



בית התפוצות
מוזיאון העם היהודי
BEIT HATFUTSOT
THE MUSEUM OF THE
JEWISH PEOPLE

Up, Close and Personal

Thinking about the Jewish Peoplehood Closeness Index



Beit Hatfutsot

The International school for Jewish Peoplehood Studies

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BEIT HATFUTSOT
THE MUSEUM OF THE
JEWISH PEOPLE

Are we all part of the same story?

Beit Hatfutsot is an institution in motion, undergoing extensive renewal, positioning itself as an active center of multi disciplinary, life-long learning and innovative Jewish culture. As an international institution, Beit Hatfutsot is a leader in offering a pluralistic platform for Jewish identity and peoplehood.

It therefore gives all of us at Beit Hatfutsot great pleasure and pride to be hosting the "Leaders Inc" conference that brings together young and passionate Jewish leaders and entrepreneurs. This is probably the most appropriate occasion to commemorate and pay tribute to Anat Dotan-Amar z"l who was an inspiration for us all.

I am happy to be introducing this collection of thoughts about the Jewish Peoplehood Index project, which affects all of us. The mere discussion around the idea of *closeness*, as well as considering the project's process and results, is essential for preparing for the future of the Jewish people. The future of our people is of great concern to us at Beit Hatfutsot, and working towards ensuring a knowledgeable, connecting present for the younger generation of Jews is a personal passion.

Contained in this volume are valuable contributions that continue to grapple with the notion of peoplehood, focusing on demographic and sociological perspectives, as well as theoretical and educational perspectives. Their common denominator is that they demand a reexamination of how one ensures a continuance of the notion of Jewish peoplehood: that identifying Jewishly continues to matter, continues to be relevant.

This volume concludes with a reflection of how we at Beit Hatfutsot and the International School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies (an integral part of Beit Hatfutsot and a driver for identity and peoplehood education) envision applying the results of the Jewish Peoplehood Index. The concept introduced is one of "familial space," using the concept of the family to understand how to ensure Jewish connectedness. It is a paradigm which entails shared responsibility while allowing for a variety of

identities. And it is an image which underscores the importance of generational participation where the previous generation feels that their particular notion of Judaism, whether it be ritual, spiritual, intellectual, cultural, is important and valuable enough to pass on.

I congratulate the Jewish Peoplehood Index project team on their achievements and look forward to continuing the conversation with them and all the other contributors.

May this coming year be a year of innovative family connections and strengthened connections,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Avinoam Armoni', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Avinoam Armoni

Beit Hatfutsot, Chief Executive Officer



**MK YULI YOEL EDELSTEIN
MINISTER OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND DIASPORA AFFAIRS**

Are the Jewish people, who disagree among themselves on almost every important issue, still worthy of the title "*the Jewish nation*", as in "one people"? The Israeli perspective tends to answer this question by emphasizing the divisive and fractious nature of our people, but the most interesting thing we may learn about ourselves may actually come from the perception other peoples have of the Jews as a united and loyal nation. In my capacity as the Minister charged with Israel's Diaspora affairs, I have received much correspondence from colleagues all over the world and from ministers in other countries with their own Diaspora communities, asking to learn from our successful experience in preserving ties with all members of our people despite the fact that many reside outside of Israel.

The reality of "a people scattered and separated among the nations" (The Book of Esther 3:8), both geographically and ideologically, with an awareness of being "one nation" is the result of both a shared ethos and a conscious effort at nurturing unity. Maintaining this awareness and unity is a strategic challenge with which the Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs is charged. The warm relations we in Israel foster with our fellow Jews in the Diaspora can also be utilized as a tool for *hasbara*; as long as Jewish communities overseas feel a sense of identification with Zion, they can willingly be recruited as public diplomacy ambassadors of Israel. After all, the real strength of the Jewish nation is found in its unity as a people, not in its unity of opinion.

Over the last few years our mission has taken on a new face. Hitler and Stalin never asked the Jewish people what their political or religious outlooks were; rather they "united" the Jews through a shared experience of cruelty and bloodshed. During this same time shared Jewish experiences-both the good and the bad-created cultural codes that touched every Jew, wherever they resided. If one would bring up in

conversation the Holocaust, The War of Independence, the creation of the state of Israel, the Six Day War, or the fight for Soviet Jewry, almost all Jews would react in a similar fashion, displaying emotions of great sorrow, great hope, and great triumph. And yet today's youth finds difficulty, perhaps justifiably so, in seeing these experiences as a foundation upon which to build one's Jewish identity.

At the Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs we believe that unity is not created through ideology alone, but through action; through *living* Israeli and Jewish experiences. Our generation has the great honor of being able to actually touch at the heart of our people's unity through both the wondrous accomplishments of the state of Israel and the rich Jewish culture that was created and embellished upon after the tragedy and disaster experienced by previous generations. Creating bonds through communal activities, through holidays and through all of the varied customs of our religion is the key to maintaining our nation's unity.

Jews will always disagree on most issues, on questions such as "who is a Jew?" or "what is the price to be paid for peace?" But, if they are exposed to the Israeli experience (revolutionary technological progress, sophisticated agriculture, diversified Jewish and Israeli culture, Israel as the largest center for Torah learning in the past 2000 years, etc) they will be able to find their commonality in their common Jewishness.

Two Jews may not ever agree on the majority of important subjects, but they will both hear the same notes sounded from a *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah, both fast on the same day for Yom Kippur, and both eat oily donuts to mark the holiday of Hanukkah, and this will be enough to bind them together as a people, as a family. Our shared emotional and existential experiences will always be stronger than any ideological disagreement.

I would like to wish all of us Jews, here in Israel or in the Diaspora, a happy new year; a year of unity and cooperation, a year in which we succeed in standing firmly and together against all of the complex challenges we will need to face.

May you be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Yuli Edelstein' with a stylized flourish above the letters.

MK Yuli Edelstein

Minister of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs

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The Jewish Peoplehood Index Project: The First Two Years

Yoav Shoham, Nimrod Goor, Mireille Surowicz, and Zvika Arran

This paper offers a comprehensive introduction to the process and objectives of the original and current Jewish Peoplehood Index, including the original deliberations over the project, the questions it hopes to answer, and the necessity to continue.

The Jewish Peoplehood Index (JPI) project has grown from a pet project of two people into an enduring quest involving many. As the project prepares to transition to a permanent home, it is fitting that we take stock of the process and accomplishments of the first two years. And what better forum than the conference organized by the dynamic Beit Hatfutsot, and this associated publication. We are grateful for this partnership, as we are for the support of the Jim Joseph Foundation and the Nadav Foundation, the hospitality of and collaboration with the Re'ut Institute, and the contribution of many individuals who will be recognized later in this document. Our apologies in advance for inadvertent omissions.

Our Objective: The project seeks to establish an index of closeness among Jews the world over, an index that is clear, repeatable, and rests on solid foundations. We envision the index being used by policy makers, organization leaders, and the media. Our goal is to lead to better practices and programs, and ultimately contribute to the cohesiveness of the Jewish People.

What is the Jewish Peoplehood Index?

