוס - סרטי יונייטד קינג

צילם ירון שרף עורך איציק צחייק מעצב אנונימי עורך שאוואט מוסיקה לן שם-טוב מעצב פסקול תומר קורן מקליט אשי מילוא מעצבת מלבושות מאיה מור מאפרת ליאת שיינין מלמקת גילה כהן תהלת פטריס אורית דבוש עובדתי ראשונה טיטי מנחם מריקה אחראית מובי פלוס מיכל גריידי מביק כנסול עוזי קרין מבייק חוסס לי שירה תהלת הפכא לירון אדרי מבייקים דוד מנדיל משה אדרי לאון אדרי מוסיים שגיא אזולאי רמי דוידוף במאי עודד דוידוף מנסט מנסק בשיתוף קרן הקולנוע הישראלי המיוס לקולנוע וטלוויזיה ביזשליים רשת הוט מפעל הפיס סרטי יונייטד קינג מובי פלוס

הוט MovePlus UNITED KING FILMS סרטי יונייטד קינג

רוץ קיש בחינם

Advertisement for Israeli movie, "The Dealers" (displayed in Jerusalem)



Concluding Conversation

Ask the teens:

- What does the category of “Exclusion of Women” issues in Israel have to do with Jewish peoplehood?
Possible Answers: It’s about how ultra-Orthodox Jews and secular or liberal Jews can coexist in Israel. For the Jewish people to truly be one people, the half of us who are women must be equal members of our people.
- How are the issues raised by the “Exclusion of Women” the same or different than those raised when Jews try to find a common definition of who is a Jew in terms of accepting patrilineal descent or not?
Possible Answers: Each segment of the Jewish community reserved the right to reach its own conclusion about the relevance and applicability of halakha and to act accordingly. It was a painful but peaceful disagreement. There is a sense in which everyone was united by their commitment to address the question. In the debate, everyone really tried to listen to each other.
- How are the issues raised by the “Exclusion of Women” the same or different than those raised when all Jews try to share a common newspaper in the United States?
Possible Answers: That was about internal politics of the community and the newspaper but no one did anything illegal. The Exclusion of Women deals with actual laws in Israel. In some cases, it is the ultra-Orthodox breaking laws by trying to get women to sit in the back or by defacing images of women. In the case of Women of the Wall, it is women being civilly disobedient in hopes of changing laws they think are unjust. In all three cases, actual violence was involved.
- It is generally challenging for Reconstructionist Jews in North America to relate to – or feel in relationship to – the ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel. (They presumably feel the same way.) What do we have in common with the ultra-Orthodox in Israel?
Possible Answer: We are all Jews. Same ancestors, some shared traditions, shared commitment to Israel...the world thinks of us as connected even if we can’t relate to them because we all call ourselves Jewish.
- What does it mean to you be part of a people that includes people you disagree with as profoundly as many of us do with the ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel who want to exclude women from the public sphere?
- Do we have a particular responsibility to address this issue once we know about it because we are part of the Jewish people?

Closing Activity

Show the teens the Seen & Heard Posters by the New Israel Fund (see page 65). Teens can participate by taking pictures of members of the group holding “women should be seen and heard” signs that the group makes.

More information is available at: http://www.nif.org/get-involved/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1258:women-should-be-seen-and-heard&catid=12:general

Share this update with teens:

Women feature in J'lem bus ads for 1st time in years

Jeremy Sharon, The Jerusalem Post (August 8, 2012)

Promoting pluralism, Yerushalmim Movement launch advertising campaign on buses under slogan "because J'lem is for us all."



The Yerushalmim Movement, an organization promoting pluralism in the capital, will initiate an advertising campaign on Jerusalem buses featuring women who represent the group, it was announced on Wednesday.

The Yerushalmim Movement petitioned the High Court of Justice court last year against Egged and Canaan, the company that handles advertising on Egged buses, after the two companies rejected an advertising campaign of Yerushalmim because it featured women.

Sectors of the ultra-Orthodox community object to advertisements bearing images of women for reasons of modesty.

Canaan and Egged claimed that they would incur financial damage if they used such advertisements and also said that buses displaying them were frequently vandalized.

In response last month to the High Court petition, the State Attorney's Office and the Transportation Ministry said, however, that no reports of vandalism had been made in recent years.

According to Yerushalmim, advertisements with women have not appeared on Egged buses in Jerusalem for at least eight years.

The ministry wrote in response to the petition that public transportation license holders such as Egged would not be allowed to discriminate on the basis of gender or any other factor when providing advertising on buses.

