

LJY – Netzer Choveret Summer 5774



וְרַע טוֹב, יִדְעִי, כִּאלֹהִים, וְהֵייתֶם.

‘Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’



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AN INTRODUCTION

This Choveret, written by the leaders of both LJY-Netzer members and outside experts is an invaluable educational resource to be used by our members, leaders, participants on LJY events and all those interested in LJY’s ideology.

The idea behind the choveret is not only to be a document to share and spread knowledge to better events but also to show our commitment to the Jewish Value of continued learning.

Contained in this document is a recapping of basic LJY-Netzer Ideology and information. This basic information can sometimes be overlooked when we delve into more complex issues but is necessary for us to be active and engaged members of LJY-Netzer. Much of this information was put together by Ben Leibowitz and the Machaneh Kadimah 2013 Tzevet.

Also contained in this document are articles written by a range of highly knowledgeable people throughout the Jewish Community, including various Rabbis, lay leaders and activists.

We hope that you find the Choveret as interesting and engaging as it was to put together.

This Choveret is primarily an online resource, which will be available on the LJY-Netzer website. This is both in order to save on paper and as this like the Jewish Conversation is meant to grow and evolve.

Being online it means that new articles will be added throughout the summer.

Enjoy!

ISRAEL

This chapter addresses a number of key issues surrounding Israel and LJYs approach towards it as a nation, a state and a homeland for the Jewish people.

We have started by looking more broadly at the history of Israel and Zionism, addressing historiographical controversies carefully and, where possible, impartially, before offering a more detailed look at Israel from the perspective of Progressive and Reform Zionists.

We firmly believe that this chapter offers all the information necessary to lead Israel education in an informed and confident manner.

Hopefully it will be as stimulating to read as it was to write and research such a controversial topic.

Israel – Geography and Demographics

by Amit Milo

Where is Israel?

Israel is on the south-eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders Lebanon in the north, Syria in the northeast, Jordan and the West Bank in the east, Egypt and the Gaza Strip on the southwest, and the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea to the south.



Latest Population Statistics for Israel

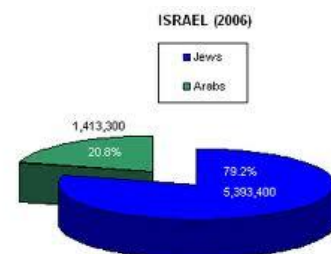
On the eve of Yom Ha'Atzmaut - Independence Day - in April 2013, Israel's population stood at 8,018,000.

The Jewish population makes up 6,042,000 (75.3%); 1,658,000 (20.7%) are Arabs; those identified as "others" make up the remainder, or 318,000 people. When the state was established, there were only 806,000 residents. Total population reached its first and second million in 1949 and 1958 respectively.

Diversified Growth

The overall population grew by approximately 138,000 people (1.8%) since Independence Day 2012 - a growth rate similar to that of the last eight years.

The Jewish population grew 1.8% (similar to past years) while the Arab population grew 2.4% (a rapid decline from the 3.4% annual growth rate in the 1990's). The Christian population grew 1.3% and the Druze population grew 1.7%.



Immigration & Naturalization

Israel welcomed 16,892 new immigrants as citizens during 2011, an increase of 1.5% from

2010. The largest immigrant nationalities were: Russia (3,678); Ethiopia (2,666); the United States (2,363); Ukraine (2,051); and, France (1,775). There were only 2.7 immigrants for every 1,000 Israeli citizens.

The Ethiopian immigration, in particular, has experienced a large increase - in 2009, only 239 Ethiopians emigrated to Israel.

4.3 million (73%) of the total Jewish population are "Sabras" - born in Israel - compared with just a 35% native-born population at Israel's independence in 1948. 38.6% of the Jewish population are Israeli-born to at least one parent who was also Israeli-born.

Those of European and American ancestry make up about 2.2 million (36%) of the Jewish population while Africans fill out another 14.5% and Asians are 11.2%.

A Young Population

Israel's population is considered young relative to the populations of other Western countries.

28% of the population was aged 0-14 while only 10.3% were older than 65 years of age. OECD average is 18.5% (0-14) and 15% (65+).

Israel's average age, however, is getting older. In 2011, the average age was 29.5 years as opposed to 27.6 in the year 2000. Average age for males is 28.4 and for women is 30.6 years old.

Life expectancy in 2011 was 80 years for men and 83.6 years for women. This life expectancy continues an upward trend of the last decade. Jewish males had a life expectancy 4.2 years higher than their Arab counterparts; while Jewish women had an expectancy 3.0 years higher. The Israeli life expectancy is higher than the OECD average.

Distribution

About 40% of Israel's total population lives in the center of the country (24% in Central region and 16.5% in Tel Aviv area). Approximately 17% of the population lives in the north and another 14% are based in the south. 12% live in both Jerusalem and Haifa regions and another 4% in the West Bank.

Just under half of the Jewish population lives in the center of the country, either Jerusalem or Tel Aviv metropolitan areas. 60% of the Arab population lives in the north.

Jerusalem and the Central region recorded an above average growth rate of 2.5% while Tel Aviv saw one of its lowest, at 0.8%.

Israel's population density increased in 2011 to 347 people per every square kilometer (not including the West Bank) as opposed to only 288 people per km² in 2000. By comparison, Slovenia (who's territory is roughly the same size as Israel's) has a population density of 102 people per km²; Belgium (slightly larger than Israel) has a density of 364 people per km².



Tel Aviv is Israel's densest region with 7,522 people per km²; Jerusalem has a density of 1,484 people per km² and Bnei Brak is Israel's densest city with 22,145 people per km².

The History of Zionism

By Rachel Shahar

The term Zionism was coined by Austrian writer and Jewish nationalist Nathan Birnbaum in the 1890s. But the idea of Zionism as a restoration of a Jewish nation goes back to the Torah.

Ancient Zionism

Zionism first appears in the Torah after Jacob and his sons have gone down to Egypt to escape a drought where they were enslaved and became a nation. The story of Passover has strong themes of returning to Canaan; back to their homeland, as a god given right. This shown by the way the Passover meal traditionally ends with the words "Next Year in Jerusalem."

Modern Zionism

Modern Zionism is a Jewish nationalist ideology created in late 19th-century Europe. Its aim was the "restoration of the Jewish state," in the words of Zionist founder Theodor Hertzl. Anti-Semitism in France and Eastern Europe, particularly the Affair in France and murderous pogroms in Russia and Poland, propelled the movement toward seeking a homeland for the Jews, ultimately in Israel. Its ideological founders included Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai (1798-1878) in Serbia, Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795-1874) in Poland and Moses Hess (1812-1875) in Germany.

Timeline of the history of Zionism 1882- 2006

1882–1903 First Aliyah to Israel.

In the 1700s, more than a century preceding the Zionist movement, relatively large numbers of Jews from Eastern Europe moved to the Land of Israel. They were basically either disciples of the Gaon of Vilna or the Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chassidism. Their motives were purely religious. They felt that the time of redemption was at hand and by populating the Holy Land they would somehow quicken the Messiah's arrival.

1894–1899 The Dreyfus Affair.

The Dreyfus affair highlighted the amount of anti-Semitism in Europe at the time. A revelation that a French officer had provided secret information to Germany led to suspicion amongst the army . Needing someone to charge for the crime, the army authorities decided upon Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the army and a Jew. He was tried in 1894, convicted and stripped of his rank. Despite proof that Dreyfus was innocent, the anti-Semitic faction in the army refused to exonerate Dreyfus. A second trial for him was held and he was again found guilty. Eventually, however the authorities relented, and in



1899, Dreyfus was returned to France and pardoned; however, he was not restored to his rank until 1906.

1897 Theodor Herzl convenes the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland.

One of Herzl's legacies was the establishment of the World Zionist Organization. Due in large part to his efforts, on August 29, 1897, the first Zionist Congress convened in Basel, Switzerland. In attendance were approximately 200 delegates from seventeen countries. The congress established itself as the World Zionist Organization and elected Herzl as president.

Subsequent Zionist Congresses were held every year thereafter until 1901, and then every other year with the exception of a hiatus during World War I. After 1945, meetings have been held approximately every four years. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, the meetings have taken place in Jerusalem.

1904–1914 Second Aliyah to Israel.

The Second Aliyah refers to the massive influx of immigrants during the years 1904-1914. Between these years approximately 35 thousand Jews arrived, mainly from Russia and Poland. Like the First Aliyah, the Second Aliyah was motivated by a combination of ideology coupled with anti-Jewish violence and pogroms. It was brought to a halt by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Unlike the immigrants of the First Aliyah, the majority of immigrants during the Second Aliyah were single young people, many with a socialist ideology coupled with a belief in the national redemption of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel. While some of the immigrants were established adults with families, who settled in the cities, the majority, being young and single, tended to find employment as laborers in the agricultural settlements.

1917 Lord Balfour writes the Balfour Declaration; Britain occupies Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration (dated 2 November 1917) was a letter from the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Baron Rothschild (Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild), a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland.

1922 League of Nations establishes British mandate in Palestine.



The British Mandate for Palestine was a legal commission for the administration of the territory that had formerly constituted the Ottoman Sanjaks of Nablus, Acre, the Southern portion of the Beirut Vilayet, and the Mutasarrifate of Jerusalem, prior to the Armistice of Mudros. The draft of the Mandate was formally confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations on 24 July 1922, amended via the 16 September

1922 Transjordan memorandum and which came into effect on 29 September 1923 following the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne. The mandate ended at midnight on 14 May 1948.

1933 Hitler and Nazi party come to power in Germany.

1935–1939 Anti-Jewish legislation enacted throughout many European countries.

1939 New White Paper severely limits Jewish immigration to Palestine.

1939–1945 Holocaust. Six million Jews die at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators.

1947 United Nations General Assembly votes in favour of the partition of Palestine.

The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine was a plan for the future government of Palestine. The Plan was described as a Plan of Partition with Economic Union which, after the termination of the British Mandate, would lead to the creation of independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem. On 29 November 1947, the General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending the adoption and implementation of the Plan as Resolution 18.

1948 May 14; Declaration of Statehood by the State of Israel.

The Israeli Declaration of Independence was made on 14 May 1948 (5 Iyar 5708), the day before the British Mandate was due to expire. David Ben-Gurion, the Executive Head of the World Zionist Organization and the chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, declared the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel.

1948 Israel's War of Independence.

The 1948 Arab–Israeli War or the First Arab–Israeli War was fought between the State of Israel and a military coalition of Arab states and Palestinian Arab forces. This war was the second stage of the 1948 Palestine war, known in Arabic as *al-Nakba* (Arabic "The Catastrophe") and in Hebrew as the *Milkhemet Ha'atzma'ut* (Hebrew: מלחמת העצמאות, "War of Independence") or *Milkhemet Hashikhrur* (Hebrew: מלחמת השחרור "War of Liberation").

1956 The Sinai campaign.

The Sinai Campaign, fought to put an end to terrorist incursions into Israel and to remove the Egyptian blockade of Eilat, marked the final transformation of the IDF into a professional army capable of large-scale operations. A battle plan for the operation was adopted in early October 1956, but was revised following Israel's secret agreement with Britain and France. Under this agreement, Israel would transfer the focus of action as close to the Suez Canal as possible.

1967 The Six-Day War.

The Six-Day War took place in June 1967. The Six-Day War was fought between June 5th and June 10th. The Israelis defended the war as a



preventative military effort to counter what the Israelis saw as an impending attack by Arab nations that surrounded Israel. The Six-Day War was initiated by General Moshe Dayan, the Israeli's Defence Minister. Rather than wait to be attacked, the Israelis launched a hugely successful military campaign against its perceived enemies. The air forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq were all but destroyed on June 5th. By June 7th, many Egyptian tanks had been destroyed in the Sinai Desert and Israeli forces reached the Suez Canal. On the same day, the whole of the west bank of the Jordan River had been cleared of Jordanian forces. The Golan Heights were captured from Syria and Israeli forces moved 30 miles into Syria itself.

1973 The Yom Kippur War.

It was a war fought by the coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria against Israel from October 6 to 25, 1973.

The war began when the coalition launched a joint surprise attack on Israeli positions in the Israeli-occupied territories on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism, which occurred that year during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Egyptian and Syrian forces crossed ceasefire lines to enter the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights respectively, which had been captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. Both the United States and the Soviet Union initiated massive resupply efforts to their respective allies during the war, and this led to a near-confrontation between the two nuclear superpowers

1979 Signing of Israel-Egypt peace agreement

The treaty was signed in Washington, D.C. on 26 March 1979, following the 1978 Camp David Accords. The Egypt-Israel treaty was signed by Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and witnessed by United States President Jimmy Carter.

1982 Lebanon War with Syria and Lebanon against Israel.

1993 August 20 The Oslo Accords

They were signed by Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

1994 October 26 Israel–Jordan peace treaty is signed by King Hussein I of Jordan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

1995 November 4 Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated.

2006 Lebanon War between Lebanon and Israel

The 2006 Lebanon War, also called the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah War and known in Lebanon as the July War and in Israel as the Second Lebanon War was a 34-day military conflict in Lebanon, northern Israel and the Golan Heights. The principal parties were Hezbollah paramilitary forces and the Israeli military. The conflict started on July 12, 2006, and continued until a United Nations-brokered ceasefire went into effect in the morning on August 14, 2006, though it formally ended on September 8, 2006 when Israel lifted its naval blockade of Lebanon.

Different Streams of Zionism

By Hannah Stephenson

It is important to note however that Zionism has never been a monolithic movement.

Quick Zionism definition - A movement for (originally) the reestablishment and (now) the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel. It was established as a political organization in 1897 under Theodor Herzl, and was later led by Chaim Weizmann

Many different Zionist organisations which had no specific ideology joined together thinking that all Jews should study together, all Jews should become united. The Jews are all one people, all Jews should move to Israel to be together. During the 1920s they vehemently objected separate schools for religious and secular Jews. However in the 1930s the General Zionism movement split along social lines into socialists and capitalists.

Herzl's- The Jewish State

- As much as we try to connect to other nations it doesn't work and so we must preserve Israel and it as our homeland.
- We shall live as free men in Israel peacefully, enriching the world and magnified by our greatness. Whatever we attempt goodness will come of it for the whole of mankind.

Labour Zionism

Labour Zionism was originally the largest of all the Zionist movements. Based mainly in Eastern Europe they argued that a revolution of the Jewish soul and society was necessary for the Jewish people to become a strong and independent people.



They were able to achieve this by moving to Israel and becoming farmers, workers, and soldiers of their own land. They created communal villages (Kibbutzim), where they were taught manual skills, the first created in 1909, many other Kibbutzim followed where newly arrived European Jews would be taught agriculture and other manual skills. Through the Histadrut they formed the leadership of the Jewish people in pre-state Palestine. Antagonistic relationship with the Orthodox in the state has caused them many problems in recent years and now, with Israel more religious and socialism less widely accepted, Labour Zionism is a marginalized movement.

Revisionist/Nationalist Zionism

Revisionist/Nationalist Zionism was founded in the 1920s by a man called Jabotinsky. Against the mainstream Labour Zionist Kibbutzniks it left the World Zionist Organisation in 1935, as the WZO refused to state that the creation of a Jewish state was an objective of Zionism, and formed the New Zionist Organisation. The revisionists advocated the formation of a Jewish Army in Palestine to force the Arab population to accept mass Jewish migration. To start with it

*The Evolution of the Israeli Right
From Jabotinsky to Begin to Netanyahu*



focused on gaining British aid for settlements but later conducted campaigns of violence against the British authorities in Palestine to drive them out and establish a Jewish state. They were territorial maximalists; they wanted Jewish sovereignty over the whole territory of Israel. They advocated the establishment of a Jewish state with a Jewish majority on both sides of the river Jordan. They rejected the 1947 UN partition plan as they didn't want a Arab and a Jewish state, just a Jewish state. Revisionism is the precursor of the Likud Party which is now the dominant part is Israeli politics.

Anti-Zionist movement summary

- Rabbi Teitelbaum opposed Israel on halachic and philosophical grounds. Drawing his views from the Talmud.
- He denounced the secular character of the state objecting to the democratic legislature as it wasn't found on halacha.
- Understood to settle in the land of Israel as a positive commandments as those who live in the country and observe Torah. However if people are sinful those who fear the world of the lord need to make him go.
- Zionist movements not based on religious ideals Rabbi Teitelbaum rejected however Rabbi Kook believes they wish to settle in Israel because of a religious Jewish spark in them planted by G-d. Therefore without their knowledge they are doing a great mitzvah.
- Violates 3 oaths
 - People would not go to Israel en masse by force.
 - Jewish people were made to promise not to rebel against the nations of the world.
 - Gentile nations not enslave Israel to harshly.
- Satmar Rav the violation of these three oaths has delayed the Messiah and holocaust is a punishment for zionism. However Teitelbaum did not reject living in Israel but it cannot be en masse or by force.



Religious Zionism

In the 1920s and 1930s Rav Kook saw great religious and traditional value in many of Zionism's ideals, while rejecting its anti-religious undertones. Zionism in the shape of the 'resettlement of the Jewish people' would bring the world harmony that would lead to the Messiah. Israel had been promised to the Jews and the right to this land for the Jews is permanent. Religious values links Israel and Judaism, if we didn't have these religious values then there would be no need for Israel – rejecting secular Zionist movements. Rabbi Kook – 'Zionism was not merely a political movement by secular Jews. It was actually a tool of G-d to promote His divine scheme and to initiate the return of the Jews to their homeland'. Israel should be a religious state governed by Jewish law.



Problems After the Formation of Israel Relationship with the Arabs – the Six Day War increased the strain on relations and highlighted the Arab-Israeli conflict. The movement for the establishment of an independent Palestine State, has continued to play a key role in the Arab-Israeli conflict and would influence Israeli politics continuously, to this day. Zionism as an organised movement – Result of early Zionist movement lead to establishment of a strong Israel, the world Zionist movement was effectively replaced by the government of Israel. The question was what would the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora be? Continuous religious vs secular conflict, the religious dream for example that of the settlers in areas such as Judea is to create a ‘Greater Israel’ with Jewish settlements wall to wall. In these settlements only Jews can reside, whereas Palestinians can only come for work. In such a state, democracy will have to bow to the rabbis. The Knesset, the government, the Supreme Court, will be allowed to continue to exist, provided that the rabbis approve of their decisions. The settlers believe that once Greater Israel becomes a religious entity and a ‘Holy Nation’, the Messiah will come and the redemption of the Jewish people will materialise. There is no place for a secular Israel in the settlers and the religious view. Whereas the secular want an Israel not under the rule of the rabbis, not even under the rule of the Messiah, rather under the rule of their own elected government. Many feel Israel will only be a free nation when the occupation and the settlements are terminated and Palestine becomes an independent next-door country.

Israel can be seen to have created a much more united Jewish people, through conflicts in Israel with Arab states have seen Jews across the world come together behind Israel. Although, continuous internal conflicts in Israel have created some split between the Jews actually living there, such as religious vs secular, Sephardi vs Ashkenazi, those who believe in a two state solution and those who feel that the whole of Israel belongs to the Jews etc...

In the past 40 years we have seen a more right-wing, often religious Zionism – originally marginalised by the left-wing secular Kibbutzniks who dominated Zionism in its early stages – come to the fore. This has been the major shift in Zionist thinking and 1967 is often identified as the turning point in this change.



Progressive Zionism

by Tom Gonski

Most of us understand Zionism as the belief in and support towards the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. Yet what do we really mean by Progressive Zionism? We can talk all day about Tikkun Olam and Liberal Judaism (or Reform Judaism in Australia where I live), the concept of Progressive Zionism seems by far the most abstract and conflicting pillar of our ideology.

