

# *Israel at 60*

A TIME TO  
REJOICE...  
REFLECT...  
RENEW



A Program Guide for  
Reform Congregations

# WELCOME

Adar I 5768

February 2008

We are blessed to live in the period of Jewish history that experienced the establishment of the State of Israel, along with its tremendous growth of population and of creativity and vitality. In sixty short years, many of the dreams of our ancestors and the founders of the State have been fulfilled. During this time, the leadership of the Reform Movement has called for deeper connections between the Jews of the Diaspora and the Zionist project, embracing Israel as a core value in modern Jewish life. As we approach Israel's sixtieth anniversary, we are awed by its accomplishments and proud that it has become one of the most dynamic countries in the world. At the same time, we are also acutely aware that aspects of the dream are not yet realized and that there is still a tremendous amount of pioneering that lies ahead for Israel's citizens and supporters alike.

This program packet has been created by the various arms of the Reform Movement in North America and in Israel. It is designed to explore the miracles of Israel's achievements so far and the critical role that Reform Jews can play in further shaping Israeli society, as the country wrestles with the challenges that come with nation building, Jewish sovereignty and the difficulties of the region. Embedded within these materials are references to the long history our Movement has had in creating liberal, progressive Reform Judaism within the Jewish State and the role that we have played as a Movement in creating structures that connect Reform Jews with Israel: Fifty years of NFTY in Israel and thirty years since the creation of ARZA, the Association of Reform Zionists of America, and ARZA Canada.

Over these past sixty years, we have created twenty-five Reform congregations and communities in Israel, including two *kibbutzim* and a Galilee settlement, despite little or no support for these efforts from the various governmental structures of the Jewish State. Through life-cycle events, many thousands of secular Israelis have been exposed to our form of Jewish expression, which has allowed them to acknowledge and even consider a religious Judaism that is meaningful to them. Through the extraordinary work on the part of our colleagues in Israel, despite bureaucratic obstacles, the Progressive (Reform) Movement has exposed the Israeli judicial system and the public to our values of pluralism, social justice and freedom from religious coercion. These Reform values are crucial to the healthy growth of society and democracy in Israel. Their development requires diligence, pressure and ongoing involvement of Reform Jews everywhere until religious freedom and social justice for *all* are fully accepted and supported in the Jewish State.

As we reflect on how far we have come as a people over the past sixty years, we can celebrate our Jewish State and can use this historical moment as an opportunity for recommitment. We are deeply appreciative of the work done by members of the Movement-wide Coordinating Committee and the initiative coordinator, Rabbi Debra Goldstein, for creating a rich and sophisticated program guide. We hope that these materials will help the leadership and membership of our Movement rejoice in the accomplishments of Israel, reflect on what we still must do to fully realize our dreams, and renew our mutual commitment to the Jewish State.

LShalom,

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President, Union for Reform Judaism

Rabbi Andrew S. Davids,  
Executive Director, ARZA

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# INTRODUCTION

## I. LEADER'S GUIDE

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### INTRODUCTION

The materials in this packet are designed to give you great flexibility to help your congregation engage in *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* weekend activities to REJOICE on the sacred occasion of Israel's 60th year of independence and renewed Jewish sovereignty, REFLECT on our loving, and at times complex, relationship with Israel, and RENEW our connections to Israel and the greater Jewish people. In this Introduction are suggestions for implementing these materials, especially in small congregations or for sisterhoods and brotherhoods, as well ideas for enriching the weekend experience.

### CORE MESSAGES OF THE WEEKEND MATERIALS

In developing these materials according to our theme of Rejoice, Reflect, and Renew, we started from the position that they should all reflect a common set of core messages that we hope people will take away from their experiences:

- As a sense of peoplehood is regaining its place within Reform Judaism, and as our peoplehood is integrally connected to the Land, Israel also should be integrated into our Jewish living, Jewish time, and Jewish language.
- There are multiple narratives and voices interwoven into the history of Israel, which makes its society, and our relationship to it, very complex....much like the loving yet often complex relationships in a family.
- As Reform Jews dedicated to the prophetic moral vision, and a modern, personal Covenant informed by tradition, we have a crucial role to play alongside all other Jews in shaping Israeli society to reflect *our* Reform Jewish values.

The programs are all structured and designed to try and address essential questions stemming from these core concepts, helping us find and make a place for Israel within the individual and collective Reform Jewish expression.

### IMPLEMENTING AN ISRAEL AT 60 PROGRAM

The materials in the guide are designed to help your congregation effectively and efficiently program for a congregational weekend dedicated to Israel at 60. We believe they can be used in, or adapted to, any size congregation. With the exception of the program related to the weekly *parashah*, these materials can also be used at any point in the calendar. Whether your congregation elects to do several programs over the course of the entire weekend or selects just a few that make the most sense for your setting, an effective implementation plan will ensure your congregation is able to accomplish this important event. To meet this goal and to maximize the impact of the programs, please consider a number of the following suggestions:

- **Build Support Throughout the Congregation:** The first step to successful implementation is ensuring top leadership support for this event. Make certain that the clergy, congregational and WRJ/MRJ presidents, the educational staff and other important decision makers are on board with the program and that they are brought into the implementation strategy.
- **Expand the Leadership:** In addition to the program leader, we recommend that the congregation's ARZA Chapter or Israel Committee be mobilized to support this important effort. For congregations without such groups, auxiliary groups such as the WRJ or MRJ or a different standing committee can be

asked to lend their volunteers and leadership structure to the effort. Those congregations interested in developing an ARZA Israel Committee can visit our website [www.arza.org/membership/guide](http://www.arza.org/membership/guide) to download the **Guide for ARZA/Israel Committee Chairpersons** or contact the regional or national office of ARZA for support.

- **Understand the Available Resources:** There is a lot of material in this guide, as well as additional resources available online at [www.arza.org](http://www.arza.org). We suggest that a meeting with all key leadership be held as soon as you receive the guide to review its contents and to decide which elements will be used directly, which can be modified to better suit your congregation, which will be saved for ongoing Israel connection projects, and what enrichment ideas you want to include for the weekend program. If you find your congregation has developed an innovative approach, we ask that you share your idea with us so that we can share it with the Movement. Send your tailored approach to [arza@urj.org](mailto:arza@urj.org).
- **A Word from WRJ:** We anticipate that many WRJ sisterhoods will be working closely with the clergy and/or other congregational leaders to implement some of the important programs described in this guide, especially programming related to the Israel Religious Action Center's *Keren b'Kavod* project as a part of the WRJ's Israel at 60 initiative. In addition, sisterhoods may want to use elements that the full congregation is not implementing to enrich its own ongoing WRJ Israel programming.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULES

One of the goals of the Reform Movement is to integrate Israel into the various frameworks of congregational life. Therefore, the materials in the packet are organized according to category or theme, under the headings of *Torah* (educational), *Avodah* (worship/ceremony), and *Gemilut Chasadim* (social action/advocacy), allowing you to choose programs from the different groups for use in a broad range and size of settings and variety of formats. *Please note, there are educational offerings in all three categories.* They can be used or adapted for both large and small groups. Both small and large congregations, and affiliates within congregations, will find these materials useful. They can be used to fashion anything from a two-hour program to an entire weekend. We offer here, purely as examples, some sample schedules. It is up to you, as a leader, and your committee, to pick and choose and fashion a format with programs that work best for your congregation.

- Three possible 1.5 or two-hour programs
  1. *Parashat ba'shavu'ah* Torah study on Saturday morning
  2. Any of the adult/teen study programs late Saturday afternoon followed by *Havdalah* with Israeli wine/food/music "hors d'oeuvres" *Kiddush*
  3. Any of the adult/teen study programs on Sunday morning (concurrent with religious school) followed by an Israeli food/music brunch for all.
- Three possible three-hour programs
  1. Friday night service with Israel-related sermon followed by *Our Israel* video and discussion at *oneg Shabbat*.
  2. (4-7 pm on Saturday) Communal Ceremony followed by Israeli light fare and music, followed by *Havdalah* and then the *Mechina* film and discussion with teens and parents/adults. (Families with young children would leave after *Havdalah*)
  3. Sunday morning Religious School Educational program, concurrent with any one of the adult programs, followed by the Communal Ceremony
- A full weekend schedule
  - Preschool Education Story program at Friday morning Nursery School
  - Friday night service with Israel-related sermon followed by *Our Israel* video and discussion at *oneg Shabbat*.

- *Parashat ba'shavu'ah* Torah study on Saturday morning
- (4-7 pm on Saturday) Communal Ceremony followed by Israeli light fare and music, followed by *Havdalah* and then the *Mechina* film and discussion with teens and parents/adults. (Families with young children would leave after *Havdalah*)
- Sunday morning Religious School Educational program, concurrent with any one of the adult programs, followed by an Israel Social Action/Cultural Fair.

Also see the suggestions in the following section, *Using These Materials in Small Congregations*.

## STAFFING THE PROGRAM

In addition to the professional staff of your congregation, the top lay leadership should be recruited to help with marketing this event. Other individuals or groups who can be helpful with recruitment and program implementation include:

- Recent returnees from personal or congregational trips to Israel
- Graduates of the NFTY Summer in Israel, Eisendrath International Exchange High School in Israel or *Birtbright Israel* trips
- Local resources in the broader Jewish community, or faculty and Hillel staff/student leaders from local universities
- Members of the congregation who are Israeli or Israelis living in the local community

If you would like assistance in identifying a local Israeli resource, such as a community *sh'liach* (emissary) or a contact at the Israeli consulate or embassy serving your community, contact the Movement's central *sh'licha*, Anna Kislanski, at [akislanski@arza.org](mailto:akislanski@arza.org) or 212-650-4280.

## PROGRAM ENRICHMENT IDEAS

While there are enrichment suggestions specific to some of the programs contained in the packet, here are many general ways to add a personal and meaningful “taste” of Israel to each event:

- Host a dinner and serve Israeli food and wine
- Encourage congregants to wear blue and white
- Use Israeli wine for Kiddush
- Serve Israeli cakes and candies with Kiddush or as program refreshments
- Play Israeli and Hebrew music
- Have available the English print versions of Israeli newspapers, *Ha'Aretz* and Jerusalem Post
- Discuss or plan an upcoming congregational Israel trip
- Display photos of Israel, especially photos of your past congregational trip(s) to Israel
- Have past Israel trip participants share their experiences
- Invite local Israelis, who may not yet be members of your congregation, to participate in the weekend
- Invite Israeli vendors to sell their products at your congregation during religious school
- Partner congregants with families in Israel
- Partner your congregation with an Israeli congregation from the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism: write to [impj@impj.org.il](mailto:impj@impj.org.il)

## CONFERENCE CALL ACCESS INFORMATION

ARZA will be coordinating a series of conference calls for program leaders to explain materials, share best practices and to answer questions.

The calls will take place on:

- Wednesday, March 19th at 1:00 P.M. EST
- Wednesday, March 26th at 1:00 P.M. EST
- Thursday, March 27th at 4:00 P.M. EST

To access the calls:

Toll-free access number: 888-277-1684

Participant passcode: 67746#

Conference leaders: Rabbi Andrew Davids, Executive Director, ARZA, and  
Rabbi Debra Goldstein, Israel at 60 Coordinator

## MARKETING AND PUBLICITY MATERIAL

We hope you are displaying and enjoying the beautiful and educational Israel at 60 commemorative **poster** that was sent to you in February. It is an excellent tool to raise awareness and excitement in your congregation for your Israel at 60 programs. If you would like to order more copies to hang in your school lobby or classrooms, social hall, or any other public spaces, send your request to ARZA (633 Third Ave., N.Y., N. Y. 10017) with \$10 for 1 additional, \$15 for 2 additional, or \$20 for 3 additional copies.

We have designed two **banners** and a **flyer** using the artwork from our poster, and posted them on our website. You can download these materials, customize them with your specifics if you wish, and have them printed at your local printers. If you simply want to use the Movement's **Israel at 60 logo** for your own materials, it is also available to download from the ARZA website: [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030).

## FOLLOWING UP

In addition to completing the Feedback Forms, we suggest that the program team review again the materials in the packet to decide what might be useful for future projects and programs, and establish an ongoing ARZA Israel Committee if you do not have one already. Keep visiting the ARZA website, [www.arza.org](http://www.arza.org), as we will be adding archived and new materials for your ongoing use.

## II. USING THESE MATERIALS IN SMALL CONGREGATIONS

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(By Rabbi Victor S. Appell, *Small Congregations Specialist*)

Celebrating Israel at 60 is a wonderful opportunity for your small congregation to raise awareness of Israel, deepen the connection your members have to Israel and the larger Jewish People, and engage in exciting opportunities for learning and celebrating. Participating in this year of reflecting and rejoicing can have a profound impact on your congregation. These programs can generate interest in adult Hebrew classes, encourage more members to join ARZA, lay the groundwork for a congregational trip to Israel, and inspire teens and young adults to travel to Israel.

The program materials in this booklet are suitable for congregations of all sizes and many have been written so as to be adaptable by congregations of different sizes. For example, *My Cousin Tamar*, a program for children in younger grades is easily customized to fit the needs of small synagogues in terms of staff and space required. While even small temples can plan to present the entire range of choices offered in *My Cousin Tamar*, several different formats are presented in this program.

Below are suggestions for using several of the programs in small congregations. One program has been highlighted from each of the three categories, *Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Hasadim*.

### **TORAH: EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT MATERIAL FOR ALL AGES** **10 HEBREW WORDS FOR ISRAEL AT 60**

This can easily be used in a variety of ways in small congregations. Most congregations, big or small, are always looking for interesting materials for their temple bulletins. “10 Hebrew Words for Israel at 60” is perfect for such a use. The entire list, along with the very interesting background information can be presented as a special section in your bulletin. Perhaps it could be formatted as a special pull-out section, printed on colored paper. Or use these materials over time, presenting one or two words per issue.

These words can be used as the basis for a *d’var Torah*. From an exploration of more spiritual themes (*makom*) to Israeli politics (*Knesset*), these words offer a wealth of options. Another way to use “10 Hebrew Words for Israel at 60” is as a curriculum for an adult education class. Each of the words is accompanied by an explanation that can lead to meaningful discussions.

For your religious school, these words can be the basis for a number of creative programs. Students can make their own *mizrach* to hang in their rooms. For the word *Yisrael* students can study a map of Israel. The words *Aliyah* provides an opportunity to learn about the Torah service. And, of course, *Tikvah* is a wonderful opportunity to learn the national anthem of Israel.

### **AVODAH: OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT WORSHIP AND ISRAEL** **PARASHAT HA’SHAVU’AH STUDY GUIDE**

*Parashat Emor* provides your congregation with a fitting text to study the concept of holiness as it applies to the Land of Israel. The Study Guide can be the basis for a sermon or *d’var Torah* at *Erev Shabbat* or *Shabbat Morning* worship. You might try something that you have not done before, such as reprinting parts of the Study Guide and using it for a more informal Torah Study as part of the *Erev Shabbat* service. If you use the materials for Torah study on *Shabbat Morning*, consider following it with an Israeli style brunch or *Kiddush*.

You could also use the materials for adult Torah study at the same time as your religious school. While the parents/adults are having their Torah study, the religious school classes can read *Parashat Emor’s* review of the yearly holy day cycle (Lev. 23:1-21) and learn about the agricultural and weather patterns in Israel and how the festivals are tied to the various harvest seasons in Israel. (There is also a great activity making footprints for the pilgrimage festivals, leading to Jerusalem, in *Teaching Torah* by Loeb and Kadden, A.R.E. Publishing. It is

available at [www.behrmanhouse.com](http://www.behrmanhouse.com). During this time, younger siblings/students can read the book, *My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel*, by Michelle Shapiro Abraham (published by URJ Books and Music) and do one of the activities in the *My Cousin Tamar* program. Then everyone can come together for the Israeli style brunch.

### **GEMILUT HASADIM: ISRAEL AND THE SOCIAL ACTION AGENDA KEREN B'KAVOD PROJECT**

Many synagogues have active social action committees and the *Keren b'Kavod* project is an ideal undertaking for these committees. This project provides congregations with an opportunity to expand the reach of their social action work to Israel. In addition, many congregants may not be familiar with the work of the Israel Religious Action Center and this is an excellent means by which to increase awareness about the important work of IRAC.

This program can easily be divided into two phases, education and action. The materials describing the *Keren b'Kavod* project can be adapted for publication in your temple bulletin. The work of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) and this project in particular can be the subject of a sermon. In that case, these materials can be distributed after services or included as an insert distributed along with *siddurim* at services. Students in Confirmation or High School classes can learn about the IRAC. In addition to the materials provided in here, additional resources can be found at [www.rac.org/advocacy/irac/](http://www.rac.org/advocacy/irac/).

Once awareness has been raised, congregants can be moved to action. Encourage congregants to make a donation to the IRAC *Keren b'Kavod* project as described in the materials. Help your members develop an ongoing relationship with IRAC and keep them informed of their work in advancing pluralism and protecting human rights by encouraging them to subscribe to the E-newsletters of the IRAC at <http://rac.org/advocacy/irac/e-newsletter-subscribe/>. High school students are often very interested in Israel and social action. If your congregation has a temple youth group, get them involved by having them co-sponsor this effort along with the social action committee.

As you will see when you read through the materials, the programs offered are easily adaptable and usable for small congregations. Consider the Sample Schedules suggestions as models and use your creativity... and enjoy!

# TORAH—Educational Engagement Material for All Ages

## 1. MY COUSIN TAMAR: PRESCHOOL EDUCATION STORY PROGRAMS

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### INTRODUCTION

In this program, children “step into the pages” of *My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel* by Michelle Shapiro Abraham (URJ Press 2007). They will explore the similarities and differences between their own celebration of Jewish holidays and that of Tamar, a young Jewish girl living in Jerusalem. While Jewish holidays in our homeland may be nationally observed, in the Diaspora (lands outside Israel) the celebrations of these holidays are based solely on the religious community with which one affiliates. The narrator of the book, a young Jewish boy living in America, tells of how he celebrates Jewish holidays in his home or synagogue. He shares that for his cousin Tamar who lives in Israel, Jewish holidays are celebrated nationally in the streets and public places. The book ends with the young boy telling us proudly, “I live in a Jewish home. My cousin Tamar lives in Israel, the Jewish homeland.”

Based on the “stations,” “learning centers” or “interest area” model utilized in many preschool settings, this program provides materials and directions to create eight learning environments that we will call “stations.” The stations were created to bring the children into the book—giving them an opportunity to eat *matzah* pizza at “Tamar’s favorite restaurant” or to dress up for *Purim* and wear their costumes “all day long.” Through hands-on activities, the children will explore, question, and play while they learn about their Jewish homeland, giving them very likely their first personal connection to Israel. The program concludes with a “Birthday Party” for the land of Israel—a celebration that unites all Jews everywhere.

This program is easily adaptable to different settings, from a full-day preschool to a temple-based family education program. In the Program Format Options section below, you will find a variety of ways to run this program, including doing all, some, or only one of the station activities. Each of the stations requires different materials and space. For example, for one station, you would need a sand table; for others just an area to sit and color or put together a puzzle. Choose those stations that most interest you, for which you can get the supplies needed, and that fit into your space. All of the stations can be set up in one room, or can be spread out over multiple rooms. The program is most appropriate for children ages three to five, and can be adapted for use with small or large groups.

Stations available are:

Art:	“I Live in America, Tamar Lives in Israel” Posters
Building:	Building <i>Shabbat</i> in Jerusalem, with blocks
Manipulatives:	Matching “My Home and Tamar’s Home” Puzzles
Dress-Up:	“ <i>Purim</i> in Israel” Photo-op
Cooking:	Tasting <i>Latkes</i> and <i>Sufganiyot</i> (jelly donuts) Making <i>Matzah</i> Pizza
Writing/Letters:	Writing “America” and “Israel” (on appropriate pictures)
Sand Table:	Hidden Holiday Objects

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

Jewish celebrations link the children of Israel living in the Land of Israel with those living outside in the Diaspora. While Jewish holidays in Israel, our homeland, may be nationally observed, in America, their celebrations are based solely on the religious community with which one affiliates. Exploring the similarities and differences of our celebrations teaches us about what it means to live as a Jew and how Judaism “lives” in the public domain in Israel, thus strengthening both our individual families and *Klal Yisrael*—our people united.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can learning about Israeli celebrations add to my celebrations of the Jewish holidays?
- How am I connected to the Land of Israel?
- How I am connected to the People of Israel?
- What makes Israel the “Jewish homeland”?
- How is Judaism lived in America and Israel?
- How do my own experiences with Jewish celebrations compare to Tamar’s celebrations in Israel?

## QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

- How are the Jewish holidays different in Israel and in the Diaspora?
- How are the Jewish holidays the same in Israel and the Diaspora?
- How do I celebrate the Jewish holidays?
- What can I learn about my own holiday celebrations by understanding how Jewish holidays are celebrated in Israel?
- How can I celebrate the 60th birthday of Israel?

## PROGRAM FORMAT OPTIONS

This program has been written so that you can easily adapt it to your setting, time, and available staff. You can use it either for a family education program, or for a program for preschoolers alone. Below are some suggestions for different program models appropriate for different settings.

### **Family Education Program with Multiple Stations**

(5 to 9 stations depending on how many families are present and which fit into your space)

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 0:00–0:10 | Program Introduction with story reading and brief discussion (see below)   |
| 0:10–0:45 | Each parent is given a copy of the Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheets (pp 19–26). With their child they visit the various stations and use the background information and questions to help their child explore the different activities |
| 0:45–1:00 | Program Conclusion with A Birthday Party for Israel (see below)  |

## **Full-Day/Half-Day Preschool Program with Multiple Stations (with or without parents)**

(5 to 9 stations depending on how many children are present and which fit into your space)

- 0:00–0:10 Program Introduction with story reading and brief discussion (see below)
- 0:10–0:45 Each teacher is given a copy of the “Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheets” (pp 19–26) Children spend 5 to 7 minutes in each station and rotate to visit the various stations. The teacher at the station uses the background information and questions to help the children explore the different activities
- 0:45–1:00 Program Conclusion with A Birthday Party for Israel (see below)

## **Temple Preschool Program with One Teacher and No Parents**

- 0:00–0:10 Program Introduction with story reading and brief discussion (see below)
- 0:10–0:30 Choose one station to do, such as Making *Matzah* Pizza or “I Live in America, Tamar Lives in Israel” posters
- 00:30–00:45 Program Conclusion with A Birthday Party for Israel (see below)

### **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

You will find specific supplies needed for each station in the Station Descriptions found on pp. 15–18. The supplies listed below are for the Program Introduction and Program Conclusion.

#### **Program Introduction**

*My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel* by Michelle Shapiro Abraham (URJ Press 2007, available at [www.urjpress.org](http://www.urjpress.org)) Also available as an additional option: My Cousin Tamar Companion CD (URJ Press, projected date Spring 2008).

#### **Program Conclusion**

- Birthday celebration foods: cake, cupcakes, *sufganiyot* (Israeli jelly donuts)
- Plates and napkins (preferably blue and white)
- Israeli food, including *chumous* and pita (optional)
- Israeli decorations, such as small Israeli flags for the children to take home, photos of family or friends in Israel, an Israeli map, blue and white streamers, etc. (optional)
- A CD of Israeli children’s music or *Ruach 5765—New Songs from Israel*, available from [www.urjpress.org](http://www.urjpress.org) (optional)

### **PROGRAM OUTLINE**

#### **Introduction**

In the introduction, children listen to the book *My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel* read to them and are introduced to the celebration of the Jewish holidays.

- I. Welcome the children (and their parents, if applicable) to a very special program. Explain that they are going to be learning about a very special place, a place called “Israel.” Ask the children to raise their hands if they have ever heard of Israel or visited there.

2. Explain to the children that Israel is actually very far away from where they live. If you know, you can share how long it would take to travel to Israel from their home. Explain that even though Israel is very far away, it is still our home. Ask the children if they know why Israel is special for us. (Israel is a home for *all* Jews no matter where they live.)
3. Explain to the children that today they are going to learn about Israel from a little boy whose cousin, Tamar, lives there. In his book, he is going to tell us the differences between how he celebrates the Jewish holidays and how Tamar celebrates them.
4. Read the book *My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel* to the children.

**“Stepping into the Book”: Sending participants to their activities**

(20-50 minutes depending on the number of stations and program format that you choose)

1. Explain to the children that they are going to step into the book that they just heard and do lots of fun activities to explore more about Israel!
2. Give the appropriate directions for the activity(ies) that you will be doing:
  - a. Parents should take their child to the different activities and use the “Parent/Station Leader Directions Sheet” for each activity to know what to do; *or*
  - b. Put children in small groups and have them visit the different stations. At each station a teacher will meet them to tell them what to do; *or*
  - c. Explain the single activity that you will be doing.

**Program Conclusion: A Birthday Party for Israel** (15 minutes)

1. In the conclusion of the program, participants come back together to share what they have done and to celebrate Israel’s 60th Birthday.
2. Ask all of the participants to finish up their activity and to come and join you in a communal area (eg., sitting on a specific place on the floor).
3. Ask the children to raise their hands and to share with you some of the things they did and learned during the activities.
4. Explain to the participants that there is a very special birthday party this year and Jews from all over the world are invited. Ask the children: Who do you think could be having a birthday party to which Jews from all over the entire world would be invited? What place is so special to all Jews, that all of us would celebrate its birthday? It isn’t a person—it is a place! (Israel!)
5. Explain that this year the State of Israel is 60 years old! Sixty years ago this special Jewish place was founded as a special homeland for all Jewish people.
6. Bring out the birthday celebration food and sing “Happy Birthday” to Israel. You can sing in Hebrew and/or English. “Happy Birthday” in Hebrew is “*Yom hu’le’idet sa’mei’ach*”
7. You may want to play an Israeli or Hebrew CD during your party, such as *Ruach 5765—New Songs from Israel* available from [www.urjpress.org](http://www.urjpress.org).

## LEARNING/ACTIVITY STATIONS: DESCRIPTIONS & PREPARATION

### Art Station: “I Live in America/Tamar Lives in Israel” Poster

At this station, children will “put themselves in the book” by creating a drawing of their own home on the poster under the text “I live in \_\_\_\_\_ in a Jewish Home.” On the other side of the poster will be an illustration of Tamar and her home with the text “Tamar lives in Israel in the Jewish homeland.”

#### Supplies Needed

- “I Live in America, Tamar Lives in Israel” poster for each child (found on 27–28)
- Markers or crayons
- Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheet for each family or station leader (p. 19)

#### Preparation

- Use the two-page copy master for “I Live in America, Tamar Lives in Israel” (pp. 27–28) Place the two pages together to create an 11x17 master. Copy one poster for each child on white 11x17 paper.
- OPTIONAL: Create a large poster or wall hanging of a house or apartment for the background of this station.

### Building Station: Building *Shabbat* In Jerusalem

At this station, children will “build *Shabbat* in Jerusalem” by using blocks with “*Shabbat* in Jerusalem Building Blocks” shapes on them.

#### Supplies Needed

- Building blocks or large Legos® (i.e., Duplos®)
- “*Shabbat* in Jerusalem Building Blocks” shapes taped to approximately half of the blocks (p. 29)
- Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheet for each family or station leader (p. 20)
- Picture of “*Shabbat*” from *My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel* either small for the children to look at or large as a backdrop for the station (see photo and below)



#### Preparation

- Copy on to various colored paper the “*Shabbat* in Jerusalem Building Blocks” shapes (p. 29). Cut and tape these shapes to approximately half of your blocks.
- OPTIONAL: Create a large poster or wall hanging with the walls of Jerusalem to be the backdrop for this station. (see photo) Tape shapes with *Shabbat* candles in the windows of the buildings to show that it is *Shabbat* in Jerusalem.



### **Manipulative Station: Matching “My Home and Tamar’s Home” Puzzles**

At this station, children will explore how holidays are celebrated in Israel and in the young boy’s home by matching puzzle pieces for each celebration.

#### **Supplies needed**

- 2 copies of *My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel* that you can cut up
- 11x17 colored paper
- A Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheet for each family or station leader (p. 21)

#### **Preparation:**

To create the puzzles

- Cut out the different illustrations for the different holidays in the boy’s home and in Israel. (You will need two books for this as you will be destroying one side of a page when you cut out the other side.)
- Take a sheet of colored paper and glue to it the two scenes (the Israel scene and the America scene) for a specific holiday. Cut the two pieces apart to make two “puzzle pieces” that fit together.
- If possible, laminate your puzzle pieces.

### **Dress-Up Station: “Purim in Israel” Photo-op**

At this station, children will explore that in Israel, *Purim* costumes are worn all day long. They will choose costumes to wear and will pose in front of a special backdrop for pictures or play in an imaginary play area.

#### **Supplies needed**

- Various costumes (all kinds are fine)
- A large sheet of butcher paper to create the picture backdrop. (prior to program)
- Markers or paints to decorate your backdrop (prior to program)
- A camera (digital or instant)
- Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheet for each family or station leader (p. 22)

#### **Preparation**

- Using the butcher paper, create a large poster with the words “In Israel, we wear our *Purim* costumes all day long, everywhere we go!” The poster can have a picture of a bus, a park, a school, or other “secular” places.
- If possible, arrange furniture for imaginary play (such as a kitchen set-up, school set-up, etc.) at this station for children to “visit” while they wear their costumes.

### **Cooking Station: Tasting *Latkes* and *Sufganiyot* (jelly donuts)**

At this station, children will taste *latkes* and *sufganiyot* while learning about the necessary ingredients for each (oil!)

#### **Supplies needed**

- *Latkes*
- *Sufganiyot* (jelly donuts)
- Napkins and small plates
- *Latkes* toppings (such as applesauce and sour cream)
- Potatoes and a bottle of oil (for showing only)
- Flour, sugar, a jar of jelly, and a bottle of oil (for showing only)
- A Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheet for each family or station leader (p. 23)

#### **Preparation**

- Make or purchase *latkes*.
- Make or purchase jelly donuts.
- Put out the ingredients for each item on a table. Note: It is important that the two bottles of oil (for the *latke* making supplies and the *sufganiyot* making supplies) look the same.

### **Cooking Station: Making *Matzah* Pizza**

At this station, children will visit “Tamar’s favorite restaurant,” which makes *matzah* pizza for everyone!

#### **Supplies needed**

- *Matzah*
- Grated mozzarella cheese
- Pizza sauce (warm)
- 1-2 toaster ovens (optional)
- Oven mitts (if using a toaster oven)
- Plates/napkins
- A Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheet for each family or station leader (p. 24)



#### **Preparation**

- Prepare the ingredients for children to make their own “*matzah* pizza.” If you use warm sauce, you do not need to cook the *matzah* pizza.
- OPTIONAL: Create a backdrop for this station that resembles “Tamar’s favorite restaurant” from the book.

### **Writing/Letters Station: Writing “America” and Israel”**

At this station, the children will pick pictures and trace the letters “America” or “Israel” for the two different places.

#### **Supplies**

- Copies of the book cover illustration of America and Israel (p. 30)
- Pencils or markers
- Markers or crayons (for coloring)
- A Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheet for each family or station leader (p. 25)

#### **Preparation**

- Copy one “America/Israel” picture (p. 30) for each child. On this book cover illustration, add the words “America” and “Israel” in dotted letters on the appropriate spaces for the children to trace.

### **Sand Table Station: Hidden Holiday Objects**

At this station, the children will sift through the sand and find various Jewish holiday objects used in both Israel and America.