The mission of the JPI project is to contribute to the cohesiveness of the Jewish people. The relationship among Jewish communities worldwide must be continually monitored and updated, informed by contemporary circumstances and relevant mindsets. The force of traditional slogans (“We are one”) and symbols (1948, 1967) is increasingly eroding as they no longer relate to current passions. “The old contract – financial, political and moral support [for Israel] in exchange for a new source of pride and a safe haven in case of future anti-Semitic violence – is fast approaching its expiration date.” (Shoham and Goor, *Peoplehood Index Project*, The Peoplehood Papers 4, 2009)

The premise behind the project is that what you don't know you can't act upon, and what you don't measure you don't know. Policy makers, organizations and programs across the globe have set it as their objective to strengthen Jewish identity and tighten the relationship among Jewish communities worldwide, and especially with Israel. They are, however, in their own words, often "flying blind".

The goal of the JPI project is to provide greater visibility into the vibrancy and cohesiveness of the Jewish people. Specifically, the JPI project aims to develop a regularly updated, global Jewish Closeness Index. The Index will inform policy making and will be the basis for public discourse in the general media. In addition, the questionnaire underlying the Index will serve as a standardized yet extensible planning-and-evaluation tool for operating organizations focusing on Jewish identity and cohesiveness. It will enable organizations to optimize their operations based on specific metrics, track the metrics over time, and compare the metrics to those of other organizations or communities.

This is an ambitious undertaking, to be sure. Much complexity is hidden in innocuous terms such as "measure," "Jews," "identity" or "closeness". The question of whom to survey raises the thorny issue of intermarriage. The question of measurement raises the issue of which medium to use (phone surveys, internet surveys, social networking data, or perhaps existing behavioral data), and what sample biases arise as a result. Finally, there is the question of what one means by closeness; for example, does it have to do with emotional connection, mutual knowledge, or actual interaction? Is it direct connection, or mediated by shared values, shared practices, or other common denominators?

In the rest of this document we will explain how the project has tackled these complexities to date.

Mutually Reinforcing Components

The JPI has two mutually reinforcing components; "the general index is the basis on which the organization-specific surveys are created, and the work with the specific organizations informs the general index and ensures that it remains a living, breathing entity that is anchored in reality." (Shoham and Goor, *Peoplehood Index Project*, The Peoplehood Papers 4, 2009)

Project history, Year 1: Two pilot studies

First pilot study. Between the two of them, the Jewish communities in Israel and the US – both roughly equally sized – comprise over 85% of the Jewish people. It was therefore natural to start with a pilot study regarding the closeness between these two communities. Starting in the summer of 2008, the JPI launched the first bi-national US/Israel survey, led by Professors Steven M. Cohen in New York and Eppie Yaar in Tel Aviv. The study intended to explore the different dimensions of closeness and distance between the two communities, aiming at understanding how these relations can be influenced in the coming years.

Opportunity and Challenge

Opportunity: High scores in the affective scales make the case for a substantial reservoir of mutual good will that could be leveraged.

Challenge: How to harness this potential, given the limited interaction – as evidenced by the results in the cognitive and behavioral scales?

The study was based on two scientific public-opinion surveys taken simultaneously among representative samples of the Jewish communities in Israel and the US. The Israeli survey took the form of telephone interviews, and the US survey took place by physical mail or via the Internet. The survey for both communities measured eight scales: Jewish identity, feelings of pan-Jewish camaraderie, mutual appreciation, importance of Israel and the US as a spiritual center, feeling towards Jews married to non-Jews, social networks, support in strengthening the ties between the communities, and knowledge about US/Israeli Jewry.

The findings were indeed illuminating; some confirmed conventional wisdom, and some exposed unexpected data and indications regarding trends in Jewish Peoplehood. Some of the findings' highlights:

- 1) Jews on both sides attach high value to their Jewish identity. In particular, Israelis attach a higher value to it than to their Israeli identity. This certainly contradicts some existing prejudices.
- 2) Overall, the two communities are remarkably alike on almost all scales, with some notable exceptions.
- 3) Both Israeli and US Jews score highly on the affective scale; meaning they profess to a high attachment to Jewish Peoplehood, while scoring much lower on the cognitive (knowledge) and behavioral (action) scales.

The findings of this study were first presented at the Herzliya Conference 2009, and reported by Professors Cohen and Yaar. (Arad, Goor, Shoham, *The Peoplehood Index Project – From a Jewish Peoplehood Index to Policy, Planning, and Evaluation*, working paper submitted at the Ninth Annual Herzliya Conference on the Balance of Israel's National Security and Resilience, February 2009)

Second pilot study. In the second study, led by Professor Steven M. Cohen, the JPI investigated the correlation between markers of peoplehood attachment on the one hand, and levels of philanthropic giving on the other, among the DC Federation donors. Current and lapsed donors of the DC Federation completed a web-based survey (September – October 2009). The survey replicated many questions that had been asked the previous year in the Peoplehood Index Project-sponsored study of the Israeli and American Jewish populations. Moreover, the questionnaire covered such issues as: attachment to Jews locally, in Israel, and around the world; attitudes toward Israel and to the Israel-Palestine conflict; images of the

"Donors are more Jewishly involved than the Jewish public at large." "Donors with higher levels of Jewish Peoplehood commitment make larger and more generous donations to Jewish causes."

local Jewish community; and patterns of giving to a variety of causes, both Jewish and non-Jews. (Steven M. Cohen, *The Power of Peoplehood: How Commitment to the Jewish People Undergirds Tzedakah for Jewish Causes*, 2009)

Again, our study led to interesting, even if tentative, insights:

- The study suggests five components that together concretize the concept of “Jewish Peoplehood commitment”: Pride in being Jewish, attachment to other Jews, attachment to Israel, commitment to Jewish group continuity, feeling responsible for Jews in need, locally, in Israel, and around the world.
- Federation donors in Washington (and presumably those elsewhere as well), outscore members of the Jewish public, both in the US and in Israel, in the following three areas:
 - Donors express higher levels of pride in being Jewish;
 - Donors have a stronger attachment to Jews elsewhere than the public in the US or Israel;
 - Donors are more likely than the public to have attended Jewish day school in their childhood, to currently belong to a congregation, etc...

The findings of this second study were presented at the General Assembly of JFNA in Washington DC, November 2009.

History of the project: Institutionalization

Informed by the first two pilot studies, the JPI prepared to embark on a disciplined journey that would culminate in a methodologically solid, scalable and repeatable product. For that it needed a physical temporary home. We were most fortunate to be able to team up with the Re’ut Institute in Tel Aviv. Besides providing the basic food and shelter (well, office and internet), we found there true kindred spirits

At that time the project for the first time secured external Foundations. We are most grateful to our partners at the Jim Joseph Foundation and the Nadav Foundation for their generous support.

The project also hired its first employee (more on the team later), and was ready to get rolling.

History of the Project, Year 2: Methodological Journey

The project next embarked on a learning process, aimed at answering the following questions:

- What data should be collected, and how?
- About whom, and from whom, should the data be collected?
- How should an index be constructed out of the data?

To answer these questions, the project assembled a stellar Consultative Group (CG) that spanned age groups, occupations, geographies, gender, and other relevant parameters. The people are listed in the box on the right.

The project team started with a thorough study of more than twenty indices, as well as screening the literature on Jewish Peoplehood, social capital, “network science”, and other more and less exotic concepts. It then launched a two-phased dialogue with and among the members of the CG. The first phase focused on the Who and How, the second on the What. The discussion (all via email, with the exception of one conference call) was extensive and thoughtful. We are truly grateful to the input of the

The Consultative Group (in alphabetical order)

Johnny Ariel, Shula Bahat, Dawne Bear Novicoff, Jonathan Boyd, Sharon Brous, Steven M. Cohen, Phyllis Cook, Sergio Della Pergola, Arnie Eisen, Misha Galperin, Zvi Gitelman, Moshe Halbertal, Tamar Hermann, Avraham Infeld, Shlomit Levy, Judit Liwerant, Yuval Kalish, Shaul Kelner, Ezra Kopelowitz, Alisa Kurshan, Dov Maimon, Andrew Markus, Shlomi Ravid, Tahl Raz, Gary Rosenblatt, Shmuel Rosner, Len Saxe, Danielle Shani, Adam Simon, Jeffrey Solomon, Ephraim Yaar.

people and the spirit in which it was provided. We were not able to incorporate all the ideas into our work, if only because they were not always mutually consistent. But at the same time it's absolutely clear that the participation of the CG led to a much better product than we could have had without it.