So how did Netzer become Progressive Zionists? Netzer was born in Melbourne, Australia (or possibly South Africa – we still argue to this day!) in 1978 with an agglomeration of extremely Zionist progressive Jews. Somewhat ironically, progressive Judaism was historically (and arguably inherently) opposed to Zionism, which was seen as a form of heightened exclusion which would inevitably lead to further anti-Semitism. Such ideas still exist in the world of progressive Judaism. The founders of Netzer felt that a more relevant form of Zionism was required, and thus adopted Progressive Zionism.



Progressive Zionism strives to infuse liberal, modern day values such as marriage equality and gender equality into the Jewish state, whilst simultaneously maintaining a strong Jewish presence in the diaspora. For example, Netzer South Africa's 5th ideological pillar is, in fact, "South Africa" – a commitment to better the country they live in, as well as the Jewish state, through their progressive values. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the concept

of Aliyah Nimshechet (moving to Israel and continuing to live out progressive values) is seen as the highest form of Progressive Zionism. Essentially, this means that immigrating to Israel is not sufficient – you must continue to live out your ideology in the Jewish homeland and contribute to the state.



But is Progressive Zionism really Zionism? Can LJY-Netzer consider itself to be Zionist if its members publicly criticise Israel? For example, Liberal Judaism has vowed its support for marriage equality, so how can we support a nation in which men and women do not have equality either in marriage or divorce? This is just the tip of the iceberg: Israel notoriously makes itself vulnerable to criticism through sketchy political action and its claim to be a 'light unto the nations'. As Liberal Jews and Progressive Zionists, it is extremely important to remember that our criticism is directed at the present government of the State

of Israel, rather than at the nation itself – in the same way that some people love England, but hate David Cameron. More objectively, the fact that we express our opinions about Israel, a country thousands of miles away, demonstrates an inherent care towards (and perhaps responsibility for) Israel. Even when we don't like it, Israel is a state for all Jews. As Zionist youth, it is essential to be able to both criticise and defend Israel effectively. Whilst



we are frustrated at some of Israel's unreasonable laws and policies, and challenge them appropriately, we should also challenge those who hate Israel. This is of crucial importance considering the prominence of anti-Israel organisations such as the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement flourishing in Britain today. Just remember kids: discuss, don't argue.

So maybe it's OK to be a Progressive Zionist and still criticise Israel, but what if we don't even consider making Aliyah Nimshechet? It has been argued that it is not possible to be a true Zionist whilst living in the diaspora – in the same way one cannot be an animal rights activist who eats meat. However, as a youth movement we can still play a crucial role in supporting and developing change in Israel. Small things such as using Hebrew words and phrases on events, educating our chanichim about Israeli culture and issues, and even getting involved in protests (perhaps for or against Israel – make sure you are informed!) make us a Progressive Zionist movement. Israel advocate and British funny-man Neil Lazarus expresses the importance of Diaspora Jewry in terms of Israel advocacy – “Diaspora Jews are in the handy position of being in anti-Israel areas” – and goes on to explain that anti-Israel actions abroad are a huge menace to the State of Israel and the peace process. (You can check him out at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kU2u5iTQSFU> – he's a really smart dude!)

Whilst some Israelis will argue that a Zionist is simply a Jew who gives money to Israel, Zionism is actually a vast and confusing topic. Some of us may never define ourselves as a Zionist, or even as Progressive Zionists for that matter, but hopefully we can all be part of the conversation about Israel and Zionism, and help to bring our progressive Jewish values to the Jewish state.

What is Reform Zionism??

SIDE NOTE

This is an excellent piece on Progressive Zionism, however this is not to be confused with Reform Zionism.



Reform Zionism was an ideology founded in the 1970s by the World Union of Progressive Judaism who were looking to express their Zionism in a way that was unique to and applicable to their Reform Jewish values. Michael Langer (now Mika'el Livni and a resident on Kibbutz Lotan) was given the task of recruitment for the first Reform Zionist Kibbutz – Kibbutz Yahel. Initially it was extremely

successful gaining 60,000 members and with a second Kibbutz (Lotan) founded in 1982/3 but has, in reality been on a steady decline ever since.

So What is It?

Reform Zionism is a form of Cultural Zionism. That is, rather than being a form of Political Zionism (which is an aim to gain a state for the Jewish people – already a reality by the 1970s), it focuses on the spiritual rebirth of the Jewish people. Central to this is the creation of community and personal connections in a world in which community has broken down.

Reform Zionism is an amalgamation of ‘the two greatest Jewish movements of the modern era’ according to Livni:

1) Classical Reform Judaism

- From this Reform Zionism take the religious element: the rejection of halacha (Jewish law) as the ultimate and sole authority over how Jews are to live their lives. A new for type of Jewish law which was, as they saw it, less anachronistic, more flexible and more suited to the modern age, was implemented.

2) Labour Zionism

- From Labour Zionism, and in particular the Kibbutz movement, ideas of community and a pioneering spirit that the Reform Zionist movement aims to emulate are best seen.

Therefore Reform Zionism is a combination of the religious side of classical Reform Judaism and the community spirit of Labour Zionism.

<u>Judaism</u>	<u>Reform Judaism (Classical)</u>	<u>Cultural Zionism (+ Labor Zionism)</u>	<u>RZ</u>
<u>Religious</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Reform Jewish Bit</u>
<u>Social/Community</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Community Bit</u>

Implications

The most important thing to realise is that Reform Zionism is not just a way of saying ‘we believe in a Jewish state but still believe we can criticise Israel’s actions’. It is actually a whole separate, fascinating, relevant – if at times confusing – Zionist doctrine and philosophy which stretches still wider.

One can of course use Reform Zionist principles, particularly from Reform Jewish principles to argue that the State of Israel is not perfect and needs to be changed. For example the belief in freedom of religious expression would mean many Reform Zionists would be in favour of Women of the Wall, the belief in the equality of human life may mean Reform Zionists are against the occupation of the West Bank ... however Reform Zionism does not expressly argue that one should support the Jewish State but be critical of its actions. It would be hard to find a Zionist movement who does not argue this.

Rather Reform Zionism is a definitive, constructed ideology. It is something we, as direct descendants of the writers and founders of the ideology - who were, like us, young progressive Jews – have a duty to learn more about, as individuals and as a movement.

The Kibbutz Movement

By Natty Hawkings

Kibbutzim are collective communities found in Israel. They have changed somewhat over the years. Traditionally basing their economy on agriculture, many kibbutzim today focus on other industries such as high tech enterprises, military and industrial output.

The original kibbutzim were utopian communities combining the ideas

of socialism and Zionism. The first kibbutzniks hoped to

be more than farmers. They sought to create a new type

of society where all would be equal and free from exploitation. The principle of equality was taken extremely seriously up until the 1970s. Kibbutzniks did not individually own tools, or even clothing. Gifts and income received from outside were turned over to the common treasury.

In the latter half of the 20th century, privatisation became widespread across the kibbutzim becoming more apparent in the past few decades.

Despite the traditional kibbutz being in decline, the 270 kibbutzim of Israel



account for 9% of Israel's industrial output, worth US\$8 billion, and 40% of its agricultural output, worth over \$1.7 billion

The first kibbutzim were founded by members of the second aliyah. Pioneer of the kibbutz movement Joseph Baratz wrote

“We were happy enough working on the land, but we knew more and more certainly that the ways of the old settlements were not for us. This was not the way we hoped to settle the country—this old way with Jews on top and Arabs working for them; anyway, we thought that there shouldn't be employers and employed at all. There must be a better way.”

Kibbutzim were also a practical solution for the many challenges facing the new settlers: difficult land, sanitation and sabotage. Furthermore most of the settlers had no prior farming experience. Establishing a farm was resourcefully and economically intense. Collectively they could establish something lasting, while independently they did not. Furthermore the development of kibbutzim helped the land to flourish.

In **1909**, Baratz, nine other men, and two women established the first kibbutz, Kvutzat Degania. Kibbutzim grew and flourished in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1989, the kibbutz population peaked at 129,000. By 2010 the number decreased to about 100,000; the number of kibbutzim in Israel was 270.

Differences between kibbutzim

1928: Degania and other small kibbutzim formed "Hever Hakvutzot" ("association of kvutzot"). Kvutzot were limited to 200 members to maintain trust, whereas Kibbutzim affiliated with Hakibbutz Hameuhad maximised their intake. Artzi kibbutzim were also more devoted to equality of the sexes than other kibbutzim. The children slept in children's houses and visited their parents only a few hours a day.

There are now three kibbutz movements:

1. The Kibbutz Movement, which constitutes an umbrella organization of two separate movements and ideologies: the United Kibbutz Movement, founded in 1979 as a merger of two older movements: the United Kibbutz and Union of Kvutzot and Kibbutzim, and Kibbutz Artzi Hashomer Hatzair
2. Religious Kibbutz Movement Hapoel HaMizrachi,
3. Agudat Israel Workers

Many kibbutzim were initially established by Nahal groups affiliated with Israeli youth movements, among them HaNoar HaOved VeHaLomed, Hashomer Hatzair and HaMachanot HaOlim.

Today there are three types of kibbutzim:

1. **Kibbutz Shitufi** (שיתופי קיבוץ): a kibbutz which still preserves a cooperative system.
2. **Kibbutz Mitchadesh** (מתחדש קיבוץ): a community which has a number of cooperative systems in its intentions (guaranteed minimal income within the community, partnership in the ownership of the production means, partnership in the ownership of the lands, etc.).
3. **Urban kibbutz** (עירוני קיבוץ): a community which exists within an existing settlement. Since the 1970s around 100 urban kibbutzim have been founded within existing Israeli cities. They have no enterprises of their own and all of their members work in the non-kibbutz sector.



Kibbutz Artzi and Kibbutz HaMeuhad kibbutzim were secular though most mainstream kibbutzim did want their new communities to have Jewish characteristics. Tu Bishvat, the "birthday of the trees" was substantially revived by kibbutzim. The most significant festivals for kibbutzim were those with some kind of agricultural component.

The Religious Kibbutz movement emerged before the establishment of the state of Israel with the first religious kibbutz founded in 1946 – Ein Tzurim

Kibbutzim also played a role in defining the borders of the Jewish state-to-be. Kibbutzim were established in outlying areas to ensure that the land would be incorporated into the Jewish state. Kibbutzniks enjoyed a steady and gradual improvement in their standard of living in the first few decades after independence. In the 1960s, the kibbutzim standard of living improved faster than Israel's general population.

Over time kibbutzniks lost identification with the kibbutzim. This derived from personal frustrations due to internal processes, growing stratification and inequality emerging due to the growth of capitalistic practices. Work motivation was affected causing an emphasis to be placed on social compensation to encourage productivity. These processes occurred in parallel with a severe economic crisis.

1980s: peak of kibbutzim crisis. Many left their kibbutzim. This led to changes in many kibbutzim.:

Extensive privatization of the kibbutz services

"**Differential wage**" – traditionally each kibbutznik received an equal budget regardless of their job.

"**Association of properties**" - refers to the transfer of some of the properties which belong to the kibbutz to the ownership of individual kibbutz members.

There are now three kibbutz compensation models.

1) The traditional collective *kibbutz/kibbutz shitufi*: members are compensated equally, regardless of what work each does;

2) The mixed model *kibbutz/kibbutz meshulav*: each member is given a small percentage of his salary along with a basic component given equally to all kibbutz members;

3) The renewing *kibbutz/kibbutz mithadesh*: a member's income consists solely of his individual income from his work and sometimes includes income from other kibbutz sources.



A Brief History of Israel before 1948

By Ben Combe

Timeline

- Pre 9th century BCE: a series of **city states** and/or small nations occupy modern day Israel.
- Mid-9th century BCE: the nation of Israel first emerges
- 7th century BCE: Jerusalem grows to be the dominant city in the region
- 597-582 BCE: Israel is slowly conquered by **Babylon**. Babylon destroy the First Temple and most of Jerusalem. The Hebrews become more distinguished from other people, due to their persecution
- 332 BCE: Alexander the Great conquers Israel
- 174-135 BCE: The Maccabean Revolt
- 135 BCE-6 CE: Independent State of Israel
- 6 CE: Judea becomes **Roman** province
- Early 1st century CE: Jesus of Nazareth prompts the founding of Christianity.
- 66-73 CE: Jewish revolt against the Romans, first ending with the destruction of the Second Temple and then the last stand at **Masada**.
- 131 CE: Jews exiled from Israel by Hadrian. He builds a temple to Jupiter (Roman God of Gods) on the site of the Temple, Jerusalem renamed to Aelia Capitolina.



- 4th Century CE: Jerusalem's name restored, Jews still banned but may return to Israel. Plans to rebuild the Temple scrapped after Emperor Julian the Apostate dies in 363 CE.
- 661 CE: The **Byzantine** (Eastern Roman) empire loses Israel to the Persians.
- 636 CE: The **Islamic Empire** captures Israel, Jews may return to Jerusalem.
- 691 CE: The Dome of the Rock constructed in Jerusalem.
- 1096 CE: The first **Crusade** slaughters and enslaves Muslims and Jews alike.
- 1200s CE: The focus of the Crusades switches from Israel to North Africa.
- 1291 CE: The Mamluks defeat the last crusaders in Acre (Akko). The end of the



Crusades leads Jew across Europe to be persecuted.

- 1517 CE: The Mamluks lose Israel to the **Ottoman Turks**.
- 1799 CE: Napoleon Bonaparte conquers Jerusalem. He plans to create a Jewish State, but he is forced to withdraw from the region due to a combination of problems in France, diseased soldiers, and a major defeat at Acre.
- Late 1800s CE: The Kibbutz movement is founded. It is the first act of what would become known as Zionism and the First Aliyah
- 1896: Theodor Herzl begins developing **Zionism** as his answer to the growing anti-Semitism in Europe, the 'Jewish Question'.
- 1904-1914 CE: Following Herzl's teachings, 40,000 Jews moved to Israel, the **Second Aliyah**
- 1909 CE: Tel Aviv is founded under the name Ahuzat Bayit.
- Late 1917 CE: **British Troops drive the Ottoman Empire out of Israel** in World War One. They become the unofficial rulers of Israel
- 1922 CE: The British Mandate is confirmed by the League of Nations.
- 1929 CE: Riots over the Western Wall and Temple Mount cause almost 250 Deaths and over 500 injuries.
- 1933 CE: The Jewish Agency and the Nazis arrange for 50,000 Jews to be transferred to Palestine
- 1933-1939 CE: Fascist regimes across Europe cause an influx of Jews across Israel.
- 1936-1939 CE: **Palestinians revolt**. The Palestinians take Jerusalem in 1938, prompting heavy reaction from the British. Over 5000 Palestinians killed, with at most 600 British and Jewish people dying.
- 1942 CE: The 200 Days of Dread, when Rommel's German army marched across North Africa, their sights set on Israel. Their plans were stopped when they lost their support from Syria and Lebanon due to Allied military action in the region.
- 1945 CE: Large numbers of Jews begin emigrating illegally to Israel after World War 2.
- 1946 CE: Zionist forces bomb British Military HQ, killing 92 people.
- 1947 CE: The **partition plan** is set up by the United Nations.

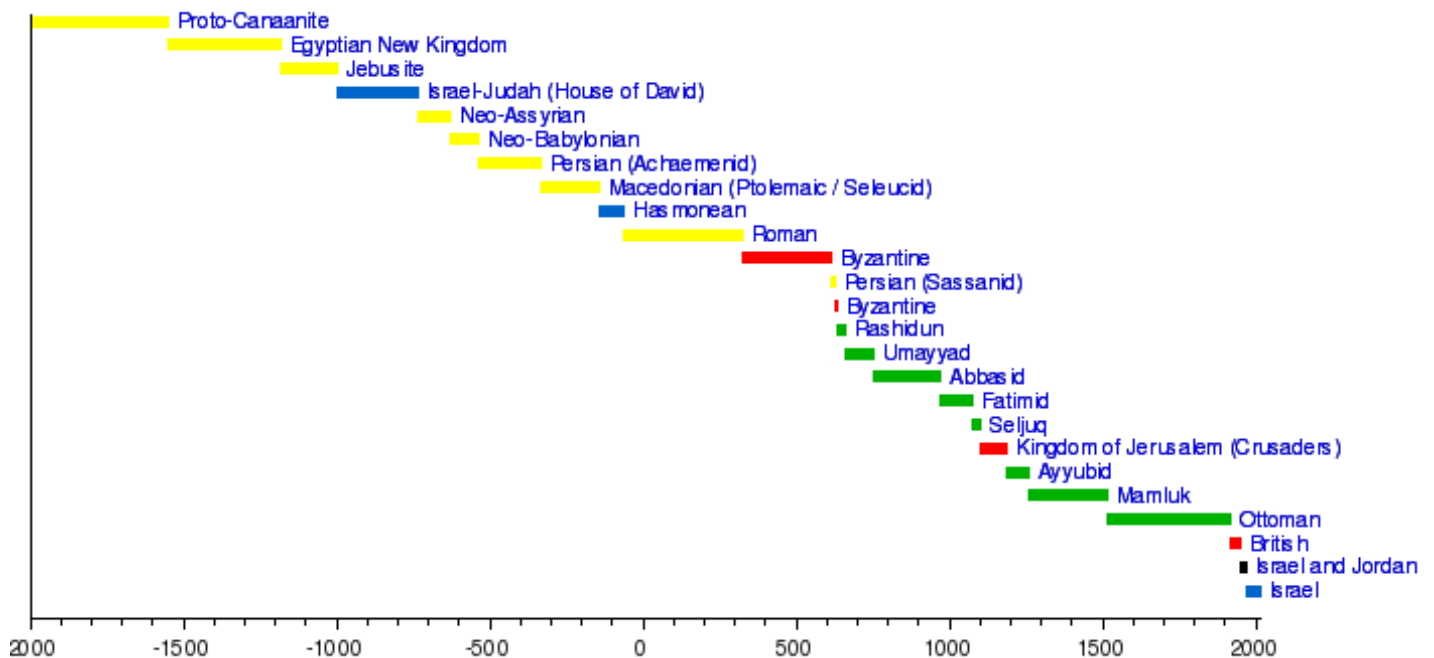


- 1947-1948 CE: The Israeli War for Independence



A note on the Timeline

Sorry if that's too much, Israel pre-1948 is a complicated issue, as proof, here's a chart of all of the ruling factions of Israel:



See what I mean?

To be honest with this period what you need to know is that the Jews were often either not accepted or exiled from the region, and yet even under pagan rule (yellow), roman rule (red) or Muslim rule (green), the Jews have maintained some presence in the region. But it is important to remember that Israel has always been one of the most multicultural regions on the planet. The religions that over this time have called Israel home include Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze and Baha'i, all due to their shared ancestor Abraham.

Israel has been treated as the cultural and spiritual hub of the western world for millennia, and as such it has changed hands many times. This meant that the people of the region were never the same faith or culture for long enough to gain power on a global scale, so Israel is both accepting and isolationist.

Israel is not always desired for its strategic benefits, however, as it is perfectly placed to be a trade bridge (or at times barrier) between the Mediterranean and Asia. Any group wishing to establish a land route to Africa must go through Israel, contributing to why so many people have conquered the region.

A Brief History of Israel After 1948

Israel's history is short yet enlivening. Whilst many historians centre its history on a series of conflicts – 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 ... - the Israeli narrative is one more complex than simply a narrative of war.

1948

When we pick the story up in 1948 it is worth noting two things.