#### **Supplies**

- A sand table
- Various holiday objects, including:
- Candlesticks (*Shabbat*)
- Menorah (*Chanukah*)
- Mask (*Purim*)
- Seder plate (Passover)
- Kiddush Cup (*Shabbat*)
- Plastic fruit (*Sukkot*)
- Shofar (*Rosh HaShanah*)
- Small Israeli flag (*Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*)
- A sign reading “In both Israel and America, we celebrate Jewish holidays!”
- A Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheet for each family or station leader (p. 26)

#### **Preparation**

- Hide the various objects in the sand table.

Parent/Station Leader Direction Sheets and coloring pages follow.

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*This program was created for the Israel at 60 program by Michelle Shapiro Abraham, RJE, Director of Education at Temple Sholom, Plainfield, New Jersey.*

## RESOURCE PAGE 1

### PARENT/STATION LEADER DIRECTION SHEET 1

#### **"I Live in America, Tamar Lives in Israel" Poster Making**

##### **Background**

At this station, children will identify "Israel" as the place where Tamar lives and their own home as the place where they live. By drawing their own home and adding their name, the children put themselves into the book.

##### **Station Discussion**

When the children arrive at the station, read out loud to them the text on the poster. Help the children write their name and where they live on the appropriate lines. Then have the children draw a picture of their own home.

##### **Some questions to discuss while they work are:**

- Where does Tamar live? (Jerusalem)
- Where do you live?
- What is the same about you and Tamar? (We are both Jewish.)
- What is different? (Tamar lives in Jerusalem, and I live in \_\_\_\_\_.)

**RESOURCE PAGE 2**  
**PARENT/STATION LEADER DIRECTION SHEET 2**

**Building *Shabbat* In Jerusalem**

**Background**

At this station, the children create a “*Shabbat* in Jerusalem scene” by building *Shabbat* with special “Jerusalem blocks.” The buildings that make up the Old City in Jerusalem are unique and beautiful. The walls surrounding the city are made of Jerusalem stone that glimmers white in the sunlight, and the buildings are topped with domes, towers, and beautiful architecture.

*Shabbat* in Jerusalem is a unique experience. Most of the shops and restaurants close, and there is a quiet that comes over the city. You can see people walking in the streets with flowers, heading off to friends’ homes and to *Shabbat* services.

**Station Discussion**

While the children are busy building, make sure to point out to them the special “*Shabbat* in Jerusalem Building Blocks” shapes on the blocks, especially those with the drawings of *Shabbat* candles.

**Some questions to discuss while they work are:**

- Do they celebrate *Shabbat* in Israel where Tamar lives? (Yes!)
- Do you remember what we learned happens in Jerusalem to tell the whole city that *Shabbat* has begun? (The *Shabbat* horn is sounded.)
- Does *Shabbat* happen ONLY in Israel? (no!) Where else does *Shabbat* happen? (in Jewish homes around the world)

**RESOURCE PAGE 3**  
**PARENT/STATION LEADER DIRECTION SHEET 3**

**Matching “My Home and Tamar’s Home” Puzzles**

**Background**

At this station, the children will match pictures of how holidays are celebrated in Israel with how they are celebrated outside of Israel. In Israel, as the book points out, Jewish holidays are celebrated on a national level. In other countries, Jewish holidays are celebrated as religious holidays by Jewish people living there.

**Station Discussion**

As the children put together each puzzle, ask them to tell you what holiday is being celebrated and how it is different in Tamar’s home and in her cousin’s home.

Illustration	Holiday	Israeli Celebration	Cousin’s Celebration
Boy blessing candles; girl in window	<i>Shabbat</i>	<i>Shabbat</i> horn tells the whole city that <i>Shabbat</i> has begun.	Candle blessing tells the family that <i>Shabbat</i> has begun.
Characters walking past stores and cars	<i>Yom Kippur</i>	Tamar walks past closed stores and parked cars.	We walk past open stores and lots of cars.
Boy in <i>sukkah</i> in backyard; <i>sukkot</i> everywhere	<i>Sukkot</i>	<i>Sukkot</i> (pl. of <i>sukkah</i> ) are everywhere.	<i>Sukkah</i> is in the backyard or at the synagogue.
Big plate with <i>latkes</i> and <i>sufganiyot</i>	<i>Chanukah</i>	<i>Sufganiyot</i> (jelly donuts) sold on the street	<i>Latkes</i> made in their own home
Children dressed in costumes	<i>Purim</i>	Tamar and her friends wear their costumes all day long.	We only wear costumes to services or the carnival.
Eating Pizza	Passover	Tamar’s favorite restaurant makes <i>matzah</i> pizza for everyone	The family makes <i>matzah</i> pizza at home.

**RESOURCE PAGE 4**  
**PARENT/STATION LEADER DIRECTION SHEET 4**

***Purim* in Israel Photo-Op**

**Background**

At this station, students will play “dress-up” in *Purim* costumes and pose in front of a *Purim* backdrop for pictures. While *Purim* outside the State of Israel is a “synagogue based” celebration, *Purim* in Israel is celebrated in the street.

**Station Discussion**

As the children choose their costumes, make sure to remind them that they are getting dressed up to celebrate *Purim* in Israel.

**Some questions to discuss while they dress up:**

- Are we going to wear our costumes on the bus? (yes!) Are we going to wear our costumes at school? (yes, we are going to wear our *Purim* costumes all day long!)
- Who remembers what happens during the *Purim* story?

**RESOURCE PAGE 5**  
**PARENT/STATION LEADER DIRECTION SHEET 5**

**Tasting *Latkes* and *Sufganiyot***

**Background**

Both *latkes* (fried potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (fried jelly donuts) are made in oil. The oil reminds us of the oil that lasted for eight days in the *Chanukah* story. On the streets of Jerusalem during *Chanukah* time, vendors have giant vats of boiling oil and sell *sufganiyot* on the street corners (much like roasted chestnuts are sold in New York City at Christmastime)

**Station Discussion**

Explain to the children that you have the ingredients that we use to make *latkes* (fried potato pancakes) and the ingredients that we use to make *sufganiyot* (fried jelly donuts).

**Discuss with the children while they are tasting:**

- Look at the ingredients that we use to make *latkes* and *sufganiyot*. What is the same about the two sets of ingredients? (oil)
- Why do we use oil for these Chanukah treats? (because it reminds us of the oil that lasted for eight days)
- Do you remember which of these treats are made in Israel? (*sufganiyot*)
- At our home or synagogue we make our *latkes*. Do you remember where they buy their *sufganiyot* in Israel? (on the street corners!)

**RESOURCE PAGE 6**  
**PARENT/STATION LEADER DIRECTION SHEET 6**

**Making *Matzah* Pizza**

**Background**

*Matzah* Pizza is a favorite in Israel and America during Passover. Many of the restaurants in Jerusalem become “Kosher for Passover.” Others simply close for the week. Italian restaurants make Kosher for Passover pasta and lasagna. Cafes and Pizza restaurants, like Tamar’s favorite restaurant, make *matzah* pizza. Sandwich places offer “*matzah* sandwiches.” In Jerusalem, it is very easy to keep Passover!

**Station Discussion/Activity**

Welcome the children to Tamar’s favorite restaurant. Explain that today we are having a very special meal—*matzah* pizza! Ask the children, “On what holiday do we eat *matzah*? (Passover) Remind the children that in Jerusalem, Tamar’s favorite restaurant makes *matzah* pizza for everyone!

Help the children make their *matzah* pizza.

1. Take a piece of *matzah*!
2. Spread on the warm pizza sauce.
3. Sprinkle on the cheese.
4. Either eat right away or put in an oven for a few minutes until the cheese is melted.

*Matzah* Pizza ingredients

- *Matzah*
- Grated mozzarella cheese
- Pizza sauce (warm)

**Writing “America” and “Israel”**

**Background**

At this station, children practice writing “Israel” and “America.” They will look carefully at the illustration from the cover of *My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel* and explore the differences between the illustration of Israel and the illustration of America. In Israel, we see a scene of the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem and a picture of Tamar. On the America side, we see a picture of a house with a fence.

**Station Discussion/Activity**

Ask the children to look at the first letter of each of the two words. “Israel” begins with the letter *I*. Ask the children to point to the word “Israel.” Ask the children to trace the word “Israel.”

Explain to the children that “America,” where Tamar’s cousin lives, begins with the letter *A*. Ask the children to point to the word “America.” Ask the children to trace the word “America.”

Ask the children to point to the side of the star that is a picture of Israel. Ask the children, “How did you know that this was Israel?” (It is where Tamar lives, the picture of the Old City.)

Give the children time to color the illustration.

**RESOURCE PAGE 8**  
**PARENT/STATION LEADER DIRECTION SHEET 8**

**Sand Table: Hidden Holiday Objects**

**Background**

In this station, the children will explore that in both Israel and outside of Israel we celebrate the same holidays with the same items. Some of the items you may find in the sand table are:

Candlesticks (*Shabbat*)

Menorah (*Chanukah*)

Mask (*Purim*)

Seder plate (Passover)

Kiddush Cup (*Shabbat*)

Plastic fruit (*Sukkot*)

Shofar (*Rosh HaShanah*)

Small Israeli flag (*Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*)

**Station Discussion/Activity**

As the children take out each item, ask them:

- What is this item?
- For what holiday is it used?
- Where do we celebrate this holiday (Israel and here!)

**My Name is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**This is a picture of my home.**

**I live in \_\_\_\_\_, in a Jewish Home.**

**This is my cousin  
Tamar's home.  
My cousin Tamar  
lives in Israel,  
The Jewish  
homeland.**

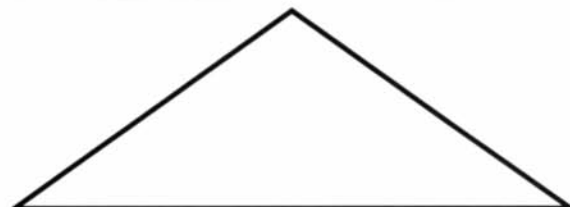


My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel  
By Michelle Shapiro Abraham  
Illustrated by Ann Koffsky  
URJ Press 2007

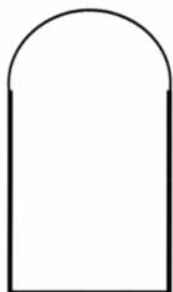
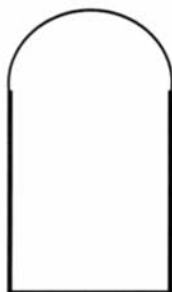
**Shabbat In Jerusalem Building Blocks**  
Shrink or enlarge this page to fit your blocks and copy on colored papers



**Rooftops**  
Tape to the upper third so that the top of the roof goes higher than the top of the block or Lego.



**Windows**  
Tape windows to the middle of the block or Lego.



**Doorways**  
Tape doors so that they touch the bottom of the Lego or block. Do not be concerned if the door goes above the top of the block.

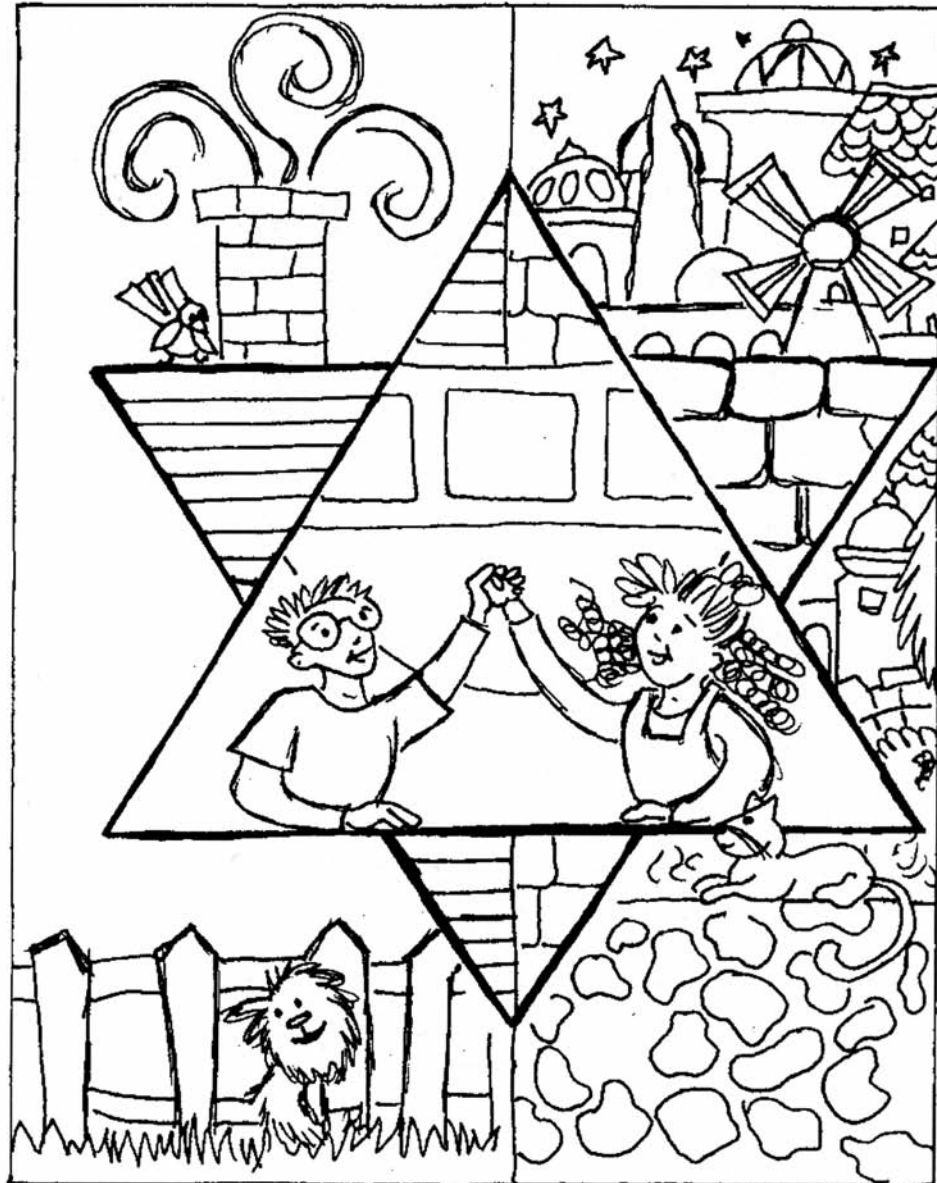
An "Old City Wall" can be created by putting two or three rounded doors on a long Lego or block.

Note: Each block should only have one item on it so that the children can create their own buildings by combining blocks. (with the exception of Old City Walls)

Also, be sure to give the children a collection of blocks with out any windows, doors, or rooftops to give height to their buildings.

# America

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My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel  
By Michelle Shapiro Abraham  
Illustrated by Ann Koffsky  
URJ Press 2007

# Israel

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# TORAH—Educational Engagement Material for All Ages

## 2. OUR ISRAEL: SHAPING OUR RELATIONSHIP Israel at 60 DVD and Discussion Guide

### INTRODUCTION

For many, the relationship with Israel is informed by our personal experiences, interactions with Israelis, first-hand travel to Israel, our history and memory, and a host of other elements. This complexity can be both the challenge to strengthening our connections with the Jewish State, as well as the pathway into a richer relationship. *Our Israel*, our Israel at 60 DVD, is designed to raise some of these issues through the personal testimonies of Israelis and North Americans who reflect on their relationship to Israel, the roles that Israel can play in our identities, and possible pathways to connection that emerge out of this wonderful, troubling, compelling, and ever powerful land, country and people.

Envisioned as an hour-long program, the DVD and Discussion Guide can be used by various cohorts within the congregation as either a stand-alone program or as the introduction to the full weekend of activities around the rubrics of Rejoice, Reflect and Renew. For program planning purposes, the following are the Timeline and Material needs that are recommended to best utilize the DVD and Discussion Guide:

### TIMELINE

Introduction	0:00–0:10
DVD	0:10–0:18
Reflections	0:18–0:25
Discussion	0:25–0:50
Wrap up	0:50–1:00

### MATERIALS

*Our Israel* DVD

Large screen TV or Projector

DVD Player or laptop

Appropriate sound support

Copies of Reflection Sheet for each viewer

Pens or pencils

Leader's Discussion Questions

General material on Israel such as Israeli newspapers, literature, ARZA and the World Union brochures, NFTY in Israel materials, etc.

We also present here the Implementation Outline for your planning purposes. **The *Our Israel: Shaping Our Relationship* DVD and Discussion Guide questions will be shipped under separate cover to requesting congregations.**

## IMPLEMENTATION

- *Introduction*

The leader should introduce the DVD and the program experience using the following key points:

- This DVD will use personal testimonies from Israelis, primarily from the Israeli Reform Movement, and North American Reform Jews, to explore the complex relationships we have with the State of Israel.
- Each of us comes to this issue with our own personal stories; the goal of this program is to open ourselves up to others' stories and look for places where our stories overlap and interact and where we can learn from others.
- Some of what we hear may be provocative and surprising. That is alright. Educational theory suggests that moving out of our comfort zone helps us grow in our thinking.
- Each individual will be identified by name and we will be provided with a minimum amount of additional information to understand where the person currently lives. As you listen, reflect on whether or not that information is relevant to the individual's testimony.
- This DVD was created specifically for the Reform Movement's Israel at 60 Initiative.

- *Play the DVD*

It is important to make certain that the room is set up to facilitate the experience of watching and hearing the DVD. Prior to showing the DVD, test the system and make certain that the volume will be loud enough to be heard by everyone in the room, noting that the ambient sound of the room will be much louder when it is filled with people. Turning the lights down prior to showing the DVD will also help individuals get quiet and focus on the testimonies. It is also helpful to have the chairs in the room set in such a way that everyone will be able to face the screen and then transition into the next steps.

- *Reflections Exercise*

Distribute a copy of the Reflection Sheet and a pen or pencil to each viewer and provide the group with five minutes of quiet to reflect on the DVD. The Reflections Sheet is designed to both facilitate deep reflection and raise some questions that can be discussed during the next step. It is important to ensure that the viewers are given quiet so that they can work through the Reflections Sheet and focus on their ideas. Ensuring this time for reflection will lead to a richer discussion and a greater probability that individuals will be able to share ideas and hear one another.

- *Discussion*

The Discussion is organized into four different sections: Reactions, Rejoicing, Reflection and Renewal. Effective facilitation will allow the group to move from generalities to specifics and from reacting to what was seen to sharing personal concerns, hopes and ideas. The questions are also designed to help the group identify some of the key issues that can serve as barriers to conversation about Israel, the different aspects of Israel life that engage Reform Jews and the challenges that face our Movement and potential strategies to find the right balance of deep love and honest critique. Some sample questions:

- **Rejoicing:** Elan uses the metaphor of a mosaic to describe Israel today and the differences that he has seen since he moved to Israel in the early 1970's. How is this metaphor different than the way Israeli society was viewed in the early years?

- **Reflection:** Ilana suggests that Israelis need to “stop lying about what goes on in Israel” and to bring the younger generation of North American Jews into an honest conversation about Israel? What does she mean by “lying” and how do you feel about her statement?
- **Renewal:** Scott tells us we “need to stop talking about Israel and need to start doing about Israel.” What do you make of this message and how might you actualize his charge?

It is important that a safe space for conversation is created for this discussion. The leader might suggest that everyone make an extra effort to listen to one another and primarily use “I statements,” statements that are about one’s personal perspective rather than broad generalizations about others or accusations. It is also important to state that, as in the DVD, there are many different and legitimate ways to think about Israel and that there are no very clear right or wrong answers or perspectives. If the leader senses the group discussion is arriving at a difficult point that might become explosive, the leader should stop discussion and remind the participants of these principles. At the same time, the leader should allow for impassioned discussion and controversy—these issues are difficult and a meaningful conversation about this complex relationship requires candor and intelligent discussion.

- *Wrap up*

The wrap up is an opportunity for the leader to reiterate the importance of a complex and meaningful relationship with Israel and to highlight some of the points that rose out of the discussion. In addition, the leader may want to point out a personal reaction to the DVD and the impact on his or her own thinking about Israel or ask for a few individuals to share their own reactions. In particular, see the last question on the Reflection sheet.

It is also useful to give the participants a next step: general materials on Israel, such as outlined in the Materials section, or specific hand-outs about congregational Israeli programming can provide participants with a next step that will help deepen their understanding of Israel and allow for an open-ended conversation about their relationship with the Jewish State. You will also find additional materials in the Israel at 60 weekend packet to help prepare for follow up to the Israel at 60 efforts in the congregation and within the Movement.

## OUR ISRAEL: ISRAEL AT 60 DVD REFLECTIONS SHEET

*The DVD you just viewed reflects only a few of the many different perspectives that Jews and non-Jews, Israelis and non-Israelis have regarding Israel as it prepares for its 60th anniversary. In a moment, the group will participate in a facilitated discussion about the ideas and issues raised by the different stories. Please take the next few moments to write down your reactions to what you saw so that you can begin to organize your feelings and thinking so that you can fully listen to the other participants without having to focus on generating your own reactions.*

1. What was your overall feeling about the video? What emotions or ideas captured your attention?

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2. Was there an individual who you strongly identified with, and if so, why?

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3. Were there any statements that you found troubling, and if so, which?

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4. If you had been a part of the video, what would you have said made you proud of Israel? What troubles you?

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5. What do you think is the most important message from the video that needs to be shared with other Reform Jews?

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# TORAH—Educational Engagement Material for All Ages

## 3. MECHINA: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE 18 IN ISRAEL

### A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEENS/COLLEGE STUDENTS, AND FOR PARENTS/ADULTS

#### Background

The movie *Mechina: A Preparation* is a 2005 documentary by Mital Guttman and Madeleine Sackler chronicling the experiences Mital's cousin, Amitai, and his friends as they take part in the *Mechina* program of the Israeli Movement of Progressive Judaism (IMPJ). Several Israeli institutions offer *Mechina* programs, which allow high school graduates to defer their enrollment into the Israeli Army, the IDF, for a year, as they take part in a program that focuses on studying and volunteering. Such programs are fairly new, allowing young Israelis the opportunity to gain a deeper sense of identity and maturity before taking on the serious commitment of the IDF. It is not yet a common experience for Israeli teens.

The IDF is a major cultural shaper within Israeli society. Historically, it has been the Israeli “melting pot,” and a major rite of passage. Other than the ultra-Orthodox and Israeli Arabs, almost all Israeli high school graduates, men and women, serve in the Army for 2-3 years before going on to university or the work force. It is very counter-cultural to take a year of volunteering and study rather than going directly into the IDF with your friends and fellow graduates.

Mital, a Duke University student at the time she made the movie, grew up in Israel until the age of seven. She went and spent a few months with Amitai and his friends at the end of their IMPJ *Mechina* year, as they prepared for the army. The dilemmas they shared with her, the similarities and differences she notices between her life and theirs, provides us with a great opportunity to learn about current Israeli youth, their thoughts, feelings, and how we, as North American Jews, may relate to them.

#### How to purchase the movie:

Go to [www.mechinathemovie.com](http://www.mechinathemovie.com) or email Mital Guttman at [mechinathemovie@gmail.com](mailto:mechinathemovie@gmail.com) in order to purchase the DVD. The movie runs approximately 50 minutes.

#### Program: (approximately 1.5 hours)

We recommend viewing this movie all together (with lots of refreshments!), but then to hold separate discussions for youth and for their parents and other adults. We believe this will allow for a more open discussion between peers, not having to think if it is “ok” to say what you really want to say. Allow approximately 25 minutes for discussion. Then we suggest coming together again as a group at the end of the discussion to share respective insights on how this experience may have deepened our connection to Reform Jewish life in Israel.

The following are guiding questions for discussion, which are intended to create an open conversation about what we saw in the film. We have given you many to choose from. Pick perhaps four or five from among them that you feel are most relevant to your group and time frame. However, we strongly suggest that Question #3 on both the Youth list and the Adult list should be included in your choices.

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUTH

1. In what ways do Amitai's, Benji's, Ayelet's and their friends' lives seem different than yours? In what way are they similar? Can you empathize with their feelings and thoughts? What part, if any, in the movie, was the most "moving" in your opinion? Why?
2. The ending scene of the film, in which Amitai is getting on the bus, leaving his family and friends, and is going to the army, is a very powerful "Israeli moment" almost every Israeli Jew goes through. Did you ever have a similar moment with your family? What do you think was going through their minds as they said their goodbyes to Amitai? What do you think he was thinking?
3. What do you think about the fact that, on the one hand, the participants of the *Mechina* are getting ready to go to the army, and on the other, they are going to a peace rally and volunteering in Arab and other disadvantaged parts of society? In your opinion, do the two contradict each other? How does this dichotomy especially reflect Reform Jewish values? How do you think these values can help strengthen Jewish morals in the IDF and Israeli society generally?
4. Amitai's younger brother, Ariel, says he is already starting to prepare for the army in the tenth grade. What do you think about that? Ayelet, in another scene says she thinks Israeli teens grow up faster than American teens. Do you think she's right? Can you picture yourself growing up like that? Can you picture yourself going into the army after high school?
5. In the movie, it is very clear the level of personal and communal commitment these teens have for their society. Do you have the same feeling of responsibility to your society? Do you feel differently towards your "Jewish" society (temple, camp, youth group, etc.), than towards the general American society? If so, how do you see that attitude reflected perhaps in Israeli society? (i.e., to them, Israeli society is "Jewish" society.)
6. Some of the heroes of this film grew up in a youth movement called "Seeds of Peace," a joint Arab/Jewish encounter program. Even though they have gotten to know their so-called "enemy," they have no doubts about joining the army. What do you think about that?
7. Maital, the filmmaker, is Amitai's cousin. Do you have any relatives in Israel? Do you know any Israelis? How does it make you feel when you think about the fact that most of the Israelis you know have to go through these dilemmas? Does it give you a sense of pride in the Israeli army? Does it give you a feeling of personal commitment for the wellbeing of Israeli soldiers? Does it make you feel more sympathetic and connected to the people, values, and mission of the Israeli army?

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. What did you find to be the most “moving” part of the film? Why? As a parent to teens, can you empathize with Amitai’s mom? Would you feel the same way she does, if your son or daughter was going into the army?
2. What are some of the main differences you see between these Israeli teens and your own teens and their friends? What are the similarities?
3. Recently, we learned from the newspapers that the first ever Israeli Reform Jew finished the exclusive Israel Air Force Pilots course. That pilot is Amitai (see attached article from the Jerusalem Post). This news brought much pride to the Reform-Progressive movement in Israel. In what ways do you think Reform Jewish values can help strengthen Jewish morals in the Israeli army, and society altogether? Do you think such a Reform Jewish leadership, learning experience would be beneficial for North American Reform teens before they go to their college experiences?
4. In the movie, it is very clear the level of personal and communal commitment these teens have for their society. This feeling is something that is often lost in today’s modern cynical world. What do you think about their ideals? Are they still relevant today?
5. Amitai’s younger brother, Ariel, says he is already starting to prepare for the army in the tenth grade. What do you think about that? Ayelet, in another scene, says she thinks Israeli teens grow up faster than American teens. Do you think she’s right? Do you think the level of maturity these young people show should be a role model for American teens?
6. What do you think about the fact that, on the one hand, the participants of the *Mechina* are getting ready to go to the army, and on the other, they are going to a peace rally? In your opinion, do the two contradict each other? Is this different than in American society? How does it reflect Reform Jewish values?
7. When Maital asks 18 years old Amitai if he will be willing to send his kids to the army, he says no. He explains that “...if by the time I’m a parent, peace won’t be achieved, that’s a personal failure.” What do you think about that? Before joining the army, Amitai was not able to re-attach to his leg the peace bracelet he made with his Palestinian and Egyptian bunkmates four years ago. This scene, was not, of course, staged. Do you see this as symbolic? Benji quotes from the Israeli song, “Winter ‘73” (attached), a promise the older generation made to the younger generation to end wars and bring peace. He says this song is the Israeli dream. What is your reaction to his statement? How do you feel about what American or Israeli teens have to deal with today? Do you think there is still hope for peace in the Middle East?
8. Maital, the filmmaker, is Amitai’s cousin. Do you have any relatives in Israel? Do you know any Israelis? How does it make you feel when you think about the fact that most of the Israelis you know have to go through these dilemmas? Does it give you a sense of pride in the Israeli army? Does it give you a feeling of personal commitment for the wellbeing of Israeli soldiers? Does it make you feel more sympathetic and connected to the people, values, and mission of the Israeli army?
9. The ending scene of the film, in which Amitai is getting on the bus, leaving his family and friends, and is going to the army, is a very powerful “Israeli moment” almost every Israeli Jew goes through. Though all of them know that probably nothing is going to happen to him, and that they will see him again in a few weeks when he comes home for a *Shabbat* vacation, they are having a hard time dealing with saying their goodbyes. What do you think was going through their minds as they said their goodbyes to Amitai? What do you think he was thinking? What would you have thought if faced with this situation?

## WINTER '73

Lyrics: Shmuel Hasphari and Uri Vadislavski

We are the children of winter 1973  
You dreamt us first at dawn at the end of the battles  
You were tired men that thanked their good luck  
You were worried young women and you wanted  
so much to love.  
When you conceived us with love in winter 1973  
you wanted to fill up with your bodies what the  
war finished.

And we were born, the country was wounded and sad.  
You looked at us, you hugged us you were trying to  
find comfort.  
When we were born the elders blessed with tears in  
their eyes.  
They said: "We wish those kids will not have to go  
to the army."  
And your faces in the old picture prove  
that you said it form the bottom of your hearts  
when you promised to do everything for us  
to make an enemy into a loved one.

You promised a dove,  
an olive tree leaf,  
you promised peace.  
You promised spring at home and blossoms  
You promised to fulfill promises, you promised  
a dove

We are the children of winter 1973.  
We grew up and now in the army  
with our weapon and helmet on our heads.  
We know how to make love, to laugh and cry.  
We are men, we are women  
and we too dream about babies.  
This is why we will not pressure you, we will not  
demand of you.  
And we will not threaten you.  
When we were young you said promises need to  
be kept!  
We will give you strength if that is what you need.  
We will not hold back.  
We just wanted to whisper:  
We are the children of that winter in the year 1973

You promised a dove,  
an olive tree leaf,  
you promised peace.  
You promised spring at home and blossoms  
You promised to fulfill promises,  
you promised a dove.

אנחנו הילדים של חורף שנת שבעים ושלוש  
חלמתם אותנו לראשונה עם שחר, בתום הקרבות  
הייתם גברים עייפים שהודו למזלם הטוב  
הייתן נשים צעירות מודאגות ורציתן כל כך לאהוב  
וכשהריתם אותנו באהבה בחורף שבעים ושלוש  
רציתם למלא בגופכם את מה שחיסרה המלחמה.

כשנולדנו היתה הארץ פצועה ועצובה  
הבטתם בנו, חיבתם אותנו, ניסיתם למצוא נחמה  
כשנולדנו ברכו הזקנים בעיניים דומעות  
אמרו הילדים האלה הלואי לא ילכו אל הצבא  
ופניכם בתצלום הישן מוכיחות דיברתם מכל הלב  
כשהבטתם לעשות בשבילנו הכל להפוך אויב לאהב.

