People I - Me and Jewish Peoplehood

Introduction:
Being connected to “my Jewish identity” can mean so many things to so many different people. While you were on Birthright, your connection to the Jewish People, to Am Yisrael, was probably drilled into you at various moments! So what does it mean? When everyone expects me to be connected to the Jewish People, how does this connect to my life?

In this session, we will receive the help of a master-educator, to gain a useful frame for understanding Jewish Peoplehood, and the Declaration of Israel’s Independence will help us begin to float ideas of how all this connects with Israel.

Goals:
- Participants will appreciate that Israel was built on an understanding of Jewish Peoplehood
- Participants will assess their own connection to Jewish Peoplehood, through a 5-legged paradigm
- Participants will begin to grapple with the breadth of connections to the Jewish People.

Big Question
- In what way am I a Jew?

Guiding Questions
- What does Israel have to do with the Jewish People?
- Do I see myself as part of the Jewish people? What makes me a part of the Jewish people?
Preparation for Facilitator

- Watch all the video clips prior to the session. For the Avraham Infeld video, make sure you understand his points. If you have time, decide which of the 5 “Legs” of Jewish Peoplehood most resonate with you.
- Set up the link for Avraham Infeld’s “5 Legged Table” speech on a computer or projector. Make sure you have speakers. You might wish to download the videos to your computer, in case the internet connection is weak. www.keepvid.com
- Make sure to get 5 laptops for use prior to the session. (You could ask some students to volunteer their computers. They should come 10 minutes early to set up the video links) Make sure the sound works on each computer.
- In Part 2: Gateways to Jewish Peoplehood students will need to walk around the room and look at 5 different texts and 5 different videos or songs. You should set up six tables with a title page, printouts of the texts, strips of colored paper, a black marker and a computer with the video or song loaded at each table. You should also cut out the trigger questions for the songs and tape them to the top right or left corner of the computers.

Make It Modular

Ideally, the session is done in its entirety. However, if time is limited, you should feel free to be selective about which components of this session you cover. To ensure alignment to the session's goals do not eliminate:

- **Part 1: Israel’s Declaration of Independence**

- **Part 2: Gateways to Jewish Peoplehood:** Either (a) watch the Infeld video and then jump into selecting the colored strips of paper building the Group Chart. OR (b) Do the text/media study around the room (skipping the Infeld video) and move right to the Group Chart. Then, no matter which activity you choose, move right into the personal mission statement.

- **Part 3: Course Overview**

Planning Tip: when planning the session it is important to not only think about timing but also about what activities and materials are going to resonate the most with your students. It’s important to have a variety of activities for the variety of learners in the group and we recommend being thoughtful about this as you decide how to set up the session.
Materials Needed
- Five computers and 6 tables set up around the room
- 6 sets of different colored pieces of paper, three sizes of each (see instructions under the section “Group Chart”) 
- Black marker at each table 
- Masking tape to make the graph (see instructions under the section “Group Chart”) 
- Print-outs of Israel’s Declaration of Independence – a copy per pair. 
- 1 Printout of each of the 5 legs sheets (Memory, Family, etc) 
- The “Post Its”

Suggested Room Layout: tables should be set up around the room so students can walk to each table. Chairs should be set up in a circle (separate from the tables) to foster discussion.

Session Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Suggested Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Israel Update, Briefly review last session, introduce this session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1: Pre-session assignment</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Participants will share their writing assignment in pairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: Gateways to Jewish Peoplehood</td>
<td>65 minutes</td>
<td>Participants will watch Infeld’s video on the “5 Legged Table” and then explore which aspects of Jewish Peoplehood they use to express their identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Close this session and briefly look to next session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wrap Up</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Looking Ahead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session Implementation/Description:

Note: At the beginning of each session you will give an introduction. This section is important as it functions as a bridge between sessions – reminding students about the material that was covered in the prior session and framing the material for the current session. Below are some suggested points to help you create that bridge between sessions. Note that you don’t need to read the points below word for word!

**Israel Update**

Before launching into the session, selected participant(s) present an update on Israeli current events. Remind them to present their findings through the prism of 4HQ. Help the group to hone their understanding and application of these four ideas. It may well be that all four questions crop up in all news headlines, but even then you will find that opposing parties involved probably place different emphasis on the four issues and/or have different answers to the four questions.

Remember, what we are trying to do is transform the participants into 4HQ people – for these four questions to become instinctive, natural to them. Keep helping them learn.

