

PEOPLEHOOD PAPERS 37

SEPTEMBER 2026 • TISHREI 5787

PEDAGOGIES OF PEOPLEHOOD

A Selection of Educational Practices for
Jewish Peoplehood from M²'s Pedagogies Fellowship



M²: THE INSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENTIAL JEWISH EDUCATION

Editors: Shlomi Ravid, Clare Goldwater and Mollie Andron

Published by the Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education

publications@jpeoplehood.org

©2026 Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education. All rights reserved

M² is proud to partner with the Z3 Project of the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto, California in launching the Pedagogies of Peoplehood Research Fellowship.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTIONS

Introduction from the Editor	1
<i>Dr. Shlomi Ravid</i>	
The Pedagogies of Jewish Peoplehood: Cultivating Collective Consciousness With Educational Creativity	3
<i>Mollie Andron</i>	
Introduction: Recurring Themes of the Peoplehood Fellows	5
<i>Adam Eilath</i>	
The Peoplehood Problem Has Changed	8
<i>Rabbi Amitai Fraiman</i>	

PEOPLEHOOD PAPERS

The Story of Israel Through Hasidic Storytelling: Bridging Reality and Hope	11
<i>Dr. Yakir Englander</i>	
36 Questions that Lead to Peoplehood: A Practice for Increasing Empathy and Connection in a Fractured Jewish World	17
<i>Rabbi Jeni S. Friedman</i>	
Primary Sources as a Portal to Jewish Peoplehood	21
<i>Shuvi Hoffman</i>	
“The World Was Created for Me” vs. “I Am But Dust and Ash”: Anava/Humility as a Pedagogy Toward Jewish Peoplehood	25
<i>Rabbi Aytan Kadden</i>	
The Mosaic of the Jewish People: A Pedagogy of Relational Sense-Making	29
<i>Mikhael Keshner</i>	
The Things We Carry: A Pedagogy of Jewish Migration and Adaptation	33
<i>Dr. Analucia Lopezrevoredo</i>	
Drawing Out a New Torah	37
<i>Jacqueline Nicholls</i>	
Peoplehood Orientation: Nurturing Klal Yisrael through Torah Study	41
<i>Laynie Soloman</i>	
Zakhor: A Pedagogy of Memory	45
<i>Dr. Samantha Vinokor-Meinrath</i>	
Pedagogy of Rootedness: Retrieving Rootedness and Building a Sense of Belonging	49
<i>Dr. Dominika Zakrzewska</i>	

Introduction from the Editor

In a report published by the Center of Jewish Peoplehood Education in 2011 summarizing the work of the Global Task Force on Peoplehood Education titled Jewish Peoplehood Education – Framing the Field, two out of the six framed as core challenges were: From concept to pedagogy and from Pedagogy to program. The report states: "Peoplehood educational programs are rare commodities, and in fact interventions with the desired Peoplehood effect have yet to be fully designed. ... there are no Peoplehood education resource books, manuals and materials to use, copy, improve or even critique. The Peoplehood educator is facing a major shortage of materials necessary to implement his agenda successfully". (2011, P27).

An article I co-authored with Clare Goldwater, published in 2013 in Peoplehood Papers 11—which was dedicated to *Peoplehood in Practice: Shifting from the "What" to the "How"*—echoed similar sentiments: "it is an acknowledgement that we are dealing with an identity crisis that requires a holistic educational approach facilitated by educators as the key change agents for assuring a strong and rich Jewish collective future. It reflects a conviction that our response should be practical, proactive and impactful. We believe that it signifies a broader shift from an intellectual conversation about what is Peoplehood to a practical approach to rebuilding Jewish collective identity; A shift in focus from concept-building to people-building".

And yet it took over a decade for a serious initiative for addressing the challenge to be launched. M² in collaboration with the Z3 Project launched the first ever fellowship of "master practitioners to develop new pedagogies of Peoplehood rooted in Jewish tradition, that can help learners and communities cultivate a stronger sense of belonging to the Jewish People". It is important to reflect for a minute on the meaning of committing to develop pedagogies. Pedagogy according to the Encyclopedia Britannica is "the study of teaching methods, including the aims of education and the ways in which such goals may be achieved". A pedagogy by design is not the development of one specific program but rather the creation of platform for developing multiple programs. A meta-program that enables the nurturing of diverse expressions of world views through impactful educational methodologies.

As the publication for this field, *The Peoplehood Papers* is honored to showcase a selection of these newly developed pedagogies, recognizing the pioneering nature of this initiative and its creative projects. We publish them both in appreciation of their intrinsic value and as a catalyst to engage educators in shaping the future of Peoplehood education. We are only at the beginning of this process, but it is time for Jewish educators to take ownership of how we engage Jewish youth in their collective identity.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my two co-editors, Clare Goldwater and Mollie Andron who carried the bulk of the editorial workload and to Julie Maschler Pearl for the design of this booklet. I also extend my gratitude to M² and Z3 for making this publication possible, and finally, to the Fellows themselves for their creativity and thoughtfulness.

May we see the launching of a fresh educational conversation in the coming year.

Shana Tova,
Dr. Shlomi Ravid

September 2026, Tishrei 5787

The Pedagogies of Jewish Peoplehood: Cultivating Collective Consciousness With Educational Creativity

When the Israelites stood at Sinai, Rashi imagined them gathered *k'ish echad b'lev echad* (Exodus 19:2) — as one person with one heart. Jewish history suggests that such moments are fleeting and difficult to sustain. And yet the aspiration itself still matters. This is the work that these Peoplehood Papers take up. And in this moment in Jewish life, it is work that could not feel more necessary.

At the outset, this project was driven more by instinct than certainty — by a shared hunch that while many people speak about Jewish Peoplehood, far fewer know how to cultivate it in meaningful ways. We sensed that beneath the language of community and connection were deeper questions that deserved more serious exploration: What does it actually mean to belong to the Jewish People? What responsibilities emerge from that belonging? Who do we mean when we say *Klal Israel* (the people of Israel)? And how might educators help others live and enact those questions more fully?

So, in 2023, we created a fellowship for twelve master Jewish educators from across the world to explore these questions. And then, six months into the first fellowship, October 7th happened.

For a brief, shattering moment, the Jewish People came together as they had not in a generation. And then, almost as quickly, the divisions returned, even sharper than before. In a moment rife with fracture, both within and beyond the Jewish community, the work of Jewish Peoplehood stopped feeling conceptual and began to feel urgent, even moral.

The approach for this inquiry was intentionally modest: a group of master Jewish educators from around the world, from diverse disciplines and institutions, gathering every other week for ten months over Zoom to grapple with the topic of Jewish Peoplehood. From that shared inquiry, each fellow explored a topic around Jewish Peoplehood that interested them. Each fellow then composed a paper and developed an educational resource that they — and others — could use to cultivate Jewish Peoplehood. The richness of the educational possibilities uncovered by the twelve fellowships proved that this endeavor was generative and creative, and so in 2025 we launched a second cohort, which led to twelve more creative practices for cultivating Jewish Peoplehood.

During the year-long process, fellows presented their work to one another and helped sharpen each other's thinking. They developed stronger worldviews and educational philosophies through the act of writing and creating. It was not a linear process. They moved forward, backward, sideways, and forward again. It was messy and beautiful, the way all real creation tends to be.

And yet, the very tensions we set out to explore often showed up inside the group itself. There was not always consensus, not even on what Jewish peoplehood means, let alone how to teach it. People experienced the weight of this moment differently, and those differences were palpable.

We discovered how difficult it can be to hold the intellectual work and the relational work at the same time: to move both the conversation and the project forward while also tending to the process, the people, and the pain in the room.

Engaging with Jewish Peoplehood proved difficult to cultivate even among ourselves. We shouldn't see this as a shortcoming, but rather as evidence of how deeply these questions matter. If a group of committed, master Jewish educators cannot easily define or embody Peoplehood, perhaps that is exactly why this work matters.

We chose ten (out of 24) that showcase the variety, the creativity and the versatility of what was developed. Despite their diversity, they are all reaching for the same goal: a stronger connection among the Jewish people, across the past, present, and future.

We are deeply grateful to our partner Z3 for making this work possible.

Happy reading. Turn it and turn it over again, for there is much in it.



To access all the Peoplehood Pedagogies developed by the fellows, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Mollie Andron has over 20 years of experience teaching in a variety of Jewish educational settings – from formal classroom teaching to nature education, from theatre education to collaborative philanthropy education. She enjoys being in the field as well as building programs and trainings to support others. Mollie holds a double Master's in Midrash and Jewish Experiential Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary, a BA in Religion from Bard College and is a graduate of M2's Senior Educators Cohort. She lives in Brooklyn, NY with her husband and children.

Introduction: Recurring Themes of the Peoplehood Fellows

Every generation of Jews inherits the language of peoplehood. We speak naturally of *Klal Yisrael*, of mutual responsibility, shared memory, and shared destiny. Yet, every generation must also ask itself anew what these words mean to it, what they require, how they are transmitted, and whether they are equal or relevant to the circumstances in which Jews find themselves. These questions are never settled. They return whenever the conditions of Jewish life change.

The attacks of October 7, 2023 and the war that followed have produced an extraordinary outpouring of reflection about the condition of the Jewish people. Across the Jewish world, educators, rabbis, communal leaders, and writers have asked whether this moment will permanently reshape Jewish identity or prove to be another episode of temporary solidarity. Others have worried about widening divisions within Jewish communities, particularly around Israel. Still others have wondered whether a renewed sense of belonging, however genuine, can be sustained without institutions capable of giving it lasting form. Running beneath all of these concerns is a more fundamental question: what does Jewish peoplehood actually ask of us now? And what does it eternally ask of us?

These questions have occupied Jewish thinkers for generations. What is new is the context in which they are being asked. The events of October 7 did not create the challenges facing Jewish peoplehood. They exposed them. Questions that had often remained implicit became unavoidable.

The essays collected in this volume do not set out to answer these questions directly. Most do not mention October 7 at all. Nor are they principally concerned with constructing new definitions of Jewish peoplehood. Their contribution lies elsewhere. Taken together, they represent a significant shift in the conversation, from describing peoplehood as an idea to examining the educational conditions under which it is cultivated.

This is, perhaps, the most striking characteristic of the two cohorts of Peoplehood Fellows. Their attention is directed less toward theory than toward the formation of programs, educators, and structures. Rather than asking what Jewish peoplehood is, they ask how it comes to exist in the life of an individual or a community. They approach the subject not primarily as philosophers or sociologists but as educators. That shift in emphasis has important consequences.

One recurring concern is how to approach memory. Is it sustained simply by transmitting information about the past or is it an active participation in it? How do you inhabit rather than merely observe the dilemmas of earlier generations. Is memory about family migration or is it about local Jewish context? The pieces about memory read together, suggest that memory becomes durable when individuals recognize themselves as participants in an unfolding story rather than spectators looking backward at a completed one.

A second concern is the challenge of sustaining relationship amid difference. This question has acquired particular urgency in contemporary Jewish life, where disagreements over Israel, politics, and religious identity often threaten communal cohesion. These pieces suggest that it isn't about consensus, rather, they ask what kinds of practices enable disagreement to remain within the bounds of relationship. Structured dialogue, *chevruta*, interpretive generosity, and habits of intellectual humility are treated not simply as pedagogical techniques but as capacities upon which Jewish peoplehood itself depends. Their work suggests that the durability of a people rests less upon uniformity of opinion than upon the ability to sustain covenantal relationships despite enduring disagreement.

Other essays challenge inherited assumptions about how Jewish identity is formed. Contemporary Jewish education often measures success by exposure: exposure to texts, to Israel, to history, to ritual, or to community. The fellows consistently move beyond this model. How can art, text study and alternative ways of engaging with text expand the possibilities of interpretation through visual art, demonstrating that serious Jewish learning is not confined to written commentary. And yet, how can Tanakh be as a source of identity formation rather than information alone. Finally, what is role of awe in cultivating commitments that exceed the merely cognitive. Across these essays runs a shared conviction that participation, rather than exposure, is the more reliable path toward enduring attachment.

Read individually, these essays offer thoughtful contributions to particular educational questions. Read together, they reveal something larger about the present state of Jewish peoplehood education.

First, they suggest that peoplehood is more fragile than Jewish communities have often assumed. Shared crisis may produce moments of extraordinary solidarity, but solidarity alone does not secure continuity. Continuity depends upon institutions, educational practices, and communities capable of shaping durable habits of belonging.

Second, they suggest that disagreement is not, in itself, the principal threat to Jewish peoplehood. Jewish history offers ample evidence that disagreement has long been one of the defining characteristics of Jewish civilization. The greater danger lies in losing the habits that allow disagreement to remain within a shared moral and communal framework. Several of the fellows make the cultivation of those habits the central task of their educational work.

Third, these essays consistently understand learners not merely as heirs to a tradition but as future participants in its development. This represents a subtle but significant shift. The transmission of Jewish life has always required preservation. These essays remind us

that it also requires creation. A people survives not only by remembering its inheritance but by producing new interpreters, new teachers, new artists, and new contributors who understand themselves as responsible for extending that inheritance into circumstances their predecessors could not have anticipated.

Finally, this collection reminds us that Jewish peoplehood is ultimately built in places that rarely command public attention. It is built in classrooms, around *chevruta* tables, through works of art, in conversations between teachers and students, on educational journeys, and in communities of learning. Those settings may appear modest when measured against the scale of the challenges confronting contemporary Jewish life. Yet history suggests that people are rarely renewed through declarations alone. They are renewed through institutions that cultivate memory, responsibility, judgment, and affection across generations.