The main outcomes of this phase were as follows:

- **Who and How:** While there is much value in looking at published behavioral data (for example – synagogue membership, Israel travel, email communications), and it is quite intriguing to mine Facebook links, after deliberations we settled on the more conservative questionnaire-based approach. That left the question of whom to administer the questionnaire to, and how. There was general concern that we simply do not have the means to sample communities across the world, but it was agreed that it would still be valuable to survey specific leadership groups (who are manifestly not representative of the general Jewish population) so they can be tracked over time and compared to one another. We adopted this approach, but at the same time have not given up on the vision of a truly globally representative index. To that end we decided to explore the feasibility of creating an internet-based Global Jewish Panel (GJP). If such a panel can be created, despite a number of a priori concerns about its representativeness, that would create value that far transcends the JPI project.
- **What:** What to ask in the questionnaire, and how to craft an index out of it, led to equally intense deliberations. One early decision was to delay the question of the structure of the index, and let the data, once collected, “speak for itself.” That is, after we see the results, it will be clear which dimensions of the index are more instructive than others. That left open the decision of what to include in the survey, and what conceptual framework underlies this decision. A number of frameworks were debated. One was the “Five C model”: Jewish Commitment, Jewish Commonality, Jewish Ceremony, Jewish Content, and Jewish personal Connections. Another was the “ABCx2 model”. The ABC refers to the affective,

behavioral and cognitive dimensions (that is, how much do Jews care about, interact with, or know each other). The “x2” refers to direct connections and indirect connections, the latter being closely linked to questions about Jewish identity (that is, if you and I both consider continuity of the Jewish people important, we are close despite our never having met each other). We ended up with a conceptually simple “ABC and geography” framework: Along one dimension we distinguished among the affective, behavioral and cognitive connections, and along the other between the local, the national, and the international (with a special look at Israel). Each question we considered was matched with one of the ABC dimensions and one of the geographical “distances”, though in addition we considered both direct and indirect connections. Overall the questions were selected to provide as comprehensive a coverage as possible within a question budget that would not overly tax the respondents. In addition we selected questions that would be minimally subject to vagaries of culture, language or age.

This 'methodological journey' resulted in the creation of the **first version of the Standard Core Questionnaire**.

Going forward: Deployments, Global Jewish Panel, and Permanent Home

During this summer of 2010 we are conducting several pilot deployments of the questionnaire. We are conducting two national surveys in Israel (one phone based and one internet based) and one in the US. These will allow us to compare the results to the exploratory survey from 2008, as well as compare internet and phone surveys. In addition, we are carrying out three specialized deployments with partner organizations: The Jewish Foundationers Network, Schusterman Foundation’s ROI program, and the Bureau of Jewish Education of San Francisco. These are key to learning how to ensure that the core questionnaire becomes a useful planning and evaluation tool for operating organizations.

Preliminary results will be published already this summer, perhaps even by the time this publication sees the light of day.

This summer we will also conclude the pilot study regarding the Global Jewish Panel. In partnership with the Panels group in Israel, we are exploring the possibility of creating a representative sample in three English-speaking countries -- US, UK, and South Africa (this is in addition to Israel, where such a panel already exists). This pilot will conclude after the summer, at which time we will subject it to rigorous tests. If successful, we will enlarge these panels, and extend them to five additional countries, which together span 94% of the Jewish people. The goal would be to eventually reach 100% coverage.

At the end of the summer one more exciting milestone will be reached; the project will announce a transition to its permanent home.

The team

The Jewish Peoplehood Closeness Index was initiated by Professor Yoav Shoham from Palo Alto, California, and led jointly by him and Nimrod Goor from Raanana. It has had three project managers. The first was Serena Eisenberg. She was succeeded by Anat Dotan-Amar. The unthinkable tragic death of Anat while on maternity leave still haunts us. This publication is dedicated to the memory of this truly amazing person, who radiated intelligence, warmth and caring. Anat was succeeded by Mireille Surowicz, who currently manages the project. Finally, Zvika “Biko” Arran has been responsible for the “product”, and is more than anyone else responsible for the core questionnaire. He is also spearheading the investigation of the Global Jewish Panel.

Acknowledgements

The JPI has been supported financially by the Jim Joseph Foundation, the Nadav Foundation, and the Shoham Philanthropic Foundation. We thank our external

supporters (including Chip Edelsberg, Phyllis Cook and Dawne Bear-Novicoff at JJF, and Irina Nevzlin and Avraham Infeld at Nadav) for their faith in the project.

The JPI has its genesis in a conversation between Yoav Shoham and Professor Uzi Arad, then at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. We owe Uzi a debt of gratitude for that, and to both him and the IDC under the leadership of Uriel Reichman for having the vision early on.

The Re'ut Institute provided more than office space and an internet connection. In particular, Gidi Grinstein, Re'ut founder and president, has long been committed to matters of Jewish peoplehood, and Netaly Ophir specifically heads Re'ut efforts regarding relations between Israel and world Jewry. They, together with Omri Dagan who helped with our recruiting efforts, have been wonderful partners.

We have enjoyed the collaboration of various organizations committed to Jewish peoplehood, including the Israel Democracy Institute, Beit Hatfutsot, and the Jewish People Policy Institute. We thank them and look forward to continuing the partnership.

A number of operating organizations have been very engaged with the project early on, including the Jewish Agency's Partnership2000, the Wexner Foundation, and Taglit/Birthright. We particularly thank our first deployment partners – the Bureau of Jewish Education of San Francisco, ROI, and the Jewish Foundationers Network.

We thank members of the Consultative Group from the bottom of our heart, as we do a number of individuals not on it who nonetheless contributed in a variety of ways. We do not mention specific names for fear of offending the ones we missed; thank you all.

Palo Alto and Tel Aviv

September 2010

Peoplehood and Closeness

Jonathan Boyd

In this article, Jonathan Boyd presents the four aspects of how Jews achieve closeness and peoplehood. Jews are connected through their shared values, through their shared fear (from their history and memory), through dialogue, and through shared culture, culture that can range from a love of music to holiday celebration, to particular places that evoke similar emotions. All four contribute to the optimistic and positive notion of Jewish peoplehood.

There are four forces that serve to bring people closer together. The first involves shared values – when we find commonality in purpose with another human being, we are likely to be drawn towards one another. A shared sense that something is clearly right – freedom, justice, peace, equality, human dignity – and must be upheld; or, conversely, that something is clearly wrong – racism, injustice, violence, oppression, occupation – and that something ought to be done, both have the power to serve as a type of adhesive in human relations. Indeed, this is particularly the case when values are threatened: the denial of freedom to Jews in the Soviet Union created the Soviet Jewry movement, which, in turn, gave a sense of shared purpose and collectiveness to Jewish activists and campaigners throughout the world. However, shared values of this sort are, to use Michael Walzer’s term, rather “thin” – whilst it is relatively easy to agree, for example, that peace is desirable, agreeing what peace means, or how it should be achieved, is an entirely different matter.