**Review Last Session – 2 minutes**

Last session, we looked into a different way of defining Israel to the Jewish People. As we saw, To Be A People, Free In Our Land, maps out the four key ideas that we are going to be exploring. The first of which, going by the order of the Hebrew words, is People. In Hebrew, Am. In what way am I a part of the Jewish People, and where does Israel fit in?

**Introduce Current Session – 3 minutes**

Being connected to “my Jewish identity” can mean so many things to so many different people. While you were on Birthright, your connection to the Jewish People, to Am Yisrael, was probably drilled into you at various moments! So what does it mean? When everyone expects you to be connected to the Jewish People, how does this connect to your life?

In this session, we will receive the help of a master-educator, to gain a useful frame for understanding Jewish Peoplehood, and the Declaration of Israel’s Independence will help us begin to float ideas of how all this connects with Israel.
Part 1: Israel and the Jewish People

In pairs, read through the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel [attached to the end of this document], and note down answers to the following three questions:

- How many times is “Jewish religion” or “Jewish faith” mentioned? Why do you think this is?
- Compare this to the amount of times you see “Jewish People” mentioned. Why does it appear so often?
- What might we learn from this about the connection between the Jewish People and the State of Israel?

Transition: Bearing in mind that this founding document would seem to place equal if not more emphasis on the “Jewish People” as opposed to “Judaism”, it makes sense to work out what we might mean by Jewish Peoplehood... We are going to hear from a speaker who has thought a lot about Jewish Peoplehood and who has some ideas about how every member of the Jewish community can opt-in to the Jewish world.

Note: Students may have heard Avraham Infeld speak during Birthright. If they did, remind them of that experience now. As they watch the video, they should consider which of the 5 Legs resonate with them.

Part 2: Gateways to Jewish Peoplehood

The 5 Legged Table: Jewish Peoplehood according to Avraham Infeld JDOV Video (15m)

After they have watched the video, explain to the group that we are now going to take each of these concepts and decide which of the “legs” most resonate with each of us in terms of expressing our Jewish identity in the context of community. It might be worth pointing out that we are not necessarily saying that Infeld’s scheme is perfect, or that they must 100% agree with it, but that it does provide “a way” (not necessarily “the only way”) to talk generatively about Jewish Peoplehood. This is why we are using it.
Processing the 5 Legs

Instructions: Instruct the participants to visit each of the 5 stations.

At each station, there should be:
1) a computer with a video or a song
2) the sheet for that station with a song, quote and text to consider
3) a marker
4) colored strips of paper

The educational content is there in order to help them consider and determine which of the 5 legs most resonates with their Jewish identity. (At the “other” station, there should be a large sheet of paper with various colored markers so students can write additional words or phrases to describe their additional idea). There should be 3 slips of paper in each color, length, and for every student, so they all have the option of choosing any of the lengths of construction paper at each station. (For example: Memory = pink, Family = green, Covenant = orange, Land/State of Israel = yellow, Hebrew language/Culture = blue.) After they’ve visited each table, they should take a slip of colored paper, and use the marker to write their name on it in order to add it to the “Group chart.”
## MEMORY

### Traditional Text

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival of the Lord. Throughout the seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten; no leaven shall be found in all your territory. And you shall explain to your son on that day, “it is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt.”

- Exodus 13: 6-8

### Contemporary Quote

“JEWS HAVE SIX SENSES…Touch, taste, sight, smell, hearing ... memory. While Gentiles experience and process the world through the traditional senses, and use memory only as a second-order means of interpreting events, for Jews memory is no less primary than the prick of a pin, or its silver glimmer, or the taste of the blood it pulls from the finger. The Jew is pricked by a pin and remembers other pins. It is only by tracing the pinprick back to other pinpricks – when his mother tried to fix his sleeve while his arm was still in it, when his grandfather’s fingers fell asleep from stroking his great-grandfather’s damp forehead, when Abraham tested the knife point to be sure Isaac would feel no pain – that the Jew is able to know why it hurts.

When a Jew encounters a pin, he asks: What does it remember like?”

— Jonathan Safran Foer, Everything Is Illuminated

### Modern Media

**Song: “Exodus from Egypt” by Eti Ankri**

http://youtu.be/L_j5QpvR-pY

Eti Ankri was born in 1963 in Lod, to a Tunisian Jewish family. She served in the Israeli Education Corps, and then studied at the Rimon school of music. A successful actress and former Singer of the Year, Eti has undergone a gradual and creative transformation into a devout religiosity.
Traditional Text

All of Israel is responsible for one another.