הבטתם יונה  
עלה של זית  
הבטתם שלום בבית  
הבטתם אביב ופריחות  
הבטתם לקיום הבטחות  
הבטתם יונה

אנחנו הילדים של חורף שנת שבעים ושלוש  
גדלנו, אנחנו עכשיו בצבא עם הנשק, קסדה על הראש  
גם אנחנו יודעים לעשות אהבה, צוחקים ויודעים לבכות  
גם אנחנו גברים, גם אנחנו נשים, גם אנחנו חולמים תינוקות  
ולכן לא נלחץ, ולכן לא נדרוש, ולכן לא נאיים  
כשהיינו קטנים אמרתם: הבטחות צריך לקיים  
אם דרוש לכם כח ניתן, לא נחסוך, רק רצינו ללחוש  
אנחנו הילדים של החורף ההוא שנת שבעים ושלוש

## **'Religious' pilot brings Reform Movement to IAF**

Megan Jacobs , THE JERUSALEM POST

Dec. 27, 2007

Only one member of the Israel Air Force's Wing Order 155 graduating class is "religious" - and 22-year-old Lt. Amitai does not fit the image of the typical Orthodox Israeli.

"I'm a conservative, religious Reform Jew," he said. "I'm observant in my own way, trying to understand Halacha, make it more modern and relevant for me."

Surrounded by nonreligious soldiers, most of whom were not familiar with the Reform Movement, Amitai found that "they liked it when a little Judaism came in."

Following his own strand of Judaism, which seeks a "spiritual experience," he tried not to just "let the holidays fly by," but instead make them special and give them meaning. Celebrating and understanding traditions, he said, were more important than prayer.

Amitai is the son of an American mother and a Polish-born father who "met in Israel, married in New York and made aliya practically the next day." His father served in the IDF in an anti-aircraft unit.

Amitai grew up in a Reform home in Jerusalem. Before enlisting, he studied for a year in the Reform Movement's Machinah Leadership Program in Jaffa. The program incorporates volunteering with religious and nonreligious study, together with some military preparatory work. It includes the study of Jewish texts to learn how one might deal with moral dilemmas that may arise.

"The idea is to learn a lot and mature a lot," Amitai said. Though the IDF does not directly offer the courses, he said, it grants permission for those who are accepted into such courses, because statistically, "many officers and combat units come out of them."

Amitai has not found it difficult to blend his form of religiosity with his military service.

"It's a Jewish army, and I joined the army because of my Jewish values," he said. "My religion enriches, not restricts, my life."

Amitai, who is not a Shabbat observer by Orthodox standards, is not fazed by the prospect of flying or participating in missions on Shabbat. A militaristic sense of discipline even plays a role in his Judaism.

"I decided seven years ago, as a philosophical decision, to do something hard that I don't understand," he said about keeping kosher. "It's always a dilemma of how much freedom I allow myself."

Amitai said his sense of discipline and Jewish appreciation of scholarship carried him through the grueling three-year course involving ground- and air-combat training to become a navigator in an elite IAF unit, while simultaneously obtaining a degree in political science from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.



“My moral values, who I am, these are things that are not necessarily connected to being Jewish,” he said.

“But like it or not, I am Jewish, and I use the richness of Judaism to deepen and enrich those morals.”

“Most people don’t know Reform, and it’s been interesting to meet people who are very religious or not in the army and challenge their values and mine,” Amitai said. “Hopefully, they know it better after they know me.”

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Another article about Lt. Amitai can be read at: [www.arza.org/news/events](http://www.arza.org/news/events) (or directly at [www.arza.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=1222&pge\\_prg\\_id=5734&pge\\_id=1041](http://www.arza.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=1222&pge_prg_id=5734&pge_id=1041)).

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# TORAH—Educational Engagement Material for All Ages

## 4. REFORM ZIONIST TIME TUNNEL: AN HISTORICAL EXPLORATION

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### INTRODUCTION

“In Jewish history,” said Holocaust survivor and Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel, “there are no coincidences.” If he is right, then the more we know about Jewish history, the better we can understand our religion, our people, and our place in the world.

Jews are masters of marking time—every week we stop for *Shabbat* and our year revolves around our many holidays. We constantly review the Jewish story in returning to the Torah portion of the week year after year. And we take tours, classes, and read books in an attempt to follow the footsteps of our ancestors around the world.

Our history tells us where we have been in order to help us understand where we are now and decide what direction to take in the future. This is especially true when we examine the phenomenon of the creation of the modern State of Israel sixty years ago. As we celebrate Israel at 60, we pause to reflect on the events of Israel’s sixty years of existence, and the events during the years leading up to its creation. We also reflect on our Reform Movement and our evolving relationship with the State of Israel, our fellow Jews who live there, and the development of Reform Judaism in Israel.

So, fasten your seatbelts and hold on tight as you journey down the “Reform Zionist Time Tunnel,” exploring the history timeline of the establishment of the State of Israel alongside that of Reform Zionism. Where do these timelines intersect and where do they diverge? As you review the facts of our history, try to reflect upon the themes that guide the history, what unifies our history and what differentiates the various factors at work. Most important of all, try to find *your* place on the Reform Zionist timeline.

### PROGRAM OPTIONS

1. The timeline sheet can be given out as a hand-out to each participant. Divide the entire group into subgroups of five or six people, each with a leader to facilitate a discussion based on the questions at the end of the timeline.
2. The timeline can be made into a poster as an informational resource tool for day-school or religious school classrooms. Middle- or high-school students can be asked, singly or in pairs, to pick a specific period on the timeline and research it in more depth both from the perspective of Israel’s history and Reform Zionist activity. Each group would then present its findings to the group.
3. A large “bare” timeline with just dates is taped to a wall. The group listens to a “verbal timeline”: two group leaders simultaneously reading from the two timelines. Each historic event, without identifying dates, is printed on a separate card or piece of paper; one is given to each participant (or group of participants) who must then decide where to affix it on the timeline. Based on the discussion questions at the end of the timeline, and on the deliberations and considerations of the participants, the leaders

would facilitate a discussion regarding the possible cause and effect interactions between the events, the parallels and contrasts, and the influences of world events and one's own story on the evolution.

For all of the options, the entire group would come together to wrap-up by sharing insights of the subgroup discussions or projects, discussing where we have been and currently are as individuals and as a congregation on the Reform Zionist timeline, and proposing what direction our steps on that timeline should take in the future.

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Created for the Israel at 60 Program by Rabbi Stacey Blank, under the auspices of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, in conjunction with Rabbi Debra Goldstein, ARZA, and Stephanie Marshall, Educator at the Bureau of Jewish Education in Orange County, CA.

TIMELINE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL		TIMELINE OF REFORM ZIONISM
	<b>1900s</b>	
1900—1st <i>Aliyah</i> : Between 1882 and 1903, approximately 35,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine. The majority came from the Russian Empire with a smaller number arriving from Yemen. Many established agricultural communities.		1900—A survey of rabbinical students at Hebrew Union College (HUC), conducted by Dr. Max Eichorn, shows that only 17% were favorable and 46% were overtly opposed to Zionism.
1906—Bezalel Academy of Art is founded in Jerusalem.		
1909—The first <i>kibbutz</i> , Degania, is established in the Galilee; the city of Tel Aviv is started as an outgrowth of an earlier suburb of Jaffa, <i>Abuzat Bayit</i>		
	<b>1910s</b>	
1914—2nd <i>Aliyah</i> : During the preceding ten years, 40,000 Jews immigrated mainly from Russia, following continued pogroms and anti-Semitism, establishing more <i>kibbutzim</i> and defense organizations like <i>HaShomer</i> to protect against rising Arab banditry and hostility.		1915—Rabbis Stephen S. Wise and Max Heller persuade Kaufmann Kohler, the President of HUC, and the Board of Governors to allow Zionist addresses by outside speakers to take place outside of the school chapel and to let students give Zionist sermons if the sermon was religious in tone.
1917—Balfour Declaration issued: British support for a “Jewish homeland.”		1915—The first of the now 31 WRJ Resolutions concerning Israel
	<b>1920s</b>	
1923—3rd <i>Aliyah</i> : Between 1919 and 1923, 40,000 Jews, mainly from the Russian Empire, arrived in the wake of World War I, the ensuing British Mandate of Palestine, and its Balfour Declaration.		1922—Rabbi Stephen Wise opened his own seminary called the Jewish Institute of Religion, in New York City, to rival HUC and to be a Zionist seminary for Jews of all denominations.
1924—Technion Institute founded in Haifa		
1925—Hebrew University founded in Jerusalem		1925—Reform Rabbi Judah Leon Magnes is appointed first Chancellor (and later President) of Hebrew University

**TIMELINE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

**TIMELINE OF REFORM ZIONISM**

	<b>1920s</b>	
<p>1929—4th <i>Aliyah</i>: Between 1924 and 1929, 82,000 Jews arrived from Poland and Hungary. This group contained many middle class families that moved to the growing towns, establishing small businesses and light industry.</p>		
	<b>1930s</b>	
<p>1934—Weizmann Institute established</p>		<p>1937—The Columbus Platform of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) reads, “In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its up-building as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life.”</p>
<p>1939—5th <i>Aliyah</i>: Between 1929 and 1939, with the rise of Nazism in Germany, a new wave of 250,000 immigrants arrived. The Fifth Aliyah was again derived mostly from Eastern Europe, but now included doctors, lawyers and professors from Germany as well. Refugee artists introduced Bauhaus (Tel Aviv has the highest concentration of Bauhaus architecture in the world) and founded the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra. With the completion of the port at Haifa and its oil refineries, significant industry was added to the predominantly agricultural economy. The Jewish population reached 450,000 by 1940.</p>		<p>1938—Rabbi Meir Elk, a graduate of Germany’s liberal Breslau Rabbinical Seminary, established the forerunner to the Leo Baeck School in Haifa, affiliated with the Progressive (Reform) Movement, and today one of the most successful educational institutions in the country.</p>
	<b>1940s</b>	
<p>1947—November 29th, The United Nations issued the U.N. Partition Plan, which divided the area known as Palestine at the time into three entities: a Jewish state, an Arab state, and an international zone around Jerusalem.</p>		<p>1947—May 8th, Reform Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver presented the case for an independent Jewish State before the U.N. General Assembly considering a proposed Partition Plan.</p>

**TIMELINE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

**TIMELINE OF REFORM ZIONISM**

	1940s	
<p>1948—May 14th, the British leave Palestine and Israel issues its Declaration of Independence.</p>		
<p>1948—May 15th, the Arab States' invasion of Israel began its War of Independence, lasting until January, 1949.</p>		
<p>1949—January 25th, Israel's first national election took place: David Ben-Gurion elected Prime Minister.</p>		
<p>1949—May 13th, Israel was admitted to the United Nations: 37 nations voted in favor, 12 opposed, and 9 abstained. On November 7, 1949, Jerusalem was declared as Israel's official capital.</p>		<p>1949—The CCAR established the Committee on the Relation of Reform Judaism and the State of Israel.</p>
	1950s	
<p>1950—The Law of Return is passed by the Knesset, granting Jews everywhere the right to come to Israel as olim (immigrants) and become citizens.</p>		<p>1950—Hebrew Union College merges with the Zionist focused Jewish Institute of Religion</p>
<p>1950—Operation Ali Baba began, bringing over 120,000 Iraqi Jews to Israel; and Operation Magic Carpet is completed, which brought 50,000 Yemeni Jews to Israel.</p>		
<p>1952—Academy of the Hebrew Language and the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel are founded.</p>		
<p>1956—Suez Campaign. In retaliation for a series of escalating border raids as well as the closure of the straits of Tiran and Suez canal to Israeli shipping, and to prevent Egyptian offensive use of newly acquired Soviet arms, Israel invades the Sinai peninsula and occupies it for several months, with French and British collaboration.</p>		<p>1958—First Reform congregation in the State of Israel: Har El in Jerusalem</p>
		<p>1958—First NFTY in Israel program</p>

**TIMELINE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

**TIMELINE OF REFORM ZIONISM**

	1960s	
		1961—The NFTY/EIE high school exchange program is started.
1964—The Batsheva Dance Company is founded, now internationally acclaimed and Israel’s premier dance company.		1963—HUC-JIR establishes a campus in Jerusalem which will come to serve as the academic center for an Israeli Rabbinic Program, the Beit Midrash Liberal Yeshivah Program of Jewish studies, and training programs for Israeli teachers and educators.
1966—S. Y. Agnon is the first Israeli to be awarded the Nobel Prize, for literature.		1965—Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) is formed.
1967—Six Day War: In response to shipping blockades and massive Arab troop mobilizations on all its borders, Israel invokes its right of self-defense by launching a preemptive strike on Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and takes control of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), Gaza and the Sinai peninsula, and the Golan Heights. Jerusalem is officially reunited under Israeli control.		1967—At the initiative of Rabbi Richard Hirsch, then head of the Religious Action Center in Washington, DC, the UAHC Biennial passed a resolution that called for a National Committee on Israel to advance the cause of Progressive Judaism in Israel.
	1970s	
		1970—HUC-JIR inaugurated its mandatory student Year-in-Israel program.
1973—Yom Kippur War: In a surprise attack on Yom Kippur, Egypt retook the Suez canal and a narrow zone on the other side. Syria re-conquered the Golan Heights. Following massive U.S. and Soviet re-supplying of both sides, Israel succeeded in pushing back the Syrians and threatening Damascus.		1973—The World Union for Progressive Judaism moved its headquarters from New York to Jerusalem, to establish international Progressive Judaism’s presence and to help build a strong Israeli Reform Movement.

**TIMELINE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

**TIMELINE OF REFORM ZIONISM**

TIMELINE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL		TIMELINE OF REFORM ZIONISM
	<b>1970s</b>	
1974—Intel Corp. chose Israel for its first design and development center outside the U.S.		1975—First Israeli Youth & Aliyah <i>sh'liach</i> (emissary) sent to work with the UAHC.
		1976—First Reform <i>kibbutz</i> in Israel: <i>Kibbutz Yabel</i> in the Arava
1977—Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball team first wins European Championship.		1977—The UAHC established the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA) and ARZA/Canada.
1978—Israel-Egypt Peace Agreement, bringing the 30-year state of war between them to an end.		
1978—The first computer anti-virus software package was developed in Israel.		
	<b>1980s</b>	
1981—Israel destroys Iraq's immanent nuclear reactor.		1980—First Israeli Progressive (Reform) rabbi, Moti Rotem, ordained in Israel
1982—Massive Israeli invasion of Lebanon to fight the PLO.		1983— <i>Kibbutz Lotan</i> , the second Reform <i>kibbutz</i> , is founded in the <i>Arava</i> desert, dedicated to establishing an ecological approach to living.
1984—Operation Moses airlifted 7,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel.		1985— <i>Har Halutz</i> , the first Reform “free enterprise” communal village is established in the Galilee.
1984—The cell phone was first developed at the Motorola plant in Israel.		
1987—The first <i>Intifada</i> begins		1987—The Israel Religious Action Center was established as the public and legal social justice advocacy arm of the IMPJ.
1989—Beginning of the <i>aliyah</i> from the Soviet Union: 200,000 in the first year!		

**TIMELINE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

**TIMELINE OF REFORM ZIONISM**

	<b>1990s</b>	
1991—Operation Solomon airlifts 14,400 Ethiopian Jews to Israel		1990—IMPJ has grown to 13 Progressive congregations throughout Israel
1992—Israel wins its first Olympic medals (silver and bronze, in Judo), in Barcelona.		1992—ARZA created its Reform Zionist Think Tank with the goal of trying to define Reform Zionism, publishing two journals, in 1993 and in 1995.
1993—Oslo Declaration of Principles: Israel and PLO agree to mutual recognition.		
1994—Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Minister of Foreign Affairs Shimon Peres, and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat awarded Nobel Peace Prize.		
1994—Peace Accord signed with Jordan		
1994—Israel sends largest ever medical aid mission to Rwanda.		
1995—Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin assassinated by right-wing Israeli fanatic Yigal Amir.		
1996—The program ICQ, which is the technological basis for AOL Instant Messenger, was developed by four young Israelis.		1997—CCAR Miami Platform: “We...affirm Am Yisrael’s reassertion of national sovereignty, but we urge that it be used to create the kind of society in which full civil, human, and religious rights exist for all its citizens...Even as Medinat Yisrael [the State of Israel] serves uniquely as the spiritual and cultural focal point of world Jewry, Israeli and Diaspora Jewry are inter-dependent, responsible for one another, and partners in the shaping of Jewish destiny.”
1998—Israeli musician, Dana International, wins the Eurovision contest.		

TIMELINE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL		TIMELINE OF REFORM ZIONISM
	<b>2000s</b>	
2000—Israel withdrew from Southern Lebanon in May; <i>Intifada</i> II started in September.		2000—1400 Reform teens spent the summer in Israel on NFTY programs; 300 Israeli counselors enriched our URJ campers here.
2003—Ilan Ramon, 1st Israeli astronaut, was a casualty of the Columbia Space Shuttle tragedy.		
2005—Israel withdrew Jewish settlements from Gaza.		2005—The Institute for Reform Zionism is established as the Movement’s permanent academic outgrowth of the Think Tank.
2006—Second Lebanon War in response to Hezbollah terrorists attacks cross the border.		2006—Mishkenot Ruth Daniel educational and cultural center is dedicated in Yaffo, the second major Reform presence in Tel Aviv since Beit Daniel in 1991.
2006—Israel now has more companies listed on the NASDAQ than any country outside North America		2007—There are over 40 Israeli students enrolled in the Israeli HUC-JIR rabbinic program.
2008—The first Israeli team wins a tennis grand slam event (doubles at the Australian Open).		2008—IMPJ has grown to 24 Progressive congregations, 45 pre-schools, active Youth & Young Adult programs and community centers impacting Israeli society, and with teachers in over 40 secular schools.
		2008—The Reform Movement in North America celebrates 60 years of Israel, 50 years of NFTY in Israel and 30 years of ARZA and ARZA/Canada.

## Discussion Questions

- From this brief survey of Israel's history, what are the main achievements of the State of Israel, both over the past 60 years and in the 40 years leading up to its formation?
- What events in Israel's history are missing from this timeline?
- Consider the events in world history that coincide with these decades. How might they have affected our feelings of connection to Israel, personally and/or as a People? (For example, what was the impact of the Cold War superpowers using the Israeli-Arab conflict in the late 1960s to test their weapons, technology and tactics? Or, what was the impact of the fall of the Iron Curtain?)
- What do you recall from your life that parallels the events taking place in Israel or that coincide with the development of Reform Zionism? Was there a connection or affect in any way?
- How has Reform Zionism evolved over the past 100 years and specifically in the last 60 years since the State of Israel was created?
- What have been the main initiatives of Reform Zionism over the years?
- How do you see your relationship with Israel? Your congregation's relationship with Israel? The greater Jewish community's relationship with Israel? What would you change?
- How do you envision the future of Israel in the next 60 years?
- What is missing from the Reform Zionist timeline that we as a Reform Movement should consider for the future?
- Where does your congregation's history fit on this timeline?

# TORAH—Educational Engagement Material for All Ages

## 5. 10 HEBREW WORDS FOR ISRAEL AT 60

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### INTRODUCTION: HEBREW AND THE ISRAEL CONNECTION

ARZA's tagline is "Connecting Reform Jews and Israel." What a challenge! As educators, we are all aware of how difficult it can be to communicate "Israel" to students in North America. We search for meaningful hooks on which to hang the stories that our students will understand. Geographically, Israel is far away and difficult. Explaining the political structure is harder still. If only we could help them feel the frenzy of a Friday afternoon in Jerusalem, the wild enthusiasm of *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* in Tel Aviv, or the historical echoes of a hike at *Ein Gedi*! But until we get them to Israel, these things are very hard to transmit.

One area of Israel and Israeli life to which North Americans can connect with growing comfort is Hebrew. While the language may seem daunting to some, with study (and activities like this program), people can begin to better appreciate how Hebrew, Israel, and Judaism all connect. After all, Hebrew is something with which Jews are familiar. We hear it at services, we sing it at *Pesach* and *Chanukah*, and we see it written throughout the synagogue. Even if we are not comfortable with the language, we identify it as an important element of Jewish life. As such, it provides a useful connector to Israel, where it is the language of playgrounds and police stations, cab drivers and cabinet ministers, lovers and lawyers.

As part of our special attempt to connect Reform Jews and Israel during this, Israel's 60th anniversary year, we present you with ten of the best Hebrew connectors that we have found and some background on each one. There are many wonderful creative ways to use these words for adult/teen discussions or even religious school art projects. Here is just one suggestion.

### GOALS

1. To create a meaningful discussion of and connection to the Hebrew language and Israel.
2. To explore the connection between Jewish context, Hebrew, and modern Israel.
3. To explore the relationship of the participants to the Hebrew language and to Israel by discussing the words.
4. To enable the participants to come up with their own set of values, embedded in Hebrew words and their connectedness to Israel.

### MATERIALS

- Papers, pencils or pens
- A copy of the 10 Hebrew words list for each participant
- Large papers/flip-chart and markers, or blackboard and chalk

### TIME FRAME

Approximately 60 minutes

## PROGRAM

1. Opening exercise (15 minutes):
  - The leader will ask each participant to write down his/her favorite word or phrase in English and favorite word or phrase in Hebrew.
  - The participants will share their choices and the leader will elicit comment on such questions as:
    - Which word was easier for you to come up with—the English or the Hebrew? Do you think that this is related to the fact that Hebrew or English is your mother tongue?
    - What makes these words or phrases your favorite?
    - How do these words or phrases represent your thoughts? Your connection to and/or memory of Israel?
2. Introduction to the subject (1 minute):

Language is a powerful form of personal expression, as we've seen from the above exercise. Let us explore this idea further by finding out how some Hebrew words can serve as our means of personal expression as Jews and as our connection to Israel.
3. 10 Hebrew words for Israel's 60th
  - *Chevruta* (20 minutes):

The participants will each get a copy of the 10 Hebrew words (see below). In *chevruta* (2-4 people), they will be asked to decide on three words that for them most clearly or closely represent their connection to Israel. Each *chevruta* will have to be prepared to present the words it chose and the main reason why those words were chosen.
  - Group discussion (20 minutes):
    1. Each *chevruta* will present to the group the three words they chose as well as the rationale behind their choices. The leader will write the words on the chart or blackboard (5 minutes).
      - *Note to the leader:* Please pay attention to the words chosen by the subgroups and point them out to the participants during this part of the discussion:
        1. Were certain words repeated? (Chosen by all or most subgroups?)
        2. Were any words not chosen by any of the groups?
    2. The group will hold the following discussion (15 minutes):
      - How did you feel performing this task? How did your *chevruta* reach an agreement?
      - Do all the chosen words represent participant's connection to Israel or just their general beliefs?
      - Are there any words "missing" from this list of 10? If you had to choose an eleventh word, what word would that be? Is this the same word you chose as your favorite Hebrew word in the opening exercise? If your choice is different this time, can you explain why?

## SUMMARY

One way to explain the potential difference between the words chosen at the beginning and those chosen at the end is that the choice at the beginning of the program was personal and individual, whereas now the discussion bears a more collective nature—"10 words to represent a collective connection to Israel"—and that sense of responsibility towards the collective and the Jewish people was incorporated into this last choice. Language, although very personal, also connects people together, just as the Hebrew language connects all Jews together and brings us closer to the Land and the State of Israel.

## NOTE TO THE LEADER:

The list of words appears on the following pages as a handout for the groups. You can also photocopy one word per page to facilitate different discussion breakout options you might devise, or even to encourage participants to express their thoughts artistically. For other suggested programmatic uses, see "Using These Materials in Small Congregations" in the packet's Introduction.

## Shalom שלום

On the simplest level, *shalom* means “hello” and “good-bye.” These are such small words, acknowledgments of our comings and goings and of the effect that the presence or absence of other human beings has in our day-to-day life. But *shalom* comes from the root *sh-l-m* שלם *shalem* meaning “whole” or “complete.” We are most whole, most complete, during the time that is framed by the bookends of *shalom*/hello and *shalom*/good-bye, the times when we are with others. And an extraordinary level of wholeness or completeness is that state which we label as *shalom*/peace, whether between individual neighbors or between neighboring states. But the highest level of *shalom*—wholeness, completeness, peace—is identified by Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 9:9): “Great is *shalom*, for the name of the Holy Blessed One is *shalom*.”

*When do you feel most whole and complete? How can Jews who are spread throughout the world feel part of a whole?*

## Mizrach מזרח

The word *mizrach* means “east.” It comes from the root *z-r-ch* זרח meaning “to shine,” since east is the direction from which the sun starts shining each morning. But throughout our history, *mizrach* also came to mean the direction in which the Land of Israel lay, at least for the Jews of Western Europe, Northern Africa, and, later on, North America. (The Jews of Eastern Europe, e.g., Poland and Russia, from among whose ranks many early Zionists came, should have turned south, not east, to face the Land of Israel. Nevertheless, the idea of *mizrach* had become so strong that many Eastern European synagogues still placed the ark on the eastern wall, not the southern wall!) Based on this perception, it became customary in many Jewish communities to hang a decorative plaque, called a *mizrach*, on the eastern wall of a home to indicate which direction one should turn while praying in order to face Jerusalem. We might think of expanding the practice beyond the realm of worship and place a *mizrach* on the wall facing Jerusalem so that, wherever we are, we understand that our “place in the world” is defined, in large part, in relationship to the Land of Israel.

*Do you know which wall of your house faces Jerusalem? Do you know which wall of your synagogue faces Jerusalem? Are there any other parts of your life during which you are aware of wanting to face in a particular direction? Which direction?*

## Yisrael ישראל

In 1948, the Zionists who had settled in Palestine since the late 19th century declared the existence of a new Jewish State. They chose to name the new country Israel, or *Yisrael* in Hebrew. But the name *Yisrael* has a long pre-1948 history. It first appears in Genesis as the new name given to the patriarch Jacob at the end of his long night of wrestling with an opponent who may have been an angel or even God. The biblical text explains the name by having the opponent say to Jacob, “No longer shall you be called Jacob, but *Yisrael*, for you have striven with God and humans and you have prevailed” (Gen. 32:29). Later, the Bible calls the people who were descendants of Jacob *b’nei Yisrael* בני ישראל, literally the children of Israel, or Israelites. Eventually the name became associated with the Northern Kingdom (the 10 northern tribes) after its split with the Southern Kingdom of Judah. But the connotation of *Yisrael* as a wrestler, especially one who wrestles with God, has remained ever since. It sheds an interesting light both on the country that bears the name and on the people who are called *Yisrael*, for twice a day our liturgy has us proclaim, “Listen *Yisrael*, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One!”

*What do you wrestle with most in life? Do you think it is similar for Israelis? What do you wrestle with most about Israel? Is it OK to wrestle with Israel?*

## Eretz ארץ

An *eretz* is a land, any land at all. In the Bible, the word is used to label Egypt, Mesopotamia, Canaan, and more. But somewhere along the line, the word with the definite article *ha*, *Ha'aretz*, or “the land,” came very specifically to mean the Land of Israel. God said to Avram, “Go forth from your land (*me'artz'cha*) and from your birthplace and from your parents' home to the land (*ha'aretz*) which I will show you” (Gen. 12:1), and from that time to this, “the land” has meant something very special to the Jewish People.

*Do you have a special connection to a land? If so, to which land? Do you feel a special connection to the Land of Israel? If you feel connected to another land (for example, the United States), how is your feeling of connection to that land the same as, or different from, your feeling of connection to the Land of Israel?*

## Makom מקום

A *makom* is a place. That's all—just a place. Any place. But two curious things happen to the Jewish understanding of that simple word. The classical Rabbinic commentators could not stand the idea of a word being so generic and non-specific. When they came across non-specific words, they obsessed over finding specificity in them. So for example, when the Bible mentions an *ish* איש—“a man”—the commentators assume that it means an angel, or Elijah the Prophet. Likewise with the completely non-specific word *makom*. The Rabbis often interpret this word as meaning the site in Jerusalem where the Temple would eventually be built. This is based on the story of the Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22), where we read that on the third day of his journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place (*ha'makom*) from far off. The Rabbis identify that occurrence and all subsequent occurrences of the word as meaning Mount Moriah, or what would eventually become the Temple Mount. The other curious metamorphosis that the word undergoes is that, in the early Talmudic period, *Ha'Makom* becomes one of the names for God, as in the formula of comfort we offer to mourners: “May *Ha'Makom* comfort you together with all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.”

*Is there a place that defines you? Is its historical context important? Do you think that living in Israel, amid so much history, defines Israelis differently? Can God be in a place?*

## Aliyah עליה

The word *aliyah* means “ascent” or “going up.” It has had three main uses in Jewish history, and comparing them with one another provides interesting food for thought. The first use was in the Bible, where the whole term was *aliyah la'regel* עליה לרגל, literally “ascent for the pilgrimage.” This refers to the thrice yearly pilgrimage festivals prescribed in the Torah for all Israelites. At *Pesach*, *Shavu'ot*, and *Sukkot* all Jews were expected to come to the Temple in Jerusalem and bring festival sacrifices. After the holiday, all returned home. It is hard to imagine what Jerusalem must have been like during those crowded festival times! The second use of the word developed with regard to the synagogue service, where “having an *aliyah*” came to mean the process of leaving one's seat in the congregation, “going up” to Torah to recite the blessings before and after a section of Torah is read, and then returning to one's seat. This is considered to be a great honor, and even if the bimah where the Torah is being read is not physically higher than the level on which the congregation is seated, the whole event is thought of as an ascent. Finally, in the era of modern Zionism, “making *aliyah*” has come to mean immigrating to the State of Israel. New immigrants are called *olim* עולים. Again, the idea of ascent is only figurative: Even if one leaves one's home in, say, the Mile High City of Denver and goes to live near the Dead Sea (the lowest physical point on earth), the move is considered an ascent!

*Based on the biblical term, can modern Zionist aliyah have new non-permanent meanings? Do you feel spiritually uplifted in Israel? Do you think Israelis do?*

## **K'nesset** כנסת

The word *k'nesset* means “assembly.” The root of *k'nesset* is *k-n-s* כנס to enter. It gives us such words as *k'nisah* כניסה (“entrance”), *kenes* כנס (“convention”), and *mikbnasayim* מכנסיים (“pants”). All these words denote things that are inside other things. Similarly, the two main uses of *k'nesset* also relate to things—in this case people—that are inside other things: buildings that are created specifically to contain people. The more familiar use of the word is in the term *beit k'nesset* בית כנסת, meaning “synagogue” (the word “synagogue” comes from the Greek *syn*, meaning “together,” and *ago*, meaning “coming.” A synagogue is a coming-together place!). It is significant that the common Hebrew term for a synagogue is not *beit tefila* בית תפילה (house of prayer), but *beit k'nesset*, a house of assembly, a community home. The other meaning of *k'nesset* is the Israeli Parliament or legislature. The *K'nesset* is the place where the representatives of the people come together to guide the nation and craft its laws. The name “K'nesset” derives from the “*K'nesset Ha'g'dolah*” כנסת הגדולה (“Great Assembly”), a group of scholar-leaders that is believed to have convened in Jerusalem after the return of the Jews to *Eretz Yisrael* from the Babylonian exile in the fifth century B.C.E. The number of *K'nesset* members (120) was also determined on the basis of the number of members of the Great Assembly.