That, in the end, is the contribution of this volume. It offers something more practical than a new theory of peoplehood and, perhaps for that reason, I view it as more enduring: a series of thoughtful experiments in the work of forming Jews who are capable of sustaining a Jewish people. If the questions surrounding peoplehood have become more urgent in recent years, these essays remind us that the answers will be found in the patient work of Jewish education itself.



To access all the Peoplehood Pedagogies developed by the fellows, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Adam Eilath taught in Jewish Day Schools in Northern California for two decades and most recently served as Head of School at Ronald C Wornick Jewish Day School in Foster City. He is currently based in Miami where he is leading an initiative to find and develop the next generation of day school educators. Adam is an alumni of the M² Pedagogies fellowship and served as faculty for two cohorts of the Pedagogies of Peoplehood Fellowship.

The Peoplehood Problem Has Changed

Peoplehood is not only the feeling of belonging to the Jewish people. It is the recognition that our lives are connected to the lives of other Jews, that we have inherited a story we did not begin, and that we bear some responsibility for what happens next.

In 2022, Clare Goldwater and I wrote that the need for a strong sense of Jewish collective belonging had never been greater. Yet despite decades of investment, innovative programming, and dedicated educators, cultivating Jewish peoplehood remained a struggle.

We suggested that part of the difficulty lay in the concept's expansiveness. Jewish peoplehood had come to encompass nearly every dimension of Jewish life. If it included everything, it became difficult for educators to determine what would help learners develop a meaningful relationship with the broader Jewish community.

We proposed shifting attention from the “what” of Jewish peoplehood toward the “how.” Rather than continuing to debate which content belonged inside the category, we asked whether educators could develop practices that cultivated collective consciousness across different subjects and settings. Could peoplehood become something learners encountered rather than another concept they were asked to understand?

The Pedagogies of Peoplehood Research Fellowship grew from that question. Across two cohorts, educators developed practices that brought learners into contact with Jewish history, memory, tradition, place, and one another. The work collected in this volume offers different ways for learners to enter the Jewish story and understand their own lives as connected to Jews across time and geography.

October 7, 2023 shook the ground beneath our feet. It did not simply increase the urgency of peoplehood education. It changed the conditions under which the work now takes place. Before the attacks, educators often worried that Jewish Peoplehood felt distant or abstract. Many Jews understood their Jewishness as a personal identity or family inheritance, but not necessarily as membership in a people whose lives remained bound together across borders. Israel could be embraced, criticized, ignored, or kept at an emotional distance. The fate of Jews elsewhere could feel important without feeling personal.

After October 7th, that distance became harder to maintain. Events in Israel reordered Jewish life around the world. Jews who had rarely entered communal spaces began seeking out other Jews, gathering because being alone no longer felt sufficient. Many who had not thought seriously about their relationship to Israel or the Jewish people found those questions forced upon them by grief, fear, solidarity, anger, and the recognition that the outside world often saw their Jewishness more collectively than they did.

We launched the fellowship to explore how educators might make Jewish Peoplehood real. While that work was underway, history made peoplehood real in ways no educator would have chosen and no educational practice could have produced. Education must now help Jews understand what to do with that reality.

Research conducted by the Jewish Federations of North America captures part of what followed. In 2024, 43% of American Jews reported that they were engaging more deeply in Jewish life or wanted to do so. Among those experiencing this surge, 73% expressed a desire to learn more about Judaism, Jewish community, and their own Jewish identities.

Eighteen months after October 7th, the proportion reporting increased engagement or a desire for it had fallen to 31%. The decline should not surprise us. A crisis can awaken a bond without teaching people how to live within it. It can bring Jews together, but it cannot provide the knowledge, relationships, and commitments that make connection part of ordinary life. October 7th made Jewish peoplehood easier to feel, but it did not make it easier to understand.

In the months after October 7th, many Jews expressed that connection through public solidarity and political action. These responses were necessary, and many remain necessary. But reaction to danger cannot become the substance of Jewish collective identity. A people can neither rely on its enemies to remind it that it is a people nor does solidarity resolve the questions that follow from belonging. Jews disagree profoundly about Israel, power, war, justice, and communal loyalty. The events that reveal our interdependence also expose the depth of our divisions. Peoplehood cannot mean that Jews share one position. It names the relationship within which those arguments take place, allowing Israel and Diaspora, disagreement and obligation, inherited memory and present responsibility to remain part of one unfinished Jewish story.

Before October 7th, the educational challenge was often how to awaken a sense of collective belonging. After October 7th, educators must help Jews interpret a sense of belonging that has already been awakened, deepen it beyond the initial emotional response, and prevent disagreement from becoming severance.

That requires more than teaching learners to tolerate complexity. They need sufficient knowledge and confidence to engage in Jewish arguments without assuming that disagreement places them outside the people. They need humility, not as an invitation to suspend judgment, but as a recognition that no Jew possesses the whole Jewish story. They also need relationships capable of carrying conflict after the immediate crisis recedes.

The pedagogies gathered here offer practices for this work. They bring learners into relationship with Jewish texts, memories, histories, and communities. They ask learners to listen, interpret, imagine, and encounter Jews whose lives and assumptions differ from their own. Although these approaches do not share a single doorway into peoplehood, none leaves learners standing outside the Jewish story. Each asks them to enter it.

The fellowship's original shift from the *what* to the *how* therefore remains instructive. Jewish collective belonging cannot be cultivated simply by transmitting more information about the Jewish people. It requires practices that enable learners to experience Jewish memory, difference, relationship, and responsibility as lived realities rather than abstract concepts.

The collection also demonstrates that the *what* and the *how* were never truly separable. Every primary source carries a historical world; Torah study places learners in conversation with earlier generations; dialogue across difference begins by recognizing those across from us as part of our shared collective. Method derives its power from the Jewish substance it conveys. Peoplehood grows not by choosing between content and experience, but by encountering Jewish inheritance in ways that enable learners to locate themselves within it.

No pedagogy can determine what happens next. A powerful experience can open curiosity or recognition, but it cannot complete the work of Jewish formation. Learners need opportunities to return, ask harder questions, build relationships, and acquire the language to understand their place in Jewish life. The practices in this volume do not solve the peoplehood problem, but they offer ways to help Jews enter a collective story that history has once again made impossible to ignore.

In 2022, we asked how educators might make peoplehood less abstract and more experientially real. We were right to ask the question, but we could not have known how violently the world would answer it. The work now is to ensure that fear and danger do not become the primary teachers of Jewish collective identity.

Belonging to the Jewish people is more than an emotional response in an emergency. It is an inherited relationship, an argument that does not end when consensus fails, and a responsibility learned through practice over time. October 7th did not solve the peoplehood problem; it changed it, transforming the task from awakening collective belonging to helping Jews understand what that belonging asks of them and how to carry it into the life that follows the crisis.



Rabbi Amitai Fraiman was raised in Jerusalem, ordained in NY, and now living in Palo Alto. R' Fraiman is the Founding Director of the Z3 Project, an initiative of the Oshman Family JCC aimed at strengthening the relationship between Diaspora Jews and Israel based on a Peoplehood oriented Zionism. R' Fraiman is also the founder of שזור/Interwoven, an organization specializing in telling the story of American Jewry to Israelis. Amitai is an ELI speaker, a musmach of YCT, and a graduate of NYU's dual MPA-MA program. Together with Michal, they are the proud parents of Maya, Yahli and Roee - who they love bigger than the sky.

The Story of Israel Through Hasidic Storytelling: Bridging Reality and Hope

THE EDUCATOR'S DILEMMA

For the American Jewish educator, teaching about Israel is defined by deep confusion. The most common phrase used to express this reality is: "It is complicated." Yet, this phrase has become a tool of silencing. It acts as a shield against difficult questions about politics, shutting down the conversation under the guise of complexity.

Educators struggle with how to cultivate love for something unfamiliar — a place that is not part of everyday life, experienced only through a family visit, a synagogue trip, or a one-time Birthright experience. We face a strict tension: if we introduce complexity too early, initial love cannot form. But if we withhold it, the student's world will collapse the moment they encounter criticism.

This collapse happens because the romanticized vision of Naomi Shemer's *Jerusalem of Gold* — where "the market square is empty" — is shattered by the discovery that the square was never actually empty. To prevent this, we must introduce the complexity. We must teach *Jerusalem of Gold* alongside Meir Ariel's *Jerusalem of Iron, Lead, and Black*, written from the trenches of the paratroopers who liberated the city in 1967.

We can synthesize these challenges into three specific tensions:

- **Falling in Love vs. Complexity:** Introducing fractures too early destroys the capacity for a simple, foundational attachment. Conversely, hiding the tension guarantees that the student's image of Israel will violently shatter later on.
- **The Categorical vs. The Personal:** contemporary discourse about Israel turns human beings into flat objects, erasing personal relationships. One side condemns Zionism as colonialism, refusing dialogue with anyone who believes in the possibility of a Jewish state. The other side instantly categorizes critics as antisemitic, casting them out of the camp. This erases the individual's ability to be a Zionist who cares about Palestinian suffering, or to fiercely criticize Israeli policy while deeply feeling Israeli pain.
- **The Brain vs. The Physical:** The debate is treated as a bloodless academic exercise scored by history and law — whether Palestinians rejected peace treaties or whether Israel fits the legal definition of apartheid. This ignores the somatic reality. It ignores the physical anxiety and sleeplessness experienced by Jews who discovered on October 8th or 20th that

their own communities turned against them. It ignores the somatic contraction of Jews watching the immense suffering of uninvolved civilians in Gaza, leaving them confused about their Jewish values and identity.

To answer these challenges, I propose returning to a unique Jewish genre: Hasidic storytelling. I know this dilemma intimately because it is part of my own life's journey. I believe that the very tool that allowed me to confront that internal challenge, the Hasidic story, can provide a solution for Israel education today.

FROM PERSONAL FRACTURE TO CULTURAL MATURATION

I was raised in a Hasidic community in Israel, a world built from thousands of stories. Each Hasidic master — each *tzadik* — had his own living presence, shaping a unique figure centered on a specific value. I did not need to meet these spiritual ancestors; I knew them and saw the world through their eyes. That is what community stories do: they give children a structure for understanding reality, building an entire culture of love on the narrative.

Yet, within this sensitive culture, as I grew, a deep critique emerged. Every single story was about a man. When I asked about this, I was told first to learn the stories of the men. Once I learned enough to clear myself of ignorance, I asked again. This time, I was told the question was immodest — why would a boy be interested in stories about women? Another time, I was told that generations of *tzadikim* had never asked this, and if I was asking now, the problem was mine. The answers grew more dismissive as the question grew more precise, revealing something profound: I had found a tension the system could not hold.

At this point, I want to step back from my personal testimony and put on my educator's hat. The crisis I experienced regarding the stories of the *tzadikim* and the Hasidic culture of my youth was actually a blessing. It represents a natural maturation process — moving from a childish love for a nurturing community to an adult life where the community narrative begins to dismantle because, by definition, it contains an element of fantasy. Reality is built from internal contradictions, failures, and encounters with the repressed spaces of community. In every generation, new cultural layers emerge that previously had no presence.

The treatment of women is complex. On one hand, Jewish society did not allow women or men wishing to connect with God to detach themselves from the community and create their own separate institutions, unlike monasteries in the Christian or Buddhist worlds. On the other hand, the absence of women's monasteries created a reality where Jewish women never had a "room of their own" to create independent Jewish work. Consequently, among tens of thousands of Hasidic stories, women exist only as background and scenery, never at the center of the narrative.

Yet, in my view, the Hasidic story is a unique cultural creation that contains within itself the solution to the very tension I have described. This is due to the unique characteristics inherent to the genre of Hasidic storytelling.

THE HASIDIC STORY AS PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

The unique power of Hasidic storytelling lies in five features that set it apart from ordinary Jewish folktales:

1. Storytelling Over Historical Truth

The importance of a Hasidic story lies in the narrative itself, in the personality of the Hasid, not in factual accuracy about the historical background of the *tzaddik*.

2. Preserving Tension Rather Than Resolving It

Even when the *tzaddik* triumphs, the underlying reasons for danger and struggle are kept alive.

3. Embodying the Physical

The *tzaddik* performs miracles through his body; sleeping, eating, and smoking are as significant as studying a page of Talmud.

4. Foregrounding the Role of the Storyteller

Whenever my father or rabbi shared stories, they consistently intertwined their own personal connection to the protagonist, making the story both engaging and deeply relatable.

5. Inviting the Listener to Become a Storyteller

In the Hasidic community, the listener can choose to enter the story itself, becoming an active participant through how they listen and respond.

Applied to Israel education, these five principles offer a way out of the impasse. Instead of debates about who started the conflict, participants learn to tell their own personal story of Israel. Instead of resolving the tension between Israeli reality and Jewish hope, they learn to carry it. Instead of abstract ideology, they bring their bodies, their memories, and their particular relationship to the land into the room. And instead of defending a position, they learn to ask the listener a question – inviting them into partnership rather than argument.



Part A: Crafting the Narrative

Part A focuses on building and practicing the story of Israel. It opens with participants sitting in *chevruta* (pairs) to share which story of Israel has impacted them most. Then, they switch pairs to share which story of Israel they actually tell when they are usually asked about Israel. This distinction — between what moved you and what you transmit — is itself a revelation. It exposes the gaps between the story that usually touches us, which is more complex, and the stories we actually tell, which focus on more "perfect," fantasized characteristics.

A facilitated group reflection surfaces what is already happening in the room: that most participants explain rather than narrate, that many stories assert the rightness of Israel's position, and that stories from Israeli-Americans often carry a level of intensity — almost a shout — that physically contracts the listener rather than drawing them in.