The second force that brings people together is shared fear. When we feel threatened – particularly when the “we” is a distinctive ethnic, national, religious or ideological group – it is almost inevitable that we will huddle together. In such circumstances, we tend to seek solace in the familiar, with those who share our concerns and our fate. Sometimes, we have no choice but to come together: in extreme circumstances, when, for example, we are forcibly ghettoized or concentrated, commonality is imposed upon us. At other times, when a real and present danger exists, our shared destiny becomes strikingly apparent. The period

immediately prior to the Six-Day War in 1967 was one such moment: the growing sense – in both Israel and the Diaspora – that the State of Israel could be on the verge of destruction served to instill in Jews everywhere a powerful feeling of shared fate. However, far more commonly, our fears are less clear and apparent. We are conscious of certain dangers lurking around us, and thus we seek out those who share a common definition of those dangers and a common belief in how they ought to be combated. In our shared fears, we find one another. Yet fear, of course, is no basis upon which to deliberately attempt to construct commonality – exploiting our sense of fear is surely obscene – but there can be little doubt that shared fear is one of the vital forces that supports unity and cohesion.

The third force is dialogue. Sometimes a simple conversation with another person can create a mutual bond. Interestingly, dialogue can – and often does – occur across difference. We may be very different from one another, in terms of language, history, religion or social background, but these need not be barriers to finding common ground. Indeed, some of the best dialogues happen across difference, when it is precisely what distinguishes one from the other that makes the bond so interesting and unique. Conversely, dialogue across difference may also enable the individual to see who she is not. Often, over time, the social, economic, cultural, political, ideological and religious differences that exist between us help us to clarify who we are at our essence, and, in turn, where we most comfortably belong. Talking together, listening to one another, allowing time and space for others to express their views fully and freely are all essential components of dialogue. Dialogue is a central component of Judaism – it forms the basis, for example, of *hevruta* study. But it must be *la-shem shamayim* – for the sake of heaven; when it descends into argument, abuse, shutting down alternative voices, it ceases to be dialogue and becomes deeply damaging instead.

The final force that brings people together is shared culture. We find commonality with others via resonant cultural references and practices. Music can do this – a shared love of Schubert, Sinatra, Springsteen or Reb Shlomo; similarly literature, film, art or dance. Common interests, common passions, common practices all serve

as human glue. In Jewish terms our cultural references include holidays (Pesach, Chanukah, Shabbat, etc.), rituals (lighting candles, fasting, attending a *seder*), songs (Maoz Tzur, Dayenu, Hatikvah) and places (the Kotel, Kikar Rabin, even Auschwitz-Birkenau). Regardless of whether we see these cultural references as positive, negative or neutral, they all have Jewish resonance, and thus serve as a cultural framework to help forge commonality. We may never have met, we may have grown up in entirely different worlds, but our common sensibilities when hearing the melody of *Kol Nidre*, or our shared love of Amos Oz, or our mutual appreciation of *talmudic* wisdom, or our common reaction to Lanzmann's *Shoah* may all serve as a basis upon which to build a sense of closeness.

These four forces – shared values, fear, dialogue and culture – bind one human being to another. When the values are drawn from Jewish texts and tradition, when the fears are drawn from Jewish memory and history, when the dialogue is between one Jew and another, and when the cultural references are rooted in Jewish cultural experience, the potential exists to strengthen the bonds that form the very basis of Jewish peoplehood.

Sadly, I never knew Anat. I never had the pleasure or privilege of meeting her. But I could not help but be touched by her. Her passion for the Jewish People, and her desire to see us find our commonality as a people was more than apparent in the contact we did have and the very work she did. Her intelligence shone through like a beacon; her humanity and capacity to engage people openly and constructively was as clear as crystal. I instinctively felt that she was someone who had at least three of the four forces described above. I think she knew how to dialogue with others, I think she was grounded in Jewish values, and I am certain that we shared common Jewish cultural references. I know nothing of her fears, but I know that there is no greater fear than losing a child or a spouse, and my heart goes out to her mother and husband, along with all of her family and friends at what must be a terribly difficult time. My guess, however, is that Anat was more hopeful than fearful, more optimist than pessimist. And it seems to me that if we are going to strengthen the bonds that link one Jew to another, we need that sense of optimism more than anything.

Perhaps that is part of her legacy: the capacity to inspire us to live up to her example, to believe in the importance of our closeness and commonality, and to work together to achieve the greatness that we could never achieve alone.

Notes at the Margins of the Jewish Peoplehood Index

Sergio DellaPergola

Here Professor DellaPergola provides thoughts and recommendations on how to achieve the most usefulness from the findings of the Jewish Peoplehood Index and how to continue to track the trends and realities of Jewish peoplehood. While some of the suggestions are related to the technical process of surveying the Jewish community at large, such as determining the most effective statistical and survey tools, other recommendations are related to how one views the subject matter: that Israel should be examined as another Jewish community, and that a community should be viewed as a collective in order to include all types of individuals and affiliations.

What follows is part of many other words and ideas that Anat, z"l, received, read, compiled, organized, and studied carefully while fruitfully advancing on her path toward a better understanding of Jewish peoplehood. May Her Memory be blessed.

These are a few modest and cursory remarks and footnotes that I believe should be kept in mind when developing a collegial and relevant conversation about Jewish identity, the ways to look at it, understand and measure it, in the common aim of building a meaningful, comparative, transnational, and above all, useful project.

1. **Is Jewish peoplehood still a global entity?** At a time when over 80 percent of the Jews worldwide are located in only two countries, Israel and the United States, it is crucial that the two major components of the global Jewish collective be able to entertain a viable mutual relationship and understanding, or at least sustained reciprocal interest. When addressing the contemporary meaning and contents of Jewish peoplehood, each major Jewish community indeed fulfills an important role in defining the perceptions of the other. As such, the nature of Jewish identification in one country also influences the essence of collective association for other Jews who live elsewhere.
2. Recent research in the United States and in Israel demonstrates – perhaps to the amazement of some observers – **the existence of overarching and shared global patterns of Jewish identification.** This is no minor finding. It provides powerful

empirical evidence to the proposition of resilience of transnational coherence in contemporary Jewish symbolic and institutional perceptions over the opposite deconstructionist thesis of a Jewish identification that essentially stems from the variable circumstances of the different local national contexts (or does not exist at all). Jews in the United States and in Israel may be distancing from each other, but they still are part of one and the same concept of Jewish peoplehood.

3. Therefore, having found empirical proof that, identification-wise, Jewish peoplehood still is a global entity, more recent experience suggests that for the long-term **it is imperative that future research be set on a comparativistic frame of reference**. Comparative research should be conducted using the same definitional criteria and the same questionnaire in every locale. The map of Jewish communities to be investigated should include all of the majors, but also a good representation of the minors.
4. Research that follows, and is subordinated to specific local needs and constraints tends to generate findings of little interest for comparative purposes. Besides specific names of places and institutions of purely local interest, there are virtually no questions that may not carry relevance beyond a limited geographical framework. In fact, **the specific particularity of one community can only emerge vis-à-vis the particularity of another community**, and this can only be ascertained if the same questions are asked in both communities.
5. **Definitions of the target Jewish population cannot be limited to religion only.** Honesty and realism are called to acknowledge that – in accordance with changing Jewish identity contents and boundaries – comparisons of figures over time become decreasingly useful and meaningful. Good research should help in understanding the nature and change of Foundational processes affecting Jews and their interactions with total society.
6. **Jewish identity is not one-dimensional.** There is no single index that can plausibly and usefully capture all of it. Operationally, several synthetic indexes might be possibly developed. The map of ideational contents investigated should be as wide as possible, so that specifically Jewish contents (in terms of values,

attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, associations) can be positioned within a much broader universe of other contents. Here, I would recommend thinking again of the classic work of Shimon Herman as something that cannot be omitted at this stage of this conversation.