*What is the role of community in Jewish life? Where do you encounter your Jewish community? What do you consider your primary community? Where does Jewish community take place in Israel?*

## **Atzma'ut** עצמאות

We are all familiar with the term *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* יום העצמאות, Independence Day. This is the anniversary of the declaration of Israel's independence on May 14, 1948, or 5 Iyar, 5708. But the word *atzma'ut*, or “independence,” comes from the root *etzem* עצם, meaning “bone.” And the expression “*etzem ha'inyan*” עצם העניין, literally, the “bone of the matter,” is equivalent to the English expression, “the heart of the matter.” So the *etzem* is the innermost part, the crux, the very essence of a thing. *Atzma'ut*—independence—is the state of being able to rely on one's own inner essence.

*What should be the inner essence of the State of Israel? Can it be a pluralistic, democratic, and Jewish State? How do we as North American Reform Jews help shape that essence?*

## **Zikaron** זכרון

*Zikaron* means “memory.” Memory is tremendously important in Jewish life. It is sacred. We know how many people come to synagogue for the *Yom Kippur Yizkor* service, or Memorial Service (the word *Yizkor* יזכור has the same *z-k-r* זכר root as *zikaron*). And we say the word twice during *Kiddush* every Friday night: *zikaron l'ma'aseh v'reshbit* זכרון למעשה בראשית (a memory of the act of Creation), and *zekher l'y'tziat Mitzrayim* זכר ליציאת מצרים (a memory of the exodus from Egypt). The same sacred act of remembering is what overwhelms all of Israeli society on *Yom Ha'Zikaron*, Memorial Day, the day immediately preceding *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*, when the entire nation comes to a standstill and mourns and remembers all those who have been killed defending Israel.

*What are your earliest memories? Are they connected to holidays? Jewish holidays? How does memory help shape a nation's identity? What memories have shaped American identity? What memories have shaped Jewish identity?*

## **Tikvah תקווה**

*Tikvah* means “hope.” The national anthem of Israel is “HaTikvah”—The Hope. What a wonderful comment on Israeli and Jewish society. So many nations choose as a national anthem a song that celebrates their past military victories. But hope, the theme of Israel’s anthem, is not about the past, but, by definition, about the future. And the hope that it expresses is not about military victory, but simply that we be “a free people in our land, *Eretz Tziyon* ארץ ציון (the land of Zion).”

*What are your hopes for the Land and State of Israel? Have they changed as you have matured? How do the tough choices that governments must make in exercising sovereignty affect our sense of hope for Israel or our connection to Israel?*

# TORAH—Educational Engagement Material for All Ages

## 6. DIFFERENCES & DILEMMAS: EXPLORING OUR CONNECTIONS TO ISRAEL—A Religious School/Family Education Program

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### INTRODUCTION

Often when we think of how to educate about Israel, we tend to forget that in order for an individual (kids as well as adults) to develop a long lasting, meaningful relationship to the Land and State of Israel, one needs to find one's own entry point and to grapple with ideas related to one's own connection to this special place. This program is designed to provide a few points of entry that would challenge some of the kids' and parents' beliefs and thoughts, explore their values and leave them wanting to learn and explore more.

### OVERALL GOALS

- To encourage participants to articulate values related to their connection to Israel
- To provide opportunities for parents and kids equally to share their thoughts and ideas in a non-hierarchical manner
- To provide opportunities for a parent-child dialogue around the significance of Israel in their lives
- To strengthen the classroom community while providing them with engaging activities and topics for discussion

### RATIONALE AND LENGTH

The 90-minute program consists of two 45-minute parts designed to complement one another. The first part of the program is meant to raise curiosity while sharing some interesting facts about Israel, as well as introducing the participants to the idea that when it comes to exploring one's relationships to the Land of Israel, there are no "wrongs." Israel is more than just a fact. It is a meaningful value, and therefore, every thought is legitimate and can and should be expressed.

The second part of the program deals with some specific dilemmas that might be raised when the value of Israel comes up within a Jewish conversation. The three dilemmas are just a small sample. If you feel you can raise dilemmas and questions that are more relevant to the lives of the families in your congregation, feel free to do so.

### PARTICIPANTS

4th–7th graders and their parents.

Please note that we suggest not mixing the classrooms for the second part of this program, as each grade might explore the dilemmas according to their age level. Part One of the program can be conducted in a large group for all ages and then you might want to break into grade classes. This program can be conducted without

the presence of parents, but we strongly recommend conducting this as a Family Program, as this multi-generational dialogue is very enriching.

## PART 1: THE TRUE OR FALSE GAME FOR YOM HA'ATZMA'UT

### INTRODUCTION

In order to break the ice and introduce the subject of discussing the connection of North American Jews and Israel, we suggest opening with a fun “True or False” game that would demonstrate the fact that the purpose of this session is to learn from each other and to discuss the meaning of the State of Israel (*Medinat Yisrael*) to us.

### GOALS

- Ice breaking, fun and compelling introduction to the subject
- Introducing the idea of Israel, and caring for the State of Israel, as a value
- Teach a few interesting facts about Israel that might cause curiosity and the will to explore more

### RULES OF THE GAME

1. The game should be led by one teacher as Host and three Panel Presenters (could be three parents).
2. The three Panel Presenters are “Graduates of the College for Liars” meaning: They will all give answers to questions (presented by the Host) that seem like truth but only one answer is a true answer.
3. Competition of three groups: the Host should divide the participants into three groups (parents are also participating) and will appoint a representative from each group to provide the answer that the group comes up with. Each time a representative gives the right answer (the truth speaking presenter will reveal himself/herself by standing up), that group will receive a score.
4. Rounds: the game has 4 rounds. The first three rounds are simple—there is only one true answer at each round.
5. **4th round—Exception to the rule:** The fourth question DOES NOT deal with facts, but is a value. Therefore ALL the three answers to this question are true. The Host should *not* let the participants know about this rule exception until the end of the game. Once all presenters get up as speakers of truth, only then will the Host explain that all of them spoke the truth, and therefore, there are no winners and losers in this part of the game (please refer to the “linkage” part further down)

### DURATION

45 minutes.

### MATERIALS

Large board for scores

Sheets of true/false questions for the presenters (please have presenters prepare in advance)

A stage-like setting

## COURSE OF THE GAME

1. The Host welcomes all participants and explains that they are here to explore and discuss their relationship to the State of Israel, in honor of its 60th Birthday. She/He will explain the rules of the game, divide the participants into three groups, and introduce the Panel Presenters.
2. The Host will run the game through to its end and then, after all Panel Presenters have admitted that they were answering the truth for the fourth question, he will explain in the following manner:

## LINKAGE

- What is the difference between the first three questions and the last question?
- The first three questions were dealing with facts. The last question was related to “Value”—something very important to people. When we deal with values, there are no totally “right” or “wrong” answers. Everyone has his or her own opinions and beliefs. The purpose of today’s activity is not to overwhelm you with facts, but to provide us opportunities to learn from each other—to understand how and what you feel and think about certain ideas related to the State of Israel.

## TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS (BASED ON FACTS)

1. **What was the exact secular date that Israel declared itself an independent Jewish State (Hebrew date—5th of Iyar)?**
  - The declaration on Israel’s independence occurred on Friday afternoon, May 14, 1948. It was important to declare the establishment of the State of Israel before the British Mandate (administration over Israel’s territory) ended the next day, since the Jews were afraid of an Arab attack and did not want to postpone. (true)
  - The declaration on Israel’s independence occurred in the Tel Aviv museum on Saturday evening, May 15, 1948, shortly after *Shabbat* ended and immediately after the British Government ended its Mandate. That day, the Egyptian forces attacked Israel from the air. (false)
  - The Declaration of Independence was signed on Sunday May 23, 1948. The American government had tried to bring about a truce agreement between sparring Arab and the Israeli forces after the British Mandate ended; it was important for this agreement to occur before any Declaration of Independence in order to prevent all out war. Since the American efforts had failed, the temporary Israeli government then declared the formation of the Jewish State. (false)
2. **How many days a week, and on what days, do Israeli children go to school?**
  - The Israeli children go to school 5 days a week from Sunday–Thursday, since Friday is the day Israelis prepare for *Shabbat*. (False)
  - The Israeli children go to school 5 days a week from Monday–Friday. They finish up school early on Fridays in order preparing for *Shabbat*. Israelis have Sundays off as well because of the influence of Western culture: They use a secular calendar, watch American movies, love Harry Potter books, and they also want to accommodate the 2.1% Christians who live in Israel. (False)
  - The Israeli children go to school 6 days a week, Sunday–Friday. Even though they study more days a week than North American kids, their school days are somewhat shorter: The average Israeli school day lasts from 8:00AM–1:00 P.M. (True)

3. **On what circumstances (when and where) did Theodore Herzl say the words: “*Im Tirtzu, Ein zo Aggada*” (“If you will it, it is no dream”)**
- Theodore Herzl wrote this phrase at the end of the nineteenth century in his book *Old, New Land*, referring to the establishment of a Jewish State. This phrase was adapted by the Zionist Movement—the movement that was striving for the re-establishment of a National Homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. (True)
  - Theodore Herzl, the visionary advocate for the State of the Jews, said these words at the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland (1897) when he was giving his opening speech. (False)
  - Theodore Herzl said these words at the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905, as a way to appease the Zionist groups from Eastern Europe after many months of arguments over a British suggestion to establish a Jewish State in Uganda (Africa). Herzl saw this offer as a wonderful opportunity and supported the British offer because he was afraid for the well being of Russian Jews who suffered many government sponsored attacks (“Pogroms”) at the time. (False)

#### **MORE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER (DON'T USE MORE THAN 3 “FACTS” QUESTIONS PER GAME)**

- **How was the Israeli flag created and who came up with this idea?**
- **What is the favorite vacation spot in Israel?**
- **How long does it take for new Jewish immigrants to Israel to receive their Israeli citizenship?**
- **What percent of the total Israeli population are the minorities (non-Jews)?**
- **How big is the state of Israel?**
- **How do you say “Hamburger” in Hebrew?**

#### **FINAL QUESTION (BASED ON VALUES—ALL ANSWERS ARE “TRUE”)**

4. **What is the meaning of the State of Israel to Jews around the world?**
1. (Spiritual meaning) The Land of Israel is the birthplace of Judaism and the place where we can express our spiritual connection to our religion. Israel is Holy to us. (true)
  2. (National meaning) The State of Israel is the Jewish national Homeland. It was established as a safe haven for all Jews and our historic home where Jews can again govern ourselves as a nation. Every Jew has the right to become an Israeli citizen. (true)
  3. (Culture) The State of Israel is the place where the Jews were born in ancient times as a People, which now has the largest number of Jews (Israelis) in one place, and where the national language, customs, holidays, and history are all based on Jewish foundations. (true)

## **PART TWO: EXPLORING DILEMMAS RELATED TO OUR RELATIONSHIP TO ISRAEL**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this part is to have the participants (adults and kids together) grapple with ideas related to the nature of the Jewish State and to their relationships and obligations to the State of Israel. As stated in the

game, there are no “wrongs” ideas. Every opinion is legitimate and educating for the group. The goals of this part are reflected in the overall goals stated at the beginning of this program.

## DURATION

45 minutes

## MATERIALS

- 3 Dilemma cards with some discussion questions.
- Props
- Board+Markers

## COURSE OF PROGRAM

1. Associations (5-10 minutes): The program leader will write the word “Israel” on the board and will ask the group to give associations they have with this word. The program leader will write the words on the board and will point out some other relevant ideas. For instance: Hebrew, 60, 1948, Jews and Arabs, war, camels, warm climate, holy, Jerusalem, my Israeli cousin, my hebrew teacher, the Western Wall etc. Each association might invite more comments, interpretations and opportunities for discussion about similarities and differences to life here—but DO NOT have this activity exceed more than 10 minutes.
2. Linkage to dilemmas: The program leader will note that this exercise brought up many questions and ideas, any of which can be explored in depth. However, we would like to concentrate on three ideas which will be presented to you through dilemmas.
3. What is a dilemma: A dilemma is a story which invites many thoughts. A dilemma is a difficult decision, and any person (child, adult) encounters dilemmas throughout the course of his or her life.
4. Divide the class into three groups and explain that each group will receive a dilemma to grapple with. The mission of each group will be to discuss the questions in the story it will get, try to come up with a solution to this dilemma, and then present it to the rest of the class as a skit (use drama). Encourage the kids and the parents to participate alike (as they prepare for their skit) and even suggest to the parents to “play” the role of kids and to the kids to “play” the role of parents.
5. Working in small groups: please give each group 20 minutes to discuss the dilemmas and prepare for the skit. While the groups are working, please go around the room and offer your help to the participants when it is necessary.
6. Dilemmas presentation:  
Setting the atmosphere:  
The program leader should set a place in the classroom for an imaginary stage, ask the people to turn off the mobile phones (ideally they will be turned off as a result of their participation at the program) and welcome them to the “Our Israel” play. The more the class gets into the right setting, they will respond better to their friends’ skits and the dilemmas presented in front of them.  
The program leader, or any of the group members, should be prepared to read the dilemma in front of the classroom in order for the rest of the groups to understand the skit.  
Summarizing after each skit:  
The program leader should be prepared to highlight the solution and ask clarification questions after each skit.

7. Summary:

“We’ve been discussing and learning from each other about various aspects of life in Israel—both similar and different than ours—and our relationship to the State of Israel. It was interesting to share all of these different opinions about our Jewish Homeland and its value in our lives. I invite you to continue this discussion at home and find more ways to connect to the Land and State of Israel.”

## EXPLORING OUR CONNECTION TO ISRAEL—DILEMMAS

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### B’NEI MITZVAH

Julie and Alexander are twins preparing for their *B’nei Mitzvah* ceremony. Last night at dinner, their parents presented them with a tempting offer: “I just spoke to my friend David from work,” said their Dad, “and he told me what a great time they had in Israel celebrating their daughter’s *Bat Mitzvah*. He says it was a phenomenal experience for the whole family, so Mom and I started considering this seriously...”

“If we cut down on some of your *B’nei Mitzvah* expenses here and just hold a modest gathering in our Temple” continued Mom enthusiastically, “we could all go to Israel, tour the country and have a nice ceremony near the *Kotel* (the Western Wall).”

“What do you mean by cutting down the expenses here?” asked Julie.

“Well...” their Mom began, “it means no big, fancy party, no designer clothes, no DJ and no to all the party favors you wanted to give to your friends. Also, if we want to keep it small, many of our extended family members may not be able to celebrate this moment with you.” Their 17 year old sister Natalie then jumped into the conversation. “Not to mention the fact that you might encounter some security challenges there. When I was in Israel two summers ago there was tension in the northern part of the country and they wouldn’t let us go any farther north than Tel Aviv. So we ended up seeing only half of the country. Considering the money we paid for that miserable trip—it just seemed not worth it.”

“Natalie, you’re not being fair,” said Dad. “Why don’t we give it some thought, kids,” he said, turning to them, “what do you say?”

Now Julie and Alexander got really confused. They had never been to Israel and the possibility of celebrating their *B’nei Mitzvah* in Jerusalem as well as touring this country they’d heard so much about seemed exciting. “On the other hand,” said Alexander, “I want a *Bar Mitzvah* event just like my friends’ and I want to be able to celebrate it with as much of my family members as possible. I tend to say ‘let’s celebrate here.’”

“But how can you say no to Israel?” asked Julie. “I want to be able to celebrate this moment in the Jewish Homeland. I want to see Israel for the first time with my family.”

The conversation continues...

Please try to come up with a solution to this dilemma and present this as a skit to your class members.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What makes a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* experience special? What makes a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* experience in Israel unique? What is so special about seeing Israel for the first time with your family?
2. What are the advantages of celebrating your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* in your country? Are there ways to connect a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* celebration to Israel even if one celebrates it here? What are they?
3. What were Natalie’s thoughts regarding the possible Israel trip? Why did she choose to raise them?

## MOVING AWAY

Lately, your friend Dan has seemed very upset. Anytime you and your friends would try to talk to him or invite him to go to the movies together, or just ask him to join your soccer game during recess at school, he would just become extremely sad and refuse to join in.

“I’m really worried about him,” your friend Emily said to you. “He keeps avoiding all of us and looks really sad. Would you talk to him? He’s your best friend.”

“I tried a couple of times,” you replied, “but maybe I should try harder.” You decided to pay him an unexpected visit at his house that afternoon. Your Mom dropped you off. Your heart was beating fast as you knocked on the door holding a bag of your favorite treats and a few soccer magazines you wanted to leave with Dan as a friendship gesture.

The door was answered by Dan. You looked at his red eyes and realized he had been crying. As you looked behind his shoulder you could see that there were some boxes in the house and Dan’s Mom seemed busy packing. “What is going on?” you asked surprised.

“We’re moving. To Israel,” said Dan. “I won’t know anyone there and you know how I hate Hebrew, and I just don’t understand how they can take me away from my friends and school.” Dan looked at his Mom with anger.

“Dan, we discussed this a million times,” said his Mom. “There will be a special English speakers’ class in your school. There are many kids with families who made *Aliyah* (immigration to Israel) there. We decided we want our family to live in the Jewish Homeland.”

“But nobody asked me,” said Dan. Now you feel confused. Your best friend is moving away to Israel. You’ve been there a few times visiting your cousins, so you know how beautiful and welcoming this country is... but to not see your best friend everyday? What do you say to him? How do you make him feel better? Why are Dan’s parents doing this to him?

### Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think made Dan’s parents decide to make *Aliyah* (immigrating to Israel)?
2. Try to imagine how Dan’s life might look in Israel? Would his school be like yours? Would he study the same things and play the same sports? What might his challenges be? What are the good things about living in Israel?
3. What is hard about moving away to another place? Is it different to move to another country rather than moving to a distant part of this country? Would it be different moving to Israel than moving to, perhaps, France?

## SHABBAT SHALOM?

Alex is very excited. Here she is, in the amazing Land of Israel for the first time, sipping from her tasty milkshake on the beach while chatting with her Israeli friend, Noya. Alex’s family is staying with Noya’s family for the second week now, and the reason Alex is so excited is because she was just invited to Noya’s friend’s 10th birthday party that afternoon. It’s late Saturday morning and suddenly Noya realizes they didn’t get a chance to buy gifts for Shani, her friend. “Oh, Shani is going to be so disappointed when we show up empty handed,” said Noya.

“I don’t understand the problem,” said Alex, “why don’t we ask your Mom to drive us to the mall so we can pick up a few gifts before we get to the party.”

“No, we can’t,” Noya replied, “it’s *Shabbat* and on *Shabbat* the mall is closed.”

“How come?” said Alex, “this is the best day for shopping.”

“I agree,” said Noya, “it is very annoying not to be able to shop for a gift on *Shabbat*. Not to mention the fact that there are some cities here that won’t even have buses running on *Shabbat*, movie theaters are closed and more.”

“Why is that?” asked Alex.

“It is because of the ‘*Shabbat* Law,’” said Noya’s Mom, who was listening to the conversation with a big smile. “Since according to the Jewish law you’re not supposed to work on *Shabbat*, and Israel is a Jewish State, they have a law preventing businesses from being open on *Shabbat*,” she explained.

“But we’re not WORKING, we’re just SHOPPING. This is a modern country,” said Noya. “As an Israeli Jew, I think this law needs to change!”

“But clerks in the stores would be working,” said Noya’s Mom as she turned to Alex, who seemed confused and puzzled. “What about you Alex?” she asked. “Do you agree with Noya? Should we change the law of *Shabbat*?”

Please try to come up with a solution to this dilemma and present this as a skit to your class members.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. As we learned from this dilemma, Israel has rules that try to preserve its Jewish nature. Are there more Jewish laws you know of that are observed in Israel?
2. Noya is an Israeli girl who thinks some of the laws should be changed. What does this teach us about the way Israelis approach this issue? Do you think there are Israelis who would disagree with Noya’s approach?
3. What do you think about these kinds of laws? Are there (or were there) similar laws in this country? Do you think *Shabbat* observance/celebration is different or easier in Israel than in North America?

# TORAH—Educational Engagement Material for All Ages

## 7. HATISHMA KOLI קולי התשמע WILL YOU HEAR MY VOICE? THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL THROUGH ITS POPULAR MUSIC

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### General Introduction

The journey of the modern State of Israel is captured in the lyrics and sounds of Israel's popular music. Israel's esteemed poets and musicians chronicle the struggle, beauty and hope of a nation. Israeli songs reflect the raw emotion of an entire nation. This music is an essential part of Israeli life. In times of pain and desperation it buoys, cries out, and heals. In moments of joy it dances and marches with pride. Becoming familiar with Israeli popular music—its socio-political themes, its biblical and historical allusions, and its emotions—helps us to better understand our relationship to our homeland and to answer an essential question underlying all of our Israel at 60 initiatives (and explained more fully in the booklet's Introduction on page 5): *How do we find and make a place for Israel within the individual and collective Reform Jewish expression?*

Questions to be addressed in each session:

1. How does the poetry and music reflect the complex, multiple narratives of the people of Israel?
2. What is reflected in the selected pieces in relation to the historical and sociological stages in Israel's development?

### Lesson Overview

- Introduction to the theme and historical period 15–20 minutes
- Listen to and then discuss each poem/song 15 minutes per piece
- Conclusion 10–15 minutes

### Materials Needed:

Copies of the words of the poems/songs

CD player and CDs with the songs if available, or a computer to download cited links

Part One: 1940s–1950s is included in this packet. Parts Two and Three (1960s–1970s, 1980s–2000s) are available online at [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030).

## PART ONE 1940'S—1950'S

### Part One Introduction

Beginning with the music of the 1940's and 1950's, the song writers set the socio-political issues to stirring, often militaristic refrains. These decades of early struggle were times of great Zionist patriotism and the formal rebuilding and dominance of the central State. This atmosphere is reflected in the music.

### A Brief History

The pioneering efforts of the *Yishuv* (the pre-State Jewish settlement in Palestine) literally paved the way for Israel. Those pioneers (*chalutzim*) established *kibbutzim*, worked the deserts into fields, and devoted their blood, sweat, and tears to restore a homeland for the Jewish people. Moreover, from the War of Independence in 1948 to the Sinai campaign in 1956, Israel's military evolved from a spirited team of patriots to an elite fighting force. Issues of absorption included the right of return for Arab refugees as well as the law of return for Jews. Over the course of the 1940's and 1950's, Israel experienced the often difficult beginnings of a coming tremendous economic boom through expanding agricultural, industrial, and urban development, while attempting to absorb masses of immigrants.

### The Music

Israeli popular music at that time was not influenced by jazz, swing or rock and roll. Unlike the popular music heard in America in the 40's and 50's, the main musical influences on Israeli music of this time period come from Eastern and Western European classical and folk music. These were the countries of origin for the majority of the poets and song writers in Israel during the 1940's and 50's. The tone of this music is often triumphant and joyful. March-like and determined rhythms paralleled the pulse of the *kibbutz*nik in the fields and the soldier in battle. There are also poignant melodies, quiet in sonic quality yet rich in textual meaning. Many of the songs have orchestral settings; many utilize the accordion, and Russian folk instruments.

The lyrics often contain imagery and direct quotations from the Bible. These references present a profoundly Jewish interpretation and influence on even a very secular life. They help to link the history of the people Israel with the Land of Israel. The songs tell of the challenges and triumphs in battle, the miraculous beauty of the rebirth of the state, and the grueling strength of character and never-give-up determination of the pioneers. There is an overwhelming sense of pride and conviction in fulfilling the Zionist dream—a Jewish Homeland.

### Type 1: Biblical / Religious Imagery

#### Song One: *Zemer Nugeh* (A Gloomy Song)

The first example is written ten years prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. It speaks of a deep longing. The words are from an earlier poem by the poet Rachel Bluwstein. Known simply by her first name, Rachel was born in Russia. She came to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1909 and was greatly influenced by the early *chalutz* (pioneer), A.D. Gordon (who was born in 1856 in Russia, made *aliyah* at the age of 47) who believed that physical work on the land would bring personal redemption and the redemption of the Jewish people.

In 1913, she went to France and, unable to return because of World War I hostilities, then returned to Russia where she was a teacher. Eventually she returned to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1919 to become a member of *kibbutz Degania*, where A.D. Gordon also lived. Rachel generally wrote simple, sensitive lyrics filled with yearning and symbolism. Her love of the countryside and nature is expressed in much of her work. Many of her poems, like this one, have been put to music. Rachel died in 1931. Listen to *Zemer Nugeh*.

## *Zemer Nugeh* 1938

**Words: Rachel/M. Zeira music: Shmulik Kraus**

Will you hear my voice my far-away one  
Will you hear my voice wherever you are  
A voice calling with strength, a silent cry;  
It transcends blessing  
(lit: that, transcending mitzvah, is a blessing)

This world is wide and its ways are vast  
Meetings are momentary, separations are an eternity  
A man asks but his legs are weak  
He's not able to find that which he lost.

Perhaps the end of my days draws nigh  
The time for tears of farewell is closing in  
I will wait for you until the end of my days  
Like Rachel's wait for her beloved.

הַתְּשִׁמַע קוֹלִי רְחוֹקִי שְׁלִי  
הַתְּשִׁמַע קוֹלִי בְּאֶשֶׁר הֵנֶךְ  
קוֹל קוֹרָא בְּעוֹז, קוֹל בּוֹכָה בְּדַמִּי  
וּמַעַל לְזִמְן מִצְוָה בְּרַכָּה.

אֶרֶץ זוֹ רַבָּה וּדְרָכֶיּוֹם בְּהָ רַב  
נִפְגָּשׁוֹת לְדַק נִפְרָדוֹת לְעַד.  
מִבְקֵשׁ אָדָם, אֲךָ כּוֹשְׁלוֹת רַגְלָיו,  
לֹא יוֹכֵל לְמַצּוֹא אֶת אֲשֶׁר אֲבָד.

אֲחֵרוֹן יָמַי כִּבְר קָרוֹב אוֹלִי,  
כִּבְר קָרוֹב הַיּוֹם שֶׁל דְּמַעוֹת פְּרִידָה.  
אֲחִכָּה לְךָ עַד יִכְבוּ חַיִּי,  
כַּחֲכוֹת רַחֵל לְדוֹדָהּ.

### Questions for Discussion

- What biblical or “religious” references are there? What does that assume about the listener?
- How does the biblical imagery reflect the meaning of the song? What does it do to the power of the song? Who is speaking?
- What does the use of the words *beracha*/blessing and mitzvah evoke? [God?]
- How does the use of religious vocabulary connect to the secular Zionist background of the author? [biblical, spiritual connection to the Land, but not “religious”?]
- What is the speaker of this song saying?

Related information for the leader: The references to Rachel can be found in Genesis chapter 29.

To listen *Zemer Nugeh* online go to [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030).

## Type 2: Nationalism- Patriotism

### Song two: *Shir HaPalmach* (Song of the Palmach)

The *Palmach* (*Plugot Machaz*—Strike Companies) was established in 1941. This group of Israeli men and women trained to protect fledgling *kibbutzim* and towns against Arab attacks. The British initially aided the *Palmach* and sought their help in collaborative, covert missions against Syria and the Nazi threat. The *Palmach* came to be an elite force that served the entire country. They sowed the seeds for an Israeli navy and air force. With larger than life members such as Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, those within the *Palmach* would help to establish the political leadership of Israel.

As background, first sing or listen to a recording of *God Bless America*.

Since the *Palmach* was established in defensive response to the growing crisis in Europe and the fear that Hitler (as well as the neighboring Arab nations) would attack, the Jews of Palestine were often locked in a similar position of those sitting in North America waiting to see the outcome of the Allies' advances.

- What was the emotional condition of those in North America?
- Were they united behind the war effort and singing songs of patriotism? (For example, *God Bless America*, by Irving Berlin, was originally written in 1918 and revised in 1938.)

Since 2001, *God Bless America* has been revived as the response to the renewed sense of patriotism.

- How has the use of *God Bless America* (and other anthems) reflected the historical contexts in which it has been played?
- Have the range of emotional feelings toward the various military actions (WWII, Korea, Viet Nam and the war against terrorism) been consistent? Have the songs we've sung reflected these feelings?

Listen to *Shir HaPalmach*.

### *Shir HaPalmach* 1942

**Words: Zerubabel Gilad Music: David Zehavi**

Though the storm is ever mounting  
Still our heads remain unbowed.  
We are ready to obey all commands,  
The Palmach will win—we've vowed.

מסביב יהום הסער,  
אך ראשינו לא ישח  
לפקודה תמיד אנחנו,  
תמיד אנו, אנו הפלמ"ח.

From Metulla to the Negev,  
From the desert to the plain,  
All our youth defend the homeland,  
Till we bring it peace again.

ממטולה עד הנגב,  
מן הים עד המדבר -  
כל בחר וטוב - לנשק  
כל בחר על המישמר!

In the eagle's path we follow,  
Over mountain tracks we go,  
Among stony heights and caverns  
We are seeking out the foe.

נתיב לנשר בשמיים,  
שביל לפרא בין הרים, -  
מול אויב דרכנו יעל,  
בין ניקרות ובין צורים.

When you summon us to battle,  
We will be there first by day or night,  
We are ready when you give the command,  
The Palmach will march in might.

ראשונים תמיד אנחנו,  
לאור היום ובמחשך  
לפקודה תמיד אנחנו,  
תמיד אנו, אנו הפלמ"ח.

### Questions for Discussion

- Is there a sense of pride in the military? How so?
- What symbols are used?
- How does *Shir HaPalmach* compare to God Bless America?
- How does *Shir HaPalmach* compare to *Zemer Nugeb*? [no God, no biblical references] What is the difference in the message? Why does the message need to change? How does a song like this reflect the voice of a nation?

To listen *Shir HaPalmach* on-line go to [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030).

For the musical notation, *Sing Along With Effi Netze Vol.I*, published in Israel. To order [www.effinetzer.com](http://www.effinetzer.com)

### Type 3: Historical Reflection

#### Song Three: *Mul Har Sinai* (At Mt. Sinai)

In the mid 1950s, Israel's military mettle was tested once again in the Sinai Campaign. In September 1955, in violation of international agreements, Egypt sealed off access to the Israeli port of Eilat. On July 26, 1956 President Nasser announced Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal, most of whose shares were held by Britain and France. Diplomacy failed to reverse Nasser's decision. On October 29, 1956, Britain, France, and Israel launched a military operation in the Sinai Peninsula. Four and a half months later, on March 16, 1957, Israel withdrew its troops from the Sinai and Gaza strip after receiving international reassurances that Israel's vital waterways would remain open.

The song *Mul Har Sinai*/At Sinai reflects the passion and pride of the Sinai Campaign. Israel once again returned to Sinai. This song elicits strong patriotism tempered with humility. The strong biblical imagery coupled with the modern reality captures the dialectical feeling in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Yehiel Mohar 1912-1969 arrived in Palestine from Poland in 1937. His lyrical poetry often expressed themes of war and triumph. Moshe Wilensky 1910- 2000, composed music rich folk idioms and syncopated rhythms.

Listen to *Mul Har Sinai*.

## ***Mul Har Sinai/At Sinai* 1956**

**Words: Yehiel Mohar Music: Moshe Wilensky**

It is no dream, my friend; it is no dream,  
my friend, no legend, if you will.

Because at Mount Sinai, the bush is  
burning still.

And now our youth will sing a melody of  
flame and at the city gates our Samsons  
stand again.

Now the holy flame burns in our hearts  
once more it's the holy flame—as all the  
engines roar.

We'll tell the tale until the day we die.  
How we returned to stand here at Sinai.