The facilitator then introduces four principles for crafting an Israel story:

- The story must contain tension without resolving it.
- The storyteller must locate themselves within the narrative.
- The body and physical presence of the storyteller matter.
- The story must end with a question that invites the listener into connection.

Participants then practice in groups of three, with structured time for storytelling, listener response, and brief reflection.

Part B: The Place — Anchored Cards

Part B deepens the process for groups with more time. Each participant receives four cards, each anchored in a specific place in Israel and corresponding to one of the four storytelling principles:

- **Jerusalem:** With its image of three religions and the contrast between Naomi Shemer's "Jerusalem of Gold" and Meir Ariel's response, it represents **tension**.
- **The Kinneret (Sea of Galilee):** Evoking the tombs of Maimonides and Rachel, the kibbutzim of Degania, and the Golan Heights, it represents **the storyteller's place within the story**.
- **The Desert (Midbar):** Whose Hebrew root *daber* means "to speak," represents **embodiment** — the land itself speaks.
- **The Israel National Trail:** Where walkers encounter one another on the same path, represents **the encounter between storyteller and listener**.

These cards are not abstract prompts but physical, place-anchored invitations to inhabit the story of Israel from the inside.

CONCLUSION

The discourse about Israel is often described as a crisis of communication — two sides not listening to each other. But it is perhaps better understood as a crisis of genre: we have been trying to have a debate when what is needed is a story. When participants learn to tell their own story of Israel, they do not resolve the conflict between hope and reality. They learn to live within it.

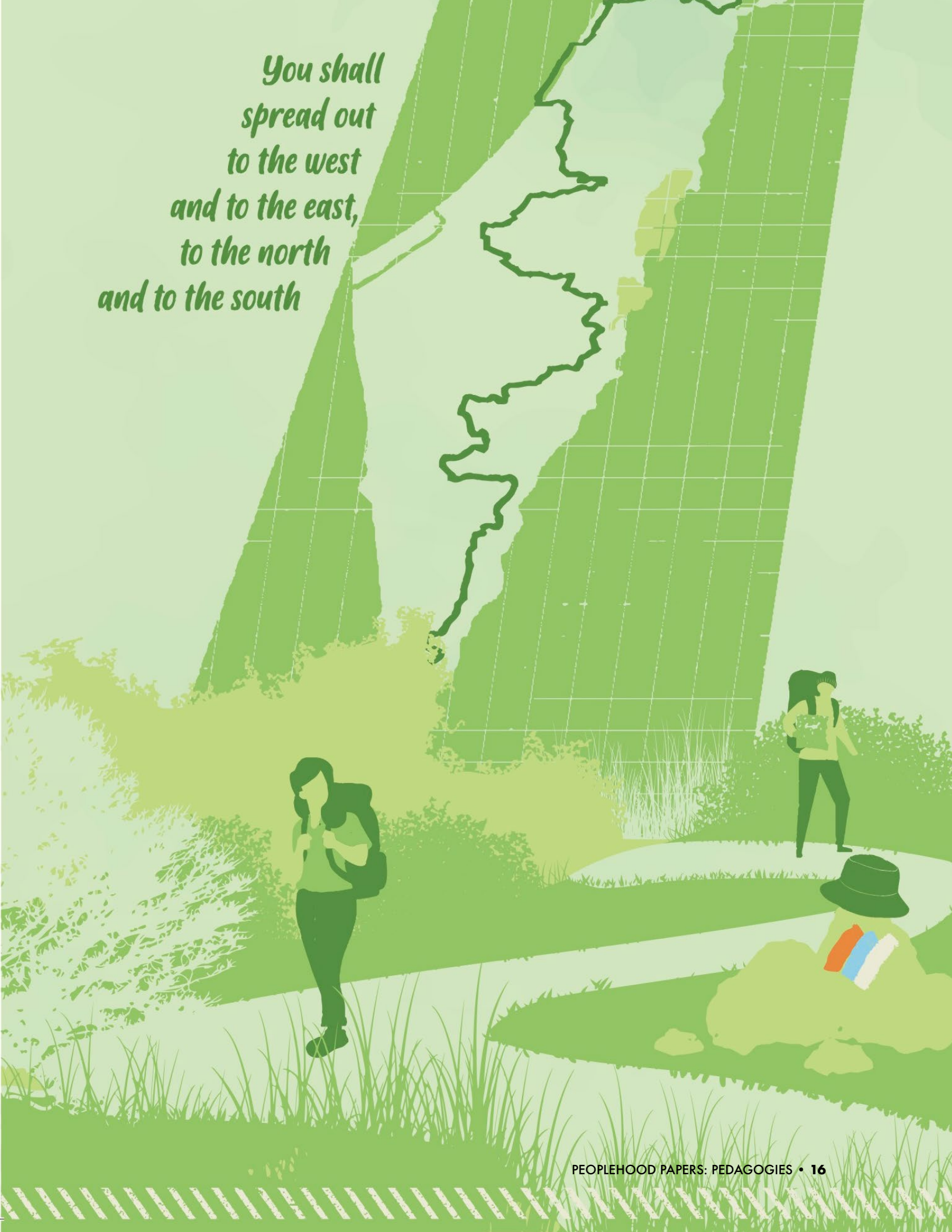


To access the full workshop guide, including the four storytelling cards and presentation materials, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Dr. Yakir Englander is the Senior Director of Leadership programs at the Israeli-American Council. He is also the founder of Sacred Roots, New Branches (<https://yakirenglander.com/>), a private consulting practice. He also teaches at the Academy for Jewish Religion. Originally from the Hasidic community of Israel, Englander left Ultra-Orthodoxy and was subsequently drafted to the Israeli military, where he served in an elite unit tasked with the identification of human remains—an experience that profoundly shaped his worldview and approach to life. Yakir served as a volunteer director and later as the vice president of the board at Kids4Peace, an interfaith youth movement in Jerusalem. His personal motto, “Nothing human is strange to me,” reflects his ability to connect with people across diverse backgrounds and his deep commitment to understanding the full spectrum of human experience. He is a Fulbright scholar and has held visiting professorships at Northwestern University, Rutgers University, the Hebrew University, the Shalom Hartman Institute, and Harvard Divinity School. Englander’s two books on body and sexuality in Haredi and Religious-Zionist communities have transformed the discourse within religious societies in Israel. Yakir lives in an intentional community in Vermont, maintains an ethical non-monogamous lifestyle, strives to pray and live a mystical life, and trains in karate and shamanic practices for cultivating sensitive awareness of the body.

*You shall
spread out
to the west
and to the east,
to the north
and to the south*

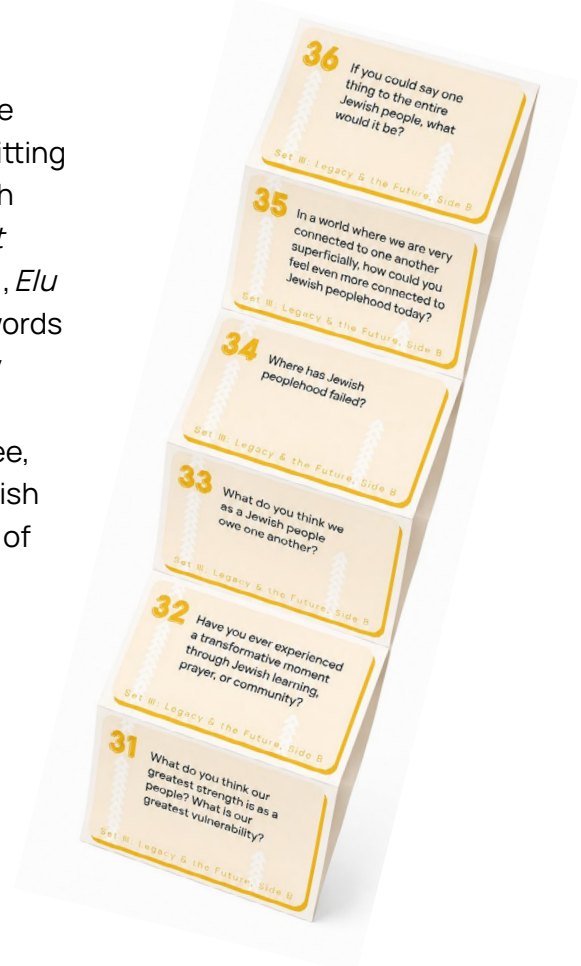


36 Questions that Lead to Peoplehood: A Practice for Increasing Empathy and Connection in a Fractured Jewish World

OVERVIEW

This pedagogy for Jewish Peoplehood begins at the edges, where Jewish difference is most pronounced and least comfortable. It invites learners to engage with those they perceive as “other” through a series of questions that highlight true differences in background, practice, and identity, and at the same time seek to build empathy and connection through recognition and mutual respect. By adopting a posture of curiosity, participants can move from positions of defensiveness to openness, and even be surprised by shared experiences and areas of agreement. The 36 questions act as a scaffold, enabling participants to transition from basic biographical sharing to more profound topics involving beliefs, experiences, and aspirations – fostering an environment for acknowledgment without requiring consensus.

This practice emerges from a deep concern for the present fragmentation of the Jewish people and a fierce hope that the majority of Jewish people believe Peoplehood is a value worth maintaining and transmitting to the next generation. Rabbinic tradition is filled with examples of constructive disagreement – *Makhloket l'shem shamayim* (arguments for the sake of heaven), *Elu v'elu divrei Elohim hayyim* (these and these are the words of the living God), and *Shivim panim laTorah* (seventy faces of Torah). These sources remind us that the challenge of living in Jewish community is not to agree, but to remain in dialogue. Without romanticizing Jewish unity, this practice insists on dignity and recognition of the other.



A VISION OF JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD

Any exercise in Jewish Peoplehood pedagogy that holds out hope for our collective future must honestly acknowledge our long history of internal rupture — biblical tribal division, civil strife, and even political assassination. Contemporary research sharpens the picture further. According to the 2020 Pew Survey of Jewish Americans, while 85% of American Jews feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people, only 9% of Orthodox Jews say they have a lot in common with Reform Jews — and the same is true in reverse. More recently, M²'s 2025 Hope Study found that internal communal division was the top professional challenge identified by 950 North American Jewish professionals, with respondents describing themselves as “caught between competing factions” and “watching our community tear itself apart.” In a moment when Jewish Peoplehood is strained by mistrust, distance, and competing claims to authenticity, this practice helps to cultivate the skills that make relationships across difference possible.

Kintsugi, the Japanese art of golden repair, serves as a spiritual and cultural metaphor for my worldview. According to this philosophy, damage does not destroy a fragile object's value. Fractures, filled with gold, are something to celebrate, not hide. Applied to Jewish Peoplehood, kintsugi demands that we invest in each other not despite our differences but through them. From this worldview emerges a search for Jewish sources to support a pedagogy rooted in difference, conversation, and mutual dignity — one that understands curiosity as the golden material that can join the fractured shards of our community together.

As Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks z”l writes, each of us “must learn to listen and be prepared to be surprised by others. We must make ourselves open to their stories, which may profoundly conflict with our own. We must even, at times, be ready to hear of their pain, humiliation, and resentment and discover that their image of us is anything but our image of ourselves.” And it is through conversation, not debate, that real change takes place: “In a debate one side wins, the other loses, but both are the same as they were before. In a conversation, neither side loses, and both are changed because they know what reality looks like from a different perspective.” Good conversations can lead to fundamental change — but in an age of increasing isolation and loneliness, many lack the tools to foster and shape them. Scaffolded questions can be a first step toward creating a shared sense of Jewish Peoplehood that honors both dignity and difference and leads to repair.

THE SCIENCE OF CONNECTION: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

This educational practice is inspired by Professor Arthur Aron's 1997 study, "The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal Closeness," which used 36 questions to deepen connections between participants who did not know one another. By guiding pairs through questions designed to elicit vulnerability, authenticity, and shared reflection, Aron's experiment produced a surprising sense of closeness far beyond what emerges in unstructured interaction. His core finding forms the backbone of this pedagogy: relational depth can be built with purpose, and guided conversation has generative power. Connection is not only a matter of shared background or chemistry — it can be intentionally cultivated through a sequence of questions that invite openness and mutual regard.

Joe Keohane's book *The Power of Strangers* reinforces this insight in a broader social register. Keohane demonstrates that when we approach strangers with curiosity rather than fear, we gain fresh viewpoints that broaden our worldview without forcing us to surrender our beliefs. Conversations bridging differences establish shared space: space for acknowledging another's reality and space for our own to be recognized. These encounters help weave a social fabric built on empathy, trust, and shared humanity, reminding us that change and connection arise through the simple courage of talking — and listening — to someone we do not yet know. Taken together, Aron and Keohane affirm that in an age marked by loneliness, mistrust, and polarization, guided conversation remains one of the most powerful tools we have for repairing social fabric. It is from this evidence base, alongside Jewish commitments to dignity, dialogue, and relationship, that the practice at the heart of this pedagogy takes shape.

THE PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

36 Questions that Lead to Jewish Peoplehood is an interactive educational practice designed for adult learners. Pairs can be matched randomly or more thoughtfully by the facilitator to ensure diversity across religious, political, or ideological lines. The questions are divided into three sets of twelve, each requiring approximately 15–20 minutes. Set I (Setting and Story) opens with questions of personal Jewish experience, memory, and community. Set II (Tensions and Belonging) moves into territory that is more complex and contested — what binds Jews together, what troubles participants about Jewish life, and how individuals relate to the broader Jewish story. Set III (Legacy and the Future) asks participants to look forward together: what they hope for, what they believe the Jewish people owe one another, and what they would say to the entire Jewish people if they could. The practice closes with structured reflection prompts, inviting pairs and then the full group to consider what surprised them, what felt hard, and what the experience revealed about Jewish Peoplehood.