Canaan said in a statement to the media on Wednesday that "despite the concern regarding vandalism, which has been directed in the past toward buses with these kind of advertisements, we decided to accede to Yerushalmim's request, in the hope that all sides will treat one another with tolerance and sensitivity."

The company stood by its claim that the "vandalism of extremists in the city" had in the past caused it and its advertisers heavy "financial damage."

Rabbi Uri Ayalon, director of the Yerushalmim Movement, said that "an atmosphere of equality between men and women is a crucial and basic value" for a democratic state and its capital.

"As a Jerusalem resident with two daughters, I, and everyone who wants a pluralistic Jerusalem, believe that the value of equality is nonnegotiable," he said.

“For someone to decide that women are merely sexual objects is offensive and I don’t want to raise my daughters in such a city,” he continued.

“Jerusalem is a city with people of all backgrounds and everyone has the right to live as they wish, so it is crucial to fight this phenomenon,” Ayalon said.

Yerushalmim’s new advertising campaign, the same one rejected in 2011 by Canaan and Egged, features women from the organization under the slogan “Yerushalmiyot [women of Jerusalem], nice to meet you – because Jerusalem belongs to all of us.”

The advertisements will go up in the coming days.

<http://www.ipost.com/NationalNews/Article.aspx?id=280554>

Reflection Journals

Pass out reflection journals and invite teens to share their thoughts privately by writing in their journals. You may invite anyone who would like to share to do so.

EXPANSION OPPORTUNITY: The Israel Religious Action Center has great lessons for teens about such issues as the struggle for acceptance of liberal Judaism in Israel, marriage in Israel, women figures in Israeli history, etc. Go to: <http://www.ira.org/AdditionalResources.aspx?SubheadingID=143>



WOMEN SHOULD BE

SEEN & HEARD



הקרן החדשה לישראל
New Israel Fund
الصندوق الجديد لإسرائيل

Havayah Six & Havayah Seven: Choosing and Doing a Project

Materials:

- Texts on page 69

Introduction:

We have discussed a lot of different groups that are part of *Am Yisrael*, what we call Jewish peoplehood. We have also discussed a lot of issues that exist between and amongst *Am Yisrael*.

We started this year discussing the idea that Jewish peoplehood is a category that is defined by a combination of what we believe, what we do, and how we feel we belong.

Some contemporary Jewish scholars have suggested that there are other ways of understanding Jewish peoplehood as a unifying category. These include:

- Peoplehood as a common destiny.
- Peoplehood as a shared mission with an emphasis on *tikkun olam*.
- Peoplehood as a shared kinship and mutual responsibility.

http://www.nadavfund.org.il/Peoplehood_Position_Paper.pdf

Break into three groups, with the following instructions:

Each group studies the text pertaining to the category they represent (see texts on page 69).

The overarching question for the teens to address is: “What can it mean for us to think of Jewish Peoplehood as rooted in or propelled by: a common covenant/destiny, a shared mission, a shared kinship/mutual responsibility?”

Teens come back together and make a case that Jewish peoplehood is best understood as people united by (insert their category).

Ask the teens:

- Is Jewish peoplehood really about one, or more, of these categories?
- Can you think of categories that may be missing and you would like to add?
- Looking at these categories (including any the group added), consider the following questions:
 - In what circumstances could Jewish peoplehood be diminished?
 - If Jewish people are less well educated about their history, will they still have a sense of shared destiny?
 - Does it matter to the idea of peoplehood based on shared mission/*tikkun olam* if American Jews increasingly disagree about political matters?
 - If Jews are part of more and more diverse families in more and more diverse communities, can our sense of shared kinship and mutual responsibility be sustained?
- The final question is the transition to brainstorming about a TEL Group Project: What can *we*, as a TEL group, do to strengthen some aspect of Jewish peoplehood?
 - Could we help some constituency of our Jewish community feel more included or represented?

- Could we galvanize a broad coalition of members of *Am Yisrael* to commit to a service project? Advocacy work?
- Could we do something to educate other Jews about just how expansive the concept of Jewish peoplehood is or can be?
- Could we create an opportunity for different Jewish people to learn more about one another?
- Could we raise money or collect resources to help address a need in our community?

A few specific ideas:

Create a congregational diversity project or documentary based on interviews and family histories. Teens could interview people who consider themselves part of the Jewish community with various backgrounds: someone who was raised particularly observant; someone who was raised secular; non-Ashkenazi Jews; Jews of Color; atheist Jews; Jews by choice; non-Jews who are part of Jewish families or members of congregations.

Make a Jewish culinary tour. Teens could create menus and cook dishes from Jewish communities around the world. They could create a Jewish culinary tour dinner as a fundraiser or as a way to teach younger students. Claudia Roden's *Book of Jewish Food* is a great resource for Jewish world cuisine.