It is no dream, my friend, and all remains  
the same. From that time until now, the  
bush remains in flame.

Still it's burning bright, within the minds  
and hearts of all the brave and young  
As they go out to fight.

Now the holy flame burns in our hearts  
once more. It's the holy flame—as all the  
engines roar.

We'll tell the tale until the day we die,  
How we returned to stand here at Sinai.

לא אגדה רעי  
ולא חלום עובר:  
הנה מול הר סיני  
הסנה, הסנה בוער.  
והוא לזהב בשיר  
בפי גדודי בנים,  
ושערי העיר  
ביד השמשונים.

הו, שלהבת יה - עיני הנערים,  
הו, שלהבת יה - ברעום המנועים,  
עוד יסופר על זה היום אחי,  
בשוב העם אל מעמד סיני.

רעי, זה לא חלום  
ולא חזיון הווה  
מאז ועד היום  
בוער, בוער הסנה.  
לוהט בזמר און  
בלבבות האל  
של נערי ציון  
ורכב ישראל.

הו, שלהבת יה - עיני הנערים...

### **Questions for Discussion**

- What is the biblical connection in this song? [Read burning bush story and discuss reference]
- What does it mean for the bush to stay in flame?
- Discuss the emotional state of the speaker? How can you tell? What imagery is used in the song?
- Is this song more like *Semer Nugeb* or *Shir HaPalmach* in terms of lyrics/tone/intended audience?

To listen *Mul Har Sinai* on-line go to [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030).

For the musical notation, *Sing Along With Effi Netze Vol.I*, published in Israel. To order [www.affinetzer.com](http://www.affinetzer.com)

## Type 4: Societal Reflections

### Song Four: *Zamar Noded* (Song of the Wanderer)

Towards the end of the 1950s, the constant building and growth yields a certain level of comfort and wealth in the land. There are those who begin to want to concentrate on the simple pleasures in life. The high zeal for military strength and strong centralized State control is beginning to shift to a more muted show of strength and more individual focus. *Zamar Noded* was written at that time by Naomi Shemer.

By the late 1950s, people are beginning to settle into their lives as Israelis. Immigrants no longer wander with only the clothes on their back. Acceptance into the greater society is marked by the acquisition of material wealth. Hospitals, apartments, and utilities, are part of the landscape. First generation Israelis look toward a bright future. The song *Zamar Noded* reflects this time period, but it is a bit of a polemic against the quest only for new found wealth.

Naomi Shemer was a prolific song writer and composer. She is known as the “First Lady of Israeli Song.” Many of her songs have become hits. Shemer was born on *Kvuzat Kinneret* and grew up overlooking the shores of the Jordan river. Many of her songs recreate the landscape that was such a part of her youth and reflect her love of the topography and scenery of *Eretz Yisrael*.

### *Zamar Noded*/The Song of the Wanderer 1958

#### Words and music: Naomi Shemer

The road is long and wide

הדרך ארוכה היא ורבה, רבה

The road is long and full of glory

הדרך ארוכה היא ורבת הדר

Everyone walks on the road until the end.

כולם הולכים בדרך עד סופה, סופה

Everyone walks on the road until the bitter end

כולם הולכים בדרך עד סופה המר

\*Chorus

אבל אני, אבל אני, לבד לבד צועד

But me I am alone, I march on in solitary, halleluyah.

הללו הללויה הללו

I sing songs of a wandering singer, halleluyah.

ושר אני ושר אני, שירי זמר נודד

הללו הללויה הללו

One lifted his face to the gold,

אחד נשא פניו אל הזהב, הזהב

One lifted his face to the good gold;

אחד נשא פניו אל הזהב הטוב

another found a girl who will love,

אחר מצא ילדונת שתאהב, תאהב

another found a girl who will love him.

אחר מצא ילדונת שתאהב אותו

I don't want a house with a field,

איני רוצה לי בית עם שדה, שדה

I don't want a house with a green field.

איני רוצה לי בית עם שדה ירוק

For your (plural) voice is what I value,  
because your voice responds in laughter.

כי כל שכרי קולכם אשר עונה, עונה  
כי כל שכרי קולכם אשר עונה בשחוק

\*My voice will sing but you (plural) are the echo,  
Halleluyah.  
Woe to the song that has no echo,  
Halleluyah.

קולי ישיר, קולי ישיר, אבל אתם לו הד  
הללו הללויה הללו  
אבוי לשיר, אבוי לשיר, אם אין לו, אין לו  
הד  
הללו הללויה הללו

A tree on the roadside slowly grows dark,  
very dark  
Just as the city lights fade

אילן בצד הדרך אט ישחיר, ישחיר  
אילן בצד הדרך אט ישחיר מאוד  
כבו הפנסים בכל העיר, העיר  
כבו הפנסים בכל העיר הזאת

### Questions for Discussion

- How does this reflect a different societal mood? What does the author want?
- What do you think the phrase “one met the good gold” means?
- Who is the echo? [note plural...avoid temptation to say “God”]
- How does a “song’s echo” have value?

To listen *Zamar Noded Sinai* on-line go to [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030).

### Concluding Thoughts

The popular music of Israel sheds light on the history of the modern State. For Israelis, music is part of their life force. It presents a snapshot of the development of a nation. By singing these songs we share in the joy and emotion, the struggle and challenge of everyday Israeli life. The music of 1940's and 1950's begins with extreme militaristic zeal for a Zion rebuilt and its land restored. It reflects the Maccabian spirit of might over the many. It ends with hope for continued prosperity, but also a hope for more personal connection in a changing society.

# AVODAH—Opportunities to Connect Worship and Israel

## 1. SERMONIC IDEAS, SERVICE INSERTS, AND IYUNEI TEFILLAH

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### SERMONIC IDEAS

In addition to gleaned some sermon ideas from the *Parashat Ha'Shavu'ah* study guide that follows in part 2 of this *Avodah* section, here are two thoughts from Rabbi Michael Marmor, Dean of the Jerusalem campus of HUC-JIR:

#### **Reshit Tzemichat Geulateinu**

The Prayer for the State of Israel, composed by Israel's Nobel laureate S.Y. Agnon, includes the phrase *Reshit Tzemichat Geulateinu\**, the beginning of the flowering of our redemption. Is this how we see Israel? Can we subscribe to this phrase? Rabbi Arthur Green told me recently that this is far from his theology (and I regard Art as a passionate friend of Israel, as close to an insider as a non-resident can be).

I suggest that we look at this phrase as we mark 60 years. Note that the terms relate to past, present, and future respectively. I want to emphasize *tzemicha*, organic growth. I believe that there is much happening in Israel today which represents real growth, a flowering of culture, expression and spiritual search. Our movement is part of this flowering, and we should learn more about it and feel involved with it.

My own theology makes Agnon's term somewhat uncomfortable for me, particularly because here in Israel and elsewhere the language of Redemption has been hijacked by purveyors of Messianic certainties (of which I am not certain).

So perhaps Israel for me is: *Geulat Reshit Tzemichateinu*—the redemption to be found in the stirring of growth and creativity. It's there within the Hebrew language, in music and literature and art, it's there in what happens when Israel and Diaspora really meet. It's there when we stop shouting slogans and start looking at what's happening beyond those slogans.

(\* Editor's note: This phrase was popularized by Rav Avraham Kook, famous religious Zionist leader and First Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Palestine from 1929 until his death in 1935.)

#### **Another Thought: On Being Sixty**

In *Avot*, 60 is the age of *zikna*, of old age. But *Tosefot Yom Tov* points out that a variant reading states *ben shishim lechochma*—60 for wisdom. What do we look at when we see Israel at 60? Something tired and “old,” or something wise and venerable? The truth is: there is evidence on both sides. Really being wise is also coming to terms with how old you are. We are no longer in the first flush of Israel's youth, and it's time to get used to this new phase.

Note that in the same section of *Avot* (5.21), 30 is the age of *koach*, strength of power. Israel is now 30 again, at the second age of power: having established our power and learnt how to use it, maybe this next phase will be about conserving and deploying that power with wisdom. As they say, 60 is the new 30.

## SERVICE INSERTS

- i. Women of Reform Judaism has given us permission to reprint the following meditation and prayer, and we encourage your congregations to consider including them in your *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut/Shabbat* or other Israel/*Shabbat* services.

### **"Mine, In Every Sense"**

My eyes  
wandered in the wilderness  
over the same rocks and crags and hazy-blue distant peaks  
that countless numbers have viewed before me.

My hands  
touched Herod's stones,  
cold in the *Shabbat* night air,  
yet warmed by the prayers of centuries.

I tasted  
my own tears for the military heroes, 13, 17, 18 years old,  
row upon row,  
and for the named and nameless victims of a horror that  
chilled and numbed me.

I smelled  
the cool pine of forests lovingly planted tree by tree,  
and marveled at the expanse of barren land  
still untouched.

Pride swelled my heart  
as a thousand blue and white flags snapped in the wind  
and the roar of F-15s overhead vibrated my very being.

Shame touched me  
for our marshmallow existence contrasting so sharply with  
the sacrifices of pioneers past and present.

Joy overcame me,  
tickled me, made me laugh, watching young  
and old celebrate  
freedom in song and dance.

Awe grabbed me,  
beckoned me, pulled at me, realizing  
how many have struggled  
and yet will struggle for survival of an ideal,  
a principle, a homeland.

At every turn my senses were bombarded, saturated.  
My cup ran over with abundant milk and honey  
and I savored every overwhelming drop.

I felt a struggle, a war with my own senses,  
longing for rest, yet unable to resist the  
treasures awaiting me.

If I forget thee O Jerusalem...  
How could I possibly?  
You are mine, in every sense.

*(Covenant of The Spirit, Women of Reform Judaism, 2005.)*

### **“Prayer For Peace”**

Grant us strength, God,  
to bring peace to Your world.

Guide our hands to dismantle injustice;  
hone our ears to hear others’ cries.  
Blunt our tongues from uttering malice;  
blind us not, God, open our eyes.

Then can we reach out in friendship;  
our hearts will listen for pain.  
Then we will speak only kindness;  
and we’ll walk without apathy’s cane.

Grant us strength, God,  
to bring peace to Your world.

*(Covenant of the Soul, Women of Reform Judaism, 2000.)*

2. We reprint here the blessings that were offered in our booklet, *Our Israel: A Reform Response*

### ***Nisim Yisraelim Sh'b'chol Yom—Israeli Miracles that Occur Each Day***

(The following blessings were composed during July and August, 2006 by Israeli staff members at the URJ Kutz Camp in Warwick, NY.)

I love Israel because of the wonderfully sweet watermelons I get in Israel every summer. Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, creator of Israeli watermelons.

AMEN

I love that in Israel my Romanian grandparents exchange recipes with their Yemenite neighbors in Hebrew. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who made Israel a mixture of Jewish cultures from all over the world. AMEN

I love Israel because all Israeli citizens share a unique existence and a bond which need not even be spoken. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, for making Israelis unlike any other people in the world. AMEN

I love Israel because I know that I am always at home—a ben bayit—when I am in my friends’ houses; we are like each others family.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who made all Israelis care for one another. AMEN

I love Israel because when I walk down the street with my arms full of food every week to go to a friend's house for *Shabbat* dinner, the streets are filled with others doing the same.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, making *Shabbat* in Israel a *Shabbat* like no other. AMEN

I love Israel because the sense of camaraderie, built on our successes and travails, is the greatest in the world.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, that gave us the place to build our lives together. AMEN

I love Israel because it is the only place in the world where people who are so different can unite in such an amazing way around one simple thing—*hov'vei tzion*, a love of the State of Israel.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has united the Jewish people in the Jewish homeland. AMEN

I love Israel because on Sunday morning, I go to the train station, show my military ID and when I get on the train I find that it is filled with so many other soldiers like me returning to duty after *Shabbat*, that we have to sit on the floor.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, the guardian of Israeli soldiers. AMEN

3. Here are two readings: one for before the *Yotzer* prayer, the first of the two prayers before the morning *Shema*, and the other before *Ahava Rabah*, the blessing immediately preceding the morning *Shema*.

(Before the *Yotzer*)

For us, as Reform Zionists, Israel is once again a source of hope. As a people with a sovereign state, we are no longer merely speaking truth to others who wield power: we now have the opportunity and imperative to use power as a force of good. As we bring our values to bear on our collective national venture, our tradition calls on us to seek a higher standard for nation-building and policy-making, and to let Torah lead us towards being an exemplar for the world. When we gather from the four corners of the earth, will we hold our heads high, ever ready to do the difficult work of tempering power with righteousness?

*Or chadash*...It is taught that within each of us resides Holy sparks of Divine light. As Israel, we are a People with a mission. As Israel, we aspire to nurture the holiness within. As Israel, we gather our sparks into a great light—and work to direct that light for a holy purpose. In Israel, we have a locus for the gathering of our People's light and the chance to shine a light of holiness for the world. A new light once again shines from Tzion. May we work towards the day when each of us is reflected in that light.

*Or Chadash al Tzion ta-ir v'nizkeh kulanu m'beirab le-oro*. Shine a new light on Zion that we all may swiftly merit its radiance.

(Before the *Ahava Rabah*)

*V'havi-einu l'shalom*...Gather us in Peace.  
Not fleeing persecution, But seeking wholeness  
May we turn towards Zion  
Not with bent backs, But with heads raised  
Above the fray

Seeking justice, pursuing peace  
Holding ourselves up  
To Your highest standards

*V'havi-einu l'shalom mei-arba kanfot ha'aretz v'tol'cheinu kom'miyut l'artzeinu*

More than half of our People's children now live in Israel. *V'havienu L'shalom...* God, gather the children of Israel, here and in our Land, as one family. Here and in our Jewish State, Your People Israel are brothers and sisters—united with a common past and a shared destiny, even as each of us has a unique relationship to You and Your Torah. Help us reach across borders and boundaries, joining our greater Jewish family in building a nation that will ever be a source of pride and hope. Bind us together in love and purpose. Renew in us the will to engage in our People's national effort in the State of Israel, that our children and grandchildren will inherit a nation that will lead the way towards a better world.

## IYUNEI TEFILLAH

Excerpted from “*Mishkan Tefilah* and Israel: Some Reflections,” by Rabbi Mark Washofsky, Professor at HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.

(The complete article is available at [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030).)

The prayerbook, as we know, is more than simply a collection of liturgical texts; it is in many ways the most “official” formulation of Jewish theology that we have. Recited on regular occasions by individuals and communities in their acts of devotion toward the *Kadosh Baruch Hu*, the texts of the *siddur* serve as a kind of *balachab* of Jewish theology, an indicator of those ideas and principles to which the people Israel has committed itself in its understanding of God, of itself, and of its history. This is true of both the traditional *siddur* and of our Reform prayerbooks.

Given that *Mishkan T'filab* is appearing during the year that we mark the sixtieth anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel, it is fitting to consider how this *siddur* understands Israel. We would ask, in general, just how this prayerbook teaches the role that Israel plays, or does not play, in the religious worldview of Reform Judaism?

What is new or different in *Mishkan T'filab*'s treatment of Israel? We again find a special service for *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* (pp. 538-553), although unlike the *Gates of Prayer (GOP)* version, which was a regular prayer service including the reading of the *Shema* and the *Tefilah*, [and even *Hallel*], this one is a ritual that stands on its own and that can be conducted outside the framework of the regular liturgy. One fairly dramatic change is *Mishkan T'filab*'s restoration of some traditional liturgical passages that were excised from virtually all previous Reform prayerbooks. Chief among these is the phrase *vehavi'einu l'shalom...*, “Gather us in peace from the four corners of the earth and lead us upright to our Land,” which appears in *Abavab rabab*, the blessing immediately preceding the morning *Shema* (pp. 62, 230, and 456). This phrase, an expression of the traditional Jewish hope of *shivat Tziyon*, “the return to Zion,” was anathema to classical Reform ideology. The same is true with *Or chadash al Tziyon ta'ir*, “Shine a new light upon Zion,” that since Geonic times has appeared in *Yotzer*, the first of the two benedictions preceding the morning *Shema*. It would appear that we Reform Jews are no longer embarrassed about giving utterance in our prayer to what has come to be known as the Zionist dream.

In other respects, though, *Mishkan T'filab* pulls back, at least just a bit, from the Zionist passion of its predecessor. Gone is the inclusion of *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* in *ya'aleh v'yavo* [traditionally reserved for the Toraitic pilgrimage festivals]; in its place, the day is mentioned by way of an insert into the *Birkat Hoda'ab*, the “blessing of thanks” (*modim anachnu Lakb*) in the *Tefilah* (p. 555). This equates Israel Independence Day with the “rabbinically” ordained festivals of *Chanukah* and *Purim*, which are also mentioned traditionally in *Birkat Hoda'ab*, rather than with the *Yamim Tovim*. This surely represents a more appropriate, less presumptive conception of the day's religious status.<sup>1</sup>

We are therefore left to ask, what precisely, *is* the role of the State of Israel in our religious worldview according to our new *siddur*? One might say that the book seeks to enunciate a reasonable middle ground. Where the *Union Prayer Book* mostly ignores Israel, and where the *GOP* exalts it above the status it arguably should enjoy, *Mishkan T'filah* affirms the state as a positive good while refusing to identify this political entity with the dawn of the Messianic Age,<sup>2</sup> a claim advanced much too glibly by some Jewish religious extremists. Personally, I'd go a bit farther than that. I think that *Mishkan T'filah* teaches us to be Zionists in the best sense of that term. It intends, in the words of "*Ha'Tikvah*," that our eyes should gaze eastward, toward Zion. It would have us express our own spiritual longings in the traditional language of Jewish national rebirth. It instructs us to place the Land of Israel, along with the people of Israel, at the center of our religious concerns. And it beseeches us to love the State of Israel—not, to be sure, blindly or uncritically, not with a zeal that obscures its reality as a political construction of and by flesh-and-blood human beings—but to love it nonetheless, to pray for its security, to work for its betterment, and to see it as the embodiment of the age-old hopes and dreams of our people.

Is that, ultimately, *Mishkan T'filah's* message concerning Israel on this, the 60th anniversary of the State's independence? We don't yet know, of course. It is a question that must be decided over time by our communities as they pray from this book, discuss and argue its content, and ask whether they find themselves and their Judaism reflected in its pages. But if it turns out that this *is* the message, that this is the sort of Zionism to which this *siddur* is committed and to which it would have us aspire, then I think that *Mishkan T'filah* will serve very well as *our* prayerbook.

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## Notes

1 Moreover, the fact that the ritual for *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* is no longer a full-fledged "service" is also in keeping with these liturgical models. A festival is the subject of its own special *Tefilah* in our liturgy; even *Rosh Chodesh* gets its own version of *Musaf*. *Chanukah* and *Purim*, by contrast, do not warrant their own "services" but are marked by special ceremonies, rituals, and inserts into the standard *Tefilah* of the days on which they occur. In this way, too, *Mishkan T'filah* portrays *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* as more like *Chanukah* and *Purim* and less like the Toraitic festivals.

2 True, *Mishkan T'filah* does reproduce the "Prayer for the State of Israel" composed in 1948 by the Israeli Chief Rabbinate (p. 552), which refers to the state as *reisbit tz'michat g'ulateimu*, literally "the beginnings of the sprouting forth of our redemption." The translation in our *siddur*, however, renders the phrase as "the dawning of hope for all who seek peace," which arguably blunts the claim that the state's founding was guided by God and is part of God's plan for the Jewish people.

# AVODAH—Opportunities to Connect Worship and Israel

## 2. PARASHAT HA'SHAVU'A STUDY GUIDE—PARASHAT EMOR

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Our religious tradition teaches that *talmud Torah*, the study of Torah, is equal to all other Jewish obligations, because through studying Torah, we learn the path to holy actions. As a religious community, we encourage our congregants to explore the issues of connection to Israel through the lenses of our sacred texts. The materials below are designed to highlight some of the Israel-oriented dimensions of the weekly *parashah*.

### OVERVIEW: THE PARASHAH AT A GLANCE

On *Shabbat*, May 10, 2008, we read *Parashat Emor*, comprising Leviticus 21:1-24:23. The purpose of this guide is to focus some attention on parts of the Torah portion that may have relevance to thinking about Israel. The study leader may have the participants each read through the *Chumash* sections or review the brief sketch of the contents of the portion provided here:

- Lev. 21:1-24 Special laws of mourning for *kobanim* (i.e., priests); marriage laws for *kobanim*; laws for the *Kobein Gadol* (High Priest); laws prohibiting *kobanim* who have a wide range of physical defects or impairments from officiating in their priestly roles
- Lev. 22:1-33 Laws restricting *kobanim* who have become ritually defiled from eating (or even touching) the sacred food donations that are the priestly due; indications regarding who, besides *kobanim*, may eat of the food that is the priestly due; laws related to the blemishes and imperfections on animals and their fitness for sacrifice
- Lev. 23:1-44 A review of the annual holiday cycle with special emphasis on the sacrifices prescribed for each; a reminder of the law of leaving gleanings from the harvest for the poor
- Lev. 24:1-23 Instructions regarding the *ner tamid* (eternal lamp); instructions regarding the twelve loaves of bread to be placed before the altar; a story of a blasphemer and his execution; some additional laws about murder, assault, and the penalty for killing an animal

At first glance, this *parashah* seems to have little relevance to our focus on Israel. The primary concern of roughly the first half, as is the case with much of the Book of Leviticus, is with issues of the priesthood, its status, its responsibilities and roles, and the broader sacrificial system. And the second half is simply a listing of the holidays that have been defined in some detail earlier in the Torah; but here, the main emphasis is on the holiday details of the sacrificial cult. On closer examination, however, these issues raise some interesting questions.

### I—THE ESSENCE OF THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM: THE CONCEPT OF HOLINESS (LEVITICUS 21:1-22:25)

Here is some background material for the leader that can be used to inform the discussion or frame how the text relates to the concept of holiness.

At the core of the sacrificial system are some key concepts:

1. Priests, that is, *kobanim*, are born, not made. Only male descendants of Aaron are *kobanim*. There is no other way to become a *kobein*. The status is inherent, not earned or acquired in any way.

2. *Kobanim* must maintain a special level of ritual purity that is not required of other Israelites. If they accidentally become ritually defiled, they are disenfranchised from serving as priests and even barred from eating (since the food of the priests was all *kodesh*, that is, holy, and thus could not be touched by anyone or anything that was ritually defiled) until their ritually pure status is restored.
3. Similarly, the animals to be sacrificed by the *kobanim* had to be more perfect than other animals.

What we see here is a system based on a dichotomy between that which is attached to the realm of the holy and that which is not. But the holiness in question here is not the kind of holiness with which we are familiar. We often speak of holy deeds, or holy moments, or holy words. We are accustomed to thinking that one can create holiness by acting in a particular way. If I sit with my *chavurah* and study Torah, our words and the time we spend together are holy. If I engage in acts of *tikkun olam*, my energies and the projects I devote myself to can be made holy. But for *Parashat Emor*, holiness is a quality that is inherent in a person or an animal. Simply by being born to a father who is a *kobain*, a boy becomes a *kobain*. His holiness is inherent. So we are really dealing with two different types of holiness here. Let's call the usual type, that is, the type we create by acting in certain ways, "ordinary holiness" (even though that sounds like an oxymoron). And let's call the type that inheres in priests, Levites, the Temple, the altar, and so on, "Levitical holiness."

#### Questions to Consider:

- There is a traditional term to describe the Land's status: *kidushat ha'aretz* or "holiness of the land." When you think about the holiness of Israel—the Land, the State, or the people—do you see it as "ordinary holiness" or "Levitical holiness"? Is its holiness inherent or is it a function of how people act in it?
- In the realm of "ordinary holiness," things (and people and time) can shift back and forth, to quote the *Havdalah* blessing, *bein kodesh l'chol*, that is, between holy and mundane. *Kobanim*, on the other hand, are holy by nature. They can become defiled, and lose their authority to act in accordance with their holiness until they are restored to full ritual purity, but during that time they do not stop being holy. Does Israel shift back and forth *bein kodesh l'chol*, or is its holiness part and parcel of its being, even when it sometimes becomes "ritually defiled"?
- Are there parts of Israel that are always holy while other parts are not? For example, is there a difference in type or degree of holiness between, say, the *Kotel* (Western Wall), the beach in Tel Aviv, and the preschool run by a Reform congregation in the modern city of Modi'in?
- In order to maintain their special status, the *kobanim* had to obey special rules that simply did not apply to other Israelites. Do you think of Israel or Israelis as having to obey special rules? If so, what are they?

## II—FESTIVALS TIED TO THE LAND (LEVITICUS 23)

The listing of festivals in the second part of the Torah portion raises another set of questions. At the beginning of the list (Lev. 23:1-8), we read about *Shabbat* and *Pesach*. Then the list seems to start over again (with the repetition in verses 9-10 of "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to the Israelite people...'" ) when it introduces *Shavu'ot* (verses 10-21). That introduction starts as follows: "When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest..." (verse 10). The ensuing verses focus primarily on agriculture and on *Shavu'ot* as the festival of "First Fruits." Even though *Pesach*, *Shavu'ot* and *Sukkot* are all absolutely equal in terms of their religious importance, casual observation of Jewish life leads to the conclusion that *Shabbat* and *Pesach* have much more of a claim on our souls than does *Shavu'ot*.

#### Questions to Consider:

- Do you see a fundamental difference between *Shabbat* and *Pesach* on the one hand and *Shavu'ot* on the other?

- Is it possible that the reason is because *Shabbat* and *Pesach* reference universally accessible themes (periodic rest from work and freedom from slavery) while *Shavu'ot* is primarily about the agricultural bounty of a particular land, namely, the Land of Israel?
- Are there other reasons that might explain the difference between the relative popularity of *Pesach* and the obscurity of *Shavu'ot*?
- If you wanted to make *Shavu'ot* more “relevant” to Reform Jews, to raise it up to the level of *Pesach*, for example, what might you do?

### III—LAWS OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL: WHERE DO THEY APPLY?

This Torah portion, like most of Leviticus, focuses largely on the sacrifices that were to be brought from the agricultural produce of the land of Israel. As Jewish law evolved in the hands of the Rabbis, a consensus developed that all such agricultural laws (e.g., the tithe, the leaving of the corners of the field for the poor, the offering of the first fruits, etc.) only apply *inside* the Land of Israel. In other words, farmers in the Land were required to bring their first fruits to the Temple and to leave the produce in the corners of their fields for the poor, but farmers outside the Land, in Babylonia or in Italy or in Nebraska, are not under these requirements.

#### Questions to Consider:

- What do you think about a system of Jewish life and law that has different rules for those *in* the Land and for those *outside* the Land? Does it make a difference if, instead of saying “different rules,” we say “additional opportunities for mitzvot”?
- Are these questions made more complicated by the verse (Lev. 24:22) “You shall have a single law for citizen and stranger alike, for I am *Adonai* your God”? How do you react to the notion that the Torah required a single set of laws in the Land for both citizens and foreigners, but also recognized two different sets of laws for Jews, depending on whether they live in or outside the Land?

### IV—LAWS OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL: REFORM ALIYAH

In the last few years, the Reform Movement has become increasingly comfortable with the notion of *aliyah*, that is, choosing to live in the State of Israel, as a viable, sacred option for Reform Jews. This has certainly been informed, in part, by the belief that being in the Land of Israel provides additional opportunities to engage in acts of holiness. In August 2006, ARZA moved this idea forward by adding to its staff a full-time *sh'lichat Aliyah*, an Israeli staff member whose primary responsibility is to help American Reform Jews explore whether some new, flexible forms of *aliyah* might be appropriate for them. This raises the interesting debate about the differences between living a Jewish life in Israel and living it in the Diaspora.

#### Questions to Consider:

- Can one’s Jewish life be “more fulfilled” or “more complete” or “more sacred” in the Land than outside it? Or are there equal spiritual opportunities in both places?
- Do the additional “Israeli obligations” that accompany living in the Land of Israel (e.g., paying taxes, serving in the army, voting in Israeli elections) constitute *Jewish* obligations? Are they mitzvot?

# AVODAH—Opportunities to Connect Worship and Israel

## 3. YOM HA'ATZMA'UT COMMUNITY CELEBRATION CEREMONY

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### BACKGROUND

*Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* is obviously not our American or Canadian political Independence Day. One could argue, therefore, that as an Israeli “secular,” political holiday, it has only a tenuous connection or “borrowed standing” for us, and thus is difficult to maintain over time. However, it is a perfect opportunity for us to forge stronger ties to Israel and to the Reform Movement in Israel (Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism—IMPJ) for our reciprocal benefit. The holiday provides a vehicle to familiarize congregants with ARZA and the IMPJ, and to ally them with our shared values and visions of Reform Zionism—of fashioning a Jewish State committed to democracy, pluralism, and social justice. And when we give the holiday such a mission, it has greater meaning and connection for us and our sense of peoplehood.

We suggest a multi-generational, celebratory *tekes*/ceremony aimed at “sanctifying” the holiday by incorporating a “*mitzvah*” model of observance based on that of religious holidays—observances that entail the self-initiated joy of fulfilling *mitzvot*, which link us to a future ideal. For example, building a *sukkah* and inviting guests inside reminds us of the fragility of our existence, our gratitude to God, and the requirement of hospitality and treating people as created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God. When the holiday articulates an ideal or a vision, and when we take actions as part of the holiday that remind or inspire us to progress toward that vision, it can engender within us the self-initiated joy of fulfilling *mitzvot* that gives the holiday a deeper, transcendent meaning—more than simply passive “entertainment” from external stimuli like watching a parade or fireworks display.

The mission and *mitzvot* of *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* are connected to core messages of the Israel at 60 Initiative as described in the Introduction on page 5. In the context of this ceremony, the related core message that we would want to impart to is:

*Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* is an integral part of our Reform Jewish holiday calendar. It celebrates renewed Jewish sovereignty in Israel and its diverse and complex society, and with it, *our* role and obligations (*mitzvot*) as North American Reform Jews to partner with the IMPJ to affect the nature of that society. Our joint role is to work toward the creation of a just and caring, pluralistic, and democratic Jewish State—one that will actualize the vision of Israel as **רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלָּתֵנוּ**—*raishit tz'michat g'ulateinu*, that it may become “the beginning of the flowering of our redemption.”

The ceremony envisions a foundational structure of candle-lighting built around excerpts from the Israel Declaration of Independence. This textual structure will remain constant, like a liturgical rubric, to allow congregants to gain familiarity and comfort with it and the holiday over time. At the same time, it will also allow for yearly variations in accompanying songs, poetry, project updates, and the like, particularly for special historical anniversaries or current events. The candle-lighting provides the aura and symbolism of sanctity connected with religious holidays. Moreover, a specially created prayer for the holiday, that borrows familiar prayer language from both *Chanukah* and *Pesach*, structurally strengthens the theme of freedom and sovereignty linking these two holidays to *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*. The Declaration of Independence as the central text speaks to our historical/cultural link and, equally important, articulates a shared political tradition of democracy and human rights to which North American Reform Jews can relate.

While built around a structure reminiscent of traditional liturgy, the ceremony is **not** meant to be a *tefillah*/prayer service in the sanctuary. This joyous celebration needs more song and dance energy, and congregants need more explicit information about opportunities to connect with Israel than might be appropriate during worship. Borrowing from the kibbutz model of celebration, it would be more of a participatory, communal, and celebratory ceremony: a figurative and literal “taste” of Israel, but a joyous celebration with a message and a vision, not simply “entertainment.” It would be communal, and take place in the synagogue (rather than familial, like a Passover seder at home) in order to reinforce a sense of shared peoplehood. Ideally, the ceremony would take place in the social hall to allow for more encircling visual displays and more fluid movement of participants, and to encourage singing and dancing. The ceremony that follows is a model and can be shaped by your actual experience and needs over time.

