

Hak'hel הקהל

Conceptual conversations surrounding Israel

טבת תשס"ה - January 2005

This curriculum was written for the North American Coalition for Israel Engagement (NACIE), the organizational body that preceded Makōm at the Jewish Agency. Though several years "old", this material is still of great relevance to World Jewry, particularly in North America. In many ways, these sessions cover the core, foundational questions that guide the field of Israel Engagement today. "Hak'hel" was designed to help North American Jewish adults re-engage with and explore the essential issues that underpin their relationship with Israel.

The name "Hak'hel" is drawn from the event described in the Torah at the end of Sukkot, when the entire nation of Israel gathers together to listen to the reading of *Sefer Devarim*. In this grand, dramatic moment, all of the people come as one to participate in a shared Jewish experience. In designing a curriculum that explored the core questions surrounding Israel, we chose to draw specifically from this image: the coming together to a nationwide conversation on core values. At the same time, the conversation also allows for multivocality, for each individual to process in his or her own way.

Hak'hel's Session topics include:

- **Why Israel?:** Is the existence of Israel a privilege and/or a necessity for the global Jewish community? Why does Israel exist today?
- **The longing for Zion:** What is the place of "longing" in Jewish life, in a world in which a Jewish State exists? How do we define "longing"?
- **Myth and Reality:** Are we interested in engaging with a "mythic Israel" or with the reality of Israel today? Are we comfortable engaging with this reality? What role do
- **Engaging with Israel through Culture:** Achad Ha'Am conceived of Israel as a Jewish center that will generate a vibrant Hebrew culture. Do you agree with his vision?
- **Media's role in shaping our image of Israel:** What are the ramifications of constant exposure to media images of Israel on our own perceptions and attitudes?
- **The nature of our engagements with Israel:** What are the ultimate (or desired) outcomes of our engagement with Israel?

The curriculum was written for the North American Coalition for Israel Engagement (NACIE) / Makōm by various writers from 3 different educational organizations: Melitz, Makom B'Galil, and Oranim Academic College of Education. Esti Moskovitz-Kalman served as Content Director, and Adi Inbar as Production Coordinator. Marlene Korenstein was the editor, and Michael Fisher and Jaime Walman served as Consultants.

Be'hatzlacha!

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