"The Talmud, Shavuot 39a"

Contemporary Quote

“I’m always so proud when it’s a Jew who wins the Pulitzer Prize or the Nobel Prize. And conversely, I’m always so glad when the serial killer isn’t Jewish.”

—Joan Rivers, American comedian

Modern Media

I’ll Be There For You: Studio G-dcast Berkeley was a Torah study group, organized by Kevah, of six families from Berkeley, CA. Jane Gottesman, Geoffrey Biddle and their three girls, Eloise, Petra, and Penina, hosted Studio G-dcast in their home to make a film about sibling relationships in the Torah. The group featured eleven kids aged 5 to 15. Their parents included a speechwriter, studio painter, landscape architect, art photographer, museum curator, singer, programmer, professor, and several entrepreneurs. The group, which also benefited from interfaith dialogue, came together from very different backgrounds and experiences with Torah study. To learn the texts, the group wrote, painted, drew, story-boarded, and sang. This is the result of their learning:

http://www.g-dcast.com/studioberkeley/
Moses ascended to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "So shall you say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel, You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to Me. And now, if you obey Me and keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples, for Mine is the entire earth."

-Exodus Chapter 19:3-5

“A contract is made for a limited period, for a specific purpose, between two or more parties, each seeking their own benefit. A covenant is made open-endedly by two or more parties who come together in a bond of loyalty and trust to achieve together what none can achieve alone. A contract is like a deal; a covenant is like a marriage. Contracts belong to the market and to the state, to economics and politics, both of which are arenas of competition. Covenants belong to families, communities, charities, which are arenas of cooperation. A contract is between me and you – separate selves – but a covenant is about us – collective belonging. A contract is about interests; a covenant is about identity. And hence the vital distinction, not made clearly enough in European politics, between a social contract and a social covenant: a social contract creates a state; a social covenant creates a society.”

-Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, thinker, philosopher, former Chief Rabbi of England

Song: “Prayer for the Secular” by Kobi Oz
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXJvIx-7ubE

Yaakov (Kobi) Oz was born in Sderot to Tunisian Jewish parents. He began playing music and composing at the age of 15. He started out playing keyboards for the band Sfatayim, which performed traditional Moroccan music. Oz organized a demonstration in 2007 to raise public awareness of the tragedy of his hometown, which is constantly under missile attack from the Gaza Strip. In 2010, Oz released his second solo album, Mizmorey Nevochim (Psalms for the Perplexed).
Then say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land.

- Ezekiel 37:21

Ours is a country built more on people than on territory. The Jews will come from everywhere: from France, from Russia, from America, from Yemen... Their faith is their passport.

-David Ben-Gurion, First Prime Minister of Israel

Song: “I Have No Other Country” by Ehud Manor
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LakSjcFZvcs

Ehud Manor (born July 13, 1941; died April 12, 2005) was an Israeli songwriter, translator and radio/TV personality.
Kapara Alecha (כפרה עליי) 
Literally translates to 'Atonement over you' and figuratively means 'darling' or 'loved one'. The word Kapara, actually refers to an old ritual carried out in Orthodox Jewish Custom during Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, when villagers take a chicken and swing it over their heads while reciting a prayer. The chicken is slaughtered and it (or its cash value) is given to the poor. I might use this to address my friend after they did a wonderful favor by saying: "John, 'Atonement over you'. I can't believe you did such a wonderful thing.

Yalla (יאלה):
"Yalla" is actually an Arabic word and it means “let’s go!” or “hurry up!” You might also hear Israelis use it when ending a phone call – “Yalla, bye!” This combination of Arabic and English is distinctly Israeli.

"Hebrew word for "charity" tzedakah, simply means "justice" and as this suggests, for Jews, giving to the poor is no optional extra but an essential part of living a just life."

— Peter Singer, The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty

Ehud Banai was born in Jerusalem and is an Israeli singer/songwriter. In 2005, Banai was voted the 28th-greatest Israeli of all time, in a poll by the Israeli news website Ynet to determine whom the general public considered the 200 Greatest Israelis.
Additional “Post-It’s” to Help Students Understand the Songs

It can be a little challenging to understand a culture that is different from one’s own without a little framing. Since there isn’t time to explain the cultural context of each song, we have provided these trigger questions to help guide students in their understanding of the media. We recommend cutting these questions out and taping them to the edge of the computer screen, (like a post-it 😊) so students can see them while listening to/watching each song.

Memory:

The phrase, “Each day and age, one must see oneself as though having escaped Egypt” is taken directly from the Passover Haggadah. What do you think Zohar is trying to say about memory in the context of her song?