- 1) The Jewish State has been born in Jewish blood. 1% of Jews in Israel were killed or seriously wounded during the war and a very large number of Jews in Israel had either fled concentration camps, survived them or been victims of more fortunate circumstances.

Collectively, as a Jewish people, this was a time when they had just experienced decimation and were



fighting for their lives.

- 2) The 1948 war also saw a great injustice done to the Palestinian people and 1948 is the root of the conflict for many today. Approximately 750,000 Palestinians left or were forced to leave Israel, many moving into Jordan/the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria or Egypt. This number, has grown through birth to approximately 4.5million – and they recognised by the UN as refugees. Some Zionists historians claim they were forced out by invading Arab militias, however a more likely reason is from fear of Zionist forces. For Palestinians this is known as ‘al-Nakba’ (the catastrophe) and for many there can be no piece until they are able to return to the land from which their forefathers were expelled.

Domestic Policy - The Ingathering of the Exiles



The purpose of Israel, as a safe haven and autonomous land for the Jewish people, meant the early Israelis saw it as a priority to gather as many Jews from around the world (from ‘galut’ - exile) to Israel as possible. The 1950s saw the Israel absorb approximately 1.2million Jews, doubling the Jewish

population in under a decade. The state had to struggle to accommodate so many people, many from Arab countries and many arriving with no money and no Hebrew.

This was still a time of dominance for the Kibbutz movement and the majority of the early state leaders – most notably David Ben-Gurion – were Kibbutzniks and former heads of the Histadrut (Labour Union which had led the Jews in pre-state Palestine).

By the 1960s the quality of living was rising and most Kibbutzim had swimming pools, by the late 60s televisions and cars.

Foreign Policy

1948 had been a major set-back for the Arab world, the newly created Arab League saw Zionism as the ‘last vestige of colonialism’. In 1956, in order to depose Nasser – the charismatic leader of the Arab world – the French, British and Israeli tried to force Egypt into war before being forced to retract by the Americans. This was a success for Egypt who threw off European influence in their economy. Israel were constantly wary of Egypt and in a perpetual state on ‘non-belligerent warfare’ with their neighbors.

In 1967 Arab states were ready to re-launch an attack on Israel. In effect the Six Day War saw surrounding Arab countries attack Israel and Israel, in what many historians



describe as the most impressive display of military tactics seen since the days of Napoleon, defeat the 5 surrounding countries in just Six Days – hence the name ‘The Six Day War’. Israel also took East Jerusalem (including the Western Wall) from Jordan, the area we now call the West Bank, Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. The Golan Heights has been settled on and is now de facto Israel’s and the Sinai was returned in a peace deal with Egypt for which the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat paid with his life. It is the occupation of Gaza Strip and the West Bank which is the at the crux of the current Israel-Palestine problem.

Post 1967

1977 was one of the most important years in Israel’s short history. Seeing Menachem Begin elected spelled the end of an era of Labour domination. Whereas the Labour Zionist movement had been dominant up until now, after Begin’s election the Likud Party saw power shifted to the right. A legacy Israel still lives with today. During the 1980s Israel were involved in a war with Lebanon, which saw the Israeli’s oversee the infamous Shatila Massacre and then fight against the First Intifada later in that decade.

The closest Israel has ever come to peace was under Yitzhak Rabin. Having signed the Oslo Accords and a peace treaty with Jordan, many thought he would broker peace. However he was assassinated by a religious right-wing fanatic named Yigal Amir in 1995. Israel reacted with a turn to the right, electing a Netanyahu government. Though in 2000 Barak came close to a peace deal with Arafat, in general the right have dominated the last 15 or so years. Though Netanyahu and co. opened up the Israeli economy and increased its wealth, there has been widespread dissatisfaction amongst the middle-classes who claim that the most of living is simply too high.

The Current Israeli Government

By Simon Lovick



Israel has perhaps one of the most heated political systems in the world, demonstrating a radical clash between the far right and left, reflecting the heated disputed about the territorial situation at the moment.

THE KNESSET

The Knesset (meaning ‘the gathering’ or ‘the assembly’) is the Israeli Parliament,

much like our House of Commons, where elected officials vote on all legislation, as well as choosing the President and the Prime Minister of Israel. The parliament has ‘de jure sovereignty’, meaning they can pass any legislation by a simple majority.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE KNESSET

There are currently 12 parties in the Knesset, as elected in the 2013 general election. The main party, the **Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu** coalition, has 31 out of the 120 seats: it is a coalition of two parties, the **Likud** Party (meaning ‘the Consolidation’), a centre-right party led by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and the **Yisrael Beiteinu** (meaning ‘Israel Our Home’), a far-right nationalist party led by Avigdor Lieberman, former Foreign Minister to Netanyahu. The recent election also saw the rise of the **Yesh Atid Party** (meaning ‘There is a Future’), a centre party led by a former journalist Yair Lapid, who won 19 seats in the Knesset. In third place, we have the **Israeli Labor Party**, a left-wing party with 15 seats, then **The Jewish Home Party**, another far-right nationalist/Zionist party with 12 seats, followed closely by the **Shas Party**, the Ultra-Orthodox religious party with 11 seats.

THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT

Much like in the UK at the moment, the Israeli Government is currently a coalition of several different parties, largely on account of the electoral system. The Proportional Representation system used in Israel means that the outcome of elections strongly represents the diverse opinion which exists in Israel.



The main party in the coalition, as outlined earlier, is the **Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu** party, the combination of the Netanyahu’s centre-right and Lieberman’s far-right parties. Formerly two separate parties, in 2013 they decided to run together on a single-ballot, thereby maximizing their potential support. This coalition has shown to be particularly right wing, supporting Israeli settlements in

Palestine territory, and strongly objecting to an independent Palestinian state. YB advocates a complete severing of ties with Gaza and the West Bank. They have also shown an emphasis on national pride, emphasizing the symbolic relevance of the Israeli flag, and their victory in the 1948 War of Independence.

The rise of the **Yesh Atid** party, meanwhile, has shown perhaps a dissatisfaction with the dominance of the right and centre-right parties. It was founded in 2012 by Yair Lapid, a former journalist, TV presenter, and News Anchor, who sought to try and represent the centre of Israeli society, the middle class. The ideological platforms of the party include seeking to minimize corruption, which runs rife in Israeli politics, and to seek out a Two state solution – ‘two states for two peoples’ – and an increase of religious equality, including egalitarian prayer for men and women at the Kotel.

The Jewish Home party has a smaller role in the coalition. It is a Far-Right, nationalist, Zionist party, with 12 seats in the Knesset. It emphasizes a strong Jewish-Zionist education, as well as the strengthening of the Jewish State and the protection of the IDF.

The **Hatnuah** Party completes the coalition, despite only having 6 seats in the Knesset. Hatnuah is a centre-left, liberal party, originally formed when Tzipi Livni lost the battle for leader of the Kadima party, and decided to form her own liberal party. It supports a peacemaking process with the Palestinians, but refuses to negotiate with Hamas into it 'renounces terror'. It also advocates greater secularization, with Livni being a strong advocate of the Women's Rights movement, and advocating same-sex marriage. It also encompassed the Green movement, taking on board many of their ideals into their platform.



Also, interesting to note the exclusion of all Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox parties such as **Shas** or **United Torah Judaism** from the coalition. Perhaps a result of **Yesh Atid**'s secular stance, or maybe an increasing demand to separate religion and state.

THE BIG PLAYERS

Benjamin Netanyahu – Prime minister of Israel, leader of the Likud party, and head of the Likud-Beiteinu coalition. He is also temporarily serving as the Foreign Affairs Minister.



Shimon Peres – current President of Israel, and former Prime Minister of Israel. He has served in Israeli politics for 66 years, serving in 12 cabinets, and is the oldest head of state in the world. In 1994, he won the Nobel Peace Prize joint with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat.

Avigdor Lieberman – leader of the Yisrael-Beiteinu party, and formerly Netanyahu's 'second-in-command'. He served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs until 2012, when he resigned following several charges and accusations of corruption. Lieberman's strong opposition to peace compromise has stalled governmental processes, saying 'The peace process is based on three false basic assumptions; that Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the main cause of instability in the Middle East, that the conflict is territorial and not ideological, and that the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders will end the conflict.'

Yair Lapid – head of the Yesh Atid party, former journalist and TV presenter. Currently the Minister of Finance in the coalition.

The Arab/Israeli Conflict Four Key Issues

by Jonty Leibowitz

There are, sadly, a number of conflicts between Israel and the Arab community, both Palestinian and within Israel. This is a short guide to the key conflicts:

Issue Number One: Settlements

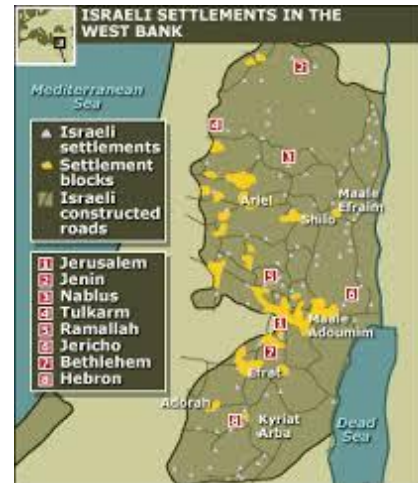
- In the wake of the Six Day War in 1967 Israel began an occupation of the West Bank, an area heavily populated with Palestinians.

- Since 1967 Israel has been building a number of settlements on the West Bank, mostly towns and homes for the large quantity of immigrants into Israel, mainly from the former Soviet Union.

- As of 2010, 534224 Jewish/Israeli settlers live beyond the Green Line established before the 1967 borders, which means 10% of Israeli's live in settler territory.

- This has prompted debate in the international community, with the majority of international opinion being that the settlements violate the Fourth Geneva Convention, mainly because the settlements are seen as an attempt by Israelis to gain the West Bank as part of a 'Greater Israel.'

- As part of his visit in March 2013, Obama called the settlements an 'obstacle' for peace.



Issue Number Two: Jerusalem

- For both the Israeli and Palestinian people, Jerusalem is central to both their national, cultural and religious identity, a place of large international tension due to its shared importance in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

- In 1948 the UN called for Jerusalem to be established as an international city, however after the War of Independence Jerusalem was divided- the old walled city became part of Jordan and the rest of the city was in Israel.



- After the war of 1967 Israel captured East Jerusalem and the old walled city, leading to the reunification of Jerusalem on 27th June 1967. This is regarded as controversial by many Palestinians, who argue that East Jerusalem will be part of the Palestinian state when it is established.

- Today Israel asserts that Jerusalem is its capital, yet countries like China and Russia have agreed at the East Jerusalem is in fact the capital of Palestine.

Issue Number Three: Right of Return

- In the wake of the 1948 Palestinian exodus roughly 710,000 Palestinians left their homes and became refugees in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Syria and Iraq.

- Many believe in the 'right of return'- the principle that the children and grandchildren of these refugees have the right to return to their homes- even though the territory is now occupied by Israel.



- On December 11th 1948 the United Nations passed resolution 194 which stated that "refugee's wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours."

- The phrasing of the resolution poses a number of questions for modern Palestinians and Israelis- can the two sides co-exist as neighbours? Were the Palestinians evicted, or did they leave of their own accord?

Issue Number Four: Arabs in Israel

- As of 2010, about 20% of the Israeli population are Arabs of Palestinian or Ottoman descent. Although most of the media scrutiny focuses on the Palestinian question, many feel that the most pressing issue in Israel today is to secure the rights of Arab citizens within Israel.

- Generally the Arab population of Israel is much worse off- of the 40 towns with highest unemployment in Israel in 2011, 36 of them were Arab towns.

- On the whole schools, health and jobs are segregated- it is very rare for Jews to live or work in Arab communities within Israel and vice versa.



Hugging and Wrestling, Critical Love, Liberal Zionism and other buzzwords - what does it actually mean to have a complicated engagement with Israel?

Robin Moss, UJIA Israel Engagement Educator

The field of Israel Engagement is currently in an exciting period of transformation. Widely seen as the poorer cousin of, or a mere sub-field within, Jewish education, Israel Engagement is now stepping out of the shadows and taking itself (and being taken) seriously. In the past decade or so, a whole literature of research articles, books, blog posts, curricula, educational resources and even entire conferences have been devoted to trying to understand better what it means to engage young Jews with Israel.

Recently, the most discussed and contested concept has been that of “complexity”¹. In a nutshell, the idea is meant to be that young Jews of a broadly liberal worldview (and LJY-Netzer certainly, in the main, fit into this category) can no longer hold in their heads those values and the Israel of milk and honey. Instead, we need to show an Israel that is complicated, that has flaws, that is broken in a number of ways and needs help to be fixed. Hence, the recent expansion of programming – serious, chunky, detailed education – about issues such as the Israeli army and government’s actions in the West Bank, the plight of African refugees in Southern Tel Aviv, the status of non-orthodox Judaisms in the public sphere, the attempted social marginalisation of women in parts of Israel and so on. The idea is meant to be that, if young people see Israel “warts and all”, they will connect to it as a real, living country, rather than a fantasy land that they will quickly discover bears little resemblance to reality.

Various different educational frameworks have been proposed for how to turn this vision into educational practice. In the rest of this article, I will analyse three of them, draw lessons from each for the Israel educator and then conclude with my own preferred framework that, for me at least, best answers the challenge of how to ensure Israel Engagement is complex and nuanced.

Makom, the Israel Engagement educational division of the Jewish Agency, proposed (ten years ago now) the idea of “hugging and wrestling”². With a strong echo of the Biblical story of Jacob (later called Israel) and the angel (was he hugging it? or wrestling with it?), this approach says that the key to real engagement with Israel is to *simultaneously* see the triumphs and successes of Israel *and* the flaws and struggles. And indeed, see how *both* some of those successes are under threat, *and* how some of those flaws might be rectified by inspiring Israelis. A learner who hugs and wrestles, so Makom claim, is capable of a holistic appreciation of and interaction with Israel. Much has been written about “hugging and wrestling”, but overall, whatever its enormous attractions, it seems in practice to have one major flaw. In Makom’s words, “The slogan was perceived to set up a dichotomy: either one critiques, or one praises. Where we wrote ‘and’, others heard ‘or.’”³ Essentially, it seemed to encourage those who already were more “positive” about Israel to do that more, and those who were more “negative” about Israel to do that more. To do both seemed to

¹ A good recent example was the exchange on eJewish Philanthropy set off by Alex Sinclair’s article, which can be found here: <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/the-complexity-of-complexity-in-israel-education/>

² The original 2004 article can be found here: <http://makomisrael.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/MAKOMWrestlingandHugging.pdf>

³ The rest of the 2011 article is well worth reading too. It can be found here: <http://makomisrael.org/blog/beyond-hugging-and-wrestling/>

Makom to be rare. **Lesson:** if you want to be a “hugger and wrestler”, emphasise the “and”. In any educational programme you are going to run, think: in what way(s) will the learners “hug” Israel *and* in what way(s) will the learners “wrestle” with Israel? If there are not at least one of each, change the programme. This absolutely rules out “Israel the perfect country of falafel and beaches”-type programmes, but it should *also* mean that Israel should never be presented solely as a social justice problem in need of a solution – so no more “Israel is doing terrible things in the West Bank/to refugees/to women/etc and here is how bad it is”-type programmes either. A real engagement, a hugging *and* wrestling engagement, would see contextualise Israel’s problems, explain the amazing things that have and do happen in Israel, discuss possible solutions to the problems, empower the learner to be a part of those solutions *and* give a space for personal reflection on one’s own feelings about Israel. That requires a lot of educational skill. Hence why so little programming genuines hugs *and* wrestles.

The idea of “critical love” might at first seem like a contradiction in terms. But those proponents of this as an educational framework for Israel see the two as intimately connected – it is critique of Israel’s flaws (at least as perceived by liberals) that is in and of itself a form of love. Sometimes this is framed as “in Israel’s self-interest”; for instance when discussing Israeli policy in the West Bank, many “critical lovers” will say that calling for a withdrawal from the West Bank is actually the right thing *for Israel*, rather than the right thing (only) for the Palestinians or the right thing (only) in some abstract sense of “right”. Sometimes this is framed as “helping Israel live up to its own values”; for instance, the Declaration of Independence is often held up as providing some sort of authentically-Israeli moral code that should be adhered to, and when it is not, it is the loving thing to do to criticise Israel⁴. The “critical love” critics, though, counter that critical love in practice manifests itself much more as critique than love. When, they ask, do the critical lovers find time to celebrate Israel? Is there not one day in the whole year – Yom Ha’atzmaut perhaps – when Jews can stop angsty and just party, enjoying Israel’s remarkable achievements in a pure, undiluted form? Further, these people will say, criticism of Israel can only come *after* one loves Israel, otherwise all critique does it make people ambivalent towards or – at worst – hate Israel. The liberal left, they claim, has for too long nurtured an environment where all Jewish educational interactions with Israel are framed in a negative (or at best, conflicted) way, and as such young people grow up without the firm bedrock of unquestionable attachment to Israel (in a way, for instance, that would be unthinkable in broader Jewish education – one would never start educating about Shabbat by talking about how restrictive it is, how long the services are, how frustrating it can be not to work etc). The presence amongst anti-Zionist activist groups on university campuses and elsewhere of Jews who at one point in their earlier years were part of this “critical love” discourse, it is claimed, is proof that the perhaps well-intentioned critical lovers are ultimately deluding themselves if they think their approach will work. **Lesson:** for a critical love approach to work, its proponents, and hence those writing actual programmes for young people, need to ensure that the criticism expressed is (and is seen to be) coming from a place of genuine love for Israel. What this means will of course differ from person to person and from organisation to organisation, but perhaps might include more of an emphasis, when Israel *does* do the right thing (for instance, quietly and without fuss treating victims of the Syria civil war, or Israel’s impressive record on offering agricultural technology and assistance to less developed countries, or Israel’s vibrant cultural scene, spanning as it does the arts, music, drama, food and much more), on running programming about that too. It might also include framing sessions that are critical of Israel carefully, making it clear that the very reason for the

⁴ Yachad, the UK’s “pro-Israel, pro-peace” organisation, who LJY-Netzer have formal links with, in the broadest sense are advocates of this approach to Israel engagement

critique is a desire to see Israel be the best it can be, and that many Israelis themselves share the same concerns and are doing something about trying to sort out the problems. Again, sadly, far too little programming that comes from a place of critical love is as nuanced as the approach seems to require.