The practice has been tested in a range of settings. Members of the International Nahum Goldmann Fellowship Network and the M² Senior Educators Cohort worked through the questions in global pairs on Zoom; participants reported feeling closer to their partners

and noted that the questions surfaced greater complexity and nuance in definitions of Jewishness and Peoplehood than they had anticipated. A 90-minute version was piloted at the Netaim conference in Bucharest in September 2025, with international Jewish educators from across Europe and Israel; the session concluded with a group debrief that generated rich conversation about how Peoplehood is experienced differently across communities. Further testing is ongoing in Hillel settings and Jewish education programs in New York. Across all settings, the structured nature of the questions scaffolds dialogue in a way that makes vulnerability possible and meaningful connection likely.

CONCLUSION

This practice transforms what might otherwise be casual or superficial conversation into a deliberate practice of Peoplehood. By asking participants to slow down, reflect, and speak honestly about their own lives, it cultivates awareness of both difference and shared experience. Participants are invited to notice commonalities and surprising points of resonance, all while maintaining respect for the uniqueness of the other. Over time, this practice not only strengthens the relationships between individuals but also reinforces broader Jewish commitments to dignity, conversation, and the ongoing cultivation of communal life. In a fractured moment, it offers something both ancient and urgent: a structured invitation to fill the cracks with gold.



To access the full question sets, facilitation guide, and reflection tools, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Rabbi Jeni S. Friedman, Ph.D. is the CEO of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. She was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and earned her PhD in Education and Jewish Studies from NYU. A Wexner Graduate Fellow/Davidson scholar, she has done extensive research on the development of clergy education and the formation of Jewish identity.

Primary Sources as a Portal to Jewish Peoplehood

OVERVIEW

In this day and digital age, being an educator is no easy task. Getting students' attention and then maintaining their engagement through a deep, complex learning process is challenging. In the realm of Jewish education, there are additional hurdles: Jewish literacy is in decline, learners are not always familiar with the richness and diversity of Jewish life, and some may view Jewish culture as irrelevant to their personal identity. How can learning with primary sources serve as a remedy – or offer a portal into the treasure trove of Jewish Peoplehood? This pedagogy proposes that authentic primary sources, approached through the PaRDeS framework, are uniquely suited to create deep encounters with Jewish Peoplehood, cultivate a sense of layered belonging, and promote learner agency.

PaRDeS – an acronym from the Hebrew words *P'shat*, *Remez*, *Drash*, and *Sod* (also the Hebrew word for “orchard” or “garden”) – is originally a framework for interpreting Torah through four levels of meaning. Applied here to primary sources of all kinds, it becomes a structured journey from first encounter to personal relevance to Peoplehood connection – and ultimately to creative contribution. The learner does not merely study the past. They enter it, find themselves within it, and add their own voice to the ongoing Jewish story.

PEOPLEHOOD AS A MAP, LEARNING AS A JOURNEY

Imagine Jewish Peoplehood as a multilayered map: a foundation of history, culture, and geography on which generations of ideas, texts, and practices are built. Studying Peoplehood is a multifaceted journey that allows us to learn about our past, the individuals who shaped our collective story, the communities from which we emerge, and ultimately ourselves. As educators, our role is to help learners explore this vast map and find entry points that speak to them. Each learner arrives with a particular time, place, and experience of Jewish life, yet primary sources allow them to encounter other voices – past and present – and discover new pathways within the landscape of Jewish Peoplehood.

The Mishnah (Pesachim 10:5) instructs that in every generation a person must view themselves as though they personally left Egypt. This is more than an invitation to bring history to life – it is a demand to take an active part in our shared story, to bring your life into history. It is the mindset this pedagogy seeks to cultivate: moving learners from spectators to

participants, and eventually to stakeholders who take ownership of and responsibility for the continuous building of Jewish Peoplehood. The Passover Haggadah – a primary source in most Jewish homes, available in thousands of editions across centuries and continents – is itself the perfect illustration of this process: a story handed down through the generations, with each community and each generation adding their own unique piece.

The journey does not end with study. Once learners experience the “magic” of uncovering layered meaning in a primary source, they are often moved to contribute a new point on the map – shifting from spectators to participants. This may be as simple as documenting a piece of their own Jewish experience or sharing a contemporary source from their lives that tells their story. In each case, they extend the story of Jewish Peoplehood by adding their voice.

THE POWER OF AUTHENTIC ENCOUNTER: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

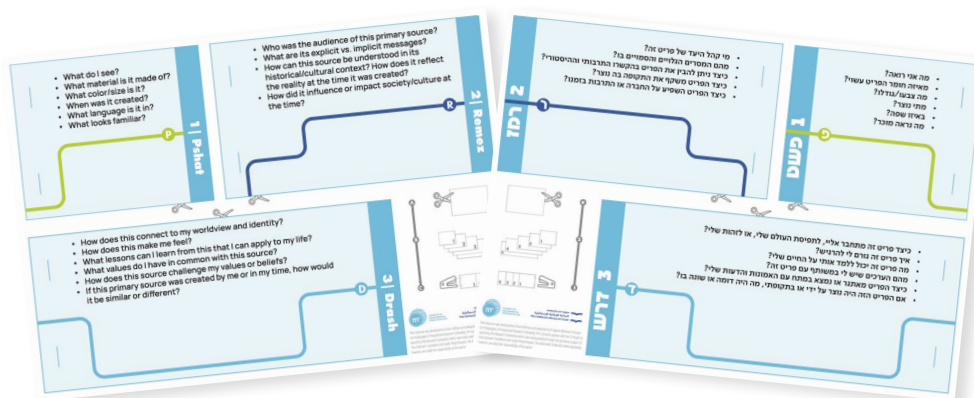
Primary sources, as used in this pedagogy, are original, tangible, authentic documents – manuscripts, letters, photographs, posters, newspapers – rather than ritual objects or Judaica. The digital age has made Jewish texts more accessible than ever: millions of learners can now find and read vast stretches of Jewish literature with a basic internet search. And yet something is lost. A manuscript uploaded to a digital platform loses its color, texture, smell, and handwriting. A five-hundred-year-old illuminated Haggadah with wine stains offers an entirely different experience from reading the same texts in a freshly printed edition. Seeing a handwritten draft of a Chana Senesh poem with crossed-out words and spelling mistakes does not compare to reading the polished final text on a website. A personal letter between Alfred Dreyfus and his wife Lucie transforms a famous trial into a human story. Physical encounter with authentic sources creates the kind of emotional connection and empathy that deepens a learner’s sense of belonging to the Jewish people across time and space.

Research on primary source pedagogy largely emerges from history education and highlights a productive tension between open-ended inquiry and structured teacher guidance. Inquiry-based approaches, such as those used by the Library of Congress through tools like Observe–Reflect–Question, center student curiosity, with teachers acting as guides. Sam Wineburg’s historical thinking model trains students to evaluate sources like historians – considering authorship, purpose, and context – which is especially important in the digital age. Empathy-based education, as articulated by Barton and Levstik in *Teaching History for the Common Good*, emphasizes ethical and emotional engagement with the past. What most of this research overlooks, and what is essential in Jewish education, is the role of identity: Jewish learning depends on ownership, interpretation, and creative engagement, echoing the midrashic tradition. The PaRDeS framework integrates all of these dimensions – inquiry, historical thinking, empathy, and identity – into a single coherent journey.

THE PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

The PaRDeS practice can take place wherever learners encounter primary sources – in a classroom, a museum, a community program, or independently. Sources should ideally be printed in color and at an appropriate size to enable the most authentic encounter possible. The practice unfolds in four stages. P'shat (the plain meaning) invites learners to observe the primary source itself – its physical features, language, and first impressions – grounding them in what is actually there before interpretation begins. Remez (hint or context) asks learners to dig deeper into the source's context: who created it, for whom, under what circumstances, and what explicit and implicit messages it carries. These first two stages, anchored in the past, typically take 10–20 minutes. Drash (interpretation) turns the focus to the learner: how does this source connect to my worldview and identity? What values do I share with it, or where does it challenge me? This stage invites creative responses – a journal entry, a drawing, a short video – anchored in the comparison between the source and the learner's own life. Sod (deeper significance) moves beyond the source and the individual learner to ask what this artifact reveals about Jewish Peoplehood across time and space: how does it connect to other expressions of Jewish life? What might it mean to a learner a hundred years from now? These final two stages, anchored in the present and future, require substantial time – ideally 30–45 minutes or more – and can extend across multiple sessions.

A fifth element completes the journey: learners are invited to add their own piece – to articulate, in writing or drawing, what they see as the next step on their personal Peoplehood journey. This might be a topic for further exploration, an artistic response, or a creative work inspired by what they have encountered. In selecting primary sources, facilitators are guided by five principles: multi-sensory richness (visual and audio sources deepen engagement and memory); same but different (balancing familiarity with novelty); choice and voice (personal resonance across the multitude of Jewish expressions); creativity and interpretation (learners who feel their interpretation matters will contribute more deeply); and engagement with conflict and complexity (including perspectives that challenge assumptions, not only those that confirm them). The PaRDeS Roadmap resource, available via the QR code below, guides learners and facilitators through each stage with structured questions and prompts.



CONCLUSION

Learning with authentic primary sources is a uniquely powerful way to engage learners with the vast and vibrant map of Jewish Peoplehood. The primary source serves as a portal into a specific point in time and space, through which the learner catches a glimpse of an alternative experience of Jewish life – one that is both foreign and familiar. The PaRDeS framework guides learners through that encounter step by step, from careful observation to personal connection to Peoplehood significance to creative contribution. This process aims to move learners from spectators to active participants who add their own voice and interpretation to the ongoing Jewish story. Jewish Peoplehood is a multilayered journey, and critical thinking is not the destination – it is the foundation for creative expression, belonging, and agency.



To access the full PaRDeS Roadmap, source selection guidance, and activity resources, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Shuvi Hoffman is Global Jewish Education Manager at The National Library of Israel, where she is responsible for developing high quality educational resources based on the NLI's collections and providing professional development for educators across the globe. She is a "Revivim" graduate, an honors program in Hebrew University, where she received her BA in Jewish studies and her MA in Biblical studies. She was the Revivim Alumni Coordinator and for almost a decade served as a Pedagogical Mentor in the program. She worked as a Tanach and Jewish Philosophy teacher at Tali Beit Chinuch School in Jerusalem, served as Head of Jewish Studies, and wrote curriculum and teachers guides. In addition, she spent two years in NY teaching Hebrew and Tanach at SAR High School as a WZO emissary, as well as teaching at "Drisha"'s summer programs. She lives in Jerusalem with her husband Eitan and their 5 children.

“The World Was Created for Me” vs. “I Am But Dust and Ash”:

Anava/Humility as a Pedagogy Toward Jewish Peoplehood

OVERVIEW

This pedagogy proposes *anava* – humility – as a foundational value and practice for Jewish Peoplehood education. It argues that the same tension present in every classroom – between cultivating self-worth and celebrating the other – is the central tension of Jewish Peoplehood itself. Furthermore, it offers concrete pedagogical practices, rooted in *chevruta* (paired learning) and the model of Moses, through which humility can be taught, practiced, and embodied.

HUMILITY AS A FOUNDATION OF PEOPLEHOOD

At the heart of education lies a particular tension. On the one hand, we strive to educate toward a sense of self-empowerment and self-worth. At the same time, we encourage students whenever possible to applaud their peers and celebrate their successes. I might wonder: If we truly educate toward self-worth, might this lead to the negation of the other? If we expand this to questions and challenges of Jewish Peoplehood, the question sharpens: if we empower the worth of one’s group, might that lead to diminishing the value of other groups – even within our own people?

I would posit that it is specifically here that we must begin to understand, educate toward, and develop a pedagogy of humility – *anava*. Humility must be a starting point and fundamental element in the mindset of the Jewish people studying, creating, and growing together. We all must recognize the strengths and successes of one another, listen to each other, and grow together through a humility that allows us to provide space, encouragement, and room for growth for one another. The Jewish people are fraught with disagreements and a dearth of mutual understanding or willingness to partner toward common goals. If we could learn to speak with confidence and with a degree of self-doubt, as well as a genuine recognition of value in the other, we would be in a very different place.

TWO SLIPS OF PAPER: THE JEWISH TRADITION OF HUMILITY

In society at large — and particularly in traditional, religious settings — humility is often understood as self-degradation: to be humble, we must first disabuse ourselves of confidence in our own value and ensure that others' successes always exceed our own. Maimonides, in his *Mishneh Torah*, reflects this view, arguing that while most character traits require a middle path, for humility one must always strive to humble oneself completely. Rabbi Moshe Haim Luzzatto's *Mesillat Yesharim* (Path of the Just) similarly leaves nearly no room for self-worth, insisting on a humility that instills a specific sense of unworthiness. Yet there is a second tradition. Bahya ibn Pakuda, in the introduction to his *Duties of the Heart*, describes his own struggle with whether to write the book at all. His conclusion: individuals must take a chance. A person may be wrong, may not truly advance the field — and yet their contribution might be the very one that matters. Without taking that chance, there would have been no advancement since the prophets. Humility, here, is not self-erasure but the courage to contribute.