KippotforHope.com. This web site sells *kippot* to support the Ugandan Jewish community. Teens could create an educational project and fundraiser using this website to raise awareness in their community.

www.Kulanu.org. *Kulanu* is involved with several "developing" Jewish communities around the globe that are not yet recognized by all of world Jewry. Some of these groups are returning to long-forgotten Jewish roots. Others have embraced Judaism on their own, often in complete isolation. In either case, *Kulanu* helps supply educational materials, scholarships, Jewish ritual objects and prayer books, teachers, and rabbis. The communities benefit by forming closer ties to the world Jewish community, and mainstream Jews benefit as they are reminded of the richness of their own religion. These include: Abayudaya (Uganda), Anousim, Cameroon, China, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lemba, Mexico, Nigeria, Suriname, Uganda, Zimbabwe. The *Kulanu* webpage features many specific ideas for mitzvah projects connecting to or supporting these peoples.

Resources:

Jews of Color www.bechollashon.org

GLBTQ Jews www.keshetonline.org

Interfaith families www.interfaithfamily.com

Jews with special needs

<http://www.bje.org/resources/contributed/File/irt.cover.directions.new.version.pdf>

Women and secular Jews in Israel whose civil liberties are being threatened
www.nif.org (see the "take action" section in particular)

Havayah Eight: Preparing a Presentation and Reflecting on the Concept of Jewish Peoplehood

Materials:

- Texts on page 69

Part One:

Prepare a presentation for the spring *kallah*. This is a chance to share with your peers what you have learned and experienced since the fall *kallah*. The more preparation, the better the presentation.

Part Two:

Use the three texts on page 69 as the basis of a closing activity. Invite teens to consider which resonates most with them and why ... or to define an alternate understanding all their own!

Three Definitions of Jewish Peoplehood

Jewish Peoplehood as Shared Covenant/Destiny

As long as there is anti-Semitism, there will be a covenant of fate among persecuted Jews.

But this is a cheerless prospect. If we are to attract Jews who live in the West in the best of conditions, we must develop a covenant of destiny as well.

It is not enough to rely on ... social factors [like anti-Semitism] that enable Jewish peoplehood – we must also offer a prescriptive call for action ... [for example by] call[ing] ... for the development of a “uniquely Jewish spiritual life.”

Jewish Peoplehood as Shared Mission: *Tikkun Olam*

In open societies, in which Jews are full citizens, Jewish peoplehood will only be meaningful if the common Jewish mission addresses universal issues of social justice faced by Jews and non-Jews alike.

The following is an example of this way of thinking:

“We have been a global people for 2,000 years. At a time when the international institutions formed after World War II are lacking in the ethical framework to deal with a new and more complex age, the Jewish people have some things to say, teach, model.”

Jewish Peoplehood as Shared Kinship and Mutual Responsibility

Shared experience produces a sense of kinship and a common descent and history.

Jews have also believed that they resemble one another in key aspects of culture and personality, as well as sharing common values, circumstances, and interests.... Throughout Jewish history, Jews were propelled to action by the common kinship they felt with other Jews....

They could easily say to one another, “We are alike, and different from others. We hold similar beliefs and ideas, we share the same sorts of opportunities and challenges, we have been subject to the same threats, experienced the same possibilities, and feel as if we are a large extended family with a great sense of mutual obligation.”

In this school of thought, shared experience and mutual obligation feed off of one another....

http://www.nadavfund.org.il/Peoplehood_Position_Paper.pdf

DIMENSIONS OF PEOPLEHOOD

Gil Troy

A Preamble and a Plea

In the spirit of the General Assembly Salon I am moderating, “Young Leaders Explore Peoplehood,” and acknowledging our attention-span-shortened, democratic, blogospheric age, allow me to offer a series of portals, of prompts, of ways into the conversation about Jewish peoplehood. These are a few of my favorite guidelines and texts. They are by no means complete, and they clearly overlap – although there are important distinctions between, say, the cultural dimension of ethnicity, the fraternal dimension of family ties, and the less substantive dimension of the tribal ties. My vision is more fully developed in my book *Why I Am A Zionist: Israel, Jewish Identity and the Challenges of Today*. Here, rather than telling people what I think, I invite people to use these statements and quotations as launching pads for

conversations, arguments, and essays of your own.