Each candle-lighting segment highlights part of the message and vision of the holiday. Each features congregants reading an appropriately related excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, interspersed with thematically relevant songs (with dancing allowed!), poems or other text, and the sharing of congregants’ personal experiences or of information about events, projects, and opportunities in Israel. Information about such projects and opportunities can be gleaned online from the ARZA website (from the Engagement section on the homepage and from the News and the Programs/Zionism pages), from the Union for Reform Judaism and its IMPJ, IRAC, and other affiliates’ websites, and from the websites of those organizations mentioned in the bracketed sections of the ceremony.

The music is chosen to evoke memories and images of Israel from history and personal Jewish experience. The songs are mostly standard Zionist folk classics from composers like Naomi Shemer and Ehud Manor, whose music has come to personify Israel and the Zionist spirit. The music also includes a song from a modern Israeli group, Sheva, whose optimism is perhaps tempered and shaped by the complexity of today’s Israeli society, and one from a contemporary American Jewish composer, Neal Katz, who is well known within the NFTY and camp spheres, to reinforce the desired link between our North American and Israeli communities.

#### **Suggested materials to decorate the room:**

1. Large Israeli flag(s) and maps of Israel
2. Display of maps of Israel with IMPJ congregations/cities noted available at [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030)
3. Reproductions of the original Israel Declaration of Independence in Hebrew
4. Posters of scenes from Israeli Reform *k'hillot*/congregations, available at [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030)
5. Israeli food for a *Kiddush*/party afterwards, along with CDs of popular Israeli and relevant NFTY music, and tables with information regarding whatever projects/organizations are presented in the ceremony

Resources for wall maps, flags, the Declaration of Independence, and CDs of classic and modern Israeli music are [www.a-zara.com](http://www.a-zara.com) and [www.israzon.com](http://www.israzon.com). The songs mentioned in the ceremony can be found on the combination of the following CDs: *The Best of Israel* (2 CD set) and *The Very Best of Israel*, available on the second website above, and *Ruach 5765* and *Ruach 5761 & 5763* Songbook (containing words and music) and CD sets from the Transcontinental Music division of URJ Press. Music and words to the classic songs can be found in *The Complete Shireinu* from Transcontinental Music ([www.URJBooksandMusic.com](http://www.URJBooksandMusic.com)).

#### **Materials for the ceremony:**

1. A 7-branch menorah (with candles) or seven separate candles, plus a *yahrzeit*/memorial candle
  - The *yahrzeit* candle is lit as part of the opening memorial, and one menorah candle is lit for each of the seven themes culled from the Declaration of Independence, all supporting the underlying core message.

- People chosen to light candles and read segments might be congregants with deep connections to Israel: ARZA/Israel Committee members; Israelis in the congregation; families with *olim* (immigrant) family in Israel; people who have traveled to Israel with congregational tours or on the NFTY/EIE/Carmel high school and post-high school programs; and/or people actively involved with IMPJ organizations.
2. The ceremony booklet (reproducible from the following pages and on the ARZA website) with Declaration of Independence excerpts, related readings and poems, and songs. The songs could be taught to, and sung by, the congregation at the ceremony; led by school/youth group/choir groups who had learned them previously; or played on a CD player from the above mentioned CDs to encourage dancing (or, of course, a combination of all three).

A *Kiddush*/party with Israeli food and music would follow the ceremony. At that time, people could also receive the Family Home Ritual (on page 93). At the party, you could also display information about ARZA, the IMPJ, congregational joint projects, and the like presented during the ceremony.

יום העצמאות  
YOM HA'ATZMA'UT—ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE DAY  
5TH OF IYAR אייר

(Leader)

Our celebration tonight is more than a recollection of some moment in the past. It is also about the meaning of that moment to us and to our future. It is a celebration of *our* Jewish sovereignty—*our* partnership as Jews in *our* people's exercise of Jewish sovereignty. It marks our role and our obligations—our *mitzvot*—to make real the vision of Israel as ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו *raishit tz'michat g'ulateinu*, the first flowering of our redemption.

That redemption will bloom more fully when we work to fashion an Israel that is just, pluralistic, and democratic. We do so by working with ARZA and ARZA Canada, our Reform Zionist organizations, to build a vibrant Reform Movement in Israel—the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ)—that can sow those Reform ideals and fulfill our crucial role in shaping the Israeli future.

Like the flames on the ancient Temple menorah, our candles tonight are a visual symbol of our commitment to make real the visions of our Prophets—Amos, Micah, and Isaiah—to make *k'dushbab*, the sacred Presence of God, manifest in our homeland.

Candles are also a symbol of remembrance, of *Yizkor*. *Yom HaZikaron*, Israel's Day of Remembrance—Memorial Day for fallen soldiers—is the day before that ushers in Independence Day. In Israel, at 11:00 A.M. on *Yom HaZikaron*, sirens wail for two long minutes throughout the entire country. On the highways and in the cities and towns, everything stops...as people exit their cars, buses, offices, schools, and homes to stand in reverential silence. It is a sight to behold! Let us, too, light a memorial candle and stand in a moment of silent **Remembrance**, to meditate on the sacrifices made to establish and defend *Medinat Yisrael*—The State of Israel.

**Meditation: Poems of Hannah Senesh**

1.  
Blessed is the match consumed  
in a kindling flame.  
Blessed is the flame that burns  
in the heart's secret places.  
Blessed are the hearts that knew  
to stop beating with dignity.  
Blessed is the match consumed  
in a kindling flame.

2.  
There are stars up above, so far away,  
we only see their light long, long after  
the star itself is gone.  
And so it is with people that we loved.  
  
Their memories keep shining ever  
brightly, tho their time with us is done.  
But the stars that light up the darkest of  
night,  
these are the lights that guide us.  
As we live our days, these are the ways  
We remember.

Listen to/Sing: Lu Y'hi—"May It Be"  
(words/music by Naomi Shemer)

As the sun sets on *Yom HaZikaron* in Israel, it is a poignant period *bein ha'sbemesbot*—between the lights or between the moods—between the sorrow of loss and the joy of sovereignty and freedom. Then, the stars and the lit torches on Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem both burst forth to herald in the celebration of *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*—the renewal of *Medinat Yisrael*—The State of Israel.

(Blast of a shofar)

We kindle our lights tonight to celebrate that ongoing renewal and redemption in our Land.

#### CANDLE ONE FOR OUR BIRTHPLACE

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

#### CANDLE TWO FOR OUR ONGOING DREAM AND HOPE

*From Israel's Declaration of Independence:* "After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom."

*Libi, libi b'mizrach*

*v'anochi b'sof ma'arav*

"My heart, my heart is in the East, but I am at the edge of the West"

—Yehuda HaLevi (10th century)

לְבִי, לְבִי בְּמִזְרָח  
וְאֲנֹכִי בְּסוֹף מַעְרָב



*Im tirtzu, ein zo agadah*

"If you will it, it is no dream"  
—Theodor Herzl (19th century)

אִם תִּרְצוּ, אֵין זוֹ אַגְדָּה

Listen to/Sing: "*Ba'shana Ha'ba'ab*"—"Next Year"  
(words by Ehud Manor, music by Nurit Hirsch)

### CANDLE THREE FOR REBUILDING LAND AND CULTURE—PAST AND FUTURE

*From Israel's Declaration of Independence:* “Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, blockade runners, and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring toward independent nationhood.”

[Report about a current or proposed shared congregational project with an IMPJ congregation, or personal reflections of congregant(s) who have studied/lived in Israel for a time.]

Listen to/Sing: “*Od Lo Abavti Dai*”—“I Have Not Yet Loved Enough”  
(words/music by Naomi Shemer)

### CANDLE FOUR FOR SOVEREIGNTY—ITS PRESENT AND PROMISE

*From Israel's Declaration of Independence:* “In the year 5657 (1897), ... the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country. This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations, which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and *Eretz Yisrael* and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.... On the 29th of November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in *Eretz Yisrael*.... This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable. This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.”

[Congregation stands and reads together:]

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

{5 Iyar/May 14, 1948}

“Centuries of Jewish persecution, culminating in the *Shoah*, demonstrated the risks of powerlessness. We, therefore, affirm *Am Yisrael’s* reassertion of national sovereignty, but we urge that it be used to create the kind of society in which full civil, human, and religious rights exist for all its citizens. Ultimately, *Medinat Yisrael* will be judged not on its military might but on its character.”

CCAR “Miami Platform”—Reform Judaism & Zionism, 1997

Listen to/Sing: “*Halleluyah*”  
(words by Shimrit Or/music by Kobi Oshrat)

## CANDLE FIVE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY: THE VISION WE SEEK

*From Israel’s Declaration of Independence:* “THE STATE OF ISRAEL...will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture...”

צְדָק צְדָק תִּרְדּוּף לְמַעַן  
תִּחְיֶה וְיִרְשַׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ:

*Tzedek, tzedek tirdof l'ma'an tich'yeh v'yarashta et ha'aretz asher Adonai Eloheichab notein lach*

“Justice, justice you shall pursue, in order that you may live and inherit the land that *Adonai* your God is giving to you.” *Devarim* 16:20

לְמַדוּ הַיָּטִב דַּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁר־וְחָמוּץ שִׁפְטוֹ יָתוּם  
רִיבוֹ אֶלְמָנָה:

*Limdu heiteiv, dirshu mishpat, asbru chamotz, shiftu yatom rivu almanab*

“Learn to do good, demand justice, aid the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan, defend the cause of the widow.” *Isaiah* 1:17

מָה־יְהוָה דוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ  
כִּי אִם־עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד וְהִצַּנֵּעַ לְכַת עִם־אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

*Ma Adonai doreish mimcha, ki im absot mishpat v'ahavat chesed v'hatznei'a lechet im Eloheichab*

“What does *Adonai* require of you? Only do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.” *Micah* 6:8

## וַיִּגַל כַּמַּיִם מִשֶּׁפֶט וּצְדָקָה כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן:

*V'yigal kamayim mishpat, utz'dakah k'nachal eitan*

“May justice wave on like water, and righteousness like an ever-giving stream.”

*Amos 5:24*

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“We are committed to a vision of the State of Israel that promotes full civil, human and religious rights for all its inhabitants and that strives for a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors. We are committed to promoting and strengthening Progressive Judaism in Israel, which will enrich the spiritual life of the Jewish state and its people.”

CCAR 1999 Statement of Principles

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[Give information about current IRAC projects, personal stories about Rabbis for Human Rights projects (e.g., olive picking with Palestinians) or New Israel Fund local empowerment programs, and latest advances of IMPJ in providing pluralistic Jewish education in the schools and in gaining degrees of recognition by the government.]

### CANDLE SIX FOR PEACE

*From Israel's Declaration of Independence:* “WE APPEAL—in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months—to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions. WE EXTEND a hand of peace and good neighborliness to all neighboring states and their peoples, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.”

*Your Majesty [King Hussein of Jordan], we have both seen a lot in our lifetime. We have both seen too much suffering. What will you leave to your children? What will I leave to my grandchildren? I have only dreams: to build a better world — a world of understanding and harmony, a world in which it is holy to live. This is not asking for too much. [...] Today we are embarking on a battle which has no dead and no wounded, no blood and no anguish. This is the only battle which is a pleasure to wage: the battle for peace. [...]*

Yitzhak Rabin – July 26, 1994, address to U.S. Congress at the signing of Peace Agreement with Jordan

Listen to/Sing: “*Noladati La'shalom*”—“I Was Born For Peace”  
(words/music by Uzi Hitman),

## Prayer for the Peace of the State of Israel

אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ, בְּרַךְ אֶת־מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, רֵאשִׁית  
צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ. הִגֵּן עָלֶיךָ בְּאַבְרַת חֶסֶדְךָ, וּפְרַשׂ עָלֶיךָ סִכַּת  
שְׁלוֹמְךָ, וּשְׁלַח אוֹרְךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ לְרֵאשִׁיָּהּ, שְׂרִיָּה וְיוֹעֲצֵיָהּ, וְתַקְנֵם  
בְּעֲצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. חֲזַק אֶת־יְדֵי מַגְנֵי אֶרֶץ קְדְשֵׁנוּ, וְהַנְחִילֵם  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְשׁוּעָה, וְעֲטַרְתָּ נֶצְחוֹן תְּעַטְרֵם. וְנִתַּת שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ וּשְׂמֵחַת  
עוֹלָם לְיוֹשְׁבֵיהָ, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

*Avinu she'bashamayim, tzur Yisrael v'go'alo, bareich et Medinat Yisrael, reishit tz'michat g'ulateinu. Hagein aleiha be'vrat chasdecha, ufros aleiha sukkat sh'lomecha, usblach orcha va'amitcha l'rosheiha, sareiha v'yo'atzeiha, v'takneim b'eitza tova milfanecha. Chazeik et ydei mginei erez kodsheinu, v'hanchileim Eloheinu y'shu'a, va'ateret nitzachon t'atreim. V'natata shalom ba'aretz v'simchat olam l'yosheveiha, v'nomar amen.*

O heavenly One, Rock of Israel and its Redeemer, bless the State of Israel, that it may be the beginning of the flowering of our redemption. Shield it with the wings of Your compassion, spread over it a *sukkah* of Your peace, and send Your light and Your truth to its leaders, officials, and advisers. Help them with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of the defenders of our Holy Land; deliver them, O God, and crown their efforts in triumph. Grant peace to the Land and everlasting joy to all its inhabitants. And let us say, Amen.

### “An Arab Shepherd is Searching for his Goat on Mt. Zion”

By Yehuda Amichai (translated by Chana Bloch)

An Arab shepherd is searching for his goat on Mount Zion  
and on the opposite mountain I am searching  
for my little boy.

An Arab shepherd and a Jewish father  
both in their temporary failure.

Our voices meet  
above the Sultan's Pool in the valley between us.  
Neither if us wants  
the child or the goat to get caught in the wheels  
of the terrible *Had Gadya* machine.

Afterwards we found them among the bushes  
and our voices came back inside us, laughing and crying.

Searching for a goat or a son  
has always been the beginning  
of a new religion in these mountains.

In our prayers and desires for peace, we must always recognize and acknowledge the important role of North American Jews in supporting Israel in its legitimate need for defense. At the same time, we continue to hope that “*Od yavo shalom aleinu, ...there will yet be peace over us.*”

Listen to/Sing “*Salaam*”—“Peace” (in Arabic)  
(words/music by the group Sheva)

## CANDLE SEVEN FOR INGATHERING AND CONNECTION WITH THE DIASPORA: OUR PARTNERSHIP

*From Israel's Declaration of Independence:* “THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles... WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of *Eretz Yisrael* in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream—the redemption of Israel.”

Traditional prayers newly added back into *Mishkan T'filah*:

אור חדש על ציון תאיר, ונזכה כלנו מהרה לאורו

*Or chadash al Tzion ta'ir, v'nizkeh chulanu m'beirab l'oro*

“Shine a new light on Zion, that we all may soon merit Israel's radiant potential.”

והביאנו לשלום מארבע כנפות הארץ, ותוליכנו קוממיות לארצנו

*Vabavi'einu l'shalom mei'arba kanfot ha'aretz, v'tolicheinu kom'miyut l'artzeynu*

“Bring us in peace from the four corners of the earth, and lead us upright into our Land.”

Even as *Medinat Yisrael* serves uniquely as the spiritual and cultural focal point of world Jewry, Israeli and Diaspora Jewry are inter-dependent, responsible for one another, and partners in the shaping of Jewish destiny..

To deepen awareness of Israel and strengthen Jewish identity, we call upon all Reform Jews, adults and youths, to study in, and make regular visits to, Israel..

Confident that Reform Judaism's synthesis of tradition and modernity and its historic commitment to *tikkun olam* [repairing the world] can make a unique and positive contribution to the Jewish state, we resolve to intensify our efforts to inform and educate Israelis about the values of Reform Judaism. We call upon Reform Jews everywhere to dedicate their energies and resources to the strengthening of an indigenous Progressive Judaism in *Medinat Yisrael*.

CCAR “Miami Platform”—Reform Judaism & Zionism, 1997

[Talk about the ARZA/Jewish Agency MASA projects and other opportunities for long-term experiences in Israel; and/or announce an upcoming congregational trip.]

Listen to/Sing: “*Or Chadash*”—“A New Light”  
(words/music by Neal Katz and Alan Cook)

A New Prayer for Yom Ha'Atzma'ut

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָזַר לָנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת נִסִּים  
לְעַצְמָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנָן הַזֶּה. נִמְשִׁיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת נִסִּים  
בְּיַחַד לְיִצְוֹר מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִי דְבָרֵי הַנְּבִיאִים, וְנוֹמַר --  
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם

*Baruch atab Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, she'azar lanu la'asot nisim l'atzmeinu ul'vaneinu bayamim ha'bem  
baz'man hazeh. Namshich la'asot nisim b'yabad l'y'tzor Medinat Yisrael l'fi divrei ha'nevi'im, v'nomar: La'shanah  
ha'ba'ah bi'Rushalayim*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of time and space, who helped us to make miracles for ourselves and our children in those days at this season. Let us continue to make miracles together to fashion the State of Israel according to the teachings of our Prophets, and let us say: Next Year in Jerusalem!



“As long as deep within the heart the Jewish soul still murmurs,”...still stirs. So begins the Israeli national anthem. Let us stir *our* hearts and souls,...and our hands, and our feet...to continue the tasks to truly fulfill the dream. Let us continue The Hope—*HaTikvah* , as we rise and join together:

**HaTikvah**

*Kol od baleivav penimah*

*Nefesh Yebudi homiyab*

*Ulfa'atei mizrach kadimah*

*Ayin l'Tzion tzofi'ab*

*Od lo avdab tikvateinu*

*Ha'tikvah bat sbnote alpayim*

*Lhiyot am chofshi b'artzeynu*

*Eretz Tzion vi'Rushalyim*

כָּל עוֹד בַּלֵּב פְּנִימָה

נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדִי הוֹמִיָּה

וּלְפָאֲתֵי מִזְרַח קְדִימָה

עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה

עוֹד לֹא אֲבָדָה תִּקְוַתֵּנוּ

הַתִּקְוָה בַּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים

לְהִיּוֹת עִם חֹפְשֵׁי בְּאֶרְצֵנוּ

אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם

As long as deep within the heart the Jewish soul still murmurs, and to the edges of the East, onward, the eye searches toward Zion, our hope is not lost. The Hope—two thousand years old—to be a free people in our own land: The Land of Zion and Jerusalem.

חַג יוֹם הָעֲצִמָּאוֹת שְׂמֵחַ

*Chag Yom Ha'Atzma'ut Samei'ach*

Happy Israel Independence Day

# AVODAH—Opportunities to Connect Worship and Israel

## 4. ISRAEL AT 60: FAMILY HOME RITUAL

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### INTRODUCTION TO PARENTS:

We use rituals to express values that we hold dear. For families with small children, bedtime rituals express something about how we want our children to end each day. As our children grow older, the way in which family meals take place expresses something about relationships within the family and the value of being together.

As Jews, rituals punctuate our days, weeks and years. *Kiddush* on *Shabbat* (the benediction over the wine) is a way of expressing the idea that the seventh day is holy. Convening a Passover *seder* and telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt from one generation to the next expresses our link in the chain of Jewish history and our obligation to teach the next generation the epic narrative of our people.

A celebration of “*Chag Ha’Atzma’ut*”, the Holiday of Independence, is no different from any of these other holiday examples. Creating a family ritual for this holiday enables families to give concrete expressions to emotions, ideas and connections that we experience related to the State and the Land of Israel. When Jews lived primarily in the Diaspora before the modern State of Israel came into being 60 years ago, they didn’t have an option to celebrate Jewish holidays in Israel. However, they always used the Land of Israel as a spiritual reference point (for example, they celebrated Jewish holidays according to the seasonal calendar of Israel as opposed to that of any other non-Mediterranean country). Today we rejoice in Israel as an actual sovereign State in which Jews can celebrate any Jewish holiday both spiritually and “nationally.” The State of Israel is accessible to us, and so are all of its indigenous foods and fruits, which stock the shelves in supermarkets and open-air markets throughout Israel. The fruits and foods that we will eat as a part of this family ritual form a bridge between our ideas of the Land of Israel as recounted in the Bible and the living, breathing life of Jews in Israel today.

Thus, this family ritual is based on the seven species of fruit and grain found in the Land of Israel and referenced in the Toah. It can be adapted for families with children in elementary school and in junior high and high school. It can be practiced for the first time to celebrate Israel’s 60th birthday and it can be repeated each year. Like most rituals, it is the most meaningful when it both connects with Jewish tradition and holds personal meaning as well. Feel free to add to, change, or adapt the following ritual so that it resonates with you and your family.

A sheet of texts and prayers for participants follows this **Leader’s Guide**.

## Sheva Minim—The Seven Species

“For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of streams, and springs and underground waters flowing out in valleys and hills; **a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey...** And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land God has given you.” (Deuteronomy 8:7-10)

כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְבִיאֲךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחְלֵי מַיִם עֵינֹת וְתַהֲמַת יְצָאִים  
בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָרִי: אֶרֶץ חֹטָה וְשַׁעֲרָה וְגִפְּוֹ וְתַאֲנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ־זַיִת שֶׁמֶן וְדָבָשׁ:  
... וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשִׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ:

*Ki Adonai Elohecha m'vi'abcha el eretz tovab, eretz nachalei mayim ayanot ut'homot yotz'im babik'ah u'bahar.*

**Eretz chitab us'orab v'gefen u't'enah v'rimon, eretz zait shemen u'd'vash.** *V'achalta v'savata u'veirachta et Adonai Elohecha al ha'aretz hatovab asher natan-lach.*

### INTRODUCTION:

It is sometimes hard to feel close to Israel when it is so far away. One of the ways in which we can bring it closer is by eating food, and specifically *the* food, also known as the *sheva minim* (seven species), of the Land of Israel.

On *Chag Ha'Atzma'ut*, like *Shabbat* or any other Jewish festival, families may have a *se'udab*, a festive meal. Just like the focus of the *Shabbat* meal is the blessing over wine and challah, the focus of our *se'udab* is on the *sheva minim* or seven fruits of the Land of Israel.

### Setting:

Gather your family together for a *se'udab*. In the center of the table, make a plate with *sheva minim* referred to in the biblical text.

- Wheat: *Chita* (whole grains, available in markets, or bread)
- Barley: *Sora* (whole grains, available in markets, or bread)
- Grapes, Grapejuice or wine: *Gefen* (vine)
- Fig: *T'enah*
- Pomegranate: *Rimon*
- Olives and olive oil: *Shemen Zayit* (olive oil)
- Dates (In the Torah, dates are synonymous with date honey, but dates will do for our purposes):  
*D'vash* (honey)

Set out “place mats” in the form of blank pieces of paper that can be marked up by crayons /markers or other drawing implements.

### Elements of the Ritual:

- **Set the context.** Tell your family that they will taste food from the Land of Israel. In order to conjure up an image of what Israel looks like, ask family members to draw their vision of an Israeli landscape (it could be deserts, cities, a piece of land with a Jewish star or an Israeli flag.) This will help your family think about the context for the *sheva minim* they are about to enjoy. Or, you might display pictures of Israel and Israeli life from a past trip or from books/Internet sources.

- **Identify what's on the table.** Ask your family to identify the *sheva minim* (seven species) on the table.
  - Which ones are familiar to them? Can they name them?
  - Which ones have they never seen before?
  - Is there anything funny or peculiar about each or any of them?
  - Which ones are used for other Jewish holidays or *Shabbat* festivals? (see information below)
  - What do they all have in common? (see information below)
- **Pass around the *sheva minim* plate.** Ask everyone to take one or two of the *sheva minim* (adjust based on the size of your family) and have each place his or her item on the “picture place mat.”
- **Share some history.** Share with your family the different meanings associated with the *sheva minim*. You can touch on the following points:
  - **First mentioned in the Bible.** The *sheva minim* are first mentioned in the Bible in the Book of Deuteronomy (cited above), when the Jewish people are being prepared to settle in the Land of Israel.
  - **One thing the *sheva minim* have in common** is that they all come directly from plants. (*D'vash* is also bee honey, but because that kind of honey is manufactured by insects, the Rabbis understood *d'vash* to mean date honey, which comes directly from a date plant.)
  - **The *sheva minim* flower and blossom in Israel during the period between Passover and *Shavu'ot*** (which is when *Chag Ha'Atzma'ut* occurs). These fruits and trees are blooming right now!
  - **The *Sheva minim* are very sensitive to heat and cold.** Just the right balance of the warm winds from the south help the flowers of the olives, grapes, dates, and pomegranates become pollinated, and cold winds from the north harden the grain kernels of the wheat and barley to enable these crops to grow.
  - **According to tradition, *Sheva minim* are dependent on God.** The Rabbis in the Talmud (the Oral tradition) were very aware how precarious the growth of the *sheva minim* plants were and they understood how dependent Jews were on God's ability to enable each wind to come at the right time.
  - **Rhythm of our holiday cycle.** Today, both in Israel and in North America, we use these *sheva minim* in the rhythm of our family's *Shabbat* and holiday life:
    - Wheat/Barley: On *Shabbat* and holidays to make challah
    - Grapes: On *Shabbat* and holidays in wine or grape juice
    - Figs: On *Tu Bi'Sh'vat* if we have a 'tu bi'Sh'vat seder'
    - Pomegranates: On *Rosh HaShana* because pomegranates have 613 seeds, which is equivalent to the number of commandments in the Torah
    - Olive oil: On *Chanukah* to light the candles of the menorah (many families use wax candles) and to fry latkes
    - Date honey: On Passover, many *Mizrachi* families make their *charoset* with dates and date honey (as well as figs) instead of apples, and on *Rosh Hashana* we use the honey with apples.
- **Read the verses in Deuteronomy** that first mention these seven fruits (Deuteronomy 8:7-10 listed above). When you reach each of the *sheva minim*, pause so that the family member who has that fruit can lift it up and show the whole family. (If your family knows Hebrew, read each of the *sheva minim* in Hebrew and have your kids repeat back after you.)

- **Recite the blessing over fruit.** Usually when we make a blessing over food, we have two things in mind—the source from where the food comes and the food itself. *This time*, when we make a blessing we should have in mind:
  - The source from where the food comes,
  - The food itself, *and*
  - Our connection to the entire Land and State of Israel. (Everyone can look at the pictures that everyone in the family has drawn or that are displayed.)
- **Recite the blessing over each fruit.** Depending on which of the *sheva minim* you will eat (see below for details), it is customary to:
  - say the appropriate blessing over the particular one of the *sheva minim*
  - and *then* eat it.

For fruit (pomegranates, dates, figs, olives, grapes):

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

*Baruch atab Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri ha'etz*

Praised are You, *Adonai*, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

For wine or grape juice (instead of grapes):

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

*Baruch atab Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri ha'gafen*

Praised are You, *Adonai*, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

For bread made of wheat or barley (if you are using this instead of wheat or barley):

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

*Baruch atab Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz*

Praised are You, *Adonai*, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

- **Ask for reactions.** What does the fruit taste like? What does it remind you of? Would you like to eat it again on a regular basis, or only on special occasions?
- **Broaden the discussion.** If your family is interested in broadening the discussion about eating, blessing and the land of Israel, ask them the following questions (*This is ideal for an older kids*):
  - Where does food come from?
  - Look at the verses in Deuteronomy (8:7-10). What do these verses say about the relationship between

food and God? Do you agree? Is this a universal relationship or one that only applies to Israel?

- The phrase “And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless the Lord” (or in transliteration “v’achalta v’savata u’veirachta”) forms the basis for *Birchat haMazon* (the Blessing after Meals).

The biblical passage goes on to say “Take care not to forget the Lord your God by not observing God’s commandments...lest you eat and be satisfied, and you build good houses and settle [in the Land of Israel] ...and your heart will become haughty and you will forget the Lord your God.”

(Deuteronomy 8:11-14)

- According to the rest of the passage, why is it important to make a blessing over food?
- Does this verse apply equally to Jews who live in Israel and to those who live outside of it? Why or why not?
- Each time we say a blessing after a meal, what would it mean to think about both the issues in Israel today and the original biblical context from which arose the commandment to say a blessing after eating? How are they connected?
- Have you ever been to Israel before? If so, what kinds of food did you eat there?
- What is typical Israeli food? Because you can get Israeli food anywhere (*chummus* is sold in most supermarkets in the United States), do you think that food would taste different if you were to eat it in a town in Israel as opposed to in your hometown? If yes, what do you think makes it taste different?

### **If you have younger kids:**

- Have them make a mnemonic with the first letter of each of the *sheva minim* so that they can remember them.

### **Continuing the *Se’udah*:**

Continue your *se’udah* by having a meal with other Middle Eastern foods like

- Israeli salad (tomatoes, cucumber and onions chopped very small)
- Pita bread with olive oil and zatar (or paprika)
- Baba ganoush (eggplant salad)
- Chummus (ground chickpea paste)
- Grilled (or broiled) chicken or lamb kabobs with couscous and pine nuts

Some suggested CDs of Israeli music as background to your dinner:

1. *The Best of Israel* (2 CD set) available at [www.israzon.com](http://www.israzon.com). This website also has CDs from current Israeli artists like David Broza, Achinoam Nini (Noa), and Idan Reichal.
2. *Ruach 5765: new Jewish tunes ISRAEL* available from URJ Press Transcontinental Music at [www.URJBooksandMusic.com](http://www.URJBooksandMusic.com).

## At the end of the meal:

**Final blessing.** After learning that the first mention of grace after meals comes in the same verse that lists the *sheva minim*, take a moment to say a blessing at the end of your *se'udab*.

There are two options:

- A go-round where everyone shares a blessing or a statement of gratitude about the meal they shared together.
- Say (or sing) the prayer below from the *Birkat haMazon*—Blessing after Meals

וְעַל הַכֹּל, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ, כִּכְתוּב, וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ, וּבֵרַכְתָּ  
אֶת יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, עַל הָאָרֶץ  
וְעַל הַמְּזוֹן.

*V'al ha'kol, Adonai Eloheinu, anachnu modim lach. Ka'katuv: V'achalta v'savata u'veirachta et Adonai Elohecha al ha'aretz hatovah asher natan lach. Baruch atab Adonai, al ha'aretz v'al hamazon*

For everything, *Adonai*, our God, we gratefully acknowledge You. As it is written (in Torah): And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land God has given you. Praised are You, *Adonai*, for the land and its food.

After a delicious meal, you can look forward to a year in which eating together as a family, making blessings, and creating connections to the Land and State of Israel continue to thrive.