Whilst the term had probably existed for many years, it was the article⁵ and subsequent book⁶ by the American Peter Beinart that brought the debate about “Liberal Zionism” to the fore. Beinart, by his own definition, is a Zionist, which we might define as someone who fundamentally believes in Jewish national self-determination. Zionism, of course, is not a singular concept; certainly, it does not have a single conception, and in its history, many different, distinct streams of Zionism can be discerned. Beinart comes from the “Liberal Zionist” tradition. This sees Zionism as ultimately founded on liberal principles, and as such is grounded and therefore must manifest itself in politically liberal ways. Paradigmatically, as in Beinart’s case, this means opposition to Israeli control of (and settlement in) the West Bank, though the Liberal Zionist might also be concerned by perceived anti-democratic tendencies within the Knesset in recent years, the long-standing discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel, economic inequality (which in Israel has risen sharply in the past 20 years) and other liberal causes. The Liberal Zionist, though, sees themselves as fundamentally in a tradition of Zionism stretching back to its earliest days. Jewish national self-determination, on this view, is non-negotiable; it is the actualisation of the Zionist vision that educationally is up for grabs. Critics of Liberal Zionism typically come from the left or from the right. Its left-wing detractors feel that Liberal Zionists are in reality hypocrites, holding as consistent two concepts that are fundamentally incompatible. They claim that Liberal Zionists are really a lot more Zionist than they are Liberal, and that a proper understanding of liberalism leaves no room for the particularism required of Zionism. Its right-wing detractors flip this critique on its head, effectively accusing Liberal Zionists of being all Liberal and no(t enough) Zionist. They argue that Liberal Zionists have never really loved Israel, being concerned only to find its flaws, measured against some impossible (or inappropriate to Israel’s unique situation) liberal standards. **Lesson:** Liberal Zionism is at its most interesting when it uses the power – ideological, emotional, intellectual – of Zionism to suggest changes of Israeli policy. Its strength derives from its assertion of heritage, of being part of a long tradition that has contributed immeasurably to Israel and now has something to say to Israel and Israelis. Therefore, programming within a Liberal Zionist paradigm requires much more of an emphasis on Zionism as an ideology (and its Liberal strand in particular); its history, fundamental ideas, key figures, texts and institutions, its answer(s) to issues within Zionism in the past and therefore in the present and so on. At the moment, many young Jews have not the first idea of what Zionism actually was, is and could be, and indeed have probably never read any of the classics of Zionism. Rectifying this deficit of knowledge, understanding and engagement with the Zionist ideology must be a key aim of Liberal Zionist educational programming, for it is only with a real understanding of Zionism as the framing concept that Liberal Zionist activism will have any meaning.

We have looked at three different educational frameworks that have been suggested for complex engagement with Israel, of the kind that LJY-Netzer wishes to promote. I would imagine that elements of all three are attractive to the movement and its educators, and underlie (even if never made explicit) much of the educational programming that goes on during events. By bringing to the surface these implicit ideas, I hope to have got you thinking harder about what your Israel education is actually about; and what it should be about.

⁵ <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/jun/10/failure-american-jewish-establishment/>

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crisis_of_Zionism

I will end with my own personal opinion on the matter. I have developed a slightly different way of thinking about Israel education. I believe that we must ensure that Israel programming has at its heart the idea that Israel is *colourful* (ie is a vibrant, vital, energetic society with many, many ideas, ideals, sides, projects etc coexisting in the same physical space), *complex* (ie is not a simple society that can be judged with a superficial knowledge or through only one lens, and requires deep exploration to begin to see its full breadth and depth) and *cacophonous* (ie it is a profoundly multivocal society, with Israelis of all kinds having differing visions of the state that are in constant conversation with each other, and therefore that as Jews outside of Israel we should be in dialogue with – impacting but also being impacted by – these voices)⁷. I think these are concepts that are still exciting to young people, and are ones that are hard to explore outside of an educational framework. And furthermore, none of these requires, I don't think, abandonment of anybody's core beliefs and values. None of these requires, I don't think, a fobbing off of young people's concerns, because they open up, rather than shut down, the Israel discourse. Finally, and most importantly, none of these requires, I don't think, *answers* to be given, only more and richer *questions* to be shared, digested and endlessly discussed with chanichim. At the core of great education has always been questions, rather than answers, and Israel as colour, complexity and cacophony is premised on this.

So I finish with a challenge: next time you are allocated a programme to write about Israel, start by asking yourself the following three clusters of questions. 1. In what way(s) is the issue I want to explore part of the richly *colourful* tapestry of life in Israel? How am I going to ensure chanichim see it as part of a wider context? 2. In what way(s) is the issue I want to explore *complex*, and as such how am I going to resist the urge to give easy-but-inaccurate characterisations of it? How am I going to leave my chanichim with more questions than answers about the issue? 3. What are (at least) three different Israeli opinions or voices on the issue? How am I going to ensure that I accurately convey the immensely *cacophonous* nature of debate around this issue within Israeli society? If you have these questions at the forefront of your mind at all times, you will be well on your way to being an outstanding Israel educator. B'hatzlacha!

⁷ My choice of “colourful, complex and cacophonous” is informed by other similar formulations, such as Lisa Grant and Ezra Kopelowitz, who talk about “integrate, complicate and connect”, Alex Sinclair, who prefers “complexity, conversation, empowerment and politics”, and Makom’s “hugging and wrestling”, discussed above

Liberal Judaism

Many of us profess to be Liberal Jews, we understand the feeling of being a Liberal Jew – of being part of a warm and inclusive community, of taking part in creative ma'amadim and expressing varying opinions on the providence and nature of Jewish liturgy.

However how many of us understand Liberal Judaism theologically and historically? How many of us understand its place in Anglo-Jewry and the forces that have shaped it?

Moreover we posit that in order to understand Liberal Judaism one needs a basic understanding of Judaism as a whole religion, in a non-denominational sense, and hence this chapter includes pieces on Jewish history, on the narrative of the Old Testament, on prayer and on Jewish liturgy.

Liberal Judaism: How did it all happen?

Timeline of the History of Liberal Judaism (By Sarah Ostrick):

- 1810

The first ever Progressive Jewish service takes place at Seesen, Germany

-27th January 1842

West London Synagogue is established. This congregation aimed to have shorter services at more convenient times of day, introduced regular sermons in English and discontinued the observance of the second day of festivals.

-November 1891

The first prayer service is held for girls and young women. It took place in the East End of London, as a result of a debate published in the Jewish Chronicle. About 200 young women attended the service, in which some of the prayer was in English.

-1858

Claude Montefiore is born, one of the founders of Liberal Judaism. He was the philosopher and theologian who gave the distinctive teachings, which inspired the thinking of the Liberal movement in the early years. In his work he started with problems of belief in the authority of the bible and then developed a modern outlook that took a different approach to the text. He proposed the modernization of practices, to make observances correspond with current beliefs.

-1873

Lily Montagu is born into a traditional orthodox home. A spiritual woman, throughout her childhood and early adulthood she came to believe that those whose Judaism was confined to ritual observance were missing something very valuable. She worked to ensure the organization development of Liberal Judaism in England, spreading Montefiore's teachings to others and it was on her initiative that the JRU was established. Later on in her life, she served as President for the WUPJ.

1899

Lily Montagu publishes "The Spiritual Possibilities of Judaism Today". In this article, she accused Jews of either being 'devoted to ceremonialism at the expense of religion' or 'indifferent both to ceremonialism and to religion'. She argued that Judaism 'admits endless development' and spoke of a reestablishment of the religion based on truth, dignity, and beauty.

- Early 1902

Establishment of the Jewish Religious Union (JRU). This society aimed to provide special services for adults and children in light of Lily Montagu's proposal of the need to adapt the ancient faith to the progressive needs of our contemporaries. Claude Montefiore is elected President. On the 18th October of that year, they held their first service in a hotel; men and women sat together and the service was mostly in English.

-November 1902

Arguably the formal establishment of Liberal Judaism as a separate movement. The JRU meets with the West London Synagogue, considered Reform, to try and come to agreements on the practices of Saturday services. However there were many disagreements, namely the West London's adamanty that men and women should sit separately. As a result, the JRU did not associate with either Orthodoxy or Reform and went its own way.

-1911

Foundation of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue. A couple of years previously, Claude Montefiore had written a report in which he declared that there were sufficient differences to warrant the establishment of a separate synagogue for the members of the JRU. After a long series of meetings, discussions and proposals, the first service took place at the LJS.

-Early 1920s

Publishing of the Liberal Jewish Prayer Book

-1926

Foundation of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. It was Lily Montagu who came up with the idea of an 'International JRU' and a conference was held with delegates from predominantly the UK, USA, France, and Germany but also Austria and India. Here they agreed to form an international body, with Lily Montagu as their first Honorary Secretary.

-1944

JRU becomes The Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues.

-1947

FLPJYG is formed, The Federation of Liberal and Progressive Jewish Youth Groups. This later evolved into ULPSNYC and then LJY Netzer!

-1992

The Affirmations of Liberal Judaism are published. It was felt that there was a need to provide a brief statement of Liberal Jewish principles and its place within Liberal Judaism.

-2003

The ULPS changes its name to Liberal Judaism.

The Three 'M's

Claude Montefiore

Eddie Kessler

Claude Montefiore (1858–1938) was one of the founders of Liberal Judaism in the UK, an Anglo-Jewish leader and scholar. He was also a pioneer in Jewish–Christian relations. Born into what has been called the 'Cousinhood' – the Anglo-Jewish aristocracy – Montefiore studied at Oxford and came under the wing of Benjamin Jowett (1817–93), who was to be a lasting influence upon him. He also studied under Solomon Schechter (1847–1915), whose influence can be seen in the Hibbert Lectures (Montefiore was the first Jew to be invited to deliver the Lectures in 1892). As well as publishing numerous works on fields relating to Judaism and Christianity, he co-founded the Jewish Quarterly Review. He was the leader of the Liberal Jewish Movement and crucial to its development in England; his Liberal Jewish views form the basis of all his writings. Montefiore's studies focused on four subjects: the Hebrew Bible; the New Testament and Christianity; Rabbinic Judaism; and Liberal Judaism. His was one of the earliest attempts by an English Jew to interpret the history of the Bible in accordance with the conclusions of biblical criticism. He wrote *The Old Testament and After* (1923), which outlined the history of Judaism since biblical times to the 20th century, laying out of the principles of Liberal Judaism. His other important works include *The Synoptic Gospels* (1909), a two-volume introduction, translation and commentary on the first three Gospels, and (co-authored) *A Rabbinic Anthology* (1938), an important work on Rabbinic Judaism.

Montefiore's involvement with the Jewish Religious Union, which was later called Liberal Judaism, began in 1899 when he advised Lily Montagu to write her famous article for the Jewish Quarterly Review. In a short time the JRU was formed and arranged public meetings to propagate its cause. A series of protests followed and on one occasion demonstrators stormed the platform where Montefiore and others were speaking. It was characteristic of him that he tried to explain and excuse their behaviour, stating their views more clearly than they could themselves!

For Montefiore, there were five aspects of Liberal Judaism, which gave it the ability to face the future with optimism.

- 1) Liberal Judaism was free as regards the results of criticism and history, focussing less on authorship and more on meaning and significance.
- 2) Liberal Judaism had the capacity to expand and absorb. A living religion was never too old to learn. Judaism could learn from its daughter religions as well as those of India.
- 3) Liberal Judaism was an historical religion. It was the heir to many ancestors, including the Rabbis, and although it was separated from them in some points, it was united with them in the deeper issues.
- 4) Liberal Judaism was a matter of faith. It was a faith in Judaism and

a belief in God. Faith illumined the past, sanctified the present and guaranteed the future. The people of Israel had been charged with a certain mission and this charge had never been cancelled.

5) Liberal Judaism had the capacity to universalise and spiritualise what was national and particularist. Liberal Jews were a religious community.

Liberal Judaism was a crucial phase in the development of Judaism. It offered hope for the future and maintained a link with the past.

Rabbi Israel Mattuck

Rabbi Danny Rich

Rabbi Israel Mattuck (1883/4 – 1954) was Britain’s first Liberal Rabbi, occupying the pulpit at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue (St John’s Wood) for most of his life from the time of his arrival in England from the United States in 1912.

If Lily Montagu was the spiritual pioneer and organiser and Claude Montefiore provided the initial intellectual underpinning for the creation of Liberal Judaism in Britain, it was perhaps Israel Mattuck whose oratory and energy which not only made him one of Britain’s finest twentieth century preachers but led to the founding of Liberal Jewish groups in Streatham, Birmingham, Dublin, Southgate and Brighton.

Although he was born into a traditional family in Lithuania, his education in German and Semitics at Harvard University and his rabbinics course at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati transformed him into an advocate of the classical American Reform ‘Prophetic’ school of Judaism.

Arriving to a more conservative British Jewry, Mattuck soon attracted condemnation for his radical social justice messages, his disregard for ‘ugly and out of date, repulsive or meaningless’ rituals and his antipathy to Zionism.

Mattuck made no apology for the political nature of his sermons, affirming that it was his duty to confront his relatively well-heeled congregants with the realities of infant mortality and poor housing, industrial relations and the dignity of labour, the challenges to and of democracy and the nature of conflict and peace.

Mattuck was a deeply spiritual man who oozed a simplistic but self -captivating theology, and, whilst suspicious of rituals which he considered transitory, he commended Jewish practice if it conveyed intellectually sound messages, or beautified life and did not require elaborate explanation.

Mattuck was an advocate of both private and communal prayer, and edited a full liturgy of prayer books which served most Liberal Jewish communities from their publication in the 1920’s until their replacement by ‘Service of the Heart’ in 1967.

Mattuck was most misunderstood on the politically charged issue of Zionism, the fulfilment of which he believed would be a betrayal of the purpose of Judaism. Mattuck thought that, although the Jewish people had been in antiquity a national entity, Judaism now had a universal task to lead humanity to the ‘knowledge of one God’, if not the Messianic Age. Whilst Mattuck appreciated the possibility that in a national Jewish homeland the social teachings of Judaism might find their full and clear expression and serve as an example to humanity –and indeed remained sympathetic to Zionism’s ‘philanthropic aims’, he could not accept that nationalism was a Jewish value which could make a lasting contribution to the purpose of human existence.

Mattuck’s thought remains a significant influence on contemporary Liberal Judaism which reflects his continuing influence in its search for truth, its willingness to confront modern issues, its demand for social justice, its combination of compassion and realism and its advocacy of genuine religious conduct rather than an insistence on legalism, absurdity or obscurantism.

Lily Montagu

Ellen M. Umansky

Lilian Helen Montagu was a British social worker, a magistrate in the London juvenile courts, suffragist, writer, religious organizer, and spiritual leader who founded and long remained the driving force behind the Liberal Jewish movement in England.

Lily Montagu was born in London on December 22, 1873, the sixth of ten children born to Ellen Cohen Montagu (1843–1919) and Samuel Montagu (né Montagu Samuel).. He was also an observant Jew who tirelessly worked to strengthen the organized, institutional life of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Anglo-Jewish community. Lily’s mother, Ellen, was the youngest daughter of Louis Cohen a member of one of the oldest and most prominent Jewish families in England. Raised in an observant home, Ellen Montagu, in the words of her daughter Lily, “remained faithful all her life to the Orthodox observances, both great and small.” Yet Lily believed that she did so more out of “wifely devotion” than personal conviction. Indeed, what Lily Montagu later remembered most about her mother’s sense of religiosity was its “elasticity,” her willingness, in other words, to answer all of her children’s religious questions, no matter how radical; incorporating English prayers into their home worship, impressing upon her children the importance of spontaneous prayer, and perhaps most importantly, believing, unlike her husband, that one could not expect young people to want the pattern of their lives to be identical to that of previous generations.

The religious influence of Samuel and Ellen Montagu on Lily was considerable. Though Lily later rejected many of her father’s religious beliefs, the significance that he attached to them and the sincerity with which they were held made a lasting impression on her. Indeed, it gave her the resolve to make Judaism as central a part of her life as it was of her father’s.

Yet by the age of fifteen, she became convinced that Orthodoxy offered her, and other women, little room for religious self-expression. Longing to become closer to God, she found herself unable to do so. Given the limited religious education that she and her sisters received, how, she asked herself, could she pray in a language that she barely understood? How could she feel part of a worshipping congregation which did not count her as a member? How could she continue to be observant when observance meant so little to her? In short, how could she be both Orthodox and religious? As Lily Montagu came to realize, echoing sentiments that she had learned, consciously or subconsciously, from her mother: “We cannot worship with our parents’ hearts.” In other words, that which stimulates a sense of faith and devotion within our parents may stifle, rather than cultivate, our own spiritual growth.

The West Central Jewish Girls’ Club, founded in 1893 by Lily, together with her sister, Marion and their cousin, Beatrice Franklin very much reflected this call to service. Believing that “the more we have, the greater our self-questioning—the more severe our responsibility,” Lily Montagu helped create a club that gave working class Jewish girls the opportunity to develop themselves socially, intellectually and spiritually, through classes, Sabbath services (which she led), concerts, outings and other special events. The worship services that she conducted were relatively brief, in English, featured sermons on topics that she felt were of vital interest to the girls, and retained only those traditional prayers which she thought had “meaning for modern Jews and Jewesses in the actual circumstances of their lives.” From 1890 until 1909, she led similar services for children at the Synagogue. The services were well attended not only by children but also by women. Their success, as well as the more limited success of her services at the West Central Club, led Lily Montagu to envision ways of creating services for adults. Her intent was nothing less than to help revivify the religious life of the Anglo-Jewish community.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, in the early 1890s Lily Montagu met Claude Montefiore (1858–1938), Jewish scholar and proponent of Liberal Judaism. It was Montefiore who gave her both the means and the confidence to redefine Judaism so as to allow for personal growth and expression, for she found in his works a vision of Judaism that mirrored her own understanding of true religion as personal in nature, universal in outlook, and best revealed through daily conduct. Her discovery of what Montefiore identified as Liberal Judaism, and what German Rabbis Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), Samuel Holdheim (1806–1860) and others called Reform, precipitated Lily Montagu’s formal break with Orthodoxy, leading to an estrangement from her father that lasted until his death in 1911.

Seeking to give Liberal Judaism greater organizational expression, she published an essay in the January, 1899, issue of *The Jewish Quarterly Review* on the “Spiritual Possibilities of Judaism Today.” In this essay, she asked all religiously committed Jews to help her form an association aimed at strengthening the religious life of the Anglo-Jewish community through the propagation of Liberal Jewish teachings. Membership would not necessarily demonstrate allegiance to Liberal Judaism but simply the recognition of its ability to awaken within many Jews a sense of spirituality and personal responsibility to God. The Jewish Religious Union (J.R.U.), established by Lily Montagu in February, 1902, instituted Sabbath

afternoon worship services conducted along Liberal Jewish lines, and “propaganda meetings,” led by Montagu, to clarify and spread its teachings. Though Montefiore agreed to serve as the group’s official leader, thus strengthening its credibility, it was Lily Montagu who assumed responsibility for its major activities and daily affairs.

By 1909, ongoing Orthodox opposition to the J.R.U. and the concern among many that a schismatic, Liberal movement was in fact being created, led to the resignation of most of the organization’s early, non-Liberal leaders and to a new membership rate that, despite well-attended services, was alarmingly low. Acknowledging the failure of its initial, all-inclusive vision, the Union declared itself to be a movement specifically committed to the “Advancement of Liberal Judaism.” During the next few decades, Lily Montagu helped form Liberal Jewish synagogues throughout Great Britain, frequently serving as their Chairman or President, and became lay minister of the West Central Liberal Jewish Congregation in 1928, a position to which she was formally inducted in November, 1944, and which she held until her death in December, 1963. Following Montefiore’s death in 1938, she assumed the Presidency of the J.R.U., a position she held for twenty-three years.

Having conceived of the idea for an international J.R.U. as early as 1925, Montagu helped found and eventually became President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. In charge of the organization’s daily affairs from 1926 through 1959 (during which time its offices were located in her home), one of Lily Montagu’s first duties was to organize an International World Union Conference to take place in Berlin in 1928. During the conference, a worship service was held in Berlin’s Reform Temple and Lily Montagu, perhaps the first woman, certainly the first Jewish woman, to occupy a pulpit in Germany, preached a sermon, in German, on the theme of “Personal Religion.” Through her efforts, the number of World Union constituencies steadily increased and, at her initiative, new Liberal Jewish congregations were created in Europe, South America, Israel, South Africa and Australia. In 1955, when poor health led its second President, Leo Baeck (1873–1956) to step down from his position, Lily Montagu was elected President of the World Union. Despite her advanced age, she chaired meetings, organized conferences, helped attract new members, and increased the Union’s activities. In 1959, when the World Union’s headquarters were transferred to the United States, she was named Honorary Life President and was elected to chair the Union’s newly-established European Board.