7. For all purposes, **Israel is one Jewish community as any other Jewish community in any other country**. The specific categories and types of Jewish identification are the same, ranging from highly committed to completely estranged on a religious dimension, and from highly involved to totally isolated on an organizational dimension. What is significantly different is population size and composition along these typological categories. If the weights of the typology are substantially different, obviously the total Jewish societal fabric of Israel ends up being greatly different from that of American Jewry or of any other Jewish community worldwide. Uniqueness prevails within well defined limits.
8. **Any Jewish community in a given locale should actually be viewed as several different and interacting sub-communities**. In fact, the term *collective* is probably more accurate than the term *community*, the purpose being that the most marginal and unrelated individuals, and not only the vibrant core, should be included in an investigation. This is also why today *Jewish peoplehood* is a more accurate term than *Jewish people*.
9. Regarding the choice of research strategy and method, we rarely have the bravery to consistently perform a cost-benefit evaluation. It concerns the investment of time and budget vis-à-vis the quality and usability of the final product. Regarding method, of course, **the more representative data collection techniques should be preferred to less cogent alternatives**. Random samples are to be preferred to available membership lists. We should stay away from the fascination of definitional short-cuts and easy, cheap samples. No easy internet survey, or survey of the affiliated in any specific organization is worth investing so much time with so much collective talent. We should keep away from limited local or institutional agendas. The product of such research would be absolutely negligible and misleading if not counterproductive. It follows that the choice of

target populations is a painstaking and costly effort that cannot be avoided for good quality research.

10. **This does not imply a rigid, intransigent position toward alternative research strategies.** A combination of lists and random respondent selection can be acceptable. It is also interesting to recall that, for example, Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) – a sophisticated multivariate theory and technique – produces nearly the same results with a very costly random sample and with a cheap non-representative sample – provided the latter was selected with sufficient randomness and has not been deliberately chosen by the investigator. Also, a simple device like the Big Mac-index (see *The Economist*) may be a nice and cheap short-cut for the more accurate Purchase-Power-Parity (PPP) Index (incidentally, I never ate a Mac). Likewise, efficient short-cuts can be obtained in the study of Jewish identification. My preferred Big-Mac identificational index would contain one question: Do you feel you belong to the Jewish People? [Very much, Quite, Not so much, Not at all].
11. Moreover, **we can think of entirely different research strategies.** Besides single-kick big ventures, or subordinate use of surveys conceived by others for other purposes, one more ambitious methodology would involve a continuing panel (also called longitudinal) survey. The initial cost might be high, but the returns accumulated over a period of several years would be far greater than a conventional survey. Various types of Delphi data collection techniques, which instead of directly investigating the target population, focus on the investigators themselves, combined with good data processing can also provide interesting insights. In practice, we might think to expand the list of our current project consultants to about 100 knowledgeable people, including in the process many more countries, and interviewing such selected panel. Such people surely have good insights and ideas about relevant processes unfolding among world Jewry, and a synthesis of their answers would produce a periodical index. One further advantage would be that the same individuals would be re-interviewed over time, creating the longitudinal study. And finally: the cost would be minimal.

12. Along with data on Jews – the main target of our research – **it is important that we collect and incorporate contextual information about the societies within which Jews live.** The interaction between micro (individual), community (self-selected associational), and macro (broader collective) levels is one of the crucial dimensions to be studied. The opportunity to perform such integrations and comparisons is a dimension fatally missing from most Jewish social research available to date.
13. **Organizations inherently tend to expand their constituencies.** I was disappointed by the reductive reading of research by some of the Jewish leadership (as was in the case of the US NJPS in 2001). The real problem was neither the cost nor the quality of the survey, but the insufficient use of the findings. To be faithful to its mandate, the institutional leadership should be planning on the basis of sophisticated, research supported insights. The new situation calls for a consortium of research institutes and community organizations to promote a continuing flow of information apt to sustain the different needs of social scientific investigation and applied purposes.

Jewish Peoplehood: 2010

David M. Gordis

Rabbi Dr. Gordis states that there are many forms in which one can identify Jewishly, but the one most relevant for the community is how contemporary Jews identify psychologically. Today's Jews see their identity in terms of how their humanity is articulated, not as an alternative to that humanity. In order to maintain the notion of the Jewish people, the community must learn to be as inclusive as possible, and to model for other communities and peoples how they too can face the challenge of balancing between an individual's universalistic tendencies and the particularities of a people.

What connects Jews to one another? Belief? Ideology? Culture? Politics? Ethnic purity? Institutional affiliation? Nationality? Each of these descriptors contains truth but falls short, in part or in whole, in describing adequately what defines Jews as a group. And that is precisely the reason for adopting the vague term “peoplehood” to characterize this quite unique group within human society.

But this is nothing new. Jews have defied conventional classification for millennia. What is new is the special resonance of this issue for our time. We are still just a moment past the devastating and unprecedented catastrophe of the *Shoah*, the murder of a substantial percentage of the Jewish People. We have experienced with the founding of the State of Israel the newly re-established reality of Jewish national existence and presence on the stage of world history. In our time, the diversity of Jewish reality is unprecedented and the possibilities available to Jews in many places in the world to opt in or opt out are more extensive than ever before. Moreover, association with this group or any other, for that matter, may not be exclusive. Most people embrace multiple group associations and engagements. And so, with a perceived challenge to maintain Jewish continuity in the face of these complexities, the question of what constitutes membership in the Jewish people becomes a critical one to address.

Membership in the Jewish People has at least three parameters which might be usefully considered: existential, formal or legal, and psychological. By existential I

mean the perception by others and sometimes unconsciously by the individual that he or she is member of this People. For the individual this is often an unconsidered and amorphous reality, leading to little if any reflection or self-examination. It is a fact of life both for the individual and for the surrounding world which views the individual as a Jew. It can be vague, undefined and unarticulated, but it is a reality in the consciousness or unconscious of the individual and in how that individual is seen by others.

By a formal or legal parameter, I refer to ways both the group and other entities outside the group classify the individual as Jewish. In our time, this matter has generated both attention and controversy in Israel in such areas as application of the Law of Return and in personal law such as marriage and divorce. Even outside of Israel the issue is of interest in matters of recognition for tax exemption purposes, officiation at ceremonies in which the state has an interest, and in recognition of religious leadership for participation in the public realm, such as providing a “Jewish presence” in interreligious events. In these area issues such as the status of Messianic Jews and the offspring of interfaith marriages are of concern both for the Jewish community and for those outside it.

For me, the most interesting dimension of exploring the nature of Jewish peoplehood lies within the third parameter, the psychological or self-identification dimension. If we are concerned about the continuity of the Jewish people, we clearly are interested in nurturing the growth of the group which we refer to as the Jewish people. Just who should be included in that group? What modes of nurturing should we pursue? This will very much depend on the approach we take to answering the age-old question of what it means to be part of the Jewish people. And much of this consideration of strategies falls under the parameter of the psychological and self-identification dimension.