We end our ritual with a Prayer for the State of Israel and with its anthem Ha'Tikvah

## Prayer for the State of Israel

אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ, בְּרַךְ אֶת־מְדִינַת  
יִשְׂרָאֵל, רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ. הִגֵּן עָלֶיךָ בְּאַבְרַת חֶסֶדְךָ,  
וּפְרַשׂ עָלֶיךָ סֶפֶת שְׁלוֹמְךָ, וּשְׁלַח אֹרֶךְ וְאַמְתָּךְ לְרֵאשִׁיָּה,  
שְׂרִיָּה וְיֹעֲצִיָּה, וְתִקְנֵם בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. חִזַּק אֶת־יָדֶי  
מִגְּנֵי אֶרֶץ קִדְשֵׁנוּ, וְהִנְחִילֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְשׁוּעָה, וְעֲטַרְתַּן נֶצְחֹן  
תְּעַטְרֵם. וְנָתַתְּ שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם לְיוֹשְׁבֵיהָ, וְנֹאמֵר  
אָמֵן.

*Avinu she'bashamayim, tzur Yisrael v'go'alo, bareich et Medinat Yisrael, reishit tz'michat g'ulateinu. Hageim aleiha be'vrat chasdecha, ufros aleiha sukkat sh'lomecha, u'sblach orkha va'amitcha l'rosheiba, sareiba v'yo'atzeiba, v'takneim be'itza tova milfanecha. Chazeik et y'dei mginei eretz kodsheinu, v'hanchileim Eloheinu y'shu'a, va'ateret nitzachon t'atreim. V'natata shalom ba'aretz v'simchat olam l'yosheveiba, v'nomar amen.*

O heavenly One, Rock of Israel and its Redeemer, bless the State of Israel, the beginning of the flowering of our redemption. Shield it beneath the wings of Your compassion, spread over it a *sukkah* of Your peace, and send Your light and Your truth to its leaders, officials, and advisers, helping them with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of the defenders of our Holy Land; deliver them and crown their efforts with triumph. Grant peace to the Land and everlasting joy to its inhabitants. And let us say, Amen.

## Ha'Tikvah

## התקווה

*Kol od baleivav penimah*

*Nefesh Yebudi homiyah*

*Ulfa'atei mizrach kadimah*

*Ayin l'Tzion tzofi'ab*

*Od lo avdah tikvateinu*

*Ha'tikvah bat sbnote alpayim*

*Lbiyot am chofshi b'artzeinu*

*Eretz Zion vi'Rushalyim*

כָּל עוֹד בְּלִבְבּ פְּנִימָה  
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמִיָּה  
וּלְפָאֵתֵי מִזְרַח קְדִימָה  
עֵינַי לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה  
עוֹד לֹא אֲבָדָה תִּקְוַתֵּנוּ  
הַתִּקְוָה בֵּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים  
לִהְיוֹת עִם חֲפְשֵׁי בְּאַרְצֵנוּ  
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם

As long as deep within the heart the Jewish soul still murmurs, and to the edges of the East, onward, the eye searches toward Zion, our hope is not lost. The Hope—two thousand years old—to be a free people in our own land: The Land of Zion and Jerusalem.

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This home ritual was created for the Israel at 60 program by **Dasee Berkowitz**. She is a Jewish educational consultant and founder of JLife Consulting, a service that works with Jews from all walks of life to develop meaningful Jewish life-cycle events. Dasee is based in New York City.

### Sources:

Hareuveni, Nogah. *Nature in Our Biblical Heritage*. Kiryat Ono, Israel: Neot Kedumim, Ltd., 1980.

ISRAEL AT 60 FAMILY HOME RITUAL  
SHEVA MINIM—THE SEVEN SPECIES

Text and Prayer Sheet

Opening Text:

“For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of streams, or springs and underground waters flowing out in valleys and hills; **a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey...**And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land God has given you” (Deuteronomy 8:7-10)

כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְבִיאֲךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחְלֵי מַיִם עֵינַת וּתְהִמֵּת יִצְאִים  
בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָרִ: אֶרֶץ חֹטָה וְשַׁעֲרָה וְגִפְנֵי וּתְאֵנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ־זֵית שֶׁמֶן וְדָבָשׁ:  
... וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשִׂבַּעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ:

*Ki Adonai Elohecha m'vi'abcha el eretz tovah, eretz nachalei mayim ayanot ut'homot yotzim babik'ah u'bahar. Eretz chitab us'orah v'gefen u't'enh v'rimon, eretz zait shemen u'd'vash. V'achalta v'savata u'veirachta et Adonai Elohecha al ha'aretz hatovah asher natan-lach.*

Blessings over each fruit:

For fruit (pomegranates, dates, figs, olives, grapes):

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri ha'etz*

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

For wine or grape juice (instead of grapes):

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri ha'gafen*

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

For bread made of wheat or barley:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאֶרֶץ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz*

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

**For the prayer of blessing after the meal:**

וְעַל הַכֹּל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ, כִּכְתוּב, וְאַכְלֵתָּ וְשִׂבַּעְתָּ, וּבִרְכָתָּ  
אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, עַל הָאָרֶץ  
וְעַל הַמְּזוֹן.

*V'al ha'kol, Adonai Eloheinu, anachnu modim lach. Ka'katuv: V'achalta v'savata u'veirachta et Adonai Elohecha al  
ha'aretz hatovab asher natan lach. Baruch atab Adonai, al ha'aretz v'al bamazon*

For everything, *Adonai*, our God, we gratefully acknowledge You. As it is written (in Torah): And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land God has given you. Praised are You, *Adonai*, for the land and its food.

**Prayer for the State of Israel:**

אֲבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ, בָּרַךְ אֶת־מְדִינַת  
יִשְׂרָאֵל, רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלַּתֵּנוּ. הֲגֵן עָלֶיהָ בְּאַבְרַת חֶסֶדְךָ,  
וּפְרֹשׁ עָלֶיהָ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמְךָ, וְשַׁלַּח אֹרֶךְ וְאַמְתָּךְ לְרֵאשִׁיָּהּ,  
שְׂרִיָּה וְיוֹעֲצִיָּהּ, וְתִקְנֶם בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. חִזַּק אֶת־יָדֶי  
מְגַנֵּי אֶרֶץ קְדֻשָּׁנוּ, וְהִנְחִילֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְשׁוּעָה, וְעֲטַרְתָּ נֶצְחוֹן  
תְּעַטְרֵם. וְנִתַּתְּ שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם לְיוֹשְׁבֵיהָ, וְנֹאמַר  
אָמֵן.

*Avinu she'bashamayim, tzur Yisrael v'go'alo, bareich et Medinat Yisrael, reishit tz'michat g'ulateinu. Hagein aleiha b'evrat  
chasdecha, ufros aleiha sukkat sh'lomecha, u'shlach orkha va'amitcha l'rosheiba, sareiba v'yo'atzeiba, v'takneim beitzta tova  
milfanecha. Chazeik et y'dei miginei eretz kodsbeinu, v'hanchileim Eloheinu y'shu'a, va'ateret nitzachon t'atreim. V'natata  
shalom ba'aretz v'simchat olam l'yosheiba, v'nomar amen.*

Oh heavenly One, Rock of Israel and its Redeemer, bless the State of Israel, the beginning of the flowering of our redemption. Shield it beneath the wings of Your compassion, spread over it a *sukkah* of Your peace, and send Your light and Your truth to its leaders, officials, and advisers, helping them with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of the defenders of our Holy Land; deliver them and crown their efforts with triumph. Grant peace to the Land and everlasting joy to its inhabitants. And let us say, Amen

## Ha'Tikvah

## התקווה

*Kol od baleivav penimah*

*Nefesh Yebudi homiyah*

*Ulfa'atei mizrach kadimah*

*Ayin l'Tzion tzofi'ah*

*Od lo avdab tikvateinu*

*Ha'tikvah bat sbnote alpayim*

*Lbiyot am chofshi b'artzeinu*

*Eretz Tzion vi'Rushalyim*

כָּל עוֹד בְּלִבָּב פְּנִימָה

נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמִיָּה

וּלְפָאֵתֵי מִזְרַח קְדִימָה

עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה

עוֹד לֹא אָבְדָה תִּקְוַתֵּנוּ

הַתִּקְוָה בַּת שְׁנוֹת אַלְפִים

לְהִיּוֹת עִם חֹפְשֵׁי בְּאֶרְצֵנוּ

אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם

As long as deep within the heart the Jewish soul still murmurs, and to the edges of the East, onward, the eye searches toward Zion, our hope is not lost. The Hope—two thousand years old—to be a free people in our own land: The Land of Zion and Jerusalem.

# AVODAH—Opportunities to Connect Worship and Israel

## 5. MUSICAL RESOURCES FOR YOM HA'ATZMA'UT WORSHIP

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Another worship/celebration alternative is to use the *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* observance as published in *Miskan T'filah* (pp 538-553). If you would like to augment this service with music, here are resources available from Transcontinental Music Publishing ([www.URJBooksandMusic.com](http://www.URJBooksandMusic.com)).

Page 538: Psalm 122 (Samachti B'omrim Li) Charles Osborne #991488—SATB Choir with keyboard accompaniment (\$2.00)

Page 539: Im Tirtzu—(Debbie Friedman) *Complete Shireinu* p.107

Page 541: Yerushalayim Shel Zahav/Jerusalem of Gold—(Naomi Shemer) *Complete Shireinu* p. 229

Page 542: Ma Navu—(Joseph Spivak) *Complete Shireinu* p.143

Page 545: Pitchu Li—(Shlomo Carlebach) *Complete Shireinu* p.166

Page 546: Ki Mitzion—(N. Shachar) *Complete Shireinu* p.314

Page 546: Bashanah Habaah—(Nurit Hirsh/Ehud Manor) *Complete Shireinu* p.30

Page 549: Lu Y'hi—(Naomi Shemer) *Complete Shireinu* p.140

Page 551: Al Kol Eleh # 991450 (Medley of Shir L'Shalom and Al Kol Eleh) arr. Josh Jacobson—Solo/SATB with keyboard accompaniment (\$2.25) or *Complete Shireinu* p. 5

Page 552: T'filah (L'Shlom Hamedinah) David Burger —#992018—SATB Choir with keyboard accompaniment (\$2.50)

Hatikvah #993317 Solo/Unison Choir with keyboard accompaniment (Hebrew and English) (\$2.50) or *Shireinu* p. 80

Additional Israel-themed musical resources are available in the *Our Israel: A Reform Response* booklet, page 11, also available online at [www.arza.org/programs/zionism](http://www.arza.org/programs/zionism).

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*Note to Cantors:* A newly created, annotated spreadsheet of over 60 available Israel-related choral music pieces is posted on the ARZA website at [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030) as part of the downloadable Israel at 60 Weekend Materials. This listing includes the piece by Andrea Jill Higgins, newly commissioned by the American Conference of Cantors and ARZA in honor of Israel's 60th *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* and premiered at Biennial 2007.

# GEMILUT CHASADIM— Israel and the Social Action Agenda

## 1. A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP: WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

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### INTRODUCTION

Jews often speak about the importance of “loving Israel.” But this notion is widely misunderstood. As we are all well aware from our personal lives, “love” is not the same as “automatic approval of everything you are and do.” Love means caring unconditionally for someone or something, even when we are upset or troubled by what the beloved is or does. It’s that way with our spouses, our parents, and our children. It should be that way with Israel, too.

We present below a series of provocative questions that are often raised when Israel is the topic of discussion. They may make us feel a little uncomfortable. But we must remember that *asking the questions* does not mean *not loving Israel*. On the contrary, it is precisely because we love Israel deeply that we care enough to ask, and wrestle with, these questions.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

The questions below could be used to guide a facilitated group discussion or as a focus for a text study session, as described below. Possible venues for this conversation or study include:

- As part of a social program or *oneg Shabbat* sponsored by the Israel/ARZA Committee
- As a Social Action Committee or Israel/ARZA Committee study session to help members focus on goals and projects for the congregation
- As part of a Parents Parallel Education program for a religious school Israel curriculum
- As a pre-trip session before a congregational Israel trip
- As part, or in lieu of weekly Torah study for *Yom Ha’Atzma’ut* or of the portions mentioned in the questions

Here are two ideas for interesting ways to deepen the discussion:

1. **Text Study** Divide the entire group into small groups (three to five people each). Give each group one or more questions, and enough *Chumashim* (Torahs) or *Tanachim* (Bibles) for each participant. Instruct the groups to discuss their question(s) by referring to the biblical texts included in the questions. It may be useful to have each group facilitated by a teacher who can provide background and guide participants to other relevant texts that they may remember but may not be able to find quickly.
2. **Listening Exercise** Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair the questions. Ask one member of each pair (Person A) to make his/her argument regarding the question. Person B must then explain what Person A’s position is (“So what you mean is...”). Only when Person A is satisfied that Person B has fully understood his/her position (“Yes, now you’ve got it...”) can Person B give her/his position. Then Person A must restate Person B’s position before the conversation can proceed. This is an exercise in listening carefully to the other person’s position. In an argument, we are often so determined to state our own case that we don’t really listen carefully to the other person’s views. This exercise prevents that pitfall.

## THE QUESTIONS

1. “Rejoice”
  - a. We who experienced the declaration of Israel’s independence in 1948, or lived through Israel’s early years up through 1967, have a deep, emotional connection to the Land and the Jewish State, and that exhilaration and hope permeate our relationship. Today’s younger generations have only experienced Israel after the 1982 Lebanon War and in the throes of *Intifadas* and occupation. How can this younger generation react with rejoicing when they only see Israel in its complex internal and external power struggles? How do we bridge the gap for them between current reality and potential? How do we communicate our deep love and commitment to Israel to the next generation? [Relevant Torah texts: Numbers 14:6-9 (Joshua and Caleb try to persuade the people about the goodness of the Land after the scouts’ negative report) and Deuteronomy 8:7-18 (God reminds us of the potential bounty of the Land and our obligation not to forget who gave it and who gave us the power to keep it good.)]
  - b. We are constantly praying and hoping for peace in Israel. Yet the only time Jews come together in large numbers and express strong feelings of support and love for Israel is when the country is attacked. How might we reshape our Diaspora relationship with Israel such that a lasting peace in the Middle East would redound to our benefit as well as that of Israel? Can we imagine American Jewish unity and energy being enhanced by such a messianic turn of events? [Relevant Text: Psalm 122:6-8 “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; those who love you will be serene. May there be peace within your walls, serenity within your palaces. For the sake of my brothers, sisters, and friends, I shall speak of peace within you.”]
2. “Reflect”
  - a. In Israel, people debate and argue all the time about Israeli policies, Israeli values, and every imaginable aspect of Israeli life. Every Tel Aviv café is filled with such spirited debates. But shouldn’t we, in the Diaspora, refrain from criticizing Israel? After all, we don’t live there! Also, isn’t criticizing Israel in the Diaspora like airing your dirty laundry in public, that is to say, a very bad idea? [Relevant Torah texts: Exodus 32:9-14 (Moses asks God to think about what the Egyptians might think if God wiped out the Israelites after the Golden Calf incident) and Numbers 13:1-14:10 (We see the results of the scouts’ airing their doubts and fears in public)]
  - b. The establishment and existence of the State of Israel has been referred to as the Jewish “return into history.” But how can I feel a part of the returnees when the State doesn’t accept my rabbi as a rabbi; doesn’t accept my sister-in-law, who is a Jew-by-choice, as a Jew; and doesn’t accept my children, who are Jewish by patrilineal descent, as full-fledged Jews? What can I, living here, do to change that situation? [Relevant Texts: Deuteronomy 29:9-14 (start of *Parashat Nitzavim*); and Ruth 1:14-17 (and perhaps 1-17)]
3. “Renew”
  - a. The clearly articulated goal of Zionism since its birth in the late 19th century has been to get Jews to move to and live in the Land of Israel. However, has the definition and/or goal of Zionism (and *aliyah*) evolved over the last sixty years since Israel’s independence? Can a person still call him/herself a Zionist if he/she chooses to live in the Diaspora? How? [Relevant Torah text: Numbers, chapter 32 The tribes of Gad, Reuven, and half of Manasseh decide to stay on the east side of the Jordan rather than settle in the Land.]
  - b. My Jewish life revolves around my synagogue, social action, Torah study, and worship, essentially free from official government interference. How can I connect to Israel, whose Jewish life seems so different, so “secular,” and where, though its fundamental principles call for a pluralistic, democratic and Jewish State, there is still no freedom *from* religion for non-Orthodox Jews? Are we, in fact, really so different, and what can I do here to help change the situation?

# GEMILUT CHASADIM— Israel and the Social Action Agenda

## 2. KEREN B'KAVOD PROJECT

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### INTRODUCTION

Over the past 60 years, Israel has advanced in many areas of life, including in the area of economic development. Case in point: Israel has one of the most robust economies in the West, with its economic growth outstripping almost every other country in 2007. However, there is also a growing gap between those who benefit from the growing economy and the hundreds of thousands of individuals and families that are seeing their personal economic picture grow bleaker by the day. Our Movement in Israel is responding to this challenge through the exceptional work of **Keren B'Kavod**, a project of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC). The Israel Religious Action Center, founded in 1987, is the public and legal advocacy arm of the Reform Movement in Israel.

**Keren B'Kavod** works on a year-round basis providing hundreds of food packages and both social and cultural opportunities to needy Israelis in all sectors of Israeli society in order to:

- provide humanitarian aid to needy populations in Israel in a way that will also empower them to create social change,
- raise public awareness of social problems in Israel,
- offer opportunities to members and friends of the Reform Movement in Israel to improve the situation, and
- educate about our Jewish values to the tens of thousands of Israelis who are guests at life-cycle events each year at Israeli Reform synagogues.

The **Keren B'Kavod** initiative has already raised over \$50,000 from Reform Jews in Israel who are now making *tzedakah* an important component of their personal Jewish practice. The idea of expressing commitment to social justice through religious frameworks is a new and important phenomenon for Israelis, including many members of our congregations in Israel. The following program is designed to raise awareness in your community about the crisis, the work of **Keren B'Kavod**, and steps that can be taken to participate in this sacred work.

This program can be used as a study session

- before a congregational Social Action Committee, Religious School Board or Board of Trustees meeting (especially as part of considerations for projects for the upcoming year),
- at a NFTY conclave, or prior to a Mitzvah Day, to link our youth social action projects here with those in Israel,
- during a pre-trip planning session for a congregational mission to Israel, as preparation for a hands-on **Keren B'Kavod** project while there, or
- as part of a 7th grade mitzvah project curriculum, or general adult education text study curriculum.

## TIMELINE

Introduction	0:00-0:05
Text Study and Discussion Questions	0:05-0:25
Learning About Hunger and Poverty in Israel & <b>Keren B’Kavod</b>	0:25-0:40
Take Action	0:40-0:55
Wrap Up	0:40-0:55

## MATERIALS

Copies of the Israel at 60 **Keren B’Kavod** Text Study and Fact Sheet

Access to Internet

## IMPLEMENTATION

- *Introduction*

The program leader should introduce the topic utilizing the following key points:

  - Israel has accomplished many things in the past 60 years and is recognized throughout the world for many of its accomplishments in the areas such as medicine and biotech, communications, desert reclamation, and a host of other technological advances.
  - This has led to a strong economy; in fact, in 2007, Israel had the most robust economy of any country in the west with a growth rate of over 5%.
  - Unfortunately, Israel has also seen a significant growth in the gap between those who have and those who have not, a challenging and less desirable outcome of the process referred to by many in Israel as *americanizatia*.
  - In this program, these issues will be explored through classic Jewish texts on poverty and hunger and we will learn how the Reform Movement in Israel is engaging congregations and individual Israelis in the process of combating poverty and hunger through the **Keren b’Kavod** program of the Israel Religious Action Center.
  - We will also look at steps we can take here in North America to be partners with **Keren b’Kavod** and to be a part of the solution to this challenge facing the Jewish State.
- *Text Study*
  - The program leader can distribute the Israel at 60 **Keren B’Kavod** Text Study and Fact Sheet, and, if it is the custom of the congregation, begin with the blessing for studying Torah.
  - Prior to studying the text, the following background information to the text can be shared with the group: The *Mishnah* was the first written collection of oral legal traditions, edited in the Land of Israel about the year 200 C.E. It then formed the basis for the studies in the academies of Babylonia and the Land of Israel which were compiled in the *Gemara*. The *Talmud* is comprised of the *Mishnah* plus the *Gemara*. The following text is from the second tractate of the *Mishnah*, with commentary and explanation by the modern Israeli scholar Rabbi Pinhas Kehati.
  - After reading the text aloud and clarifying any terms or words, the program leader can raise the following questions:

1. What are differences between the *kupab* and the *tamchuy*? What can we learn from the distinctions (a) between giving food and giving money, (b) between daily and weekly distributions, and (c) between fixed contributions (to the *kupab*) and non-fixed contributions (to the *tamchuy*)?
2. What do you think of the two different explanations given by Kehati for the number of people who collect and distribute the *tamchuy*, i.e., the opinion of Rashi that it was a practical matter of needing to distribute immediately and the opinion of Rambam that it was a matter of law?
3. When the *Mishnah* says, “enough food for two meals,” it uses the Hebrew word “*se’udab*” for “meal.” A *se’udab* is a substantial meal, a “square” meal, perhaps even a feast. Who determines when an individual is eligible to receive food from the *tamchuy*? Why do you suppose the *Mishnah* uses the word *se’udab* even though it has a connotation that is far beyond subsistence-level eating?
4. What practical implications can you glean from this ancient Jewish tradition about the *kupab* and the *tamchuy*? How (if at all) does the tradition affect your sense of personal *tzedakah* obligations and practices? How might it affect our communal *tzedakah* obligations and practices, say in our synagogues?

- *Poverty in Israel and the **Keren B’Kavod***

- The group can now review the second half of the handout entitled **Fact Sheet on Poverty in Israel—A Deep Moral Challenge**
- The program leader might want to ask some of the following leading questions:

1. Which of these facts did you find the most surprising?
2. How might the text we just studied guide our response to these issues?
3. What are the responsibilities of a Jewish State and the Jews who live in that State in regard to implementing these values into daily life?
4. Are there examples from individual’s lives or projects at the congregation that respond to similar challenges in our local communities?
5. How might Reform Jews in Israel bring the values of our Movement to bear in responding to such issues?

- The program leader can now share some of the following information about **Keren b’Kavod** and the Israel Religious Action Center:
  - The Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) was established in 1987 with the goals of advancing pluralism in Israeli society and of protecting and defending the human rights of all Israeli citizens, especially those rights having to do with freedoms of conscience, faith, and religion. (for more on IRAC, visit <http://rac.org/advocacy/irac/>)
  - In recent years, the IRAC has expanded its religious justice work to include training congregations in Israel through its *Kehillat Tzedek* program to fight poverty in Israel through its **Keren B’Kavod** project.
  - **Keren B’Kavod**, which translates as “*a fund in dignity*,” is the Israeli Reform Movement’s response to the growing difficulty for many people in Israel to provide themselves with basic necessities. **Keren B’Kavod** addresses the problem of poverty through food projects, cultural education and other similar efforts. The project helps foreign workers, native Israelis, and people from all sectors and all religious backgrounds.
  - One of the elements of the **Keren B’Kavod** project that makes it different from many other projects in Israel is the fact that it uses the liberal religious values of the Reform Movement to inspire Israelis to participate through financial donations and social action work at the grassroots

level. For many Israelis who have not been exposed to these values or who understand Judaism solely as the inheritance of the Orthodox and traditional community, these core ideas are both new to them and compelling.

- *Take Action*

There are a number of ways that individuals here in North America can take action and serve as partners in the work of ***Keren B’Kavod***:

- As a group or as individuals, dollars can be raised and donated to ***Keren B’Kavod***. These donations can be gathered at the conclusion of the program, and at other fundraising events, and sent to the **World Union for Progressive Judaism, 633 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017** with a note indicating that they are for ***Keren B’Kavod***.
- Individuals can visit the ***Keren B’Kavod*** website **[www.happybirthdayisrael.com](http://www.happybirthdayisrael.com)** to learn more about the project and to make an online donation by sending an electronic birthday card, a special picture or a blessing.
- Key elements from this session can be printed in congregational bulletins or shared within the various cohorts of the community to raise awareness and to raise support for ***Keren B’Kavod***.
- Staff of the IRAC, staff and volunteers of the ***Keren B’Kavod*** project, or members of the ARZA staff can be invited to speak at the congregation to provide more information on the issues of poverty and hunger in Israel.
- Congregations can make certain that visits to Israel include an opportunity for some hands-on work with the ***Keren B’Kavod*** project

The group may want to talk about these different opportunities for action and prioritize what would make sense for the congregation in the coming year so that Israel enters its 61st birthday with less poverty and hunger.

- *Wrap up*

The wrap up is an opportunity for the program leader to reiterate the key point that while Israel has had many tremendous successes, there are still key issues facing the Jewish State, such as the growing economic disparity. It is also important of us as Reform Jews in North America to understand that our sister Movement in Israel is combating this challenge in a constructive manner inspired by our shared religious values. In addition, the program leader may want to point out a personal reaction to the issue of poverty in Israel and the importance of ***Keren B’Kavod*** and the impact on his or her own thinking about Israel, or ask for a few individuals to share their own reactions. Someone in the group might be asked to take responsibility for writing about the session for the upcoming bulletin so that more of the congregation can be brought into the partnership.

## ISRAEL AT 60

### KEREN B'KAVOD TEXT STUDY AND FACT SHEET

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TEXT: MISHNAH PE'AH 8:7

מי שיש לו מזון שתי סעדות, לא יטל מן התמחוי. מזון ארבע עשרה סעדות,  
לא יטל מן הקפה. והקפה נגבית בשנים, ומתחלקת בשלשה:

One who has enough food for two meals does not take from the *tamchuy*. [One who has] enough food for fourteen meals does not take from the *kupab*. And the *kupab* is collected by two and distributed by three.

#### COMMENTARY BY RABBI PINHAS KEHATI

During the Tannaitic period [i.e., the period of the *Mishnah*] there were two charitable institutions in every Jewish community: (1) the *kupab*, the communal charitable fund, whose officials would collect weekly from each member of the community an individually fixed contribution... From the fund, charity was distributed to the poor of the city every Shabbat eve. Each poor person was given sufficient money for seven days' food. (2) The *tamchuy* was the charity dish, from which the wandering poor were fed daily. The *tamchuy* officials collected daily from the houses all kinds of food or money, in order to supply the food for the *tamchuy*... The *tamchuy*... is collected and distributed by three because the distribution is made immediately after the collection and if the collection were to be done by two, there would be the trouble of searching for a third person in order to distribute the *tamchuy* (Talmud, Bava Batra 8b; Rashi [Rashi was an 11th century French commentator]). Rambam [i.e., Moses Maimonides, 12th century Spain, Morocco, and Egypt] explains that since the quantities of the contributions to the *tamchuy* are not fixed, but left to the donor's discretion, the collection for the *tamchuy* also involves matters of monetary jurisdiction [and therefore must be adjudicated, according to the rules of the *Mishnah*, by a court of three].

#### FACT SHEET ON POVERTY IN ISRAEL—A DEEP MORAL CHALLENGE

In the recent past, **Keren B'Kavod** donations from Israeli Reform Jews have been used to address the growing issue of poverty and hunger in the Jewish State.

- *Almost 40% of children in Israel live at or below the poverty level.*
- *750,000 retirees find themselves living below the poverty level.*
- *New immigrants, legal foreign workers, non-Jewish citizens and those on the periphery are most susceptible to poverty and hunger.*
- *Some 1,200,000 Israelis currently find themselves within the framework of the governmental welfare bureaus.*
- *The current coalition government has been unable to raise the minimum wage to \$1,000 a month.*
- *Last year's Second War in Lebanon significantly delayed the government's declared War on Poverty.*

[WWW.HAPPYBIRTHDAYISRAEL.COM](http://WWW.HAPPYBIRTHDAYISRAEL.COM)

# GEMILUT CHASADIM—

## Israel and the Social Action Agenda

### 3. REFORM ZIONISM AND ISRAEL ADVOCACY

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In the Spring 2008 issue of *Reform Judaism* magazine, ARZA published a piece at the direction of its Institute for Reform Zionism (IRZ) entitled “An Open Conversation About Reform Zionism.” Printed in the style of the Talmud, it features a central definition of “Reform Zionism” written by Rabbi Peter Knobel, and commentaries on that definition written by six other Reform Jews. We publish here a discussion guide to key points of that statement that relate to a social action advocacy agenda.

For at least 20 years, ARZA and the Reform Movement have been wrestling with questions regarding whether there is indeed a distinct concept or principle of Reform Zionism, or whether there should be. In 1992, a Reform Zionist Think Tank was established comprised of representatives from ARZA, HUC-JIR, CCAR, and the IMPJ [Israeli Movement for Progressive (Reform) Judaism] to more formally study the matter and suggest action steps. That Think Tank has developed into the Institute for Reform Zionism (IRZ).

One recurring theme in the deliberations has been the recognition that the Reform Jewish values of social justice, civil rights, peace and democracy are crucial to the healthy growth and development of the Jewish State. Such is the work of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) in Jerusalem. Promoting these values is a key component of Reform Zionism and is reflected in several sections of the current statement and commentary in *Reform Judaism* magazine. We believe that promoting these values and the objectives of Reform Zionism should also be a key component of our Israel advocacy.

The relevant sections of the statement are reprinted here, with discussion questions to guide your own “open conversation” about the meaning and role of Reform Zionism, especially as it relates to the social action agenda. Such a conversation could be the subject of an adult study session, or a study topic for a synagogue Board of Directors meeting or Social Action Committee meeting considering plans and projects for the coming year. One way to strengthen the connection between Reform Jews and Israel is to bring an Israel focus to some of our Social Action Committee efforts.

For each one of the proposed statements, what would your commentary be?

**“The rebirth of Israel is a modern miracle. It allows us as a nation to construct our own state according to the prophetic ideals of compassion and justice.”**

- One commentator found the idea of “miracle” very problematic. In what way was the rebirth of Israel a miracle? Was it any more than the result of geopolitical factors and military prowess, not unlike the story of *Chanukah* (to which secular Israelis always compare *Yom Ha’Atzma’ut*) before the ancient rabbis came up with the jar of oil story? Do both of these histories have miraculous components?
- How has the State of Israel incorporated those prophetic ideals? In what ways has it lived up to those ideals, and in what ways fallen short? Should it be the role of North American Reform Jews to affect the application of those ideals? If so, how?

**“Israel must be a democratic, pluralistic, Jewish State that wields power with justice and compassion, guarantees equal rights to all its citizens and protects the rights of minorities.”**

- How might these values come in conflict, and then what is the State supposed to do? The birthrate among Israeli Arabs is so much higher than that among Israeli Jews that some demographers predict that within as little as 10-20 years the majority of Israelis will be Arabs. Is it fundamentally impossible to maintain both the Jewish nature of the State and the democratic and pluralistic nature of the State?
- What does it mean to be a *Jewish* State? Can there still be separation of “synagogue and State?” Does it have to mean anything more than a founding or dominant culture, much like America is a Christian State/culture?

**“The people and the land of Israel are sanctified through mitzvot that lead to *tikkun ha-nefesh* (repair of the soul), *tikkun ha-am* (repair of the people), and *tikkun ha-olam* (repair of the world). Our commitment to land and people is unconditional, but we must stress the covenantal demand that Jews in Israel apply the highest moral principles of the Torah and the Prophets to contemporary life.”**

- What is meant by “commitment to the land”? Does “land” mean the State, generally, or particular geography? If it is commitment to particular geography, how can that be reconciled with our commitment to peace?
- Is this statement holding Israel to a different or higher standard than that to which we hold ourselves? What is our responsibility to help Israel meet that standard?