Liberal Judaism in Britain Today

By Abi Preston

Size

Since its beginnings in the early part of the 20th century by Lily Montagu, Claude Montefiore and others, Liberal Judaism has expanded from a small gathering in London to a grouping of nearly 10,000 Jews ranging from Edinburgh to Bristol.



Different Congregations



The first ever Liberal Jewish Synagogue was founded in St Johns Wood and to this day is the biggest synagogue in all of England, including non-liberal synagogues. The synagogue currently has three rabbis, including an emeritus rabbi. It was founded in 1911, by the Committee of The Jewish Religious Union. By 1912 premises had been acquired in a former chapel in Hill Street, Park Road. By 1918 it was evident that a larger building was needed, a site was purchased in 1924 at the present location in St. John's Wood, and an imposing synagogue seating 1,350. This building was opened in 1925, and consequently membership increased further.

Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue is situated in the outskirts of London. It was founded in 1964 by 30 families and it has now grown to some 1100 adults and approximately 300 children and junior members under 18 years of age. Originally based in Pinner, the community moved to premises in Hallowell Road Northwood in 1966 and to the present purpose built premises in 1980. Rabbi Aaron Goldstein and Rabbi Lea Mühlstein are the rabbis of the Synagogue. The Emeritus Rabbi, Dr Andrew Goldstein (father of Rabbi Aaron) provided rabbinic Leadership from 1965 to 2008.

Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue was founded in 1935. It is an inclusive congregation, drawing in members and friends from diverse backgrounds, in which children, women and men play an equal role in communal life. Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue has been at 6 Lansdowne Road, Hove since 1939. The original accommodation was expanded in the 1960s by the purchase of an adjoining property on Farm Road. Just two blocks north of the seafront, and very close to the Brighton/Hove border, the synagogue is in a prime location for the congregation of Brighton and Hove.

The Liberal Synagogue Elstree congregation was founded in 1969 as the Stanmore Liberal Jewish Congregation. Meeting in local halls and homes, the original nucleus of 30 families grew rapidly. With the shift of the local Jewish population services became centred on the Elstree area and in 1977 the name was changed to Hertsmere to reflect this. The congregation then acquired the present Grade II listed building, a semi-derelict former village school, which was transformed by members working evenings and weekends to create the flexible synagogue, school and community centre we have today. Extensive building works were completed in February 1998. In 2004 the congregation voted to change its name hence from September 2004 became The Liberal Synagogue Elstree.

Rabbi Danny Rich, the Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism

- Rabbi Danny Rich was state educated at Hearnville Primary School, Sir Walter St. John's Grammar School and Manchester University. In 1984 Danny began his rabbinic studies at the Leo Baeck College in Finchley. He was ordained in 1989, submitting a thesis on 'The Teaching of Torah to non-Jews.' He was for three years the part-time Director of the Youth Department of Liberal Judaism, and completed his 15th and final year as the Director of the Kadimah Summer Camp in 2005. In December 2004 Danny was appointed the Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism.



Aims

The main aim of Liberal Judaism is to preserve the traditions of Judaism while adapting them to a contemporary modern society. As times have changed, many of the teachings in the Torah are outdated and do not apply to our society today. Therefore, liberal Judaism has taken on the task of mixing the past with the present by reinterpreting the ancient texts. Liberal Judaism also aims for its members to be liberal thinkers with the ability to determine for themselves what they believe and do not believe.

Liberal Jewish Beliefs and Values

by Sarah Newman

The official beliefs of Liberal Judaism are laid out in the Affirmations of Liberal Judaism. The main point that is made throughout the article is that whilst a Jew is someone who inherits the tradition, and a practising Jew is someone who accepts and follows these traditions, a practising Liberal Jew places this tradition in the framework of the 21st century world, living morally and seeking justice. The Affirmations are split into common ground and the distinctiveness of Liberal Judaism.

Common Ground

Judaism

- Commitment to religion, culture and heritage of the Jewish people.
- One God who is Creator and demands that humans act with justice and mercy.



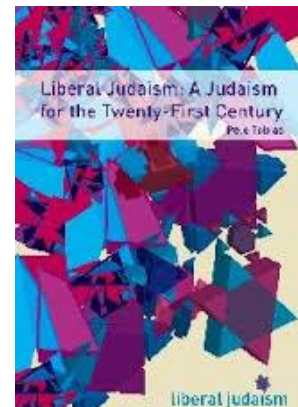
- Humanity created in the Divine Image with free will, can possess both good and evil, can form a personal relationship with God, and can repent.
- Jews have suffered setbacks throughout history, but one day freedom, justice and peace will triumph.
- The Covenant between God and the Jews.

Israel

- Commitment to maintaining its security, development and ensuring it fulfils its commitments to justice and equality outlined in the Declaration of Independence.
- Liberal Judaism believes in a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, opposes boycotts and wants peaceful co-existence.

Literature

- The importance of Torah, Mishnah, Talmud and Midrash as forms of Jewish expression and wisdom.
- Commitment to both formal and informal Jewish education (such as LJY-Netzer).



Ethics

- The importance of mitzvot through respect, love, practical kindness, social action, peace and good treatment of animals and nature.
- Transmitting ethical Jewish values from generation to generation (l'dor vador).

Observance

- The synagogue as the heart of the Jewish community, with prayer enabling a path to spirituality.
- Observing the Sabbath and festivals.
- Embracing the traditional Jewish rights of passage e.g. circumcision, marriage.

Distinctiveness

Development

- The recognition that Judaism is a dynamic, changing, diverse religion.
- Commitment to worldwide Progressive Judaism.

- Liberal Judaism is the only strand which offers Judaism in conjunction with modernity.

Equality

- Liberal Judaism accepts patrilineal descent (a Jewish father) rather than purely matrilineal descent (a Jewish mother).
- Mixed-faith relationships are accepted, meaning that they can have marriage blessings and be buried together in cemeteries.
- Liberal Judaism also believes in the rights of same-sex marriage, supporting the legislation for civil same-sex marriages, but even before this providing an official liturgy.
- The Affirmations make it clear that Jews of patrilineal descent and those in mixed and/or same-sex marriages should be treated equally rather than merely accepted.
- Liberal Judaism believes that men and women should be equal within the synagogue, education and marriage. This means that men and women can sit together at synagogue, women can become rabbis and girls can have Bat Mitzvahs.



Torah and practice

- Liberal Judaism does not believe that the Torah was divinely revealed, rather that it was written by humans capable of making mistakes.
- Liberal Judaism believes in a Messianic Age rather than a Messiah, that this will be gradually and occur when all of humanity accepts God's will. The latter point is perhaps problematic for LJY-Netzer, in light of a rejection of the second paragraph of the Aleynu. Nevertheless, the last affirmation emphasises the importance of respecting other religions and creating a dialogue with them, as ultimately this world is mysterious.
- There will be no 3rd temple due to the creation of synagogues and no separate recognition of Jews of priestly descent. The use of musical instruments in services will be encouraged.
- Liberal Judaism believes in sincere worship, meaning that one should mean what they say. This has led to adapted liturgies as well as the frequent use of English in services.
- Liberal Judaism believes in informed decision-making for the individual, relating to issues such as kashrut and observance of Shabbat.



- Liberal Judaism believes in biblical observance of the festivals, without the extra day.

Ethics

- Emphasis on the prophets to highlight importance of establishing justice. Whilst religious observance, which promotes holiness, is important, it is not as important.
- Encouragement of individual decision-making within a community framework of guidance and rules.
- Importance of tolerance and interfaith relations.

For more information, see:

[http://www.liberaljudaism.org/images/stories/affirmations of liberal judaism 2006.pdf](http://www.liberaljudaism.org/images/stories/affirmations_of_liberal_judaism_2006.pdf)

And <http://www.liberaljudaism.org/about-us/what-is-liberal-judaism.html>

Judaism in Britain Today

by Lee Steinberg

Let's talk about modern Anglo-Jewry, shall we? Let's start with a little bit of numbers. All statistics here are from the 2011 census, information from the Board of Deputies website:



- There are currently 263,346 people who answered “Jewish” on the religion question of the census. If we assume that some of the people who did not respond to that question are Jewish, it is estimated that there are around 280,000 Jews living in England and Wales. This number is largely unchanged since 2001.
- As a percentage, 0.5% of England and Wales are Jewish. This is again fairly unchanged.

- Geographically, there are Jews in all of the 348 local authorities of England and Wales.
- Local authorities in London account for about 65% of all British Jews.
- Some places with notable increases of Jewish residents from 2001 are Hertfordshire (26%), Manchester (15%), and Barnet (15%). This also leads to my favourite fact from this census, that 1 in 5 Jews in England and Wales live in the London Borough of Barnet.
- Substantial Jewish population growth in Hackney, Haringey, Salford, Gateshead, as well as Barnet and Bury highlights a significant increase in size of the Orthodox population. More on that later.
- A spreadsheet containing a full breakdown of Jewish populations in local authority areas across the country can be found at <http://www.bod.org.uk/live/click.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bod.org.uk%2Fcontent%2FCensusReligionLA.xls&o=Item%2B632&v=177dca>

Right, let's move on to a little bit about denominations of Jews in Britain. This stuff is from that most reliable of web sources, Wikipedia.

- There are 409 synagogues in the United Kingdom, with approximately 75% of British Jews affiliated to one. Of those affiliated, they are distributed in the following groups:
 - Central Orthodox– 54.7%
 - Reform (Movement for Reform Judaism and Westminster Synagogue and Chaim V'Tikvah) – 19.4%
 - Strictly Orthodox – 10.9%
 - Liberal – 8.7%
 - Sephardi – 3.5%
 - Masorti– 2.7%



Now, to round up, here are some other nice statistics I found for this. These are mostly from the Wikipedia page on British Jews, which I would encourage anyone to read up on if they are planning a session on Jewish people in Britain today. Other useful resources include the Board of Deputies, or any other Jewish organisation.



- 60% of school-age Jewish children are at Jewish schools, the largest of which is JFS, in Kenton, with 2100 students. Over 4000 students attend one of JFS, Hasmonean High School, or King Solomon High School alone. When schools like Yavneh and JCOSS are at full capacity, it is

expected that there will be about 5500 Jewish children attending Jewish high schools in the London area alone.

- The current Chief Rabbi of the British Orthodox synagogues is Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis. The Chief Rabbi does not represent any of the other denominations of British Jewry listed above (but he is an excellent speaker, and a nice guy, if you're interested).
- There are loads of Jewish Youth Movements (obviously). We are part of one. I'm not going to sit here and list them.

I hope you enjoyed your short introduction to British Jewry. Have a look at some of the other resources linked above, I personally found the Board of Deputies of British Jews to be a very useful organisation in research for this.

Lee Steinberg



A Jewish Approach to Spirituality and Spiritual Practice

Danny Newman

Danny Newman is currently a Student Rabbi studying at Leo Baeck Rabbinical School.

Every nation, every religion begins with a story, with sacred foundational myths and narratives that define who they are and how they understand their role in the world. We, the Jewish people, have always understood the *Torah* to be the source of our sacred myths.

Our most powerful and compelling narrative is the story of the creation of the first human being at the beginning of *Bereishit*. Our spiritual ancestors wrote that the first human being was created in the image of the divine (*b'tzelem elohim*).

Through telling this story, our ancestors were making it clear to us, and all future generations of the Jewish people, that all human beings are innately beautiful, all human beings have the potential for self-realisation and all human beings are of infinite value.

One of our most stunning teachings in our *Talmud* (a collection of our (originally) oral laws) is that if a person saves the life of another person, it is considered that they have saved an entire world.

So what are the implications for Jewish spirituality and spiritual practice in the light of our awareness that every human being has the potential for self-realisation and every human being is of infinite value?

In my understanding, the Jewish spiritual path has two directions:

- (1) The inner direction – e.g. developing, nurturing and healing ourselves; and
- (2) The outer direction – e.g. giving our unique gifts to the world, helping to change the world for the better and to advance social and economic justice.

In Jewish language we would call these two directions:

- (1) *Tikun Atzmi*; and
- (2) *Tikun Olam*.

Let us start with *Tikun Atzmi*.

What this means is getting to know ourselves, understanding ourselves and becoming intimate with ourselves. Learning how we think about things, how we react to things and our “way of being” in the world. Really becoming aware of what motivates us and what we are passionate about.

It means forgiving ourselves for the things we may not like about ourselves or some of the things we may have done. It means really accepting ourselves for who we are, with all of our faults and in all our splendid beauty. It means appreciating ourselves for all the wonderful things about ourselves. Asking ourselves how the people in our lives who love us would describe us? Really owning, acknowledging and appreciating our strengths, our innate goodness and our desire to do and be good in the world. This isn’t always an easy journey. Often it can be difficult and challenging. It takes commitment, honesty and courage. It helps to have good friends around you who are embarking on the same path. Perhaps some time exploring these issues with a trusted mentor, counsellor, therapist or wise elder.

It then means working to cultivate within ourselves important qualities and character traits including: compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, humility, kindness, love and wisdom.

The purpose and objective of prayer, meditation, contemplation and other Jewish spiritual practices is to help us cultivate and uncover within ourselves these human qualities and character traits.

We then move on to *Tikun Atzmi*.

Once we know ourselves, our passions and our vision for the world we want to create, we can go out in to the world and begin to act to heal the world. Perhaps we are passionate about preventing global warming? Perhaps we are deeply troubled by economic injustice and inequality? Perhaps we are passionate about protecting the animal kingdom? Perhaps we are committed to fighting discrimination against human beings on the basis of their gender, race or sexuality? Each of us has our own unique role to play in building a fairer, more just and more egalitarian society.

This is the vision of our spiritual ancestors the Biblical Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos to name a few.

Please take time to read about our spiritual ancestors and find ways to integrate their message into your lives in meaningful ways that speak to who you are, what you really care about and the type of person you want to be in the world.

Liturgy

By Miriam Steiner

The basis of Judaism comes from a number of accepted works, not just the Torah. They can be split into two sections: the written and oral (spoken) bible.

Written: The Tanakh

- ⤴ The Tanakh refers to all written down texts from Biblical times
- ⤴ It is the name given to the three books, Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim
- ⤴ Its name comes from the first sounds of each of those books. Ta=Torah, Na=Nevi'im, Kh=Kehtuvim



Torah - "Teachings" or "Instructions" - Written between 600 and 400 BCE

- ⤴ The Torah is split into five books
- ⤴ It tells us the basics of Jewish Law
- ⤴ It was supposedly given to Moses on behalf of the Jewish people by G-d on top of Mount Sinai
- ⤴ It contains the 613 mitzvot ("Commandments")
- ⤴ A different portion (called "Parasha") is read each week in Synagogues. There are 54 portions

Nevi'im - "Prophets" - Written around 400BCE to 650BCE

- ⤴ Contains the writings of the prophets (those who could communicate or were communicated to by g-d) of biblical times
- ⤴ Some sections, called haftarah, are read before corresponding torah portions in synagogues

Ketuvim - "Writings" - Written around 300BCE to 50CE

- ⤴ Written by people considered less holy than the prophets
- ⤴ Not traditionally read in synagogues or services
- ⤴ It contains the Megillot (Scrolls), the most famous being the Book of Esther, which is the basis for the festival of Purim

Oral: Talmud

- ⤴ The oral Torah, as told by G-d to Moses and passed down verbally
- ⤴ It has two main parts, the Mishnah and Gemarah
- ⤴ Oral teachings were written down after the destruction of the second temple in 70CE

Mishnah – Coming from the words “Repetition”, “Secondary” or “To study and review” - Recordings of conversations from around 536 BCE – 70 CE , written 220CE

- ⤴ The main religious authority after the Tanakh
- ⤴ Is not a list of new commandments, but develops and clarifies commandments in the Torah
- ⤴ Provides the basis for much modern (after the temple was destroyed) Jewish customs, particularly prayer and festival observance
- ⤴ Split into six sections: Seeds, Festival, Women, Damages, Holies and Purities

Gemarah – Coming from the words “To study” or “Learning by tradition” - Written around 200-500CE

- ⤴ Rabbinical analysis and commentary on the Mishnah
- ⤴ Is seen to “complete” the Talmud

The Torah

A Narrative Overview by Benjamin Ward-Lee

A (not so) quick guide for those of you who fell asleep during text study

History

Religious tradition states that all of the teachings in the torah were given to Moses by God (some at Mount Sinai and some at the Tabernacle.)

Fun Fact! *There is a Midrash that says the Torah was created prior to the world and used as a blueprint which is super interesting because of the connotations that has in respects to free will.*

The majority of Biblical scholars believe that the majority of the written books were the product of the Babylonian exilic period (c. 600 BCE) and that it was completed by the Persian period (c. 400 BCE).



Fun Fact! *A popular (but increasingly challenged) model of the Torah's construction is the Documentary Hypothesis. This theory proposes that the Torah was written as a series of independent narratives which were subsequently edited together. This would explain many of the inconsistencies in the books and mmgolly aren't theories fun?*

Deuteronomy is often treated separately from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers when dating is concerned. The process of its formation probably took several hundred years, from the

8th to the 6th century BCE, and its authors have been variously identified as prophetic circles, Levitical priestly circles, and wisdom and scribal circles.

Fun Fact! 55% of Israeli Jews believe that the Torah was revealed to Moses by God.

Structure

The Torah is divided into five books, the hebrew names being their incipits (the first word from each respective book) and the english names reflecting the core themes of the book.

Fun Fact! According to the Oral tradition, the prose in the Torah is not always in chronological order. Sometimes it is ordered by concept according to the rule: "There is not 'earlier' and 'later' in the Torah." Some scholars understand confusions in chronology as a sign that the current text of the Torah was redacted from earlier sources.

1. *Bereshit* (בְּרֵאשִׁית, literally "In the beginning") - *Genesis* ("Origin")
2. *Shemot* (שְׁמוֹת, literally "Names") - *Exodus* ("Going Out")
3. *Vayikra* (וַיִּקְרָא, literally "And He called") - *Leviticus* ("Relating to the Levites")
4. *Bamidbar* (בְּמִדְבָּר, literally "In the desert [of]") - *Numbers* ("Recording the numbering of the Israelites")
5. *Devarim* (דְּבָרִים, literally "Things" or "Words") - *Deuteronomy* ("Second Law", a reference to the recapitulation of the commandments reviewed by Moses before his death.)

Fun Fact! The stories in the narrative are linked together by a system of resonating word roots that can often only be appreciated in the original Hebrew. For example, within a story, (*Genesis* 2:25) after Eve's creation: "And the two of them were naked, the human and his woman and they were not embarrassed" (Hebrew word for naked is 'arum'). The very next line in *Genesis* 3:1 is: "And the snake was slier than any animal of the field" (Hebrew word for sly: 'arum')

The form of the Torah is that of a narrative, spanning from the creation of the world, following the trials and tribulations of the Israelites through to the conclusion with the death of Moses.

Fun Thought! The marriage of explicitly stated laws (such as the Ten Commandments) and implicit teachings (the celebration of Pesach) in the Torah is related to the complex nature of Jewish tradition. Teachings being embedded within the story influences the flexible nature the Jews take towards religious code, and explains the culture of constant text study/dissection.

The Narrative (courtesy of wikipedia)

Bereshit (Genesis) begins with the so-called "primeval history" (Genesis 1–11), the story of the world's beginnings and the descent of Abraham. This is followed by the story of the three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), Joseph (Genesis 12–50) and the four matriarchs (Sarah,



Rebekah, Leah and Rachel). God gives to the patriarchs a promise of the land of Canaan, but at the end of Genesis the sons of Jacob end up leaving Canaan for Egypt due to a regional famine. They had heard that there was a grain storage and distribution facility in Egypt.