Rabbi Simcha Bunim famously captured this double-edged nature of humility in a teaching that has become iconic: everyone should carry two slips of paper, one in each pocket. One reads “For me the world was created”; the other reads “I am but dust and ash.” Rabbi Yerucham of Mir extended this: just as individuals must be aware of their sins and strive to atone, so too must they be aware of their positive characteristics and how they may grow through their abilities. Most fully, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook wrote in his *Midot HaReyah*: “Genuine humility and lowliness increase health and vitality, whereas imaginary humility causes illness and melancholy... Whenever humility brings about melancholy it is invalid. But when it is worthy, it engenders joy, courage and inner glory.” And: “At times we should not be afraid of the feeling of greatness, which elevates humankind to do great things. And all humility is based on such a holy feeling of greatness.” Rav Kook teaches that humility specifically inspires individuals to create and add vitality to the world, while recognizing that this is a holy feeling — not an evil inclination pushing us toward personal grandeur. This, I believe, is the *anava* that Peoplehood education requires.

THE PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

As an educator for over twenty years, I have attempted to instill humility in my students primarily through *chevruta* — paired study — as a staple of my teaching. In *chevruta*, two or three students analyze a text together, each bringing different beliefs and assumptions, arriving at different interpretations and conclusions. The novelty of *chevruta* is that the pair does not split apart at the realization of their differences — quite the contrary. They remain together, listening intently, recognizing their differences, and at times celebrating the gulf between them. Humility is what provides the glue: it allows each partner to recognize that the other's voice is different from their own and yet worthy of recognition and celebration.

The biblical model for this pedagogy is the story of Eldad and Medad in Numbers 11. When two elders prophesied not at the Tent of Meeting but in the camp among the people, Joshua urged Moses to restrain them. Moses' response has become a clarion call for educators across the generations: "Would that all of God's people were prophets." In this, Moses – the prime teacher, the one who spoke to God face to face – prays for a situation in which his own role becomes redundant. As Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch commented: "Moshe's response to Joshua is the eternal example he is providing to educators of all generations – that they will have reached the pinnacle of their work when their own role becomes redundant." From this model, the pedagogy develops four concrete practices: (1) Modeling, in which the teacher embodies humility by inviting student participation in classroom norms, admitting what they do not know, and celebrating when students surpass them; (2) Peer Teaching, in which students regularly teach one another – through *divrei* Torah, summative presentations, or family-tradition sharing – building both self-worth and genuine curiosity about the other; (3) Partnering with Neighbors, in which students venture beyond the classroom into the local community to encounter those who hold different values or life stories, seeking leadership in unexpected places as Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp; and (4) Emotional *Chevruta* Sharing, a structured practice drawn from the Mussar movement's heshbon hanefesh (self-analysis), in which students write in response to a prompt, then share while a partner listens and reflects back only what was heard – without embellishment, without answers – before gradually progressing to clarifying questions and, much later, to alternative perspectives.

CONCLUSION

Humility, as presented here, is the recognition of one's self-worth and the commitment to making the world a better place through one's own capabilities – while at the same time noting others' values and contributions and actively encouraging them to add to the mix. Whether working with teenagers or adult learners, the *chevruta* approach provides camaraderie while also creating a safe space in which to share more personal and emotional dimensions of thought and experience. The two slips of paper – the world was created for me; I am but dust and ash – are not in contradiction. They are the full, honest picture of what it means to be a person among people. I pray that this tool of emotional *chevruta* will allow learners to recognize the value in their own voices as well as that of their counterparts, thus helping to contribute to a healthier, richer, and more humble Jewish people.



DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Yossi Hershkowitz, z"l, Head of School of the ORT Pelech Boys High School in Jerusalem, who fell as a paratrooper in the Israel-Hamas war on November 10, 2023. Those who knew Yossi reflected most on his humility. He was a leader with a clear vision and yet constantly encouraged his staff to create and implement their own goals, trusting them to push beyond what they thought their capabilities were. A week before he fell, he shared a message with his staff opening with the words of Rabbi Elimelech Bar-Shaul: "Hineni – Here I am – for every mission on behalf of the Supreme Providence... all of me, without a defined amount and without leaving any part behind." As Abraham answered hineni, and Joseph, and Moses before the burning bush, this brief word speaks to devotion beyond ego and personal gain – a commitment to forwarding values, not one's self-worth. This was the way of Yossi Hershkowitz. May his memory be for a blessing.



To access the full practice guide, including session structures, *chevruta* prompts, and facilitation notes, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Rabbi Aytan Kadden is an educator and teacher trainer. He has been a Judaics classroom teacher in grades 1-12 for more than twenty years. In the past several years Aytan has dedicated time and energy in training teachers on the university level in the Hebrew University Revivim Program. Additionally he has been working with new teachers in school, helping them develop themselves as teacher leaders. As a teacher mentor he has worked with schools in Moscow and Berlin as well as with Legacy Heritage Teacher Institute assisting teachers and schools to enhance their Jewish education models. Aytan has strengthened himself through immersion in M²'s SEC. As a community leader Aytan has also taken on a new role as spiritual guide in his local synagogue. Aytan has a BA in History from Columbia College, an MA in Medieval Jewish History from Yeshiva University and Rabbinic ordination from the Israeli Rabbinate.

The Mosaic of the Jewish People: A Pedagogy of Relational Sense-Making

OVERVIEW

A pedagogy of relational sense-making is an approach to Jewish peoplehood education that supports meaning-making through exploration of Jewish connection, diversity, and demography. Learning aligned with this approach centers on the relationships among identities, values, practices, and narratives. Learners are invited to notice patterns of overlap, difference, and tension, and to locate themselves within the complex mosaic of the Jewish people. The learning arc moves from identification (“Who is this? Who am I?”), through comparison (“How do these differ from one another? From myself?”), and toward connection (“How do these belong together? How do I belong among them?”).

At the center of this pedagogy is The Mosaic of the Jewish People — a deck of fifty square tiles, each depicting a fictional, archetypal Jewish child with a name, hometown, four core identities, and a short biography. Together, the children are designed to be approximately representative of the global Jewish people today, reflecting diversity across geography, religious denomination, ethnicity, language, and lived experience. Learners work with these tiles to build, arrange, and reflect on connections, discovering that meaning emerges through adjacency, context, and interaction. Ambiguity is treated not as a problem to be resolved but as a productive space for inquiry, and learners’ own lived experiences are welcomed as essential resources that shape how connections are noticed and understood.



A VISION OF JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD

This pedagogy emerges in response to persistent challenges of engagement, disagreement, and understanding within the Jewish people. In the wake of October 7, 2023, public discourse around questions of Jewish safety and flourishing has often fractured into echo chambers, moral absolutism, and performative signaling. Interlocutors are too often dismissed as either misled or malicious, leaving little room for nuanced understanding or constructive reflection. While these dynamics are not unique to Jewish life, they strike particularly at the heart of a community that prizes covenantal connection and collective responsibility.

My own commitment to this approach is rooted in my lived experience as an immigrant twice over and as the subject of personal Jewish transformation. This (ongoing) transformation might be described through three shifts in worldview — away from judgment, individualism, and a form of communal isolationism; toward curiosity, collectivism, and a broader, global perspective — which a pedagogy of relational sense-making seeks to cultivate in learners. Critically, the pedagogy is grounded in the assumptions that every Jewish child is part of the Jewish people, that this belonging matters, and that it is best deepened through an attitude of curiosity rather than certainty.

THESE AND THESE: THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

One Jewish text that has profoundly shaped this pedagogy is a short passage from the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Eiruvim 13b: *Eilu va-eilu divrei Elokim Hayyim hen* — “These and these are the words of the living God.” Often cited as a foundational statement of Jewish pluralism, the passage affirms the legitimacy of multiple perspectives within a shared framework. Less frequently emphasized is its conclusion: *va-halakhah ke-Veit Hillel* — “and the law follows the school of Hillel.” The weight of these nine words — six plural terms expressing enduring tension, three singular resolving — encapsulates the rabbinic approach of prizing relationship over resolution. The pedagogy draws three lessons from this: that principled disagreement may be rooted in multiple valid perspectives; that collective decisions implicate those whose positions do not prevail, creating an ethical imperative to hold minority voices rather than allow disagreement to harden into fracture; and that a robust sense of belonging to the Jewish people is fundamental, non-negotiable, even divinely ordained.

This pedagogy is also informed by R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik's distinction, in “Kol Dodi Dofek,” between the *brit goral* (covenant of fate) — the inescapable shared condition of being Jewish in the world — and the *brit y'ud* (covenant of destiny) — the creative, aspirational dimension of Jewish life. Soloveitchik insists that destiny cannot be pursued without first embracing fate: meaningful Jewish life can only be built upon the foundational acknowledgment of shared belonging.



Contemporary scholarship reinforces this foundation. Dr. Sivan Zakai's longitudinal research on how Jewish children think about Israel revealed that the questions that most sustained children's interest over time were "prism questions" — questions with many possible answers that highlight differences among people, which children wondered about year after year, rethinking and refining their emerging ideas. Zakai observed that children's deep questions about the relationships among self, family, community, and nation are too often set aside in favor of transmitting factual information (*My Second-Favorite Country*, 2022). A pedagogy of relational sense-making takes these findings seriously: children deserve educational experiences that allow them to ask and investigate the questions that capture and hold their attention, including contested questions about identity and belonging.

"A Pedagogy of Play" (2023), from Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, offers a complementary foundation. Their framework demonstrates that play is not merely recreational but a powerful vehicle for curiosity, agency, collaboration, and critical thinking. Meaningful learning emerges when learners actively explore, experiment, take risks, and construct understanding through interaction with peers, materials, and experiences. This orientation aligns directly with relational sense-making: both approaches invite learners to notice patterns, make connections, and situate themselves within complex webs of meaning rather than absorb predetermined conclusions. Together, these sources support a pedagogy in which Jewish peoplehood education is not the study of fixed identities but an invitation for learners to locate themselves — actively, curiously, playfully — within the global Jewish community.

A PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

The Mosaic of the Jewish People is a deck of fifty square tiles — designed to function as a provocation, a game, a resource for standalone learning activities, and a tool for embedding Jewish peoplehood in existing learning units.

Used as a provocation, The Mosaic invites learners to surface existing assumptions, curiosities, and questions about who Jews are and how Jewish identities take shape. Simply exploring the deck — noticing names, places, identity markers, and narrative elements — reveals points of interest ripe for further learning. Used as a game, learners build a shared mosaic by placing tiles adjacent to one another so that shared core identities touch. This mechanic requires close reading, comparison, and negotiation, prompting discussion about why certain connections feel intuitive, surprising, or difficult to sustain. With no single correct solution, the game privileges experimentation and reinterpretation. Used in standalone activities, the tiles can prompt categorization, discussion, roleplay, and reflection — or learners can design their own personal tiles. Finally, the deck is organized into twelve thematic clusters, each featuring four or five characters with varied experiences of a Jewish practice, or on a question of Jewish civics. Each cluster can be deployed to enhance a learning unit (on, say, eating Jewishly, or the meaning of Zionism) with the rich diversity of Jewish peoplehood.

The cards' vibrant images and narratives quickly capture and hold learners' attention. Their square shape enables mosaic-building, and the color coding of identities supports recognition and collaborative play, expanding opportunities for noticing adjacency, overlap, and emerging patterns. These features reflect a core insight of relational sense-making: learning deepens when relationships are made visible, navigable, and open to reinterpretation. For this pedagogy to function as intended, educators should resist the impulse to resolve ambiguity too quickly, and instead adopt a facilitative stance that privileges curiosity over coverage and interpretation over conclusion, and allows learners the time and space to explore difference without the pressure of persuasion or self-disclosure.

CONCLUSION

In a field grappling with polarization, fragmentation, and the pressure to simplify, a pedagogy of relational sense-making offers something genuinely different: an approach that helps learners first perceive the underlying web of identities, values, and narratives in which encounter and disagreement take place, before they are asked to navigate either. By noticing patterns, grappling with difference, and situating themselves within a mosaic of Jewish lives, learners develop not only knowledge but the relational and ethical capacities that make more demanding forms of dialogue possible later. Jewish education becomes an invitation to inhabit complexity, embrace pluralism, and cultivate a sense of belonging that is both deeply personal and collectively sustained.



To access the full practice guide, including the Mosaic character deck (in printable and digital engagement versions), game instructions, and activity resources, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Mikhael Keshner is a curator of educational experiences and resources, whose professional passion is supporting Jewish educators and learners in building informed, constructive, and committed relationships with *am yisrael* (the Jewish people) and *medinat yisrael* (the Jewish state). As a British-born Israeli-by-choice and new American, he cares deeply about strengthening each Jew's connection to global Jewry. Before joining The Jewish Education Project as Director, Israel Education, Mikhael worked at Harvard Hillel, MIT Hillel, and Hebrew College. He holds Master's degrees in Philosophy (University of Cambridge), Near Eastern & Judaic Studies (Brandeis University), and Jewish professional leadership (Brandeis University). At home, Mikhael is an avid reader, *hevruta* enthusiast, and devoted *abba* to two young children.

The Things We Carry: A Pedagogy of Jewish Migration and Adaptation

OVERVIEW

The Things We Carry is a multisensory pedagogy that invites learners into the lived experiences of Jewish migration, adaptation, and cultural creativity across the diaspora. It begins with the belief that memory lives not only in our minds but also in our bodies. This approach engages all five senses — sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell — to make Jewish history personal, embodied, and emotionally resonant. It shifts learning from something we study to something we feel.

The experience opens with a suitcase placed at the center of the room. As each item is uncovered and placed on a story cloth, the suitcase becomes a vessel of memory, movement, and reinvention. Inside is a curated collection of objects that reveal both continuity and change in Jewish life — a weathered siddur annotated in multiple languages, a recipe card adapting traditional dishes with local ingredients, a vial of anise that connects kitchens across continents, maracas that carry Jewish melody into new musical traditions, and a kippah stitched with Indigenous textile patterns. Through these encounters, learners discover that Jewish migration is not only a story of loss or displacement. It is also a story of creativity, resilience, and transformation.