I would like, however, to venture, one challenge. I fear that “peoplehood” is becoming a safe, politically-sanitized way of expressing Jewish nationalism without the baggage of Israel or Zionism. The concept of Jewish peoplehood, that Judaism is not just a religion but an historic national community, is intimately tied to the Jews’ one homeland, Israel. As we approach the 60th anniversary of Israel’s miraculous rebirth, we should use the concept of peoplehood as a way into a deeper, more meaningful, less political relationship to the Jewish state, not as a way station toward a safer, generic, non-Israel-oriented, non-God-centered form of Judaism that just makes us feel good as members of a special, historic club as we watch Jon Stewart, don’t celebrate Christmas, bond more quickly with fellow Jews, or eat lox and bagels.

Belonging

I am a Jew because I am a “we,” a link in a chain back to Abraham, consecrated and strengthened by a covenant with God.

Abraham, Genesis, 12:1-2:

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם, לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וּמְדוּלַתְךָ
וּמְבֵית אָבִיךָ, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ.

1 Now the LORD said unto Abram: 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee.

ב וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ, לְגוֹי גָדוֹל, וְאַבְרָכְךָ, וְאַגְדַּלְתָּ שְׁמִי; וְהָיָה,
בְּרָכָה.

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing.

Morio Feldman, birthright, April 9, 2003:

A tear falls: a tear that contains the beauty, the backgrounds, and the brotherhood of Israel. A tear falls: a tear that holds a sunrise over Masada and a sunset over the Old City. A tear falls: a tear that contains the rich beauty of a Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony and the passion of a prayer offered at the Western Wall. And as this tear falls, I realize why I am so moved by the Israelis, a

people formerly unknown to me. I realize that this land, these traditions, and these people are a part of who I am. "They" becomes "we" and I realize that I am one of them.

Fate

I am a Jew because we share a common destiny; all too often as targets but also as active participants in one of humanity's greatest and longest-lasting adventures.

Megillat Ruth, 1:15-17:

And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house; God deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead, and with me. 1.16. And Ruth said, Do not entreat me to leave you, or to keep from following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you dwell, I will dwell; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; 1.17. Where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if even death parts me from you.

History

I am a Jew because I am a part of Jewish history; having been shaped by my Jewish ancestors and traditions, I eagerly look forward to shaping an exciting and compelling Jewish future for my descendants and heirs.

The Haggadah:

בְּכֹל-דּוֹר וְדוֹר תִּיב אָדָם לְרֹאוֹת אֶת-עַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם,
B'chol dor v'dor chayav adam lirot et atzmo ki'eelu hu yatzah m'mitzrayim.
In each generation every individual should feel as though
he or she had actually been redeemed from Egypt.

Elie Wiesel:

"We are bound by tradition to believe that together we have stood at Sinai, that together we have crossed the river Jordan, conquered the land of Canaan and built the Temple; that together we have been driven thence by the Babylonians and the Romans; that together we have roamed the dark byroads of exile; that together we have dreamed of recapturing a glory we have never forgotten -- every one of us is the sum of our common history."

Community

I am a Jew because the sum is greater than the individual parts, I am strengthened from being connected to others – and strengthen others in return.

Natan Sharansky, Fear No Evil (1988)

"For the activist Jews of my generation, our movement represented the exact opposite of what our parents had gone through when they were young. But we saw what had happened to their dreams, and we understood that the path to liberation could not be found in denying our own roots while pursuing universal goals. On the contrary: we had to deepen our commitment, because only he who understands his own identity and has already become a free person can work effectively for the human rights of others...."

[During one of the lengthy KGB interrogations....] Finally, Colonel Volodin's patience ran out and he began to yell at me: 'That's enough! What do you think, that your fate is in the hands of those people and not ours? They're nothing more than students and housewives!'

'Students and housewives.' Thank you, Citizen Colonel, for providing me with such an excellent formulation. Today, whenever I appear before audiences in Jerusalem and in New York, in Paris and in London and many other cities where people demonstrated in my behalf, I thank them all for their efforts and I remind them of their strength and their power. And I always remember to tell them what Volodin said, for in the end the army of students and housewives turned out to be mightier than the army of the KGB." Pp. xxii, 170.

Hatikva (1886):

As long as deep in the heart, a Jewish soul yearns. And towards the ends of the east an eye is scouting for Zion. Our hope is as yet not lost. The hope that is 2000 years old. To be a free nation, in our own country. The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Memory/Identity

I am a Jew because unlike the amnesiac who loses his memory and identity, I remember, I belong, and through both I find my moral bearings.

Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, The Politics of Hope (1997):

Herzl's character Dr. Friedrich Lowenburg in *Altneuland* who "rediscovers his identity... discovers, as Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer have argued, that to have moral commitments, even an identity, we must first belong...."

Ethnicity

I am a Jew because I was born into Jewish culture; I get it, and I like getting it.