Fun Fact! *There is still much debate about the theme (if any) that unites the stories of Genesis, as no simple answer has been found. The general consensus seems to be the theme of “divine promise”.*

Shemot (Exodus) begins the story of God's revelation to his people Israel through Moses, who leads them out of Egypt (Exodus 1–18) to Mount Sinai. There the people accept a covenant with God, agreeing to be his people in return for agreeing to abide by his Law. Moses receives the Torah from God, and mediates His laws and Covenant (Exodus 19–24) to the people of Israel. Exodus also deals with the first violation of the covenant when the Golden Calf was constructed (Exodus 32–34). Exodus concludes with the instructions on building the Tabernacle (Exodus 25–31; 35–40).

Fun Fact! *It is thought that Exodus was originally written in two parts, with the division of parts 1 and 2 occurring at the crossing of the Red Sea.*

Vayikra (Leviticus) begins with instructions to the Israelites on how to use the Tabernacle, which they had just built (Leviticus 1–10). This is followed by rules of clean and unclean (Leviticus 11–15), which includes the laws of slaughter and animals permissible to eat (see also: Kashrut), the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), and various moral and ritual laws sometimes called the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26).



Bamidbar (Numbers) tells how Israel consolidated itself as a community at Sinai (Numbers 1–9), set out from Sinai to move towards Canaan and spied out the land (Numbers 10–13). Because of unbelief at various points, but especially at Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 14), the Israelites were condemned to wander for forty years in the desert in the vicinity of Kadesh instead of immediately entering the Promised Land. Even Moses sins and is told he would not live to enter the land (Numbers 20). At the end of Numbers (Numbers 26–35) Israel moves from Kadesh to the plains of Moab opposite Jericho, ready to enter the Promised Land.

Fun History Lesson! *The key event in the formation of the Old Testament was the fall of the kingdom of Judah to the Babylonian empire in 586 BCE. The Babylonians destroyed the city and the Temple of Solomon, executed the king's sons in front of him before putting out his eyes, and took him and many others into exile. These events represented a major religious crisis: why had their god allowed this to happen? What had happened to the promise that the descendants of David would reign forever? The Babylonian exile lasted approximately 48 years, from 586 to 538*

BCE, and ended with the conquest of Babylon in that year by the Persians. The new Persian ruler decided to allow the exiles to return home. According to the book of Ezra-Nehemiah they did so under the joint leadership of a descendant of the last king and the last High Priest, rebuilding the Temple and reconstituting Judah (now called Yehud) as a holy community ruled by priests. Gregory Dawes believes that it was in this period that the Pentateuch (or Torah, to give the Hebrew name) was composed, by detaching the book of Deuteronomy from the Deuteronomistic history and adding it to the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. This new historical context explains all the moaning and the being in exile within Numbers. Write what you know, I guess.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) is a series of speeches by Moses on the plains of Moab opposite Jericho. Moses proclaims the Law (Deuteronomy 12–26), gives instruction concerning covenant renewal at Shechem (Deuteronomy 27–28) and gives Israel new laws (the "Deuteronomic Code").[34] At the end of the book (Deuteronomy 34) Moses is allowed to see the promised land from a mountain, but it is not known what happened to Moses on the mountain. He was never seen again. Knowing that he is nearing the end of his life, Moses appoints Joshua his successor, bequeathing to him the mantle of leadership. Soon afterwards Israel begins the conquest of Canaan.

The Five Main Prayers

By Helen Goldhill

The Bar'chu

The Bar'chu is traditionally a call to prayer at the morning and evening services, it is not included in the afternoon services due to the fact that the Shema is not recited. After the prayer leader recites "Barchu et Adonai ha-mevorach"

(Praised be the Lord, who is [to be] praised), the congregation responds "Barchu Adonai ha-mevorach l'olam va-ed" (Praised is the Lord, who is [to be] praised for ever and ever). This is the prayer leader summoning the congregation to praise, and when the prayer leader repeats the response it is to indicate the obligation equally falls to him or her.

Although it's literally meaning is "bless", in context the word "Barchu" is the equivalent of "praise" as it does not wish to suggest that humans have the ability or power to grant a blessing on God. Instead the Barchu recognises that God is the source of all blessings and is an assertion of the worshipper's dedication to fulfil God's will by performing the divine commandments.

The practice of standing during the Barchu may have originated at the time of Ezra, based on the verse in Nehemiah (9:5), "Rise, bless the Lord your God who is from eternity to eternity: 'May Your glorious name be blessed, exalted though it is above every blessing and praise!'"

BAR'CHU et Adonai ham'vorach!
Baruch Adonai ham'vorach
l'olam va-ed!

בָּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ!
בְּרַחַם יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!

PRAISE ADONAI to whom praise is due forever!
Praised be Adonai to whom praise is due,
now and forever!

Some say that the source of the Bar'chu, or at least the tradition of bowing comes from Chronicles I 29:20 – “And David said to all the congregation: ‘Now bless HaShem your G-d.’ And all the congregation blessed HaShem, the G-d of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and prostrated themselves before HaShem, and before the king.” We bend our knees and bow as we become open to God’s blessings by humbling ourselves. The word for “bless” (*barchu*) shares its root with the word for “knee” (*beirach*), and so we bend our knees as we open ourselves to receive God’s blessings.

The Shema

The Shema is part of the morning and evening prayers, and is the basic declaration of faith of the Jewish people in the unity and oneness of God, but also that God is unique and beyond all human understanding. A midrash traces the origin of this verse to the last moments of the life of Jacob who was concerned that his children and grandchildren, living in Egypt, would depart from the traditions of Abraham and serve the local gods. However they put his mind at ease by assuring him: “Hear, O Israel (i.e., Jacob): ‘We accept the one God as our God.’”



There are three paragraphs of the Shema. Paragraph first is known as *Ve-ahavta* (You shall love [the Lord your God]). It stresses that one should not observe the commandments because of the fear of punishment or as an attempt to gain divine favour, but rather out of the pure love that represents the highest level in which a human being can relate with God. The second paragraph emphasizes study of Torah and the observance of mitzvot, inciting some of the rewards for following the teaching of Torah and some of the punishments for disobeying. This paragraph is in the plural and addressed to the entire community whose collective action determines whether there will be sufficient rain and a bountiful harvest; unlike paragraph one which is directed to the individual. The third paragraph of the Shema is primarily concerned with the commandment of putting tzitzit (fringes) on the corner of one’s garment. These three paragraphs can be considered to represent the entirety of Torah and are therefore incited to be read twice daily during prayer service, fulfilling the duty to study Torah day and night.

The number of words in the Shema is 245, it is customary to bring this number to 248 by either: repeating the last two words of the Shema and the first word of the following benediction, or reciting “*El melekeh ne’eman*”: God faithful king. This is done as 248 is equal to the number of organs in a human body, symbolizing that it is essential to dedicate one’s entire body to servicing God and fulfilling the mitzvot.

The Shema should be recited with full concentration on the meaning of the words, to prevent distractions, it is customary to place the right hand over the eyes while saying the first verse. It should be recited out loud, enough to be heard by the ear, since it is written “*Hear, O Israel*”. Any language can be used because it is crucial that the worshipper understand what he or she is affirming. Beit Shammai took the words “when you lie down and when you rise up” literally, ruling that the evening Shema should be recited while reclining whereas in the morning it should be said standing upright, Beit Hillel argued persuasively that this merely referred to the times the Shema should be read and not the

positions. According to Hillel, one says the Shema in the same posture in which they said the blessing before it.

The Amidah

The word *Amidah* literally means standing, because it is recited while standing. It is also known as *Shemoneh Esrei*, meaning eighteen, because it originally consisted of eighteen blessings, and as *tefilah* (prayer) because it is the most important Jewish prayer and the highlight of the Jewish prayer service.



One should stand with one's feet together while reciting the *Amidah* as a show of respect for God. The rabbis add that this pose mirrors the vision of angels that Ezekiel had in which the feet of the angels appeared as one (Ezekiel 1:7). The custom is to face the direction of Israel, and if one is in Israel, to turn to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. This shows respect for the Temples, which were central to Jewish life, and reminds one that the synagogue was established to try to fill the gap in Jewish life left by the Temples' destruction. In many synagogues in the west, the ark is on the eastern wall of the synagogue for this reason. The *Amidah* is a person's opportunity to approach God in private prayer, and should therefore be said quietly, loud enough to hear oneself but not so that it is audible to others and disturbs their

concentration.

There are several interesting customs relating to one's physical position while saying the *Amidah*. Before one begins the *Amidah*, it is customary to take three small steps forward as if one is approaching a king. Some say this was derived from Abraham who "came forward" to pray for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:23). Where there is not much space, it has become the practice to take several tiny steps back before taking the three symbolic steps forward. To humble oneself before God, one bends the knees and bows at both the beginning and the end of the first blessing while saying "*Barukh atah*" (Blessed are you). One should stand erect in time to say God's name, "*Adonai*." In the sixth blessing, for forgiveness, when one says the words "*hatanu*" (we have sinned) and "*pashanu*" (we have transgressed), it is customary to lightly beat once upon the chest with one's right hand. This symbolizes that the heart is the source of the temptation to sin. One bows again during the eighteenth blessing, for thanksgiving, both at the beginning, during the words "*Modim anahnu lakh*" (We thank you) and at the end with the words "*Baruch atah*." At the end of the *Amidah*, in the meditation after the last blessing, before reciting the line, "*Oseh shalom bimromav*," (He who makes peace in his heights) one takes three steps backwards, mirroring the three steps forward taken at the beginning. While saying that line, it is customary to bow three times: toward the left, toward the right, and then forward. This is again symbolic of a subject leaving a king.

The Aleinu

Aleinu denotes the Jewish people's struggle over being the "Chosen People" and the trials that arise with that responsibility. The prayer signifies the Jewish people's faith and dedication to God. Additionally, the prayer



speaks of God's eternal rule. Many different sects within Judaism have eliminated various verses in the prayer over time. Many Ashkenazi and Reform prayer books have removed the verse "la-hevel va-rik" (vanity and emptiness), because its numerical connotation equals that of the words "Jesus and Muhammad". The text has been subject to "Numberless changes", primarily by Conservative and Reform communities, to make it less controversial and invidious; in some instances these changes have taken the form of less-than-literal translations of the traditional Hebrew into the local language.

The prayer Aleinu ("It is our duty to praise") is the closing prayer of the morning, afternoon and evening service. It consists of two prayers, *Aleinu* and *V'al Kein*. Some believe *Aleinu* was written by Tanna Rav in 3rd century Babylonia for Rosh Hashanah services. Rav was the first to institute the *Aleinu* into the service. However, other Jews believe the prophet Joshua wrote the prayer after conquering Jericho, signifying the Israelites as a superior nation among nations. However *Aleinu* was probably written by the men of the Great Assembly during the Second Temple period.

During the verse, "va-anachnu korim" (we bend the knee), many people of Ashkenazi descent or in Ashkenazi congregations, bow at the waist toward the ark. This is symbolic of bowing to God and being humbled in his presence.

The Kaddish

Many Jews think of the Kaddish as the mourner's prayer, even though it contains no mention of death. The practice of mourners reciting the Kaddish probably began during the 13th century, a time when Jews in Germany were suffering severe persecutions at the hands of the crusaders. Scholars believe its origin may be related to a legend that Rabbi Akiva rescued a soul from eternal punishment in hell by teaching the son of the departed to recite the Kaddish at a congregational service. Widespread belief in the efficiency of this practice led to children reciting the Kaddish for their parents during the 11 months after burial. Mourners recite the Kaddish for only 11 months based on a Talmudic statement implying that only the wicked are judged in purgatory for a full 12 months – and no child would want to designate his or her parents as wicked.

Another explanation as to why it is read by mourners is that it is an expression of acceptance of Divine judgment and righteousness at a time when a person may easily become bitter and

reject God. Or a further explanation is that by sanctifying God's name in public, the mourners increase the merit of the deceased person. *Kaddish* is a way in which children can continue to show respect and concern for their parents even after they have died.

The person saying Kaddish always stands, though traditions vary to whether the other worshippers do. Formerly, only one person at a time recited the Kaddish and if there were



several mourners, each said the prayer in turn. Today in virtually all congregations mourners rise and recite the Kaddish in unison.

<http://iyyun.com/teachings/barchu-blessing-and-bending>

<http://davenmaven.wordpress.com/2010/09/16/28/>

Jewish Traditions: A JPS Guide

By Ronald L. Eisenberg

http://www.nfty.org/cwr/resources/rcvp_network/traditional_movements_in_worship/

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Amidah.html>

Liberal Judaism & LGBT

Surat Knan

'Judaism is for the Human Being, the individuals in all their glorious attributes. Gender and Sexuality are part of the divine creation. Liberal Judaism welcomes individuals with all their attributes and foibles. As a matter of principle, Judaism deplores discrimination and oppression, thus Liberal Judaism sees the equal treatment of every individual – regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation as demand of prophetic justice.' (Rabbi Danny Rich, CEO Liberal Judaism 2014)

Traditionally, Judaism has understood homosexuality and transgenderism as contrary to Judaism, and this opinion is still maintained by Orthodox Judaism in principal. Progressive Judaism does not hold this view, and the struggle for equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals is at the forefront of the Liberal Jewish movement.

We are guided by the basic belief that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the Divine image, as it says in Genesis 1:27, 'God created humans in God's image. God created them; male and female God created them.', the Progressive Jewish community is committed to securing equal rights for LGBT individuals. Liberal Jews see this Genesis passage as a message for creating companionship, working together, taking care of the world - 'tikkun olam'. We may not be the same, we are in fact all different, but most of all we are equal. We believe that 'male and female symbolise an ENCOUNTER - an encounter both with oneself AND with another person, regardless gender, race, religion and ability. Our Judaism celebrates diversity, denounces social injustice, and strives for equality and human rights for all people.

The two Biblical texts that opponents of equality most often cited are both found in the book of Leviticus. In a discussion of sexual behaviour, the Israelites are instructed, "Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abomination" (Leviticus 18:22). Later, the text reaffirms, "If a man lies with a male as one lies with a woman, (...) they shall be put to death - their blood guilt is upon them" (Leviticus 20:13). How can Jews resolve the apparent conflict between Leviticus's prohibitions and the moral obligation to speak out against the injustices against LGBT individuals? We can begin by remembering the verse that sits directly between the two: Leviticus 19:18 reads, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

Leviticus approaches same-sex relationships as necessarily promiscuous, because they never occurred in the context of loving families. The intent of these laws, then, is to forbid promiscuous, 'unnatural' sexual practices in general – even between a man and women. Because the Torah does not directly address the issue of loving, monogamous, same-sex relationships, we must turn to the more general ethical framework of the Torah for guidance.

Liberal Judaism was the first religious movement in the UK to publish official liturgy celebrating and blessing same sex partnerships. Our *B'rit Ahavh* – or Covenant of Love – was published in 2015 and has become the basis for countless joyful *simchas* of love.

Among other faith denominations, Liberal Judaism continued to lobby for full equality, facing opposition from conservative politicians and religious communities despite broad public backing. The new law that sanctions same sex marriages in places of worship came into effect on 29 March 2014, and many happy couples have tied the knot ever since. We empower LGBTQ Jews to become active voices in our synagogues participating fully in all areas of Jewish life.

Over the years, Progressive Judaism has broken numerous taboos, appointing the first women rabbis, the first openly LGBT rabbis, providing mixed-faith blessings and welcoming the children of such couples on an equal basis, regardless of the gender of the Jewish parent.

In 2012, after a successful Lottery Heritage Fund bid, Liberal Judaism launched its pioneering oral history project *Rainbow Jews: Celebrating Jewish LGBT History and Heritage in the UK*. The aim was to uncover a hidden history and share this heritage with the wider audience via multiple outputs. LGBT History Month 2014 marked the launch of Britain's first ever archive of LGBT History 'Rainbow Jews' at the London School of Economics, which was attended by over 400 people. The project has brought together over 200 volunteers and contributors from diverse backgrounds and engaged a worldwide audience of over 6 million people via social media. Here's why the organisation is proud to have hosted this landmark initiative: 'Liberal Judaism believes it's a matter of justice that the voices of a marginalised community within our own community, which have not been heard, are articulated and recorded. *Rainbow Jews* celebrates the huge positive contribution that Jewish LGBT people have made within our communities and to our wider society'. We have always been, and will continue to be at the vanguard of institutions offering full equality and fairness to LGBT people.

Veteran Human Rights activist Peter Tatchell said: '*Liberal Judaism is a beacon of support for LGBT human rights. Its commitment to marriage equality marks out as humanitarian and religious trailblazer.*'

LJY-N and Netzer Olami

This section covers our history, our ideology and our current

Enjoy!

History of LJY-Netzer

1902 – Foundation of Liberal Judaism in the form of weekly prayer groups in London set up by Lily Montagu and others. The idea was to have services including more English and men and women taking an equal part.

1947 - Walter Woyda, set up an organization which aimed to bring together the many youth groups under an official ULPS (Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues) umbrella. Walter became the first chairman of the newly formed **FLPJYG** (Federation of Liberal and Progressive Jewish Youth Groups). Conferences with outstanding guest speakers were held, the first in 1949 on “Judaism and Citizenship”, social and cultural functions abounded and many joint activities were held with the Reform Movement’s **YASGB** (Youth Association of Synagogues of Great Britain).

1960s-1970s - With the voluntary help of rabbis, rabbinic students and lay members, nearly all of whom were graduates of FLPJYG, a number of weekends and other activities were centrally arranged. These culminated in a major conference on youth held in June 1972. This attracted over 100 participants and was instrumental in re-establishing a vibrant and effective Youth Movement. Meanwhile Rabbi Andrew

Goldstein, together with his wife, Sharon, was, through the annual residential Kadimah Holiday School, developing a new generation of committed ULPS youth. **ULPSNYC**, (originally ULPS National Youth Committee, later ULPS Network of Youth Clubs) was born and a full programme of youth weekends, leadership training, creative services and a regular magazine was implemented. For those over 15, a summer activity “Senior Kadimah” was instigated and run by Rabbi Clifford Cohen, first in Amsterdam, and later as an Outward Bound venture in Derbyshire.

1980s-1990s – At its annual conference in 1988, the ULPSNYC leadership made a proposal to become a Zionist Youth Movement, and in particular to affiliate to **Netzer Olami** (the international Progressive Zionist Youth Movement). But the ULPS adult leadership was not convinced of the desirability of such a step, fearing that commitment to Liberal Judaism might be overshadowed by commitment to Zionism. Tensions over this issue led a few of ULPSNYC’s young leaders to leave. Finally, in May 1991, there was a complete restructuring of the Youth Department and a new management scheme provided for two youth workers and a youth administrator under the overall control of Rabbi Danny Rich.

1993 - after several years of negotiations and discussions, ULPSNYC formally affiliated to Netzer Olami and became **ULPSNYC-Netzer**. Now structured as a classical Zionist Youth Movement, its Mazkir (General Secretary) each year automatically fills one of the youth worker posts.

2002 – ULPSNYC-Netzer made a revolutionary decision to change the way its summer camp Kadimah was run. Previously, overall responsibility for the running of the camp had fallen to adults from the ULPS and the director of Kadimah (Rabbi Danny Rich). But in 2002, ULPSNYC-Netzer decided to run its camps itself, so that the youth movement would truly be run for the youth, by the youth.

2004 – ULPSNYC-Netzer is forced to change its name to something different due to the founding of “Liberal Judaism” (replacing the former Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues). JLY (Jewish Liberal Youth) and PJY (Progressive Jewish Youth) were considered, but members of ULPSNYC-Netzer decided upon “**LJY-Netzer**” as the new name – standing for Liberal Jewish Youth.