Covenant:

Kobi Oz is an Israeli who has explored combining his secular views with his traditional roots in his music. What complexities does the song point to about his desire to speak to God and his beliefs/actions?

Land/State of Israel:

Though this song has turned into a sort of national anthem, the songwriter originally meant this song as a critique. What do you think the songwriter may have intended the listener to consider during the song?

Hebrew Language/Culture:

Note the significance: a religious word (Kapara, “atonement”) makes its way into common vernacular and the word “yalla” is actually Arabic, borrowing a word from another culture.

What do you think Banai was trying to say by writing this song in English?
Group Chart – 20 minutes

Each participant should rank his or her 3 “legs” in order of priority, with #1 (And the longest strip of paper) being what they value the most. Note: Remind participants to rank their real “legs,” and not their ideal ones. Participants might associate the “Covenant” category with being religious, but try to encourage students not to shy away from this category, as they don’t have to be religious to be moved by a spiritual or religious ritual or place. For example, they may have had a bar or bat mitzvah because their parents made them do it because it is a tradition of the community. As teenagers, they may have only done it because they were commanded (by their parents 😊) but as emerging adults they might be glad they had the experience even if they weren’t intrinsically motivated at the time.

On the floor, create the following diagram (using masking tape – the bigger the better!):

Participants should place their 3 cards the appropriate columns, each participant adding on top of the others. This exercise will create a visual group bar graph that displays the tendencies of how the group relates to Jewish Peoplehood and community through the expression of their individual Jewish identity.

Invite people to come stand around the graph in order to look at the results and have a group discussion. Look at the group's "Top 3" tendencies, according to the graph. Discuss the results with the group. Pay special attention to any glaring results.
Ask the group:
- Were these results unexpected?
- If so, what surprises you about the results?
- Why did you choose the categories that you chose? (Pick a few people to explain their choices, at least one from each of the 5 categories)
- Does seeing others’ responses make you reconsider your own? Would you change any of your choices if you could? If so, which one(s)?
- Do you think Infeld’s schema is insufficient? Is he missing something? Would you add a different leg to the table?

“The Israel Update”
- Ask if there are any lingering questions
- Pick the volunteers for next week

Conclusions/Wrap Up – 10 minutes
Summary: Today, we addressed questions of identity and Peoplehood by thinking about how your Israel is fundamentally connected to the Jewish People, how you define and express your Jewish identity, and how to connect to the Jewish People as a result of expressing that identity. Hopefully you have a clearer understanding of what this People is, that you are such an honored member of!

To close, ask participants to share one question (lingering issue, challenge, question) and one exclamation point (something new you learned today, something that surprised you) they are taking away from today’s session. (You can use the ? mark and ! document by putting it on the table or the floor to animate this part of the session.)

Looking Ahead – 5 minutes
- Next week, we will start to think about Peoplehood and Obligation, and we will explore what our responsibilities are in the context of Jewish Peoplehood. If we are part of a collective, does this collective expect anything from us, or is it just a facebook page we occasionally get updates from?
- Homework: Remind them they will receive an email with their homework for the following week the next day. See Pre-Session Assignments in Session #2 for homework.
Post-Session Reflection for Facilitator

Success Checklist

☒ Did participants develop a deeper understanding of how their Israel experiences affected their Jewish identity?
☒ Did participants respond to the 5 Legged Table metaphor? Did it help them to more clearly articulate their Jewish identity preferences?

How did it go? Reflection on the session:

In the "Success Checklist," if you aren't able to answer "yes," to the questions, why do you think these objectives weren't achieved?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What was one thing that surprised you during the session?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What was something that happened that you weren't prepared for?
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________________________________________________________________________

Was there anything that happened in the group that needs to be addressed in the next session?
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Is there anything you want to discuss with your mentor or supervisor?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Israel’s Declaration of Independence, May 1948

ERETZ-ISRAEL [(Hebrew) - the Land of Israel, Palestine] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, ma’pilim [(Hebrew) - immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country’s inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and reaffirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people – the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe – was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations.

Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel,undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.
On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.


WE DECLARE that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People’s Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People’s Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called “Israel”.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL – in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months – to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.
WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream – the redemption of Israel.


David Ben-Gurion
Mordekhai Bentov
Eliyahu Berligne
Rabbi Wolf Gold
Yitzchak Gruenbaum
Eliyahu Dobkin
Zerach Wahrhaftig
Rabbi Kalman Kahana
Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin
Zvi Luria
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Daniel Auster
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David Remez
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Bekhor Shitreet
Moshe Shertok