Lenny Bruce:

- Dig: I'm Jewish. Count Basie's Jewish. Ray Charles is Jewish. Eddie Cantor's goyish. B'nai Brith is goyish; Hadassah, Jewish.
- If you live in New York or any other big city, you are Jewish. It doesn't matter even if you're Catholic; if you live in New York, you're Jewish. If you live in Butte, Montana, you're going to be goyish even if you're Jewish.
- Kool Aid is goyish. Evaporated milk is goyish even if the Jews invented it. Chocolate is Jewish and fudge is goyish. Fruit salad is Jewish. Lime jello is goyish. Lime soda is very goyish.
- All Drake's Cakes are goyish. Pumpernickel is Jewish and, as you know, white bread is very goyish. Instant potatoes, goyish. Black Cherry soda's very Jewish, macaroons are very Jewish.
- Negroes are all Jews. Italians are all Jews. Irishmen who have rejected their religion are Jews. Mouths are very Jewish. And bosoms. Baton-twirling is very goyish....

Family

I am a Jew because, as Sister Sledge sang, "we are fa-mi-ly," I am rooted in my family's saga, destiny, culture, and values, which are deeply, ineradicably, delightfully Jewish.

Arnie Eisen and Steven M. Cohen, The Jew Within: Self, Family and Community in America (2000):

"The families of our respondents – both families of origin and current families – loomed large in respondents' accounts of their Jewish journeys, activities and identities.... This emphasis on the

family is not at all surprising. Much like other ethnic and religious groups in the United States and elsewhere, Jews harbor a variety of powerful images of their families. Some see them as centers of warmth and nurturing, placing particular emphasis on the maturation and worldly success of the children. At times, so the popular image goes, Jewish families may be *too* warm, too caring, and far too intrusive. However, even in their extreme versions, and whether substantiated or not, images of intense Jewish families stand in contrast to allegedly cold and loveless American WASP counterparts, images that likewise date back half a century and more. Though Jews may differ as to their evaluation of their families, they generally concur as to their salience and centrality.” [pp. 43-44]

Jacob Klatzkin (c. 1914):

“To be a Jew means the acceptance of neither a religious nor an ethical creed. We are neither a denomination nor a school of thought, but members of one family, bearers of a common history.”

Tribal

I am a Jew because everyone needs to belong to something, and this is the team I was lucky enough to join (by birth or by choice).

Adam Sandler, The Hanukkah Song:

David Lee Roth lights the menorah,
So do James Caan, Kirk Douglas, and the late Dinah Shore-ah
Guess who eats together at the Carnegie Deli,
Bowzer from Sha-na-na, and Arthur Fonzerelli.
Paul Newman’s half Jewish; Goldie Hawn’s half too,
Put them together what a fine lookin Jew!
You don’t need Deck the Halls or Jingle Bell Rock
Cause you can spin the dreidl
with Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock-both Jewish!

Spirit

I am a Jew because I embrace and celebrate the values and teachings of Jewish civilization.

Mordechai Kaplan:

Judaism must be more than true, good and beautiful. It must, first of all, be alive, and it is alive only to those who live it as a civilization. Judaism is the spirit of a nation, and not the cult of a denomination. When we accept Judaism as a cult only, we consider it our duty to help maintain a synagogue, to attend services occasionally, and to refrain from inter-marrying with non-Jews. But when we accept it as a civilization, we cultivate the knowledge of Israel's past so as to make that past an integral part of our personal memory; we dedicate ourselves to the furtherance of Israel's career, beholding in that career our own personal future; we accept, as far as in us lies, the responsibility for the material and spiritual welfare of all of world Jewry. To be a Jew in that sense is to be imbued with a Jewish consciousness that reaches down into the secret places of the unconscious.

Responsibility

I am a Jew because I take responsibility to count and be counted among my people.

Exodus, Chapter 30:

12 'When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, according to their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

יב כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת-רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְפָקְדֵיהֶם, וְנָתַנוּ אִישׁ כֶּסֶף נַפְשׁוֹ לַיהוָה, בְּפָקֶד דָּא תָּם; וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה בָהֶם נֶגֶף, בְּפָקֶד דָּא תָּם.

And a final thought – to put the question of Judaism, Zionism, peoplehood and Israel in the mix...

Gil Troy, *Why I Am a Zionist: Israel, Jewish Identity and the Challenges of Today:*

I am a Zionist because I am a Jew – and without recognizing a national component in Judaism I cannot explain its unique character. Judaism is a world religion bound to one homeland – Israel. We are a people whose Holy Days are defined by the Israeli agricultural calendar, rooted in theological concepts, and linked with historic events.

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