In reflecting on these issues, one may either take the perspective of a particular religious or ideological position which opts for viewing some form or forms of Jewish connection as legitimate and others as empty and without foundation. Some religious perspectives on Jewish peoplehood choose to invest energy in proclaiming

the Jewish legitimacy or illegitimacy of some who claim membership in the Jewish people. Often criteria imposed by those who hold to these religious positions will include ancestry and/or conformity with rituals and procedures required by one or another authority. My point is not to judge those who approach Jewish peoplehood in this fashion; their ideology requires them to do so. But if one chooses to approach the issue from a somewhat higher “altitude,” one cannot fail to be struck by the irony attendant on a group, which has frequently expressed profound concern over an apparently diminishing Jewish population, investing considerable energy in defining people out of the Jewish people. From the perspective of seeking to encourage individuals to self-identify Jewishly, and to attract the engagement particularly of younger Jews with their Jewish participation, the community as a whole should seek to transcend ideologically imposed definitions and exclusions, and to encourage multiple modes of Jewish connection.

It has always been true to an extent that membership in the Jewish people was not necessarily an exclusive connection. By that I mean that multiple group affiliations are the norm of human experience and Jewish experience as well, so that Jews were linked to a variety of national entities, but also to family, commercial associations and a variety of other interest groups. But, as noted earlier, this non-exclusive character to membership in the Jewish people is particularly significant in the contemporary world. Most, though not all Jews, would not self-identify as Jews if the price of this self-identification was detachment from other significant associations and affiliations. These might include broader religious affiliations, political and special interest groups, and participation in the larger community. One way of expressing this is that for most contemporary Jews, Jewishness or Judaism is not an alternative to being “human,” but part of the way their humanity is articulated. This observation is significant in that it points to the way many contemporary Jews navigate the tension between universalism and Jewish particularism. If they felt that Jewish engagement required their abandonment of universalistic dimensions, perspectives that embraced all people and the interests of the larger society and the larger world, they would rather opt to disengage Jewishly. Contemporary Jews by

and large reject an insular “them vs. us” mentality, and this represents a relatively new phenomenon in Jewish self-perception.

This perspective on Jewish peoplehood, and particularly on the third parameter which I have suggested, namely the psychological/self-identification parameter, carries with it some policy implications for the community: the community should seek to be inclusive rather than exclusive. It should welcome to communal participation a wide range of religious and ideological positions. Moreover, it should seek to create multiple points of Jewish connection, in such areas as religious expression, the arts, social action, and political activism, including those activities concerned with the relationship of Israel and world Jewry. It should experiment with a variety of organizational styles and make room for many voices to be heard.

In effect, the Jewish people will need not only to live with but to embrace a permeable definition of itself and criteria for membership and participation. This approach promises a dynamic and thriving future for our people, and implies a receptivity and openness which can be a model for other groups struggling with the challenge to navigate universalism and particularism, and thus an enhancement of the quality of human experience generally.

Adoption, Not Conversion

Avraham Infeld

According to Avraham Infeld, "adoption" is a much more suitable term for describing conversion to Judaism because it reflects the truth of the matter: this individual is being adopted into this people. By replacing the term conversion with adoption, the emphasis is shifted from the individual to the people. The result is to reflect even further the fissures which exist within this people, begging the question: who is this people who are about to adopt this individual?

The recent debates regarding issues of conversion makes the discussion about Jewish Peoplehood that much more relevant and urgent. The very use of the term

It is not easy to submit an article to a publication in Anat Dotan's memory. For the short time we were able to work together while I was at the Nadav Foundation, I was impressed by a variety of her talents –her intelligence, her integrity, her tenacity, and her efficiency, but primarily by her vivaciousness. The very thought of her no longer being with us is therefore most difficult to accept. My condolences to her family and in particular to her mother Amira, who for many years has been a living expression of Jewish Peoplehood

"conversion" in relationship to how one not born into the fold joins the Jewish People, touches on the core question of what is it that they are joining.. The continued discussion around Jewish Peoplehood as if the concept is a new or dangerously modern term is most misleading. There is no concept more central to the ways in which Jews understood themselves until the emancipation than that of a people (*Am Yisrael*). It was the Jewish People that left Egypt, it was the Jewish people that entered into a covenant

with the Creator at Mount Sinai it was the Jewish People that conquered the Land of Israel, it was the Jewish People that were twice exiled from the land, and it was the Jewish people that lived in the Jewish ghettos in all the lands of its dispersion.

Jewish Peoplehood is ultimately that sense of belonging to that Jewish People.

Education towards Jewish Peoplehood therefore, is an educational process that carries as its central goal the enhancement of a content based sense of belonging

and commitment to the Jewish People, its memory, its values, its big ideas, its potential and, to the people's special relationship to Israel, the expression of its national sovereignty.

The advent of the emancipation, enabling the exodus of the Jews from the ghettos of Europe, their engagement with concepts of liberalism, modernity and democracy provided fertile ground for the breakdown of Peoplehood and the ensuing crises of identity which has since accompanied Jewish life. Their meeting with nationalism created Zionism an answer for some. Their meeting with acceptance by the other enabled both enhanced assimilation and ways of defining being Jewish purely as membership in a different faith community. Their meeting with both of the above created in some the rejection of modernity and a return to a ghetto with even higher walls and fences.

The descendants of those who experienced emancipation mostly see themselves today either as Jews by nationalism, Jews by religion, Jews by "reghettoisation" or Jews who have completely assimilated. They hardly understand each other, are motivated by different commitments and deeply endanger the unity of the Jewish People. The work of the Jewish Peoplehood Index in examining "closeness" can on its own only help us understand how bad the situation is. What is needed is a determined commitment to rebuilding the language of Peoplehood and engaging with an educational process charged with making that language meaningful

This is equally true of the Jew in Israel and his fellow Jew in the Diaspora. A Peoplehood aware Israeli, knows that he/she is an Israeli by virtue of their being a member of the Jewish People in the same way that a Peoplehood aware Diaspora Jew, of whatever denomination, enters his/her synagogue by virtue of their being co-signees to a covenant entered into by the entire Jewish People. A Jew stands before the Almighty not as a result of a personal spiritual experience but as a member of his Jewish community. That is why almost all Jewish Prayer is in the plural and not the singular, and why Jews pray in a *minyan*.

There is no greater sign of the breakdown in Peoplehood language than the use of the term "conversion" to describe the process by which one becomes a Jew. It is not accidental that the Hebrew term is devoid of any sense of "conversion." The Hebrew term "*giyur*" stems from the root *la-gur*-to live with. One who can go through the process of *gerut* is one who has a proven desire and commitment to live with this Jewish People, to assume on their shoulders the responsibilities of this People, to add their signature to the Covenant signed by this People at Sinai, to partake in ensuring this family's significant future, to uphold its commitment to Tikkun Olam and to rejoice in its accomplishments. Anyone willing to make those commitments should be warmly embraced and welcomed into the fold.

The continued use of the verb "convert" in relationship to one becoming a Jew, is a mighty obstacle in the path of developing a relevant language of Jewish Peoplehood.

A converted Jew (*Yehudi Mumar*), by Jewish law refers to one born in the fold who takes upon himself another religion. One who joins the fold is a *ger* –one who has come to live with us in the fullest use of that term. One cannot convert to a People!!

A *ger* is not one who has been converted into the religion but one who has been adopted into the People.

It is no accident that Ruth, the great grandmother of King David and, according to tradition, the first to present herself for adoption, makes the proclamation "your People are my People and your God is my God." Our God cannot be theirs unless they first join the People .