2004 Onwards- LJY-Netzer has continued to grow and evolve over the years giving more power to the younger members through events such as Kinus, holding larger and better attended leadership seminars and by employing four full time movement

workers. Through an ideological mission statement LJY-Netzer affirms and acts upon its commitment to Liberal Judaism, Reform Zionism, Tikkun Olum and youth empowerment, striving to act as a force for good within the Jewish and wider communities.

Who knows what the future will bring.....

LJY-Netzer Ideology

Our Four Pillars

We here at LJY-Netzer have four pillars supporting ideology:

**Liberal Judaism
Empowerment**

Progressive Zionism

Tikkun Olam

Youth



Liberal Judaism

Liberal Judaism is the dynamic, cutting edge of modern Judaism. Liberal Judaism reverences Jewish tradition, and seeks to

preserve the values of the Judaism of the past while giving them contemporary force. It aspires to a Judaism that is always an active force for good in the lives of Jewish individuals, families and communities today, and equally makes its contribution to the betterment of society. Liberal Judaism confronts the challenges of our time, welcomes gladly all advances in human knowledge, and responds constructively to changing circumstances. Liberal Judaism values truth above tradition, sincerity above conformity and human needs above legal technicalities. Liberal Judaism is always willing to engage in dialogue with other streams of



Judaism, or with other religions, or with secularism. It is always ready to reconsider, modify and innovate. Liberal Judaism is the Judaism of the past in the process of becoming the Judaism of the future.

Progressive Zionism



As a Progressive Zionist Youth Movement we encourage our chaverim (members) to develop a personal relationship with Israel. We believe in the unique importance of Israel to the Jewish people and strongly support the existence of Medinat Israel (the State of Israel) and its development towards the ideas of its founders. We organise both short-term (1 month) and long-term (10 months) programmes in Israel for our members to participate in, as well as bringing a flavour of Israel to all our events through cultural experiences, working with Israeli nationals and the use of some Hebrew words.

We ensure that we provide a balanced view of Israel by welcoming those of all opinions while being critical of Israel when we see appropriate. We encourage our members to create their own relationship with Israel and form their own opinions by giving them the information they need to make an informed-decision.

We are also a branch of Netzer Olami, one of the greatest Zionist youth movements in the world and affirm the Netzer Platfor.



Tikkun Olam

We strive to be active in our commitment to Tikkun Olam (Repair of the World) on all levels, from self (Tikkun Atzmi) to social action on a range of communal and global issues. This vision of Tikkun is inspired by our Liberal Jewish ideology.

As part of our dedication to Tikkun Olam we boycott the meat and fish industries and are a vegetarian movement. We are a vegetarian movement as it reduces our carbon footprint as a movement. If you would like any more information about our boycotts or why we are vegetarian please contact the office and we are happy to discuss these issues with you.



Every year LJY-Netzer supports a charity of the year. This year it is **Bernardo's**. Barnardo's transforms the lives of the most vulnerable children across the UK through the work of our services, campaigning and research expertise.



We also have a Social Action Project, for the next two years it's **mental health awareness**. [Mental health problems are common](#) - but nearly nine out of ten people who experience them say they face [stigma and discrimination](#) as a result. This can be even worse than the symptoms themselves.

We take part in Mitzvah Day UK.

Youth Empowerment

Youth Empowerment is our newest pillar. It was brought to and passed on Veidah 5774.

LJY-Netzer believes in the power of young people to make decisions for themselves, be responsible and change the world.

LJY-Netzer is a youth movement run for and by the youth of Liberal Judaism. Our events are staffed by trained volunteers from the ages of 16-25, looking after, teaching and being role models for the younger members of the Movement.



All our decisions are made by our members and we have decision making forums for all age groups. Yom Kinus for Ananim (school years 3-4) and Plagim (school years 5-6), Kinus for Nechalim (school years 7-8) and Yamim (school years 9-10) and Veidah for Galim (school years 11-13) and Bogrim (ages 18-25).

Everything from boycotts to keeping fun themes gets discussed with asephot (discussions) going on till late into the night.

Netzer Olami

By Asher Fingerhut

Netzer Olami is the worldwide youth movement of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ).

Today there are over 16,000 members active in different sniffim (branches) all around the world. The different sniffim we have are:

- Netzer South Africa



- Netzer Russia
- Netzer Australia
- Netzer Belarus
- Netzer France
- UPJ – Netzer Germany
- Netzer Spain
- Netzer Ukraine
- LJY – Netzer
- RSY – Netzer
- Noar Telem
- NFTY
- Kol Shearith Israel – Netzer Panama

Netzer stands for Noar Tzioni Reformi (Reform Zionist Youth) and is the International Zionist youth movement of the WUPJ, home to thousands of young people in a range of countries around the world. Netzer Olami is based in Jerusalem in the central headquarters for all Netzer's sniffim.



Through our various sniffim, we run weekly meetings, summer and winter camps, residential Shabbatot, hadracha (leadership) training events, activism days, study events and seminars.

Netzer Olami works to bring together all of these young people in both ideological and practical ways, with Israel being a central focal point. We encourage as many chanichim (members) as possible to come to Israel on short term summer tours, on

our long term leadership program, Shnat Netzer, and on various other seminars and conferences. We also send shlichim (educational emissaries) to several of the sniffim. These shlichim help the young people run their movement in their countries.

As a youth movement we believe in youth empowerment and in young people running things for themselves. A central feature of our sniffim is that young people take responsibility for the major decisions affecting the movement. Each year in Israel there is an International Veida (Conference) where the young people who constitute its leadership set policy for the whole movement.

Shnat Netzer is a unique 10month leadership program for young adults in Israel that develops the skills and knowledge necessary for them to become Madrachim (leaders) in the movement. The year is spent with participants from all over the world, including South Africa, Australia, Argentina, North America, the Former Soviet Union and Europe. Together you will be able to develop skills and share experiences to help you become knowledgeable youth leaders.

Netzer Olami evolved from network of various Synagogue youth clubs to a movement that today has sniffim (branches) in progressive Jewish centers around the world. The initiative began in 1978 in two of these centers, Australia and South Africa. Rabbis from the progressive movement initiated the idea of a Reform Zionist Youth Movement and they sent Shlichim (educational emissaries) to help guide the building of the new youth movement. The Shlichim came as educators who could impart knowledge and experience related to the State of Israel and the classic framework of youth movements. A youth movement is an ideological community led by young people that continually develops through its participants. Through this partnership of Rabbis, Shlichim, the communities and the young people themselves, the youth movement was founded.



The Netzer Platform

By Issy Schmidt

As members of Netzer Olami, we adhere and agree to the 14 points of the Netzer platform.

1. **Judaism is a people, a nation and a religion**

- This point is linked to the fact that Netzer is a Religious Zionist movement. The three elements of Judaism – as a people, a nation and a religion – are indivisible.
- Judaism as a people: Netzer identifies the creation of the state of Israel as a triumph for the Jewish people, and acknowledge its role in providing a physical refuge for Jews.
- Judaism as a nation: Netzer also emphasises the importance of Israel as a place in which to promote the renewal of the Jewish religion and culture.



- Judaism as a religion: The creation of the state of Israel is the realisation of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis: 'to your offspring I assign this land' – it is a restoration to the ancestral homeland of the Jews.

2. The covenant as a moral obligation

- The covenant established at Sinai between God and Moses made the agreement that God would set Israel aside as a chosen nation, in return for the Israelites' adherence to the Mosaic Laws.
- Netzer believes that this covenant gave the Jewish people a unique religious purpose; Israel cannot be a state just like any other.
- Netzer sees Israel as having an obligation to strive to attain the highest moral ideals. Israel should be 'a kingdom of priests' (*mamlechet kohanim*), 'a holy people' (*goy kadosh*) and 'a light unto the nations' (*I'or goyim*). Israel should therefore be setting a moral example to the rest of the world.

3. Sovereignty

- Netzer believes that the national sovereignty of the Jewish people is important for the safety of Israel.
- Jewish powerlessness, and a lack of a homeland, led to centuries of persecution which culminated in the tragedy of the holocaust. It is therefore important for Jews to live within a Jewish majority.
- However, Netzer also believes in the duty of Israel to strive for full civil, human and religious rights for all its citizens, regardless of their religion. The individual rights of minorities (religious and cultural) should be respected and protected, leading to a society which is both Jewish and democratic.
- Netzer believes that the reclaiming of Jewish sovereignty provides the opportunity to show that Jewish values and traditions still have relevance when dealing with contemporary issues, and will allow Israel to be judged by its 'strength of character' rather than its 'military might'.

4. Israel and Diaspora

- The state of Israel serves as the spiritual and cultural focal point for world Jewry, but Netzer believes that Israeli and Diaspora Jews are responsible for each other, and interdependent partners in the shaping of the future of Judaism.
- All *kehillot* (communities) share in the responsibility of the fate of world Jewry, while still remaining autonomous and self-regulating.
- Netzer believes that the key to 'revitalising' Judaism is creating a deeper relationship – socially, spiritually and intellectually – between communities worldwide.

5. Aliyah Nimshechet (continuing *aliyah*)

- While it believes in the necessity of a strong Diaspora community, Netzer encourages *aliyah* in order to pursue the idea of *yishuv eretz yisrael* – the settling of the land of Israel.
- As it is only in Israel that Jews bear the responsibility of the governance of society, it is only in Israel that they can



realise their full spiritual and ideological potential, both individually and communally.

- Netzer also likes the fact that in Israel one can live national life according to the Jewish calendar.
- The act of *aliyah* is not enough, however; it should be a part of a continual effort to live out Netzer's values and beliefs, helping to create the kind of society envisioned by Netzer.

6. Progressive Judaism in Israel

- Netzer resolves to inform and educate Israelis on the values of Progressive Judaism, and to intensify its efforts to do so.
- Netzer believes that the synthesis of tradition and modernity present in Progressive Judaism, as well as its inherent commitment to *tikkun olam*, means that it offers a unique and positive contribution to Israel.
- Netzer therefore fully supports the development of Progressive Judaism in Israel, and commit to strengthening it in every way possible.

7. A pluralistic approach to Judaism in Israel

- Israel's existence is not only for the benefit of its citizens, but also to defend both the spiritual integrity and the physical security of Jewish people everywhere.
- Israel consists of many different (often conflicting) religious interpretations, and so Netzer believes that it must be a pluralistic and democratic society in order to best serve the Jewish people.
- Netzer therefore strives towards a state in which no single interpretation of Judaism (e.g. orthodox or progressive) takes legal precedence over any other.

8. Tikkun Olam

- Netzer believes that we as Jews have a special role to play in making the world a better place, due to our particular values and our vision of a Messianic Era.
- Netzer is therefore committed to playing an active role in the process of *tikkun olam*.
- The process of improvement and striving for perfection must take place at various levels in our lives: *Tikkun Atzmi* is the improvement of ourselves as individuals, *Tikkun Kehila* is the improvement of our communities, *Tikkun*

Medina is the improvement of the Jewish state, *Tikkun Am* is the improvement of the Jewish People, and *Tikkun Olam* is the improvement of the whole world.

- However, Netzer rejects the idea that each of these levels must be perfected before moving on to the next one; instead we strive to be involved in the betterment of all of these areas at all times.

- Netzer therefore defines itself as 'universalistic' and 'particularistic' – we are concerned with ourselves, the Jewish people, and with the whole world.



9. Our Values

- Netzer, as a Reform Zionist movement, believes in a particular set of values, which are fundamental to its vision and mission. Netzer strives to ensure that these values inform and are present in all things, and identify the most important values as:
 1. Prayer through ma'amad
 2. Observance and celebration of Shabbat and the Jewish festivals
 3. Jewish study (especially Torah study) as an ongoing, lifelong commitment
 4. Individual and communal informed decision-making
 5. A belief in the oneness of God
 6. The unity of the Jewish people
 7. The centrality of Israel in Jewish life
 8. *Tzedakah* (charity) and *g'milut chasadim* (loving kindness)
 9. Commitment to the prophetic vision and its vision and understanding of Judaism
 10. Social justice, and commitment to peace
 11. Equality – particularly gender equality in Judaism
 12. Mutual care and co-operation
 13. Care for the environment
 14. The dignity of all human beings, tolerance for their differences and a respect for “the other” within our society and community.
- Netzer encourages its *sniffim* to continually define for themselves what these values mean to them in Judaism and everyday life.



10. Reform Zionist community

- Netzer recognises the value of communal living, and encourages its *chaverim* to explore life in a strong communal framework.
- Netzer is committed to supporting and developing new and establish reform Zionist communities. These communities should be built on the basis of the above values, and be committed to becoming intimate, purposeful communities of participation and communal religious authority.

11. Ivrit

- Netzer believes that the knowledge of Hebrew is indispensable in the study of Judaism and the unification of the Jewish people, as a way of fostering solidarity between Diaspora and Israeli Jews.
- Netzer therefore commits to intensifying the use of Hebrew within the movement and putting greater effort into teaching it to *chanichim*.
- Netzer also affirms that *ivrit*
 - as the language of our sacred texts, as well as of the modern state of Israel – is a symbol of the



revitalisation of the Jewish people.

12. Spending time in Israel

- To further the above points of the platform, Netzer resolves to ensure that as many *chaverim* as possible go to Israel within the framework of a Netzer programme.
- Netzer further commits to encourage *chaverim* to spend a significant amount of time in Israel, participating in a long term programme (e.g. Shnat) and/or independently after they have left the movement.

13. *Hagshama* (self-realisation) and activism

- As a youth movement, Netzer is committed to being both educational and activist. Netzer believes in the importance of education as a vehicle for change and self-development, and so the majority of the activities it runs are educational in nature.
- However, Netzer also believes that ideology and education must be supported by action, and sees it as the movement's right and responsibility to take a stand on key issues in the world, as well as to work towards bringing about its vision.
- Netzer encourages the implementation of self-realisation (*hagshama*) – the living out of ideology and values in everyday life. Netzer encourages its *chaverim* to take up this 'challenge' and so lead meaningful, fulfilled Jewish lives.

14. *Geulah* (redemption)

- Netzer believes that the renewal and perpetuation of Jewish national life in Israel is necessary for the physical and spiritual redemption (*geulah*) of the Jewish people and of humanity.
- Netzer sees that time of redemption as a distant hope, but hopes that a peaceful Israel will hasten that time and fulfil the messianic dream of 'universal peace under the sovereignty of God'.
- Netzer acknowledges both the great achievements of modern Zionism, and the great difficulties it has faced, and asserts that we must continue to work through the challenges ahead in order to hasten a time of *geulah* and peace.

Social Action Project of the Year - Mental Health Awareness

By Miram Steiner



Every two years, LJY-Netzer picks a new social action project to work on. This year, attendees at Veidah, LJY's annual decision-making event, decided our social action project for at least the next two years is mental health, in association with Time to Change.

At Veidah we decided a social action project should be a real mission for the movement. An opportunity to truly change society for the better. By focusing on mental health, and participating in the Time to Change campaign, LJY members can make real progress in ending mental health discrimination and make a positive impact on society.

Mental health is an issue that isn't often talked about as often as it should be, and this is one of the reasons why we decided at Veidah to focus on it. One in four people in a year suffer from a mental health problem, and one in seven people suffer from depression. Most worryingly, suicide is the biggest killers of young males. Mental health affects our chanachim, madrichim and our families and friends. Despite this, people often wait years before seeking help from those close to them or health professionals. By educating all members of LJY about mental health, we can get people talking about their own issues, help people talk to their friends and families who may be in need, and create a force of people ready to make social progress on mental health stigma. By getting ourselves talking, we can help others realise that mental health problems are nothing to be ashamed of, and no one should be treated any different because they have a mental health problem.

The Time to Change project is a campaign dedicated to ending mental health discrimination. They run nation-wide campaigns on issues related to ending discrimination, such as "Time to Talk" day on the 6th of February, and awareness weeks on specific illnesses such as the recent "Schizophrenia Awareness Week" which aimed to end misconceptions and stereotypes about people living with schizophrenia.

LJY and its members can get involved in Time to Change all year round by getting involved with projects in their local communities and synagogues, as well as reading and sharing the work Time to Change does online. All it takes on an individual level is getting educated and involved with the campaign and making sure you make a difference in the lives of others around you. On a movement level, we will be getting involved in nationwide campaigns, making sure madrichim have good training on mental health issues, making sure our welfare policies reflect the destigmatization of mental illness and more. LJY will also be working towards making a Time to Change pledge, showing they are committed to working towards

ending discrimination based on mental health, and I hope we will be lobbying Liberal Judaism to do the same.

Mental health in association with Time to Change and LJY have the shared aims of inclusivity and equality, and through it being our social action project we can be sure that we are really helping to make social progress. The awareness and social change we can create by getting involved in the campaign and educating ourselves should never be underestimated. This is a social action project that I believe can, and will, make lasting change. It will affect the members of LJY, and it can affect the whole of society. It is, undoubtedly, time to change discrimination around mental health, and LJY is now a part of that.

By Miriam Steiner

Resources for Mental Health First Aid:

<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/join-the-conversation>

<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/guides-and-toolkits/youth-professionals>

LJY-Netzer's Charity of the Year

What is COTY?

Every year at LJY-Netzer's Veidah (decision making forum), a Charity of the Year, or COTY, is decided. This year, 2013/5773, the charity of the year is 'Windows: Channels for Communication'.

Barnardos

On this year's Veidah there was a particularly interesting and lively debate surrounding who should be LJY's charity of the year. Whilst there were a number of extremely worthy causes put forward, there is one which I believe is particularly well-suited to LJY's ideological mission, to the nature of our charitable work and which seemed to resonate with a great number in the room.

Barnardos, our new charity of the year, is a children's charity which works with some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in Britain today. Tackling issues as wide-ranging as fostering and adoption, sexual exploitation, domestic violence and child poverty, Barnardos do invaluable work with over 100,000 young people. (see their website for more details – <http://www.barnardos.org.uk/>)

Why though, is it so well-suited to LJY, and why did it seem to strike such a chord with so many in the room?

Firstly there is something especially powerful about young people helping young people – a youth movement giving time and energy to help other young people who were not born into as fortunate circumstances as many of us have been lucky enough to be. This was a sentiment expressed repeatedly at Veidah. Furthermore at Kinus a few months ago there was a strong request for a charity which was easily understandable and more relatable than previous years. In the last 4 years we have had solely Israeli charities which have sometimes felt a little distant for some of the younger participants in particular. Barnardos tackles an issue which is both geographically and age-wise, closer to home and will hopefully be invested in with greater emotion and energy than ever before!

Secondly it is extremely easy to get involved in Barnardos on a local level. With over 500 charity shops and many local, community projects it offers an opportunity for LJY members to commit beyond the few weeks of camp a year and inspire other communities we may be part of to get involved also.

Thirdly, it offers the opportunity to educate on a number of particularly pertinent and little touched on issues. Child poverty being an excellent example. Though many of us will live a few hundred metres from any number of the 3.5million children who live in the UK in poverty, or the 1.6million who grow up in a cold house because their families cannot afford heating, it is an issue that is often hidden from us. If we believe in social justice then surely we must start at home, helping those of our age and physically close to us first and foremost.

Fourthly, Barnardos are an extremely efficient, well-organized charity. They have numerous projects which we can help with and they have a network of resources and professionals who can guide us as to the best way to raise money for them. With 92p of every £1 going directly to young people, Barnardos has an extremely high meta-charity rating and we can be sure our money is being well-spent. On top of this though, they are committed to seeing our money spent as we want it spent – we can tailor our donation to a specific cause. I am currently in touch with a number of employees at Barnardos who are extremely excited to work with us and are currently coming up with various fundraising ideas and activities, which can hopefully be put into use soon!