A VISION OF JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD

Jewish peoplehood is not a fixed or uniform concept. It is a living expression of memory, movement, and belonging. My worldview is rooted in the belief that to be Jewish is to be in motion. This motion takes many forms: spiritual searching, geographic relocation, cultural adaptation, and the constant work of building and rebuilding home. It reflects a people shaped by journey and by the resilience that emerges from navigating change.

I grew up within layered identities. I am Peruvian and American. I am an immigrant and a citizen. I am Latina and Jewish. Throughout my life, I was often told I was too much of one thing and not enough of another. I moved through liminal spaces between communities, crossing social, emotional, and psychological borders each day. What became clear to me early on is that Jewish identity cannot be flattened or confined to binaries. It is layered and multidimensional, shaped along the journey to find connection, meaning, and home. This pedagogy emerges from my commitment to reclaiming and elevating the multiplicity of Jewish migration stories.

As the founder and chief executive officer of Jewtina y Co., I have spent years working with Latin-Jews who live in a "double diaspora," existing outside of both Israel and Latin America. Their migratory paths hold both fragility and strength, rupture and resilience, as they navigate what it means to hold two homelands at once, neither of which is where they currently reside. Their stories live in the foods they cook, the music they inherit, the ritual objects they protect, and the languages they turn to in prayer and in the intimacy of home. These sensory fragments are not simply remnants of the past. They are threads that bind memory to identity and identity to community. This pedagogy challenges cognitive-centered models of Jewish education that privilege text over experience, and it draws on a tradition that has always known that Jewish memory is embodied: we smell *besamim* (fragrant spices) at Havdalah, hear the *shofar* (ram's horn) on Rosh Hashanah, taste the *matzah* of our ancestors at Passover. Jewish memory does not live solely in books. It lives in bodies and senses, in kitchens and sanctuaries, in migration routes and family stories.

JEWISH MIGRATION AS SACRED PATTERN: THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

Jewish tradition is, at its core, a tradition of movement. From our earliest sacred texts, the Jewish people are portrayed as wanderers, seekers, and builders of new homes. The Passover declaration *Arami oved avi* — "My father was a wandering Aramean" (Deuteronomy 26:5) — anchors Jewish identity in the act of migration. It is both collective and personal. At the seder table, we do not just remember; we relive. We taste the bitterness of *maror* (bitter herbs), feel the urgency of the *matzah*, and hear the story as if we ourselves were leaving Egypt. This ritual teaches that the experience of migration is not only part of our past but a foundation of who we are becoming. The Hebrew language itself reflects this truth: *halakh* (to walk) is the root of *halacha*, the path of Jewish law; *avar* (to cross over) gives us the word *lvri*, Hebrew, meaning one who crosses; and *shuv* (to return) is the root of *teshuvah*, returning to self and to relationship. Migration and adaptation are not deviations from tradition. They are essential expressions of it.

This pedagogy is also grounded in educational theory that centers embodied, culturally rooted, and inclusive practices. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences reminds us that learners understand and express knowledge through many modalities — among them bodily kinesthetic and spatial intelligences, activated when participants hold textured objects or trace migration routes. John Dewey's philosophy of learning by doing affirms that meaningful education must emerge from direct encounter, not passive reception. And Geneva Gay's framework of culturally responsive pedagogy insists that education is most impactful when it honors the cultural knowledge and lived experiences learners bring with them. Neuroscience supports these approaches as well: multisensory learning activates more neural pathways, deepening both retention and emotional connection.

Together, these frameworks affirm something that Jewish ritual has always known: when learners are given the opportunity to feel, taste, hear, and hold the stories of our people, we are not merely teaching history. We are cultivating relationship — with the past, with community, with family, and with self. Ruth Behar captures this beautifully in *Across So Many Seas*, tracing centuries of Jewish journeys from Inquisition-era Spain to Cuba and the United States, showing how Jewish identity is carried not only in texts and traditions but in objects, songs, recipes, and resilience. Her insight that "every family has a suitcase of stories, some spoken and others carried silently" is the animating truth of this pedagogy.

THE PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

The Things We Carry is an immersive, multisensory learning experience designed for participants aged 14 and above and requiring approximately 100 minutes. It unfolds in five stages: (I) Preparing for the activity; (II) Unpacking the suitcase; (III) Discovery phase; (IV) Personal story activation; and (V) Closing: Adaptation and imagination. Each phase guides learners through a layered exploration of Jewish migration, memory, and identity, using sensory-rich materials and reflective prompts rooted in both personal and collective story.

The experience begins with a vintage suitcase placed at the center of the space. Learners watch as 5–7 symbolic objects are slowly unpacked and placed on a shared story cloth — each one passed hand to hand, inviting touch, smell, sound, and sight before any words are spoken. Once the suitcase has been unpacked and curiosity is alive in the room, learners move into a guided discovery phase, using the M² Passport resource to reflect on what the objects evoke and what questions they raise. The experience then turns personal: participants share an object they have brought from home, connecting the collective suitcase to their own family stories in small-group conversation. Finally, in a closing imagination exercise, each learner writes a note to a future relative, extending their object's journey forward in time and locating themselves within the larger, unfolding story of Jewish migration.

When tested with diverse groups — middle school students, high school teens, and intergenerational adults — participants consistently reported deep emotional engagement, surprise at how quickly the time passed, and a hunger to learn more about their own family histories. One participant noted: "I realized I don't know enough about where my family came from. I want to go home and ask my parents everything." This response, which was typical, shaped the development of the M² Passport, which extends the pedagogy beyond the session itself and into participants' everyday lives.

CONCLUSION

The Things We Carry matters because it challenges the dominant narratives of Jewish education that have often centered certain geographies, languages, and histories while marginalizing others. It affirms that there is no single way to be Jewish, no single path of migration, no single vessel that holds our collective memory. When learners engage with this pedagogy, they discover three essential truths: that Jewish migration is both universal and particular, connecting us to all who have left home in search of safety and belonging while carrying the specific texture of Jewish memory and covenant; that resilience is not just survival but creativity, as the Jews who crossed borders did not simply endure but innovated and created something new; and that every Jewish learner belongs in this story, because curiosity and the desire to connect are themselves acts of continuation. This is an ongoing Jewish story, shaped by movement, adaptation, and the things we choose to carry forward – and every learner is part of it.



To access the full practice guide, including facilitation scripts, the M² Passport resource, and all materials, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Dr. Analucia Lopezrevoredo is a sociologist, experiential educator, and organizational leader fascinated by the many ways Jewish communities have adapted, thrived, and remained connected across the globe. As Founder and CEO of Jewtina y Co., a nonprofit dedicated to celebrating, elevating, and expanding Latin-Jewish life by connecting Latin-Jews to one another and strengthening their connection to global Jewry, Analucia is constantly exploring how Jewish identity, culture, and community are being reimagined in the 21st century. Born in Peru and raised between cultures, she believes that the diversity of the Jewish people is one of its greatest strengths, and that building bridges across Jewish communities worldwide is among the most powerful ways to strengthen identity, belonging, and peoplehood today.

Drawing Out A New Torah

OVERVIEW

Drawing Out A New Torah is a pedagogy that brings together two activities not usually found in the same room: traditional Torah study and drawing. Its central claim is straightforward: drawing is not merely a form of artistic expression but a way of thinking. When learners pick up a pen and draw in response to a sacred text, they are not illustrating what they already know. They are discovering what they did not yet know they thought. This pedagogy creates structured opportunities for that discovery to happen in community, where the act of drawing alongside others becomes a practice of Jewish Peoplehood in miniature.

The practice is designed primarily for adult learners, including those who insist they cannot draw. In fact, it is precisely those learners — the ones who say they “failed drawing in primary school” — for whom this approach opens something genuinely new. By treating drawing as a verb rather than a noun, a process of thinking rather than a product to be judged, the sessions invite every participant into the conversation. The result is a *beit midrash* (house of study) that is both more embodied and more democratic than many learners have previously experienced.

JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD AND THE INDIVIDUAL LETTER

In his final speech to the people in the book of Devarim (Deuteronomy), Moshe describes the Torah as not being far away in heaven. This is a radically democratizing image: the sacred text belongs to all the people, not only to the hierarchical class of holy leaders. The Torah is the inheritance of every Jew, and it follows that everyone has the potential to find their own path and mode of engagement with it.

An idea attributed to the Ba'al Shem Tov takes this further. The Jewish people are compared to a Torah scroll, and every individual is a single letter within it. If a single letter is missing, damaged, or indistinct, the scroll is invalid and cannot be used. So too, each person needs their own distinct expression — to be their own defined letter. Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks expands on this: “Every Jew is a letter in the Scroll. Each Jewish family is a word, every community a sentence, and the Jewish people at any one time are a paragraph. The Jewish people through time constitute a story, the strangest and most moving story in the annals of mankind.” (*Radical Then, Radical Now*). Before these letters combine to enhance the meaning, each must be distinct. This pedagogy is grounded in the conviction that drawing is one powerful way for an individual to become their own distinct letter.

This is Jewish civilization as a dynamic relationship: a conversation between Torah and the particular time, place, and perception of each individual. Expanding the *beit midrash* to include drawing is not a departure from tradition but an extension of it — a way of drawing out new insights and returning them to the ongoing Jewish conversation.

TORAH IN THE BODY: THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

The central text for this pedagogy is Devarim 30:12-14: “It is not in the heavens... neither is it beyond the sea... No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to do it.” The Hebrew word translated as “to do it” is *la’asotah* — which more precisely means to make or to act. Torah is not an abstract spirituality. It requires living, breathing, thinking, feeling expressions of being. It needs mouths, hearts, and bodies. The Talmud in Shabbat 88 imagines the angels objecting to God giving the Torah to humans, and Moshe’s winning argument is that Torah is written with instructions for human bodies and human relationships. It makes no sense as a disembodied spirituality. And so one should use one’s body and physical materials to engage with it — discovering the embodied knowledge within.

The biblical craftsman Bezalel is described as filled with *chokhmah*, *binah*, and *da’at* (wisdom, understanding, and knowledge) — three distinct types of thinking — as well as *kol melakhah*, all manner of workmanship. The medieval commentator Rashi interprets these three as wisdom learned from others, intelligence deduced for oneself, and divine inspiration. In his book *The Craftsman*, sociologist Richard Sennett identifies a strikingly parallel structure in the artisan’s education: apprentice, journeyman, master. Both frameworks affirm that making is itself a form of knowing, one that involves the mind, body, and material all working together.

Artists and thinkers have been clear about this specifically for drawing. David Hockney: “Drawing is the thing you do to understand something, to make it more present in your mind... The act of drawing forces the artist to slow down, take note of details and look at the world.” John Berger: “For the artist drawing is discovery... A line, an area of tone, is not really important because it records what you have seen, but because of what it will lead you on to see.” Drawing is not an illustration of what is already understood. It is the process by which understanding is reached. And when drawing happens alongside others, it creates community. The Paris-based artist Chloe Briggs, who convenes open drawing sessions attended by hundreds around the world, reflects: “These sessions are about a lot more than drawing practice... They are about life and love and learning to see other human beings through the gentle act of drawing.” This convergence — of Torah’s insistence that sacred knowledge is embodied, and the art world’s understanding of drawing as a mode of collective thinking — is the foundation on which this pedagogy rests.

THE PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

The session structure brings Torah study and drawing into direct conversation across seven stages: (1) an introduction to both the topic and the methodology; (2) a “What is Drawing?” exercise, in which participants write their own name, hold it up, and discover that every person’s mark is different — eliminating competition before it can take root; (3) a warm-up sequence using a purpose-designed warm-up notebook, pairing short drawing exercises with brief rabbinic texts to establish drawing as a way of slowing down seeing; (4) text study accompanied by abstract mark-making, inviting participants to doodle and try out materials freely while engaging with the source sheet; (5) deeper text study, deliberately leaving questions open rather than resolving them, so that the drawing process can do that work; (6) individual prompted drawing in response to the main text, with the facilitator moving through the room; and (7) a show-and-tell, using a purpose-designed reflection notebook, in which all drawings are displayed together and participants consider each other’s responses.

The show-and-tell is the heart of the session’s Peoplehood dimension and not to be rushed. All participants have engaged with the same texts and the same drawing prompts — yet every drawing will be different. Much like handwriting, a drawing is a trace of another’s unique thought process. When the drawings are gathered and viewed together, something remarkable happens: interpretations that in traditional textual learning would be presented as competing or adversarial — “Rashi says X but Ramban says Y” — instead sit alongside each other in respectful harmony. Even if a hundred people draw the same tree from the same viewpoint, the result is a hundred different drawings, none of them the “correct” tree, yet each revealing something true. It is in this moment of mutual recognition that the values of Jewish Peoplehood are made tangible: the dignity and worth of each perspective, and the enrichment that comes from encountering others without being diminished by them. The participant is not wrong because someone else sees it differently.

In testing with the M² cohort, the approach proved effective across different types of Torah texts — biblical narrative, Talmud, legal material — and has been adapted for intergenerational groups, including a workshop at the Polin Museum in Warsaw. The two purpose-designed resources, the warm-up notebook and the reflections notebook, are each constructed from a single sheet of paper folded into a small book of sixteen pages, keeping the materials simple and non-precious, which is itself a pedagogical choice: adult learners should not feel they are handling materials designed for children, nor that the drawing they produce is a precious object that must be done correctly.