The support of successful programs such as Taglit/Birthright and Masa, expanding the work of Melitz and Beth Hatfutsot with Israelis specifically on issues of Peoplehood, and the full implementation of the new Strategic Plan of the Jewish Agency are essential elements in rebuilding the language of Peoplehood

The real problem in the so called "conversion" debate is not who is the Rabbi conducting the ceremony, but what is it that the so called "converts" are joining.

Lack of clarity on this issue could make ceremonies of "conversion" by any denomination equally questionable

The Practice of Peoplehood

Shaul Kelner

Based on his research of various contemporary Jewish experiences, Professor Kelner concludes here that there is no one definition of what constitutes Jewish peoplehood. What he does assert is that for every type of Jewish peoplehood, shared practice and action, more than theory or law, allow for a true sense of connectedness and kinship.

Does Jewish peoplehood circa 2010 mean the same thing as Jewish peoplehood in decades past? One could broaden the question and ask whether this construct “peoplehood” has any type of universal meaning that transcends the specific ways it is realized at different moments in history?

This question has preoccupied me for the better part of a decade, as I have studied diverse practices that American Jews have used to engage with other Jews, real or imagined, whom they perceive as somehow distant or different. In the three cases I have examined – the use of mass tourism on Birthright Israel to perform a connection with the state of Israel, the use of political protest to perform an identification with Soviet Jewry, and the use of intimate conversation in Jewish leadership fellowships to perform an identification with American Jews of other religious denominations – the specific meaning that peoplehood takes on appears (to me, at least) to emerge out of the specific practices that are enacting it, not to precede these practices. As a result, the peoplehood that is realized through tourism is not the same as the peoplehood that is realized through political action, which is not the same as the peoplehood that is realized through conversations behind closed doors.

The notion that meaning is ultimately grounded in concrete human action, and not floating freely in some Platonic realm of universals, is a mainstay of practice (or praxis) theory. But one need not look to Marx or Bourdieu or Foucault to make the case. I recall first grasping the argument on an intuitive level through studying the biblical text about the giving of the Torah. Presented with the law, the Israelites are

said to have responded, “*Naaseh vnishma*. We will do and we will understand.” Paying careful attention to word order, the sages make much of the fact that the doing comes before the understanding. For the most part, this serves to teach a lesson about blind faith or trust in God: the Israelites’ were willing to commit themselves before knowing exactly what they were committing to. Yet there is another stream in the traditional exegesis that puts forward the idea that the understanding will come about *through* the doing. The meaning will emerge from the person’s own participation in the action, not from the text’s description of the action. In contemporary parlance, we are speaking of embodied practice.

There is a world of difference between blowing a shofar in the streets of Manhattan to pressure the US government to intervene with the Soviet Union regarding its Jewish policy, versus sitting on the grass at a retreat center listening to rabbinic colleagues explain why their positions on gender and halakhah are so very different from one’s own. The former is public, political, and engages people imaginatively with distant Jews whom the protestors will likely never meet. The latter is private, personal, and engages people intimately with individual Jews whom they will come to know as unique and complex human beings. Under the slogans “I am my brother’s keeper” and “We are one,” the first practice enacts a peoplehood that affirms Jewish unity. Under the motto “*Elu velu divre elohim hayim*” (“Both these and those are equally the words of the living God”), the second practice enacts a peoplehood that celebrates the personal encounter with Jewish diversity.

It is no surprise that as mass mobilization on behalf of Soviet Jewry waned, the notion of peoplehood that the protest activities generated began to wither. With no *naaseh*, there is no *nishma*. Ideas, cut loose from their moorings in concrete action, drift away and quickly dissipate. Yet even at that moment, new practices were emerging that have come to anchor new models of Jewish peoplehood – models that had not been dreamed of before the novel practices actually created them.

This is not a new story. Indeed, one can read Jewish history as a succession of different modes of practice—historically and geographically situated—that have

generated different conceptions of who Jews are and how they should relate to one another. And what of the future? What new models of Jewish peoplehood will emerge? To get a hint of what Jews might be saying about peoplehood in the years ahead, pay careful attention now to what Jews are actually doing to engage with each other in the present.

Three ways by which Jews connect to the Jewish People

Ezra Kopelowitz

Dr. Kopelowitz outlines here how Jews over the last two centuries have refashioned the nature of their connections with each other, and have passed from a traditionalist perspective of Jewish belonging to various redefinitions of what constitutes the Jewish collective. The Jewish Peoplehood Closeness Index and its measure of Jewish connectedness allows Jewish institutions and educators the opportunity to better assess if Jews are in fact moving towards a multi-faceted approach to identifying Jewishly that goes beyond equating one's Jewishness with one's religious identity alone.

Many of the categories of Jewish life which were born in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are shifting and changing, leaving us unsure of the manner in which Jews around the world continue to connect to the Jewish People. What are the nature of current commitments and the identification of Jews with the Jewish People? By what means and in which modes do Jews continue to connect to one another? The role of a research initiative, such as the Jewish Peoplehood Closeness Index (JPCI), is to provide answers.

While JPCI's focus is the collection of data, the project will generate discussion as to the significance of the findings, which in turn will lead to further refinements of the data collection methodology. Such is the importance of a sustained research project of the type envisioned by the JPCI. This short article offers an interpretative framework which might contribute to making sense of JPCI data, which will in turn feed into the cycle of further expanding our understanding of the nature of contemporary Jewish belonging.

1. Traditionalism – “obvious Jewish belonging”

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Jews transitioned from traditional to modern society, in the process shaking the conceptual and organizational foundations of Jewish life. Traditionalist concepts of Jewish belonging assumed the existence of “a Jewish People.” That there are Jews with a coherent set of beliefs and practices for determining who is and is not Jewish was as obvious as there are clouds in the sky and birds that fly. The regimes in which Jews lived enforced belonging and empowered traditional hierarchies to control the pace of change. The result was that one did not ask if a person is Jewish, but rather what level of piety and local customs he or she held to. Questions such as “what constitutes the Jewish People” and “how best to change tradition to meet the demands of the times,” were not topics for community wide discussion.

2. Modernism – “boundaries for distinguishing ‘us’ from ‘them’”

Since the advent of the modern state in the late 18th century, traditionalist understandings of who is a Jew have steadily weakened and all but disappeared. Modernity rests on the shoulders of individual citizens who are granted “the right” to decide, if, when and how to belong to an ethno-religious group, such as the Jews. The “obvious nature of Jewish belonging” upon which traditionalist Jewish life rests, disintegrates as each individual can now choose to opt out or in. Personal preference, rather than received tradition, becomes the touchstone for determining the character of collective Jewish life. Individuals will seek out a Jewish life-style and community, which they feel appropriate to their needs. The result of the rise of Modernism was a rapid generation of new and innovative forms for Jewish expression, such as the various forms of Socialist, Zionist, Liberal and Orthodox Judaisms which arose in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The paradox of modernity is that on the one hand, the secular and religious Jewish movements seek the adherence of individuals. They are built to cater to the ideological preferences of their constituents. On the other hand, all propose

“collective solutions.” Each movement competes with the other for the loyalty of the Jews, arguing that their solution best guarantees the future of the Jewish People. The classic modernist ideologies offer sharp distinctions between Jew and non-Jew, and right and wrong Jewish ways. While the modern ideological movements offer conflicting definitions of who is a Jew, it is nevertheless obvious that there must be clear sets of criteria for determining, who is in and who is out. Jewish education is the effort to socialize adherents into a clear set of beliefs and practices that Jews should do when they are together and which distinguish them from non-Jews.