Barnardos is a fantastic charity who we can do truly good and effective work with this year. It is a charity which is true to LJYs values and will hopefully be able to inspire and enthuse members from across the whole of the movement. We will hopefully be able to reinvigorate our activity with regards to charity and make our charity of the year this year an educational, but more importantly practical, focal point of LJY events over the coming year.

By Ben Leibowitz

Theme of the year

Ani V'ata Nesheneh Et Ha'Olam: Political Action

LJY-Netzer is steeped in a rich tradition of social action. Time and time again- whether it is through charity work whilst on Tours, raising awareness whilst on camps or our set piece events such as Mitzvah Day; LJY-Netzer has long answered the clarion call to change the world.

We know exactly why – the desire to see innovative change in the world is a central figure of the Jewish story. Just as Moses answered ‘Hineini’ when called upon by God (literally for some, figuratively for others), successive generations of Jews have tried to answer the call to carve out a better world.

Therefore by making our TOTY (Theme of the Year) ‘Ani v’atah n’shaneh et ha’olam’ – You and I Shall Change the World’, we on LJY-Netzer continue this tradition which drives us forward. You could even argue that, because we on LJY-Netzer are so aware and proud of our social activism, this TOTY is a de facto theme *every* year.



But that doesn’t mean that we can’t use the word ‘politics’ to describe our desire to change the world, nor shouldn’t we. The truth is that LJY-Netzer already makes a series of ‘political’ statements, although perhaps inadvertently; when we sign up to affiliate with ‘Everyday Sexism’, shouldn’t we push the government to pass tougher Sexual Assault laws? When we campaign for a Two State Solution, shouldn’t we lobby our political leaders to do so too? Of course we should, because these steps- although tied up in the ‘boring’ world of politics- really can help us change the world. That’s why this year ‘Ani v’atah n’shaneh et ha’olam’ carries a slightly different meaning for LJY-Netzer. The tagline for this TOTY is ‘Political Action’ and this reveals why it can be so bold and so different. For many years on LJY-Netzer, we’ve recoiled from the ‘p-word’ (politics) because of all its negative connotations. Many of these are well founded- LJY-Netzer should never ever seek to affiliate with a political party of mainstream movement because this would compromise the rich tapestry that makes up our members beliefs. Besides, which party would we join? Where would LJY-Netzer be on the political map? Both these questions are almost impossible to answer and rightly so – LJY-

Netzerchanging the world through politics shouldn't mean pinning on a Blue, Red or Yellow rosette.



The truth is that 'Ani v'atah n'shaneh et

ha'olam' is a call to go beyond our comfortable boundaries of 'social action' and engage with the 'political' world we've traditionally been scared of. I think we can take inspiration from our parent movement Liberal Judaism, who in the last 2 years have led the way for non-party political action. In 2013, Liberal Judaism Chief Executive, Rabbi Danny Rich, actively supported the governments Gay Marriage Legislation and only a month ago LJ also signed up to the Living Wage campaign. Doing one did not make LJ 'Tory' no less than the other made us 'Labour.' In fact, these two bold moves were simply affirmations of what should be at the centre-point of LJY-Netzer: here are our values, let's go out and change the world.

The Jewish community has always been one where 'Ani v'atah n'shaneh et ha'olam' and 'political action' have gone hand in hand. Some of the greatest Jewish figures throughout history have boldly innovated in the field we now call politics. In pre-modern Judaism, people like Moses and David stand out as leaders ready to actively shape their world. The world's most pioneering anti-homophobia legislation came from Harvey Milk, an American Jew in the 1970s. In Britain, Jews have led both the Conservative and Labour parties, Benjamin Disraeli and Ed Miliband. Theodor Hertzl is perhaps the greatest Jewish visionary of them all.

Back in November 2013, a clip emerged of unlikely new signing duo appeared on Israeli TV- Benjamin Netanyahu and Shimon Peres, back in the mid Nineties, singing Arik Einstein's iconic tune to 'Ani v'ata.' These two political leaders, both so divisive and derided, are perhaps two of the more unlikely candidates to be singing a song of timeless vision and idealism. Hence we on LJY-Netzer need to reclaim this song for our cause and our mission of social action and a utopian vision of how society should be.

LJY-Netzer has always been and will always be an optimistic movement that looks at what the world *can* be, not just what it currently is. This year, let's take up the challenge of

embracing rather than hiding our political side and realise that, although it has been said before, You and I shall change the world

TOTY Ideas/Sessions from Yom Chinuch.

At this year's Summer Yom Chinuch, we had a plethora of amazing sessions and outside speakers.

They were all examples of people trying to change the world that fits in with our Theme of the Year of 'Ani V'ata Nesheneh Et Ha'Olam'.

Rabbi Danny Rich: Liberal Judaism and Equal Marriage

Rabbi Danny Rich is the Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, he worked tirelessly during the review of the Equal Marriage bill fighting discrimination and intolerance. Rich presented evidence to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee looking into the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill, reiterating Liberal Judaism's stance on the issue, stating that "although Liberal Judaism respects the right of other religious movements to decline to conduct marriages which go against their teachings, and to have this right protected in law, it also seeks, in the name of freedom of religion, the right to conduct marriages which it sees as legitimate, and as an important pastoral service to its members."

Liberal Judaism was a leading participant in the campaign for Equal Marriage first and foremost because the discrimination against Same-Sex couples and the restrictions on offering them religious marriages – both supported by the law and the resources and power of the state – was an injustice which needed correction. Liberal Judaism sees itself as the inheritor of the Hebrew Biblical motif whereby the Prophets observed the contemporary society, condemned its failings and sought to encourage change.

More specifically its reasons include:

1. Liberal Judaism seeks to be an active force for good in the lives of Jewish individuals and to make its contribution to the betterment of human society. It confronts unflinchingly the challenges of our time, welcomes gladly all advances in human knowledge, and responds oconstructively to changing circumstances.

2. Liberal Judaism affirms the Jewish conception of humanity that each individual is created in the Divine image, and, believes that every person, despite their natural and other differences, ought be afforded equality of rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

3. Liberal Judaism affirms the importance of individual autonomy and, whilst recognising that individuals need guidance and that communal life and society require rules, supports prohibitive legislation only in as far as it is necessary for the protection of other individuals and of society as a whole.

4. Liberal Judaism recognises that Jewish tradition – in accord with the philosophies and ideas of the past – is a product of the environment in which it was forged. Liberal Judaism therefore seeks to synthesise the ancient values of Judaism with the insights of modern scholarship.

5. Liberal Judaism advocates loving, monogamous relationships, and wishes them to be sanctified and celebrated in front of both family and community. It accordingly wishes to extend the possibility of marriage to same-sex couples in the same manner to that enjoyed by other couples.

6. Liberal Judaism acknowledges that scholarship of the history of Jewish marriage demonstrates that the institution has evolved in practice and in meaning. Liberal Judaism therefore upholds the continuing evolution of marriage to include extending it to same-sex couples.

7. Liberal Judaism considers marriage, in accord with traditional Jewish teaching, to be a contractual arrangement by the partners concerned, and can see no moral, logical or practical reason why the possibility of marriage should not be extended to same-sex couples.

Finally, although Liberal Judaism respects the right of other religious movements to decline to conduct marriages which go against their teachings, and to have this right protected in law, it also seeks, in the name of freedom of religion, the right to conduct marriages which it sees as legitimate, and as an important pastoral service to its members.

Liberal Judaism has always considered itself welcoming to, and affirming of, all persons although it was not until 1991 that Liberal Judaism published its pamphlet *Where We Stand on Homosexuality*. Primarily motivated by the intolerant backlash that followed the AIDS epidemic,

the pamphlet rejected prejudice and discrimination, and affirmed the idea that ‘the appropriate context for the expression of human sexuality is a lasting relationship of mutual love and faithfulness between two persons’.

Before the year 2000 Liberal Judaism had no policy on Same-Sex Commitment Ceremonies, enabling its rabbis to do as they considered right. In 2000 the Rabbinic Conference of Liberal Judaism set up a working party, chaired by Rabbi Danny Rich, to consider the matter of Same-Sex Commitment Ceremonies. As a result, the Conference approved ‘the recognition of Same-Sex Partnerships between two Jews by appropriate Jewish ritual and support(ed) those (rabbis) who officiate at such ceremonies’. It accepted that, for many Jewish same-sex couples the natural and appropriate symbols for such ceremonies would be those of the wedding service, and that the traditional terminology of holiness and sanctification rightly reflected the way in which many same-sex couples understand and conduct their relationships. It further gave permission for those ceremonies to take place in a synagogue where the rabbinic and lay leadership of the local congregation agreed.

In the wake of the 2004 Civil Partnership Act, in 2005, Liberal Judaism published *Lesbian and Gay Jews and Same-Sex Relationships*’ in its *Liberal Judaism in Practice* series. More significantly, and probably as the first synagogal movement in the world to do so, Liberal Judaism published *Brit Ahavah: Covenant of Love: A Liturgy for the Service of Commitment for Same-Sex Couples*.

In March 2011 Liberal Judaism formally resolved to update its liturgy and practice to make marriage for same-sex couples fully equal to that of heterosexual couples.

Rabbi Aaron Goldstein: Legal Aid

Rabbi Aaron Goldstein is the Rabbi at Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue. He has been part of active campaigns for Legal Aid, the Living Wage and many other social action projects.

Let’s make no fairytale of Avram’s life. It was a tough one.

True he seems to have had a calling and promises from God but we rely on the ancient rabbinic tales to convince us that he had a prior knowledge of God, before

being told to leave the second place in which he had settled following the death of a close family member: first Ur after his brother Haran dies and secondly the place called Haran following his father Terach's death. Even before this moment, his own longevity has been called into question as in the Biblical words; Sarai was barren and could not bear children.

He experiences famine in the land he had been promised, almost as soon as he arrives and is forced to survive the debauchery of Egypt only at the cost of subjecting Sarai to the Pharaoh's harem. Avram has to recognize the growth of Lot into a man of his own means, letting him go from his household at the right time before the family is torn asunder. If one were to question the close affection Avram has for his orphaned nephew, Lot, it is immediately erased as he intervenes when Lot is caught up in a power struggle between 4 Canaanite kings – it is rather irrelevant whether this is historic fact or myth, the latter being quite probable as Avram nowhere else is depicted as a warrior.

So it is actually quite remarkable that (in Genesis 15) – after all this *tsurus* – Avram accepts God's reassurance that he would indeed possess a land and sire a son to insure his progeny – with Sarai who from all the literary cues was his beloved and that fact obviously mattered. God merely reiterates a promise and Avram seems to accept it: *V'he'emin b'Adonai v'yakhshveha lo tzedakah* – And because he (Avram) put his trust in the Eternal One, God, considered him favourably.

“With nothing more than an extravagant reiteration of the promise of offspring, Avram drops his question and trusts in God. “And thus you find,” observes an ancient midrash about this verse (Mekhilta d'Rabi Ishmael, Beshallach 7), “that our father Abraham inherited this world and the world-to-come only as a reward for the faith that he had.” (The Jewish Study Bible)” Jon Levenson suggests that: “In the Tanakh, faith does not mean believing in spite of the evidence. It means trusting profoundly in a person, in this case the personal God, who has reiterated the Divine promise.”

Rabbi Lawrence Kushner suggest that: “Arrogant faith, blind faith, challenges the physical laws and can only be satisfied with increasingly difficult tests. [A faith such as these demands] “If you really have faith, then you'll do this.” Opposed to such spiritual brinkmanship is a quiet, gentle trust that never calls us to pit our piety against the natural order...when we are unsure or afraid, such faith is our support...if I am very fortunate, someday, I may understand.”

Arthur Green presents a Hasidic reading of Jeremiah 17:7, “Blessed is the person who trusts in the Eternal One and the Eternal is his trust.” Why the repetition? Because when we trust in God, all we seek is God's own Self. We trust in God to bring us nothing but God! That trust, one that seeks no reward or vindication other than God's presence, is one that can survive great challenge.

Avram, through all of the *tsurus* of his life is able to trust in God. So I pray might we through all that life throws us, for found within that trust is great strength. As Arthur

Green comments (on Sefat Emet's own commentary of Lech L'cha), "Thank you God, for all that nervous energy. Life as an angel might have been easier – standing still to do Your bidding. But it is our walking, our ever climbing (and sometimes falling!) from rung to rung that makes us human. Despite all the struggle and pain that go along with growing, we wouldn't have it any other way."

It is often the most vulnerable in society who are challenged in a way that we would never wish on ourselves. In positions of weakness we rely and must trust on others and pray that they will be there for us. We are well aware of the strength of community that can be an incredible support when we are in need and a vital element of our self-esteem to which we contribute when we are able.

Yet beyond the walls of our communities, are many who have no community to support them. That is where the agencies of the State are so vital, the backstop to family and community. We must all trust in those agencies and occasionally challenge them when their thinking seems to be unjust: and so I raise the issue of proposals to radically alter the legal aid system. Whilst acknowledging undoubted abuse of the system, the proposals seem to take advantage of this fact, not to root out abuse but to disadvantage the most vulnerable.

A proposed Residence Test for all non-criminal legal aid should sit uncomfortably to us, the children of refugees. Children and families refused support from local authorities will not be able to access legal aid to ensure they are adequately accommodated in line with the law; newly-recognized refugees will have to wait for a year from the date they claimed asylum to access legal aid if they are made homeless or denied healthcare, so that for example, victims of trafficking who are not properly recognized as such will not be able to access legal aid to ensure they receive the support they need and deserve.

This is not about lawyers protecting their incomes. Most who act on legal aid supported criminal cases barely make a profit. It is about ensuring that those imprisoned do not have their rights 'vanished.' It is about ensuring that we as citizens without the means might challenge such issues that demand Judicial Review, recently including HS2, challenges to elderly care homes, maternity and A & E departments through to fox-hunting.

As Jews and especially as Liberal Jews, we sometimes feel unable, too small to act on national or international issues in a meaningful way. On this issue, I give you a simple and easy way to respond. Please support by putting pressure on the Government to reconsider their proposals with the postcards here or at

<http://savejusticeuk.wordpress.com/>

We all deserve to have trust and just perhaps, it might lead to faith.

JCORE, Malte Gembus, - "So you think you're not prejudiced?"

The Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE) are the leading Jewish voice on Race and Asylum. <http://www.jcore.org.uk/>

Activity	Aims
<p>Warm up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handshakes • Enemy / Defender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - get participants active - set a playful and encouraging tone for the rest of the session
<p>1st part: What is a stereotype?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectrum: Read out statements, participants have to position themselves in the spectrum between “Agree” and “Disagree” • Labels: “Which stereotype am I?” activity 	<p>Explore initial assumptions of stereotyping and racism</p> <p>Give participants an idea of what it feels like to be stereotyped</p>
<p>2nd part: Racial stereotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show series of clips about racial stereotypes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jackie Mason Jewish stereotypes 2. Stereotypes about black / white people – Dave Chappelle Discussion about similarities between the clips seen – relate back to stereotype definition • Picture activity: Stereotype vs. representation Show pictures of different groups, talk about initial attitudes and labels, discuss which image shows a stereotype and which doesn’t 	<p>Trigger thoughts about stereotypes in our society and in ourselves</p> <p>Explore possible definitions of what a stereotype is / is not</p>
<p>3rd part: Asylum reality & Stereotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz Read out statements the group has to position themselves in between false and true • Adults in the life of an asylum seeker Put up five flipchart paper size posters around the room, write five words 	<p>Learn facts and numbers about asylum seekers in the UK today</p> <p>Explore what the reality of unaccompanied minors looks like in the UK today and create understanding for</p>

	their situation
Final thoughts and evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you take away with you from this workshop? 	Wrap up the session and evaluate the workshop

For more information you can download their Resource Choveret:

<http://www.ljy-netzer.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/JCORE-Choveret-for-Youth-Groups.pdf>

Ben Leibowitz : Sign on the Green Line: educate with integrity

Ben Leibowitz is an experience LJY-Netzer Chavera, having been on many events as a chanich and madrich, he was also President at Cambridge JSoc. He was part of the cross-communal team that put together the Sign on the Green Line Campaign. <http://signonthegreenline.org/>

The aim of the ‘*Sign on the Green Line*’ campaign is simple – to get Jewish institutions across the country to use maps of Israel that include the (pre-1967) Green Line.

This request, however, has clearly struck a chord with the Jewish community. Seven days ago, 16 young Jewish people from diverse backgrounds, aged between 17 and 24, launched a website, a Facebook page, a Twitter account and a vision.

A week later and the campaign has garnered vast volumes of press attention, exploded across the Twittersphere and other social media forums and is being discussed feverishly in university J-Socs up and down the country.

If the aim of this campaign is simple, the rationale and impetus behind the campaign is even bolder in its simplicity. This is a call on the Jewish community to educate with integrity.

With a dual belief in firstly the power of maps in shaping our conscious and subconscious perspectives, and secondly the necessity of the Green Line to an accurate portrayal of Israel, we aim to get every Jewish institution in the country to pledge to educate with maps that clearly show the Green Line.

This is not a political statement. This is not an imposition of borders, nor is this 16 young people who think we have found the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is a call to be educated with consistency, accuracy and integrity. There is little controversial about marking the Green Line on a map. Indeed, the maps on the website of the Israeli government and maps used by organisations such as BICOM, already appreciate the necessity of its use.

There is, clearly, in both the eyes of the international community – for which the line is used to demarcate two separate areas of land in the absence of a peace deal –and in the eyes of the Israeli government, which has never annexed the West Bank and does not, therefore, see the West Bank (minus the exception of East Jerusalem) as legally part of sovereign Israel – a need for this line in an accurate portrayal of the complex realities of the Israeli-Palestinian situation today.

The failure to use maps that include this line risks not only betraying a bias as to whom the land is seen to belong but, most importantly, fails to educate with accuracy and honesty.

There has been widespread support for the campaign from across the British Jewish community, and in general there has been an appreciation of the reasoned logic and cogent call the campaign has made.

There have, however, been a few notable, and troubling, exceptions, noted in this newspaper last week. The campaign has been called “silly” by one Jewish leader, with another claiming we need an injection of “sanity”.

These comments were not supported by reasoned statements or argument, but were knee-jerk reactions displaying an immaturity which we, as campaigners with an average age of 20, understand we would not be able to get away with.

It is a puzzling and, indeed, slightly disconcerting day when young Jews engage, with lucidity and intelligibility, with Israel issues, and indeed call for more accurate and just education, and are attempted to be dismissed by members high up in the Jewish community.

Having never been offered an argument against our campaign with any real substance or persuasiveness, it is unclear where exactly we and these select few figures diverge. Surely these figures understand the importance of maps in shaping perceptions?

Surely they appreciate the importance of the Green Line as a legal and geopolitical demarcation between these two areas of land? Surely they believe in the need to educate the leaders of tomorrow with integrity?

Especially when they are making a point of asking for it. This campaign, bolstered by reason, backed by a committed team and sustained by a genuine conviction of the compulsion of the cause, shows little signs of abating and indeed continues to grow in scope and depth by the day.

If you feel compelled by the cause and wish to sign our petition, put pressure on your local educational institutions to commit to education with integrity, or wish to find out more about the Green Lines campaign, then we would urge you to do so, and to become part of this grassroots movement which is positively changing how we educate on Israel – one Green Line at a time.



Thank you all who contributed.

We hoped this has helped further your personal development as well as aided you in the education of others.

Watch this space as more articles will be added to this choveret throughout the summer!