CONCLUSION

Torah is not an abstract spirituality in the possession of angels. It belongs on the physical, earthly world of humans, in their mouths and in their hearts — and in their hands. Drawing is a way for the body to think with physical materials, and when that thinking happens alongside others in response to sacred text, it enacts the core values of Jewish Peoplehood: each individual contributing their distinct letter to the shared scroll, none diminishing the other, all of them together revealing something of the Torah that no single person could reach alone. This pedagogy models the dignity and mutual respect that are not merely desirable features of Jewish community but its vital foundational values.



To access the full practice guide, including session structure, source sheet guidance, and the warm-up and reflections notebooks, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Jacqueline Nicholls is a London based fine artist, Jewish educator, and award winning visual poet. She uses art to engage with traditional Jewish ideas in untraditional ways. Her main focus of her artistic practice is to consider handwriting as a form of drawing. Her drawing project, Draw Yomi, completed in Jan 2020, Jacqueline drew the Talmud, following the Daf Yomi schedule. She regularly teaches at the London School of Jewish Studies. Jacqueline's art has been exhibited in solo shows and significant contemporary Jewish Art group shows in the UK, USA and Israel. Jacqueline has an MA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins. Art. Recent residencies include 'Wasted Books' at The London Library, '50 Jewish Objects' Jewish Studies Department, Manchester University, and Beit Venezia, where she was the lead artist for New Venice Haggadah (2016) and the Deck of Esther (2022), reimagining Megillat Esther as a pack of playing cards.

Peoplehood Orientation: Nurturing Klal Yisrael through Torah Study

OVERVIEW

“I just want to learn Torah.” In mid-October, as my students and I gathered for our weekly *halakha shiur* (class), I began by asking them what they might need from our classroom space. This was the overwhelming response — from adults in formation as rabbis and teachers, representing a range of political commitments including passionate anti-Zionists and steadfast supporters of the State of Israel. One week that semester, almost half of my class had been in Washington, DC — either for the Israel rally or the Rabbis for Ceasefire action. But week after week, we learned Torah. A friend of mine once said that talmud Torah — the act of studying, creating, and teaching Torah — is one of the only pluralistic mitzvot (commandments). Over those months, this was my experience. More than direct actions, rallies, and professing allegiances, it is perhaps the bet midrash (house of study) in which we forge ourselves as *Klal Yisrael* (the collective of the Jewish people).

This paper proposes a Peoplehood Orientation to Torah teaching — a conceptual stance that understands rabbinic literature as a tool for nurturing a sense of Jewish Peoplehood and that uses methodologies to cultivate this sensibility. It offers one concrete practice within this orientation: writing letters to our ancestors, through which learners forge personal relationships with the commentators and sages who dwell within the texts they study, and in doing so find new tethers to the Jewish people and its mesorah (tradition).

TORAH AS THE HOME OF KLAL YISRAEL

My Jewish education taught me that the vehicle around which *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish people) formed and coalesced is the State of Israel — that peoplehood is fidelity to and love of *Medinat Yisrael* (the State of Israel) as not simply a modern nation-state but as a symbolic representative and embodiment of the Jewish people. As we have seen in recent years, this definition of peoplehood is wanting. When we collapse the notion of *Klal Yisrael* or *Ahavat Yisrael* (love of Israel/the Jewish people) with unequivocal support of *Medinat Yisrael*, we deem those who cherish the diaspora and seek solidarity with Palestinians as outsiders, othered, and un-Jewish. If *Klal Yisrael* is to survive this next chapter of Jewish history, we must return to and recover authentic entities around which our people can coalesce. I suggest we return to Torah — the project that not only initially forged us as a collective but also carried us through diaspora and continues to do so.



Transcending the education that taught me the modern State of Israel was the sole conduit for *Klal Yisrael*, I have found that shifting my focus to Torah as both the locus of *Klal Yisrael* and the vehicle through which it is constituted has opened me up to loving Jews more fiercely and deeply than ever before. Torah has become a portal for me into Jewish collectivity and connection that brings joy, depth, and rigor to my love of this collective. I first found echoes of this vision in the words of R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik, who described beginning a Torah class without a planned conclusion and watching various commentators — Reb Chaim Brisker, the Shach, Rebbe Akiva, Rashi, the Rambam, the Ra'avad — enter the room one by one, until “suddenly a symposium of generations comes into existence.” This image of Torah learning as a cross-temporal conversation — *mispar ha'dorot*, across the generations — transformed my life and my teaching.

Daniel Boyarin's 2023 manifesto “The No-State Solution” gives this vision its most contemporary philosophical articulation. Boyarin understands Jewish nationalism as rooted not in the nation-state but in the creative vitality of a stateless national collective, bound together by shared discourse, cultural signifiers, practices, and a traveling homeland of text and practice. As he writes: “Talmudic study — its melodies, rhythms, and counterpoints — has wbeen the music of Jewish existence, the lullaby of Jewland.” In *chevruta*, Soloveitchik and Boyarin bring us into a sense of *Klal Yisrael* organized around the central creative force of Torah and its interpretive legacy. As teachers, it is our sacred task to teach in ways that honor this potential.

A PEOPLEHOOD ORIENTATION: THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

In training teachers at SVARA, the notion of “orientations” is an essential framework. Orientations to teaching were developed by Pam Grossman to articulate a taxonomy of purposes that teachers of English literature bring to their classrooms — a step between worldview and pedagogy that contains both a conception of purposes and accompanying paradigmatic practices. Barry Holtz later applied this framework to the teaching of Bible in Jewish education, identifying nine orientations. Jon A. Levisohn then applied it to rabbinic literature, offering a menu of ten orientations from which educators can consciously select — among them a Torah/Instruction Orientation, a Historical Orientation, and a Literary Orientation. As Levisohn defines it, an orientation “is a teacher’s fundamental stance toward a particular subject that encompasses a conception of purposes and a set of paradigmatic practices” — it is not a technique or method, but a coherent organising framework. It is in this spirit, and in the lineage of Grossman, Holtz, and Levisohn, that I offer an orientation-in-formation: a Peoplehood Orientation.

The Peoplehood Orientation understands rabbinic literature — broadly defined — as a tool for nurturing a sense of Jewish Peoplehood. It teaches Torah using modalities that enable learners to connect more deeply with themselves as part of the broader collective of Jewish people. Learners are encouraged to develop personal relationships with commentators, sages, and figures found within ancient texts, and to understand those texts as portals to the worlds in which our ancestors lived. Questions within this orientation are not about establishing historical truths, but about encountering historical information as a gateway into deeper relationship: who are these people, and what were the worlds they inhabited? How does learning the words of these sages deepen our sense of Jewish Peoplehood, of connection to a collective through the dynamic exchange of Torah? This orientation aims to bring our ancestors out of the pages of a source sheet and into learners' hearts and bodies.

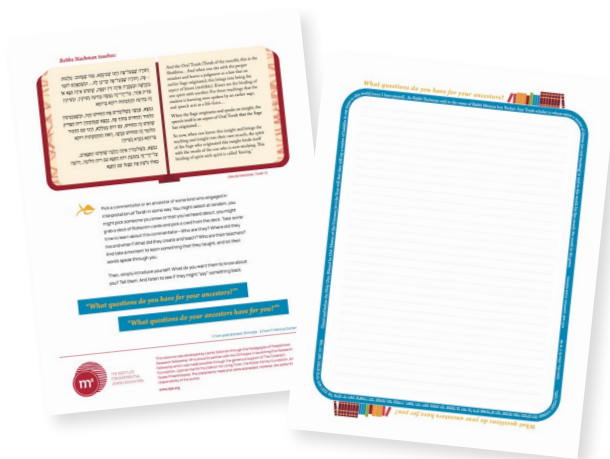
THE PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

The practice I offer within this orientation is writing letters to ancestors. I first developed this methodology in my own learning during a month-long pilgrimage through northern Spain, Provence, and northern France, visiting cities and towns where Rishonim — medieval Talmud commentators — once lived and learned. As my partner and I traveled between regions once inhabited by dynamic Jewish communities now invisible, we introduced ourselves to the cast of characters we knew had dwelled there, learned pieces of Torah they authored, and invited them to speak back to us. By the end of the journey, the intimate connection I felt to each commentator reverberated outward, unlocking within me a pure love for our people and our mesorah that I had not felt in almost a decade. Each ancestor I met offered me a new tether to the Jewish people. Returning home, I began experimenting with this practice in my teaching.

The theological grounding for this practice comes from Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, who taught that when a student learns the insight of an earlier sage and speaks their words aloud, “the spirit of the Sage who originated this insight binds itself with the words of the one who is now studying. This binding of spirit with spirit is called ‘kissing.’” When we learn, when we put the words of those who came before us in our mouths, we are kissing them — entering an intimate, cross-temporal encounter through the Torah that we share. The practice works as follows: students select a commentator or ancestor who engaged in the interpretation of Torah — at random, or using a tool such as Rishonim trading cards or a matching quiz. They may gather historical information about this person and learn something of their *hiddushim* (original Torah insights). The prompt is simple: introduce yourself. What do you want them to know about you? Tell them. Then listen to hear if they might say something back. Two guiding questions support this: What questions do you have for your ancestors? And — in a beautiful reversal — what questions do your ancestors have for you?

CONCLUSION

Peoplehood is not simply a connection to a collective — it is a love and appreciation for the collective. A Peoplehood Orientation to Torah teaching takes seriously the possibility that the bet midrash, the house of study, is where Klal Yisrael is forged and renewed in every generation. When students write letters to their ancestors, when they speak the words of the Rambam or Rashi or the Rashba aloud and feel those spirits bind with theirs, they are not merely studying Jewish history. They are enacting Jewish Peoplehood in its deepest form: a cross-generational, cross-cultural, cross-ideological conversation that is inherently dynamic, multi-vocal, and rooted in love and curiosity. This is, I believe, a conversation in which we all have a stake.



To access the full practice guide, including the letter-writing prompts, source sheet guidance, and the Rishonim trading cards, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Laynie Soloman is a passionate teacher and Torah-lover who seeks to uplift the piously irreverent, queer, and subversive spirit of Jewish text and theology. They serve on the faculty of SVARA: A Traditionally Radical Yeshiva and co-founded the Trans Halakha Project, an initiative that creates new forms of halakhic (Jewish legal) expression shaped by trans and non-binary Jews. Laynie has taught rabbinic text & practice widely, including at Yeshivat Hadar, the Academy for Jewish Religion, and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. They earned their MA in Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and are pursuing their PhD in Jewish Studies at Gratz College. They believe that grounding in, learning, and expressing ourselves through Torah is a liberatory spiritual practice and source of cultural resistance that can help us live with greater integrity, rootedness, and joy. Laynie lives in Philadelphia with their family and many books.

Zakhor: A Pedagogy of Memory

OVERVIEW

In Hebrew, history is a modern etymological inclusion. Classically, the word used is *zakhor* — memory. This distinction is not merely linguistic. History is something that belongs to someone else, something we observe and absorb from a position of remove. Memory is inherently ours. We journey backward and forward across time as we recount our own stories and the stories we carry, whether or not we were corporeally present at their inception. *Zakhor* is a pedagogy that takes this distinction seriously, centering the personal memory of each learner as a building block of collective Jewish identity and Peoplehood.

The practice centers around the manifestations of nostalgia in contemporary Jewish experience and the ways through which the Jewish people tell stories and transmit the memories of the past to present generations. At this moment in the arc of Jewish history, young people are seeking new sources of meaning-making and belonging while feeling disconnected from a Jewish experience that can feel separate from the rest of their lives. *Zakhor* responds to this by inviting learners to place themselves inside the Jewish story — not as inheritors of someone else's history, but as text people whose own memories are part of the Jewish canon.

MEMORY AS THE FOUNDATION OF PEOPLEHOOD

To be part of the Jewish people is to be a component of a story that stretches across time and space. The Jewish people of today are the collective heirs of a legacy that goes back to our foundational texts, our collective origin story, and the multiple manifestations of our culture that have planted the seeds of the modern Jewish experience. While contemporary Jewish people may struggle to answer questions of who is inside and outside the tent of acceptance and belonging, looking back at our past through the personal lens of memory becomes a way to connect to a sense of self, a sense of purpose, and a sense of Peoplehood. In a world where the future of the Jewish people seems full of divergent pathways and points of view, memory and the shared stories that shape where we come from may also be what shapes our next steps.

If history is objective, memory is most surely not. Memory is personal — but in much of Jewish tradition, personal and collective are deeply intertwined. The kaddish, the prayer of mourning, requires a minyan (a quorum of ten): the individual must show up to be part of the whole. So too is the story of the Jewish people dependent on each memory being a building block of a shared history that can be told, shared, and passed on. As the late poet Yehuda Amichai wrote: “The Jews are not a historical people / And not even an archaeological people, the Jews / Are a geological people with rifts / And collapses and strata and fiery lava. / Their history must be measured / On a different scale.” This geological metaphor — layered, pressurised, eruptive — captures what a pedagogy of memory seeks to work with: not a clean narrative line, but a living, shifting accumulation of personal and collective experience.

REMEMBER AND DO NOT FORGET: THE JEWISH TRADITION OF ZAKHOR

To remember the story of the Jewish people is a commandment that appears multiple times in the Tanakh. In the Ten Commandments, as first recorded in Exodus 20:8, the instruction is to “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.” In the second iteration in Deuteronomy 5:12, “remember” is replaced by “observe.” Memory, as embodied in the mitzvah of Shabbat, is therefore understood as an active rather than a passive process — not a mental state but a practice, a doing. Deuteronomy 25:17-19 presents an even more arresting formulation: we are commanded both to remember what Amalek did to us on our journey out of Egypt, and to blot out the memory of Amalek entirely. To intentionally blot out a memory, however, requires that one first have it. At this moment in much of Jewish education, learners do not have the baseline knowledge that allows them to know what to remember or forget. Forgetting through omission means the past is lost forever, rather than becoming a teaching tool that informs our current circumstances.