## **ACTION STEPS**

Despite our lingering questions and continued conversations, there is general consensus that Reform Zionism is a mission to effect social change. What can we do to carry out this mission? Here are some suggestions for future and ongoing Israel-related social action and advocacy activities for your congregation:

- Learn more about the IMPJ and IRAC, and support their social action and civil rights agendas through joint actions and financial donations through ARZA and the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ).
- Learn more about the other organizations in Israel that are active in supporting human rights, gay/lesbian rights, women’s rights, Arab-Israeli dialogue and cooperation, environmental protection, and poverty relief, as well as those supporting the security and legitimate defense of the State. (See the list of some recommended websites below.)
- Invite Israelis involved in these organization to speak to your community.
- Make targeted donations to these organizations through your Federation or the New Israel Fund.
- Put a hands-on social action component into your congregational Israel trip. Contact the Union for Reform Judaism Commission on Social Action for information, and see the section in this packet on the IRAC’s *Keren b’Kavod* program, which has a program component for visiting congregations.
- Bring a delegation from your congregation to speak with your local congressional leaders and Israeli Consulate officials in your area regarding our strong concern and support for implementing these Reform Zionist principles in Israel. These types of personal visits make a strong and important impression on both American and Israeli officials.

**SOME SUGGESTED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Abraham Fund**

[www.coexistence.com](http://www.coexistence.com)

*Funds coexistence projects in Israel*

**AIPAC**

[www.aipac.org](http://www.aipac.org)

**Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel**

[www.adalah.org](http://www.adalah.org)

**Adva Center**

[www.adva.org](http://www.adva.org)

*Think tank focusing on social & economic justice*

**Arava Institute**

[www.arava.org](http://www.arava.org)

*Institute, with Israeli and Arab professors and students, researching environmental protection and sustainability solutions for the region.*

**Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)**

<http://www.nif.org/acri>

**Bat Shalom**

[www.batshalom.org](http://www.batshalom.org)

*Feminist peace organization*

**Brit Tzeded v' Shalom/Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace**

[www.btvshalom.org](http://www.btvshalom.org)

**Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development**

<http://www.cjaed.org.il>

**Givat Haviva**

<http://www.dialogate.org.il/peace>

*Education & coexistence between Jews and Arabs*

**Haifa Women's Coalition**

<http://www.haifawomenscoalition.org.il>

**Interns for Peace**

<http://www.internsforpeace.org>

*Engages Israeli and Arab students, women and community leaders to learn about and promote human rights tolerance, democracy and peace.*

**Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel**

[www.icci.co.il](http://www.icci.co.il)

**Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information**

[www.ipcri.org](http://www.ipcri.org)

**Israel Religious Action Center**

[www.irac.org](http://www.irac.org)

**Israel Women's Network**

<http://www.iwn.org>

**Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group**

<http://www.igc.org/traubman/dg-prog.htm>

**Kav La'Oved, Workers Hotline**

[http://www.kavlaoved.org.il/index\\_en.html](http://www.kavlaoved.org.il/index_en.html)

**Neveh Shalom/Wahat al-Salaam**

[www.nswas.com/](http://www.nswas.com/)

*Jewish-Arab village*

**New Israel Fund**

[www.nif.org](http://www.nif.org)

*Funds many programs for economic empowerment, environmental protection, and civil rights issues.*

**Nisan Young Women Leaders**

<http://www.nisan.org>

*Leadership training for young Jewish and Arab girls*

**Open House**

[www.openhouse.org.il](http://www.openhouse.org.il)

*Coexistence projects between Jews and Arabs in Ramle.*

**Parents' Circle, the Association of Bereaved Families in Israel**

<http://www.parentscircle.israel.net>

*An Arab-Israeli dialogue group to promote non-violent solutions to the political issues.*

**Peace Now**

[www.peacenow.org.il](http://www.peacenow.org.il)

**(Americans for Peace Now)**

[www.peacenow.org](http://www.peacenow.org)

**Rabbis for Human Rights**

<http://www.rhr.israel.net/overview.shtml>

**Seeds of Peace**

[www.seedsofpeace.org](http://www.seedsofpeace.org)

*Summer camp for Jewish and Palestinian teenagers*

**Sikkuy, Association for the Advancement of Equal Opportunities**

<http://www.sikkuy.org.il/english/news/index.asp>

**The Israel Project**

[www.theisraelproject.org](http://www.theisraelproject.org)

You can also refer to the websites mentioned in the Israel Social Action and Cultural Fair program, and see the *Keren b'Kavod* program description and consider partnering with an IMPJ congregation in their efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty.

# GEMILUT CHASADIM— Israel and the Social Action Agenda

## 4. ISRAEL SOCIAL ACTION AND CULTURAL FAIR

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One effective way to raise Israel awareness and connection in your congregation is to tap into its Social Action concerns and energy. Part of the *mitzvah* of *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* is to partner with the IMPJ (Israel Movement for Progressive (Reform) Judaism) to work for social justice and promote social welfare projects in order to promote Reform Jewish values, Reform Zionism, within Israel. One way to do this is to hold an Israel Social Action and Cultural Fair.

If each committee and auxiliary in your congregation is engaged to sponsor one station, it is not too much of an effort for any one of them, and a wonderful way to engage the entire community. Have as many stations as you have ideas and volunteers! In addition to *mitzvah* stations described below, we recommend having Israeli food (with perhaps cooking demonstrations) and music (CD's or live). You could also reach out to the Israeli Consul General's office in your region and Jewish Agency *sh'lichim* (emissaries) in your region for information and suggestions for Israeli artists and craftsmen who could participate with their creations. These agencies may have staff who could also come to host a Question & Answer station. You could also partner with one or more congregations in your area to make it a community event.

The Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles has graciously offered its successful "Israel at 60 Tent" program during its Mitzvah Day as a model. It is adapted here, followed by several suggested Israeli organizations that could be beneficiaries of the projects and fund-raising both from the fair and from ongoing synagogue projects the fair might spawn.

### ISRAEL AT 60 CARING AND CULTURE FAIR

*The Jewish people, forced to leave their ancient country, has never abandoned, has never forsaken the Holy Land.*

—Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

#### 1. ***Make "L-O-V-E Dolls" for Israel.***

We will make yarn dolls and send them, via the IMPJ, to Ethiopian children who have recently immigrated to Israel through Operation Promise.

#### 2. ***Letter Writing Campaign.***

We will be writing letters to the Israeli Defense Forces to let them know that we support Israel.

#### 3. ***Interns For Peace Bake Sale—Don't Go Home Without Some Treats.***

Our Elementary School students are committed throughout the year to supporting Interns For Peace, a non-profit agency that engages Israeli and Arab students (as well as women and community leaders) to learn about and promote human rights, tolerance, democracy and peace. Help raise additional funds by contributing and purchasing homemade baked goods.

#### 4. ***Contribute to a "Package from Home."***

We will collect and pack NEW undergarments (t-shirts, boxer shorts, socks) for Israeli soldiers. Gently-used duffle bags are also needed. If you have a trip to Israel planned, volunteer to be a "*Mitzvah Courier*." [This was a joint project with another synagogue.]

**5. *Take an Imaginary Trip Through Israel.***

A morning trike-a-thon of family fun, sponsored by our Early Childhood Center families (for children ages 3-7). Your \$36 minimum donation will sponsor a special-needs child at Beit Issie Shapiro in Israel, which helps thousand of people each year with a wide range of disabilities.

**6. *A Greeting from a Special Friend.***

Make “Feel Good, Get Well” and “Greeting” cards for the children at the Schneider Children’s Medical Center of Israel.

**7. *Knit-a-Mitzvah – Knit Scarves for Israeli Soldiers.***

A perfect at-home project. Just ask, and we will provide yarn and simple patterns. Keep Israeli soldiers warm during the winter months.

**8. *Beit Café***

Come taste and learn about Israeli and Middle Eastern delicacies, with demonstrations and recipes. Your donation to the IMPJ *Keren b’Kavod* project will help to fight hunger and poverty in Israel.

**9. *We Will Celebrate Israel at 60 Throughout the Year.***

There will be an array of materials available about Israel at the Fair – our upcoming congregational programs, ARZA, Jewish National Fund, The AIPAC Conference, New Israel Fund, Brit Tzedek v’Shalom, Operation Promise, etc. Come and learn how you can become involved and help!

**LIST OF TIKKUN OLAM ORGANIZATIONS IN ISRAEL**

**American Friends of Beit Issie Shapiro**

[www.beitissie.org](http://www.beitissie.org)

**American Friends of ILAN, Inc. (Israel Foundation for Handicapped Children)**

108-18 Queens Blvd., Forest Hill, N.Y. 11375  
718-575-5189 (no website found)

**AMIT**

[www.amitchildren.org](http://www.amitchildren.org)

*Training and supporting troubled children*

**Friends of Israel Disabled Veterans, Inc.**

[www.fidv.org](http://www.fidv.org)

**Friends of the Israel Defense Forces**

[www.israelsoldiers.org](http://www.israelsoldiers.org)

**Interns For Peace**

[www.internsforpeace.org](http://www.internsforpeace.org)

**Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism**

[www.reform.org.il/eng](http://www.reform.org.il/eng)

[www.happybirthdayisrael.com](http://www.happybirthdayisrael.com)

**Interns Religious Action Center**

[www.irac.org/eng](http://www.irac.org/eng)

**Israel Special Kids Fund**

[www.israelspecialkids.com](http://www.israelspecialkids.com)

**Jewish Agency for Israel**

[www.jafi.org](http://www.jafi.org)

**Kav Lachayim (Chai Lifeline)**

[www.kavlachayim.co.il/Eng](http://www.kavlachayim.co.il/Eng)

*Cares for sick and disabled children and their families*

**Myriam's Dream, Inc.**

[www.myriamsdream.org](http://www.myriamsdream.org)

*Awards empowerment grants to local self-help groups*

**New Israel Fund**

[www.nif.org](http://www.nif.org)

**North American Conference of Ethiopian Jewry**

[www.nacoej.org](http://www.nacoej.org)

**Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel**

[www.schneider.org.il/Eng](http://www.schneider.org.il/Eng)

**The Koby Mandell Foundation (Camp Koby)**

[www.kobymandell.org](http://www.kobymandell.org)

*A camp for Israeli children who have lost loved ones in terrorist attacks.*

# NEXT STEPS

## RESOURCES FOR A POST-WEEKEND ISRAEL AGENDA

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### 1. MO'ADON SEFER (BOOK CLUB)

#### Reading Modern Israel: Suggestions for an Israeli Book Club Discussion

One of the most compelling ways to bring Israel into your community is to establish an Israeli book club. By reading original, translated, high-quality Israeli literature, we use Jewish texts and experiences to explore the human condition, and can get to know the various, complex narratives inherent in Israeli society and culture. Through this literature, we find new, informal ways to connect with Israel and its people, and get a closer look at societal and personal issues in Israel that speak to our Reform sensibilities and values. Here are some initial suggestions for establishing a reading group exposing you and your congregants to some of the most popular, hip, and exciting works of Israeli literature available in English today.

#### How to start a book group?

Starting a book group is easy! All you need to do is let your congregants know about a month or two in advance which book you are going to discuss. All the translated Israeli literature is available for purchase online. Choose a book to start with. One suggestion is to start with *The Bus Driver Who Wanted to Be God*, a collection of short stories that may allow the group an easy way to enter the world of Israeli literature. Then select a place (it could be in a house, a club or your synagogue) and a date and time for the group to meet. Ask each participant to purchase and read the book before the scheduled date. Before your meeting, print out the corresponding study guide mentioned below and make a copy for everyone in the group. We suggest starting with one book discussion in the autumn and one in the spring, and working up to one each quarter.

#### Available online study guides

Our partners, the Jewish Agency and its Makom Network initiative, have created study guides to accompany the eleven best-selling Israeli books listed below. They can all be downloaded from [www.makomisrael.net](http://www.makomisrael.net) under "Fiction is Real". We encourage you to use these guides to bring a group of congregants together for an interesting discussion.

- *A Tale of Love and Darkness* by Amos Oz
- *Someone to Run With* by David Grossman
- *The Blue Mountain* by Meir Shalev
- *Bethlehem Road Murder* by Batya Gur
- *A Good Place for the Night: Stories* by Savyon Liebrecht
- *The Place Will Comfort You* by Naama Goldstein
- *Adjusting Sights* by Haim Sabato
- *A Trumpet in the Wadi* by Sami Michael
- *Snapshots* by Michal Govrin
- *The Dawning of the Day* by Haim Sabato
- *The Bus Driver Who Wanted to Be God* by Etgar Keret

**Enjoy!**

## 2. MO'ADON SERET (MOVIE CLUB)

### Watching Modern Israel: Suggestions for an Israeli Movie Club

In the last 10 years, the Israeli film industry has received growing worldwide recognition and several awards nominations. Israeli movies are more similar to Independent cinema rather than to commercial American (or “Bollywood”) films, with most of them being fairly personal and reflective, inspired by Israeli perspectives on Jewish values and experiences, and often critical of Israeli society, politics, and even classical Zionist principles. Israeli movies offer another lens through which to explore the human condition and a different way to get to know the various, complex narratives inherent in Israeli society and culture—the Israel beyond the news media. In this short guide, we offer you some initial recommendations for great, modern Israeli movies to take you inside the State of Israel and its people.

In general, for any movie recommended, we are looking to explore four elements of the film-going experience:

- **Personal experience**

Please allow the emotions their space; allow people to feel the movie, before starting to analyze anything. Don't start with the questions you have prepared. Open things up with general questions about the emotional experience. Did they enjoy it? How did it make them feel? It is crucial to allow people to debrief on their emotional experience before we break the film down into its parts.

- **Getting to know Israelis**

By experiencing the story, thoughts and conflicts of the movie's characters, you can identify and/or disagree with their choices, and eventually feel like you might have known them, or perhaps have met (or might meet) people just like them on your visit to Israel.

- **The Human Condition**

What does this Israeli film have to say about values, especially those that speak to our Reform sensibilities and values? How might it teach the viewer not only about Israel, but also about him/herself and his/her world? How might this piece of Israeli culture enrich your life?

- **The Israel Connection**

How does the film shed a light on your connection to Israel? How are we the same or different? What new angles or insights into the complex Israeli reality did you see through the movie?

**Where do I purchase the movies?** There are many online stores that offer Israeli DVD's for sale. We found that the most comprehensive one is [www.israzon.com](http://www.israzon.com)

### 10 recommended Israeli Movies:

(Fuller synopses and details are available at [www.arza.org/6030](http://www.arza.org/6030).)

1. **Beaufort (2007) (Age 16 and up) 126 minutes**

Set at a military outpost in Southern Lebanon about to be evacuated, this movie shows the absurdity of daily life during wartime like few movies from any country ever have.

2. **Aviva, My Love (2006) (Age 18 and up) 115 minutes**

Aviva, a hard-working hotel cook in the small Israeli city of Tiberias, has had a lifelong dream to be a writer, but her journey to greatness affects her life and the lives of her precarious family.

3. **Someone to Run With (2006) (Age 14 and up) 110 minutes**

Based on the novel by David Grossman, the intertwined stories of two Jerusalem teenagers is a tale about growing up and finding the strength to overcome your fears, the meaning of true friendship, and best of all, finding someone to love, someone to hold, someone to run with...

4. **Little Heroes (2006) (Ages 10 and up)** 73 minutes  
Four young children, all misfits from society in one way or another, set out together on a dangerous trip to the desert to find a couple injured in an accident. The adventure allows them to learn more about themselves, each other, and the society that has rejected them.
5. **Nina's Tragedies (2003) (Age 18 and up)** 96 minutes  
The story of Nadav, a 12-year old boy in a troubled family, with love-sick fantasies for his aunt Nina, who is forced to learn much more than he expected about family, love, and adulthood.
6. **The Schwartz Dynasty (2005) (Age 16 and up)** 104 minutes  
This tragicomedy centers on the common mission of two women of different generations to find a space in their Israeli village's Jewish cemetery. The resolution of their conflicts with an inflexible, bureaucratic town council, the intolerance of recent Russian émigrés, and religious extremism is as unexpectedly delightful as it is powerfully moving.
7. **James' Journey to Jerusalem (2003) (Age 16 and up)**  
This offbeat social satire is a clever "morality tale" of the waylaid, up-ended spiritual journey of James, a young man sent by his Christian African tribe on a spiritual sojourn to Jerusalem.
8. **Walk on Water (2004) (Age 15 and up)** 95 minutes  
In this taut thriller, a hit man, Eyal, is given the mission to track down a very old ex-Nazi officer who might still be alive. In the process, he befriends the grandson, whose frankness and openness challenges Eyal's rigid, clichéd values.
9. **Yossi and Jagger (2002) (Age 16 and up)** 67 minutes  
Based on a true story, the movie portrays the love affair of two Israeli officers in a remote army base on the Israeli-Lebanese border. Without flag-waving or ideological posturing, this film tells of the difficult structure of life of young Israelis today, trying to survive in an impossible world.
10. **Noodle (2007) (Age 18 and up)** 90 minutes  
At thirty-seven, Miri, a twice-widowed, El Al flight attendant, has her well-regulated existence suddenly turned upside down by an abandoned Chinese boy, whose migrant-worker mother has been summarily deported from Israel. The film is a touching comic-drama in which two totally different human beings accompany each other on a remarkable journey to a meaningful life.

### 3. UN-PACKING IT ALL IN: PREPARING FOR YOUR ISRAEL TRIP

For thousands of years, Jews had been making pilgrimages to *Eretz Yisrael*, the Land of Israel. During this 60th anniversary year, take the opportunity to revisit the meaning of Israel travel with the following exercise to mentally prepare for a trip to *Medinat Yisrael*, the State of Israel. As you will see, the journey begins well before you check in at the airport.

#### Packing or Unpacking?

Contrary to the normal course of events regarding travel to and from somewhere far away, packing and unpacking for a trip to Israel should happen in reverse order. As a result of the different ways by which Jews experience Israel—liturgically, through news media, Israeli acquaintances, friends and/or relatives—preparation for a trip to Israel does require a different approach. Weeks and months before even one suitcase is brought out of storage, travelers should begin to **unpack** their minds. Then there will be room to pack in and fully appreciate the experiences during the visit and upon return.

#### Instructions

The following is an exercise for individuals, groups, and/or families to do before a trip to Israel. You may want to jot down some notes as you go through the scenarios. First-timers and veterans alike can benefit from the questions, discussions, and activities. Make sure to revisit your notes during your trip and a few weeks after you return!

In each “Think” section, spend 10-15 minutes thinking individually about the answers to the questions, and then share your thoughts with each other. Listed in the “Act” sections are activities that you can do as a group or on your own before, during, and after your trip to Israel.

#### **C’visah: Unpacking for Israel is about “laundry.”**

##### **Think**

In your Israel “wardrobe,” what is clean, what is dirty, what do you have to air out? When you “wear” Israel, what does it look like and how does it feel? Are you covered from head to toe in layers, or are you mostly naked, wearing only the bare minimum? How prepared are you for the climate?

##### **Act**

- Begin a travel journal and use the first few pages to write about your current relationship with Israel, your goals for the trip, and something you want to learn about Israel that you don’t currently know.
- Read up on the news in Israel, straight from the sources:
  - *Ha’Aretz*—[www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com)
  - *Jerusalem Post* - [www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com)
  - *Yediot Abaronot* - [www.ynetnews.com](http://www.ynetnews.com)
- Visit ARZA’s website for current news, events, and programs happening throughout the Reform Movement—[www.arza.org](http://www.arza.org).

## **Mazkeret: Unpacking for Israel is about souvenirs, too.**

### **Think**

The Hebrew word for souvenir is *mazkeret*, related to the word *zikaron*, memory. Have you been to Israel before? What is your strongest memory from your last trip? Along the journey of life, what memories have you collected about Israel? What trinkets and *tchatkes* have you picked up or been given? A flag pin here, a red string there...If you attach any emotional significance to your souvenirs, what are the emotions?

### **Act**

- Using a big map of Israel, find the places you have visited, and where you would like to go, or use one of these interactive maps online:
  - [www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-4981,00.html](http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-4981,00.html)
  - [www2.emap.co.il](http://www2.emap.co.il)
- Make a list of the Judaica you currently own (*sefer* plates, candle sticks, *mezuzot*, jewelry, *talitot*). How many were made in Israel, and if you can remember, tell the story of each piece's origin.
- Write in your journal about the significance of something "made in Israel." How is it different from the same thing made elsewhere? How is it the same?

## **Chazarah: Returning home, to routine, and to your daily life post-trip.**

### **Think**

What has changed since you've last been to Israel? If you have never been, can you predict what it will feel like when you are there: A national calendar based on Jewish holidays and weekends that end when the Sabbath Bride leaves—not when the shopping malls close on Sunday? How can these experiences shape your interactions with Israel when you are back at home? Furthermore, what is the *Jewish Homeland*? Is Israel a *Home* for you? What do you think it means "to return?"

### **Act**

- Your tour may include a *mifgash* (encounter) with an Israeli congregation or family. If it does not, make plans to visit an Israeli family while you are there! Write down some basic questions about daily life in Israel to ask them.
  - For a list of congregations of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, visit [www.arza.org/travel/other](http://www.arza.org/travel/other)
- Call your tour operator to ask for a night or two of home-hospitality, instead of a hotel room.
- Set up a partnership with a family or congregation for your home or community. You can trade pictures, make and receive care packages, and even have an exchange student come visit.

## **Nesiah Tovah! Have a nice trip!**

When you unpack for a trip to Israel, you are making room in the suitcase of your mind for answers to the questions above. You will bring some of those answers with you to Israel, shift them around, and certainly make room for more as you move from place to place in the country. The next time you plan a trip to Israel, remember to unpack your mind before you pack the suitcase.

For more resources on Israel travel, including ways to connect to the Reform Movement in Israel, visit [www.arza.org/travel](http://www.arza.org/travel).

#### 4. MITZVAH PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout these materials, we have suggested many organizations which provide social benefits to Israeli society and which your congregations may wish to support with *mitzvah* projects. To recap, those organizations (and their websites) can be found in the following sections:

*Gemilut Chasadim*—Israel and the Social Action Agenda

*Keren b’Kavod* Project—pages 106–110

Reform Zionism and Israel Advocacy—pages 111–114

Israel Social Action and Cultural Fair—pages 115–117

#### 5. ONGOING ISRAEL ENGAGEMENT

For a guide that gathers and encapsulates the many Israel programs and organizations that were present at Biennial and which provide opportunities to engage with Israel, see ARZA’s booklet, *The Reform Israel Experience*, available to download at [www.arza.org/programs/zionism](http://www.arza.org/programs/zionism) and from the Engagement section of the ARZA homepage, [www.arza.org](http://www.arza.org). You can also request a hard copy by calling ARZA at 212-650-4280, or by email at [arza@arza.org](mailto:arza@arza.org).



## WEEKEND FEEDBACK

### LEADER'S ASSESSMENT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I. How useful were the materials ARZA provided for the Israel at 60 Weekend?

#### Leader's Guide

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

#### Torah: Educational Engagement Materials (in general)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

Please evaluate each of the specific materials listed below:

#### *My Cousin Tamar* : Preschool Education Story Programs

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

#### *Our Israel* : Shaping Our Relationship (DVD/discussion guide)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

***Mechina* : What it Means to be 18 in Israel (DVD/discussion guide)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

**The Reform Zionist Time Tunnel: An Historical Exploration**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

**10 Hebrew Words for Israel at 60**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

**Differences and Dilemmas: Exploring Our Connections to Israel**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

***HaTishma Koli* : The Journey of Israel Through Its Music (Part One: 1940's-1950's)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

**Avodah: Opportunities to Connect Worship and Israel**

**Sermonic Ideas, Service Inserts, and *Iyunei Tefillah***

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

***Parashat Ha'Shavu'ah* Study Guide**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

**Musical Resources for Worship and Study**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

**Israel at 60 Communal Ceremony**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Not									Extremely	Did not
Useful									useful	use

**Israel at 60 Family Home Ritual**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A  
Not Extremely Did not  
Useful useful use

**Gemilut Chasadim: Israel and the Social Action Agenda**

**A Complex Relationship: Why Should We Care?**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A  
Not Extremely Did not  
Useful useful use

**Keren b’Kavod Project**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A  
Not Extremely Did not  
Useful useful use

**Reform Zionism and Israel Advocacy**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A  
Not Extremely Did not  
Useful useful use

**Israel Social Action and Cultural Fair**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A  
Not Extremely Did not  
Useful useful use

2. Did the Israel at 60 materials meet your expectations?

Yes

No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please reflect on the use of Torah, Avodah and Gemilut Chasadim as the framework for the Israel at 60 materials.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you feel the theme of Reflect, Rejoice and Renew resonated with your congregants? Did your congregants engage on these multiple levels beyond just celebrating Israel's milestone?

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5. Please share any questions, suggestions or additional comments you may have regarding the Israel at 60 materials in the space provided below.

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6. Does your congregation have an ARZA/Israel/World Jewry Committee?

Yes

No

If yes, kindly provide us with the name and email address of your Committee Chairperson:

Name of Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chairperson's email: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chairperson's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your congregation's current relationship with ARZA.

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8. How can ARZA better serve you and your congregation with regard to building lifelong connections between North American Reform Jews and Israel?

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9. Would you be interested in having your congregation participate in other ARZA-sponsored Israel-related initiatives in the future?

Yes

No

*Please return this form to:*

**Israel at 60 Feedback**

**ARZA**

633 Third Avenue

New York, NY 10017-6778

Fax: 212-650-4289



3. The materials for planning this weekend were prepared by ARZA, the Israel organization of the Reform Movement. Do you have suggestions for how ARZA can better serve you and your congregation with regard to building lifelong connections between North American Reform Jews and Israel?

Yes

No

Suggestions/Requests: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you interested in pursuing a stronger and better defined relationship between your congregation and ARZA?

Yes

No

5. Would you like to receive the ARZA e-newsletter and additional ARZA materials?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide your email address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this form to:*

**Israel at 60 Feedback**  
**ARZA**  
633 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10017-6778  
Fax: 212-650-4289

# NEXT STEPS

## A FINAL NOTE TO CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Thank you for participating in the Israel at 60 Weekend. ARZA and ARZA Canada would like to continue to provide you with the tools needed to foster lifelong connections between your congregants and Israel.

ARZA membership at the congregational level significantly strengthens our Movement's ability to make Israel an important part of Reform Jewish life and insures that our values are brought to bear on Israeli society and within the Zionist world.. Each congregation that makes ARZA a part of its community sends a powerful message to our partners in the Reform Movement in Israel and beyond that they are with Israel during times of celebration and conflict. ARZA membership opens a direct connection to Israel for families and individuals who connect to the Jewish people through their congregational involvement.

**As an ARZA congregation, you will have access to a variety of resources including:**

- **ARZA websites [www.ARZA.org](http://www.ARZA.org) and [www.arzacanada.org](http://www.arzacanada.org)**
- **ARZA national and regional staff in the U.S. and Canada**
- **Connections e-newsletter**
- **Herzl Exhibit**
- **Rabbinic Council**
- **ARZA speakers**
- **Shlichim (Israel representatives of the Jewish agency for Israel)**
- **Membership materials**
- **Holiday materials and programming guides**
- **Leadership training for Israel engagement**
- **Student membership and B'nai Mitzvah certificates**
- **ARZA/Kesher network (college student leadership initiative)**

## GETTING INVOLVED

ARZA membership is \$36 per year in both the U.S. and Canada for either an individual or a household (2 adults). We encourage you to get your congregation involved with the Membership Check-off Program. Simply include ARZA membership as a \$36 line item on your congregation dues statement. Congregants can voluntarily "check-off" to add \$36 to their dues.

## WHAT ARZA MEMBERSHIP DOLLARS SUPPORT

18% goes directly to Israel Reform Movement Projects in Israel

\$5 per member goes to Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC)

The balance supports ARZA's educational, advocacy and engagement mission in the United States and and Canada and within the international Jewish community.

## MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS FOR CONGREGATIONS

- **Automatic membership:** ARZA dues are automatically included for each congregational member.
- **Standard membership:** ARZA dues appear as a line item on the bill and the congregant can elect not to join ARZA.
- **Opt-in membership:** ARZA dues appear as a line item on the bill, but the congregant must elect to join, otherwise the line item is removed.
- **Direct membership:** A letter is included in the bill and a tear sheet permits the member to make a pledge or write a check directly to the congregation or to ARZA.
- **Student membership:** For \$5 a year per student, you can purchase student memberships in ARZA for all students within your congregation. Special ARZA B'nai Mitzvah certificates are available upon request and make perfect gifts.

## MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

Your congregation remits \$34 per member (individual or household as appropriate) and keeps \$2 for Israel programming or scholarships for Israel travel. Don't forget to have your Rabbi(s) and other congregation staff members join! Payments can be made monthly, quarterly or annually. Final payment should be received by ARZA by June 1st each year.

You need not wait until the money is collected to send ARZA an alphabetical list (including clergy and staff) with the name, mailing address, phone number and email address of each membership unit (individual or household as applicable) In the U.S., attn: Marsha Anderman, 633 Third Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, New York 10017-6778. In Canada, attn: Sandy Levy, 3845 Bathurst Street, Suite 301, Toronto, ON M3H3N2 Canada. To discuss how to develop ARZA membership within your congregation, please contact in the U.S., Elana Paru, Associate Executive Director, 212-650-4284 or eparu@ARZA.org; and in Canada, Rabbi Sharon Sobel, Executive Director, 416-630-0375 or ssobel@urj.org.

## **ONE GREAT WAY TO JOIN ISRAEL IS TO JOIN ARZA**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU AND YOUR CONGREGATION!**



**We would like to acknowledge all of our colleagues in the Movement and at the Jewish Agency whose support and valuable efforts on the Planning and Coordinating Committee helped bring this project to fruition:**

Rabbi Victor Appell

Jonny Ariel

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Aaron Bloom

Rachel Canar

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Alana Cooper

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Joan Garson

Liran Avisar Gazit

Didi Gilbert

Melissa Goldman

Rabbi Reuven Greenvald

Emily Grotta

Dotan Harpak

Rabbi Deborah Hirsch

Anat Hoffman

Laurence Jacobs

Rachel Kaplan

Iri Kassel

Rabbi Jan Katzew

Cantor Lanie Katzew

Rabbi Rich Kirschen

Anna Kislanski

Rabbi Elliott Kleinman

Jennifer Knobe

Rabbi Peter Knobel

Jerry Krautman

Carolyn Kunin

Claire Landers

Ellen Lefkowitz

Atara Levy

Shelley Lindauer

Rabbi Michael Mellen

Marlene Myerson

Rabbi David Nelson

Rabbi Bob Orkand

Elana Paru

Mark Pelavin

Hadas Rapaport

Paul Reichenbach

Shira Resnick

Loree Resnik

Jeanie Rosensaft

Rabbi Don Rossoff

Lori Sagarin

Sara Beth Samuels

Rabbi David Saperstein

Rabbi Stan Schickler

Nancy Schneider

Marla Schuchman

Roseanne Selfon

Sigal Sheldag

Cantor Yvon Shore

Rabbi Sharon Sobel

Rabbi Lennard Thal

Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman

Rabbi Eric Wittstein

Rabbi Eric Yoffie

**Thank you for your partnership!**

Rabbi Andrew Davids

ARZA, Executive Director

Rabbi Debra Goldstein

Israel at 60 Coordinator