Jewish tradition also holds that all Jews — meaning all who would ever live throughout history — were present at Mount Sinai for the moment of revelation. The Torah, therefore, is not something each generation inherits anew, but something that has been ours all along. We don’t approach revelation from a place of remove; we were already there. The Passover seder enacts this most powerfully. The Mishnah (Pesachim 10:5) instructs that in every generation, each person must regard themselves as though they personally came out of Egypt. The seder is not a commemoration of history but an act of memory: placing oneself inside the story and passing that memory on to the next generation as their own. This is precisely the spirit that *Zakhor* as a pedagogy seeks to cultivate — embodying Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s insight that the Jewish people do not need more textbooks; they need text people.

THE PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

The pedagogy of *Zakhor* centers on the sacredness of placing the personal into conversation with the collective. In this practice, each person is the text, and each person's memories become part of the collective Jewish canon. The practice has three stages and is best enacted in a group setting that allows for both personal reflection and collective processing. The first stage, My Jewish Story – Creating the Framework, establishes the legitimacy of every learner's story as a building block of Jewish Peoplehood. Some learners may feel they lack a “real” Jewish story – this is precisely the moment to invoke the tradition of Mount Sinai and the idea that every Jew was present at the moment of collective revelation. Some learners may carry painful memories – the tradition of the shiva house, where the mourner initiates conversation if and when they choose, guides the facilitation here: sharing is only valuable when everyone is invited, not required. Whatever each learner is carrying, the first step is to validate, welcome, and include.

The second stage, My Jewish Story – Personal Reflection, is the core of the practice. Each learner draws a simple stick figure and responds to a series of guided prompts that map Jewish memory onto the body: on the eyes, how they see Judaism's role in their life; on the head, how Judaism has shaped their decision-making; on the mouth, a Jewish story important to them to tell; on the hands, a Jewish action they do; on the heart, someone they carry with them on their Jewish journey; on the stomach, a core Jewish food memory; on the legs, what grounds them in their relationship with Judaism; on the feet, a Jewish place that has shaped them; and in the background, a moment in Jewish history – personal or collective – that has formed them. The deliberate use of the body as the organising frame is not incidental: it enacts the central claim of *zakhor*, that memory is not only cognitive but physical, carried in the body as much as the mind. The third stage, My Jewish Story – Collective Reflection, invites learners to share their self-portraits in chevruta (paired learning), to surface commonalities and honour differences, and to create a group composite – a cookbook of food memories, a collective timeline of formative moments – that visibly becomes part of a shared Jewish story.



CONCLUSION

The Jewish people today are diverse, and with that diversity can often be divergent from one another. While there is an excitement to a future shaped by a multifaceted Jewish people, this diversity carries the risk that moving away from the common core will lead to multiple Jewish peoples rather than a large, pluralistic, united — though not uniform — nation. Looking backward may be the best way to build the foundation of a shared future. Memory is not nostalgia. It is an act of ownership: claiming the Jewish story as one's own and accepting the responsibility to carry it forward. When each learner sees their own memories as a genuine and irreplaceable piece of the collective Jewish experience, they cease to be observers of a history that belongs to others and become participants in a story that belongs to all of us.



To access the full practice guide, including the self-portrait prompts, facilitation notes, and collective reflection activities, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Dr. Samantha Vinokor-Meinrath is a lifelong Jewish educator and learner. She is the Senior Director of Knowledge, Ideas and Learning at The Jewish Education Project. Samantha is a recognized expert on Jewish teens, identity development, antisemitism, and Israel education. She is the author of *#antisemitism: Coming of Age During the Resurgence of Hate*, a deep dive into the identity development of Jewish Generation Z-ers. Samantha is an alumna of the University of Pittsburgh, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Gratz College. She lives in Westchester, New York with her husband, sons, and two beloved rescue dogs.

Pedagogy of Rootedness:

Retrieving Rootedness and Building a Sense of Belonging

OVERVIEW

The Pedagogy of Rootedness is an educational approach designed to ground Jewish youth and individuals joining Jewish communities in the history of their local Jewish community, weaving that local history into the broader tapestry of global Jewish heritage. Its central and distinctive feature is the use of artifacts — tangible objects, photographs, recordings, or descriptions of traditions and historical figures — as entry points into the past. By holding, researching, and reflecting on these objects together, participants are invited to discover their connections to previous generations' knowledge, achievements, and values. The goal is not simply to expand historical knowledge, but to build positive Jewish identity, a sense of pride in one's community, and the self-efficacy that comes from understanding oneself as part of something larger and longer-lived than one's own experience.

A VISION OF JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD

When a community has experienced profound tragedy, it is easy for that tragedy to become the dominant lens through which its members understand themselves. The destruction of the physical and non-physical legacy of one's group often leads to disconnection from one's broader history and to an overemphasis on its most recent and most painful chapters. In the case of Polish Jews, the Holocaust and the devastation it brought have caused many to diminish the importance of the remarkable achievements and contributions of Polish Jewry across a thousand years of history. A millennium of vibrant cultural, intellectual, and communal life has been overshadowed by a few years of catastrophe, the trauma of which continues to be passed from generation to generation.

Yet to build self-esteem and self-efficacy and to empower new generations to advocate for themselves and their communities, it is essential to remember and appreciate the achievements of one's ancestors alongside their suffering. Polish Jewry contributed enormously to the development of Polish society: scientists, writers, composers, lawyers, and doctors with Jewish roots formed an important and inseparable part of Poland's cultural and scientific heritage. Recognizing the value of one's own group's history — and particularly how one's local community shaped the world around it — is what allows people to create their own goals and play an active role in building the society of which they are a part. This conviction is the foundation of the Pedagogy of Rootedness.

ROOTS AND RENEWAL: THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

The pedagogy draws deeply on the symbolism of the tree, which is woven throughout Jewish tradition. In the Torah, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge represent the choices at the heart of moral existence. In the book of Jeremiah, Israel itself is depicted as a tree – subject to upheaval but not everlasting destruction: “The Lord called your name, Green Olive Tree, Lovely and of Good Fruit” (Jeremiah 11:16). Educationally, this tree metaphor captures how knowledge nourishes spiritual and communal growth: just as roots sustain a tree through the seasons, the accumulated heritage of a community sustains its members through change and loss. This is inseparable from the concept of *mi dor le dor* – “from generation to generation” – the cornerstone of Jewish tradition that reflects the timeless transmission of knowledge, values, and cultural heritage across time. The pedagogy of rootedness draws on this principle directly: becoming aware of one’s heritage and the achievements of one’s own group creates a feeling of belonging, shapes a connection with and responsibility for one’s community, and empowers participants to be proactive in strengthening Jewish life for future generations.

In pedagogical terms, the approach is grounded in intentional teaching: purposeful, consciously planned, and carefully executed learning that sets clear goals and adjusts both materials and methods to the specific group characteristics. Intentional teaching treats the educator not merely as a transmitter of information but as an educational guide – a creator of conditions in which students can construct meaning for themselves. This approach is especially important in the Pedagogy of Rootedness because the material is not neutral. Topics related to local Jewish history, family heritage, and community identity can carry significant emotional weight. The educator must be attentive not only to the content but to the emotional landscape of the room, calibrating the depth and pace of the work to what participants are ready to hold. Identity, in this framework, is not delivered but constructed – and the teacher’s role is to support and guide that process with care.

THE PEDAGOGY OF PEOPLEHOOD

The practice can be implemented as a standalone workshop or as part of a longer series of classes and can be applied in a wide range of Jewish educational settings: Jewish schools, community centers, introduction to Judaism courses, and conversion programs. The format is flexible by design. In a one-time workshop, the facilitator selects the artifacts and shapes the discussion around topics that are accessible and emotionally safe for a group that may not yet know each other well. In an extended course, participants can be invited to research and present their own artifacts – objects from local Jewish history or from their own family stories – allowing for deeper engagement with more personally significant and emotionally complex material. This expanded version requires that the educator first build a genuine sense of safety and trust within the group before moving into high-risk territory.



The preparation phase asks the facilitator to clarify the time available, understand the group's dynamics and prior relationships, and set clear goals — whether the primary aim is knowledge building, identity development, or both. Artifacts are then chosen accordingly: they might be actual objects or photographs, descriptions of traditions, images of significant places, works of art, or audio and video recordings. Once chosen, artifacts become the organizing center of the session. Participants encounter each artifact, research its context and meaning, and bring their findings into structured conversation. This can be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Where time and setting allow, the practice can extend beyond the classroom into field study — visiting the places and sites connected to the artifacts themselves.

Throughout, the practice moves between the particular and the universal: from the specific artifact and its local story, outward to the broader sweep of Jewish history, and then back inward to what it means for this participant, in this community, today. The aim is that participants leave not only with expanded knowledge but with a strengthened sense of their own place within the Jewish story — a rootedness that is not passive inheritance but active, living connection.

CONCLUSION

The Pedagogy of Rootedness holds significance for Jewish communities wherever they find themselves in the Diaspora, irrespective of their size or the specific contours of their history. The need to reclaim a full and honest relationship with one's communal past — one that encompasses achievement and vitality alongside loss and trauma — is not unique to Polish Jewry. It is a challenge that resonates across Jewish communities that have experienced rupture, displacement, or the erosion of collective memory. By placing artifacts at the center of learning, this practice makes history tangible, personal, and discussable. It builds pride, belonging, and the sense that every participant has a role to play in carrying the Jewish story forward.



To access the full activity guide, including preparation frameworks, artifact selection guidance, and reflection tools, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Dr. Dominika Zakrzewska is a project manager, educator, and scholar with over a decade of experience working at the intersection of Jewish communal life, academia, and international social projects. Her work focuses on countering bias, fostering dialogue between people from diverse backgrounds, and supporting Jewish life and minority rights in Central and Eastern Europe. She serves as an Assistant Professor at the M. Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw and holds a PhD in Social Sciences, as well as master's degrees in Education, Psychology, and Jewish Nonprofit Management. Dominika was a 2024 Ralph I. Goldman Fellow at JDC Entwine and a recipient of the Fulbright Slavic Award (2022). Her other distinctions include grants from the World Union of Jewish Studies and the Yesod Europe Jewish Professional Development Fund, a Scholar-in-Residence position at the Oxford Summer Institute, and fellowships with URJ Klal Yisrael, and Mi Dor Le Dor at the Taube Center in Poland.

More Peoplehood Pedagogies

Check out these additional creative Peoplehood Pedagogies created by the two cohorts of the M² Fellowship.



The Pedagogy of Storytelling

Bezawit Abebe



A Jewish Pedagogy of Responsiveness

Dr. Sandra Anusiewicz-Baer



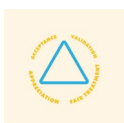
Enhancing Student Learning on Jewish Heritage Travel Journeys

Dr. David I. Bernstein



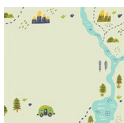
The Case for Chevruta as the Vital Instrument for Peoplehood

Sophie Bigot-Goldblum



The Questions That Bind Us: Jewish Peoplehood through She'elot em Kavod (Questions Imbued with Dignity)

Stacey Aviva Clark



Who am I? Who are We? Learning About Jewish Peoplehood by Facing Difference and Fostering Belonging

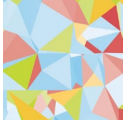
Maia Ferdman



Kaveh: A Pedagogy of Hope

Rabbi Amitai Fraiman





Pedagogy of Hiddush

Avidan Halivni



The Pedagogy of Interpersonal Hiyuv: What Are Our Obligations to Others?

Rabbi Joshua Mikutiks



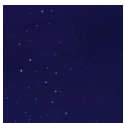
A Practice of Wonder: Cultivating Jewish Belonging Through Awe and Attention

Deborah Niederman



The Practice of Embodiment of Jewish Historical Crises

Dr. Alexandria Fanjoy Silver



Meaning-Making in the Teaching of Tanakh Storytelling as a Pedagogy for Connection to the Jewish People

Reuven Spolter



Speaking Jewish: Using Language to Build Identity and Jewish Peoplehood

Rabbi Josh Weinberg



ABOUT PEOPLEHOOD PAPERS

The Peoplehood Papers provide a platform for Jews to discuss their common agenda and key issues related to their collective identity. The journal appears three times a year, with each issue addressing a specific topic.

For past issues: <https://www.jpeoplehood.org/peoplehoodpapers>

The Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education (CJPE) is a "one stop" resource center for institutions and individuals seeking to build collective Jewish life, with a focus on Jewish Peoplehood and Israel education. It provides professional and leadership training, content and programmatic development or general Peoplehood conceptual and educational consulting.

ABOUT Z3 PROJECT



The Z3 Project is a movement reimagining Jewish Peoplehood for the 21st century. An initiative of the Oshman Family JCC, we believe Jewish communities in Israel and the Diaspora can—and must—lead, shape and take ownership of their identities, institutions and shared future. Through our Conference, Institute and Leadership Lab, we revitalize Jewish public life with bold ideas and meaningful engagement.



ABOUT M²

M²: The Institute for Experiential Jewish Education was founded in 2016 with the belief that Jewish education can unlock meaningful and purposeful Jewish living. By offering cutting-edge professional development programs, innovative educational frameworks, and tailored consulting services, M² empowers educators and organizations to create impactful Jewish experiences. Its global network of alumni and partners continues to inspire and expand the reach of impactful Jewish education worldwide.

www.ije.org