3. Late modernism – “meaningful Jewish belonging in a collective context”

We currently find ourselves in a situation of flux between modern and late modern society. The rise of global society and the weakening of the nation state, grants individuals even greater authority to fashion a personal connection to collective life than ever before. Increasingly, individuals across the spectrum of Jewish life are disregarding or loosening their affiliation to the modernist ideological movements and national communal frameworks and are searching out more intimate forms of group life.

Late modern sensibility does not assume the existence of a coherent group of Jews with clear rules for determining insider/outsider; nor does Jewish education focus on establishing boundaries between Jews and non-Jews, and socializing someone into a clear set of values and practices. Rather, late modernity provides individuals with the means and motivation to search out the company of others Jews on their own terms. For educators, the assumption is that Jewish continuity depends on intensifying each individual’s personal Jewish journey within a collective context. If an individual sees value in building Jewish relationships, he or she is more likely to seek out Jewish family and community and less likely to marry out, for these are the basic conditions for fully exploring and developing a meaningful Jewish life.

The primary concern of the late modernist is not with constructing boundaries against intermarriage or assimilation, or declaring commitment to a particular

ideology. Rather than keep the dangers of modernity at bay, the late modernist seeks to offer positive content which will compel individuals to seek out the company of other Jews within the context of modern society. Modernity is a background, a resource, rather than a danger for Jewish belonging. When Jews perceive Jewish life as a means for building a rich human life they will opt into the Jewish People. The end result is associations of individuals with one another in institutions that enable them to connect and interact with other Jews in the richest possible way and, at the same time, live life as full citizens integrated into the broader society.

Post-modernism – “disconnected individuals”

Many of the ideological clashes at all levels of Jewish life today, the world over, are occurring as Jewish leadership attempts to grapple with the pull of the classic and late modern solutions for enabling Jews to connect to the Jewish People. However, beyond the politics and debates of Jewish life, all are battling a common danger, namely the disconnected or free floating individual often identified by the term “post-modernism.” The post-modern Jew is apathetic or even opposed to living in the context of an organized network or community of Jews. In contrast, modern and late-modern individuals embrace group life, each according to their own sensibility. Either one or a mix of the modern and late modern sensibility is vital for Jewish Peoplehood. Jewish life depends on the fashioning of strong and vibrant connections between Jews.

Towards a renewed understanding of the ways in which Jews fashion connections to the Jewish People

The role of research efforts such as JPCI is to help us understand the extent to which Jews continue to connect to one another. If a survey question uses a scale of 1= “no connection” to 4= “strong connection,” anything from “2” above indicates continued connection. Once the Jewish connection is confirmed, we can then inquire into the nature of that connection.

For example, a major challenge for educators is to move Jews away from simplistic, one dimensional understandings of what Jewish belonging is about. For many Jews, Jewish life is reduced to “religion.” For the assimilating Jew – “If I am not religious, do not believe in God or do not identify with religious ritual then why should I be Jewish.” In contrast, for the fundamentalist it is all about a particular set of religious beliefs and practices - “If you don’t do it like me, then you aren’t an authentic Jew.” Both extremes rest on too heavy an emphasis on religion, which is but one medium (albeit very important) for connecting to the Jewish People. Whether in a modernist and/or late modernist mode, a connection to the Jewish People occurs when an individual expands their “Jewish consciousness” – “ahh, it is not just about being religious.” Is that happening? Where in the Jewish world are there Jews who are “getting beyond religion,” and expressing a multi-faceted connection to other Jews and the Jewish People? What do those connections look like? To what extent do modern and/or late modern approaches prevail?

The Jewish World- A World of Diversity

Judit Bokser Liwerant

Professor Bokser Liwerant points to the complexity of defining Jewish Peoplehood. Particular Jewish identities are constituted by an extremely wide range of affiliations and perspectives that can be overlapping, and often seemingly contradictory. Any closeness index must take these variants into consideration. The Jewish communities of Latin America can serve as model for measuring affiliation and cohesiveness, especially given how well they model the migratory effects of globalization.

While discussing the diverse dimensions of the Peoplehood Index Project, the subject of Jewish identity(ies) unavoidably emerges. Reflecting on collective identity(ies) and Jewish peoplehood amidst a changing world of individual and collective social interaction contributes to the ability to overcome alternatives such as methodological purism vis-à-vis theoretical approaches or rigorous scientific considerations vis-à-vis pragmatism. The conversation and the ideas it further elicited have become part of the challenges research faces due to the current transformation Jewish life and identities are going through.

Our homage is to Anat's sustained commitment to follow arguments and questions and interpret and translate a contested field.

Peoplehood and Jewish identity today encompass a world of diversity. Differentiation and pluralization seem to define the ways Jewish collective identity(ies) unfold. Internal differentiations, divergent symbols of identification and differences in the meanings ascribed to identities are displayed within the changing perimeters of the Jewish world in various spatial, geopolitical, and socio-cultural contexts. The present reshapes old and new historical configurations and influences the interactions and interrelations of the collective: religion coexists and re-emerges together with secularization processes; peoplehood develops hand in hand with national existence; ethnicity and civic commonalities reaffirm but also question one another; culture and education intertwines the particular and the universal, and

collective belongingness interacts with the growing individualization processes. Individual, community and society enter an overlapping dynamic between the public and private spheres. Thus, ascribed and primordial identities coexist with voluntarily chosen and achieved ones. Today, this dual dimension of identity building processes, both elective and primordial, is highly determined by globalization processes. Old and new identities thus oscillate in a tense fluctuation between the moment of the unique and the universal, the moment of the common and the particular. Therefore, new forms of cohesiveness and closeness find their way into a diversified Jewish existence and into the modes, mechanism and contents which flow both inside structured and solid old/new frames or follow non organized channels. “Thick” cultural identities, while affirming their weight, face a world of “thin” ones and social interaction, and its voluntary character and complexity, shapes multiple and overlapping layers. Complexity is related to the diverse individual, social and communal realms wherein structural and cultural dimensions interact (Eisentadt, 1977; Ben Rafael, 2002; Bokser Liwerant, 2008). In as much as identities are built around contents and identification referents that imply both an individual sense of belongingness and collective-relational behaviors, they stretch and reshape themselves beyond their original definitions.

Jewish collective identities are built in different institutional arenas—territorial, communal or religious, national or cultural—and in different political-ecological settings—local, regional, national—in a global world wherein they interact, intersect, and overlap, and their components re-link (Eisenstadt, 1998). Accordingly, they impact in different ways the manifold scenarios as well as the plurality of networks of interaction. Identification and identities condense and express both a transnational dimension that defines the Jewish world and the diverse national/spatial dimensions, conditioned by place and territory. Therefore, both singularities and shared features reflect these scenarios and the various modalities in which they intermingle. Though these dimensions are analytically distinct, Jewish identity shows both common nuclei and divergent conditions and expressions. Diverse settings have resulted in a pluralization within the wide ethno-cultural-religious-national collective frameworks and their inner reconfiguration.

Much of today's discussion develops around the question of differentiation and pluralization vis-à-vis shared basic elements that allow to refer to all of them as Jewish identities. "Family resemblance," a la Wittgenstein or, following Appadurai's (1996) concept of flows or streams, describes how the diverse flows of Jewish identity coexist according to their approach to distinct aspects of the identity structure (Ben Rafel, 2006). Sergio DellaPergola (1999) stresses that differences in the identification patterns that develop and prevail in the Jewish world are more a matter of intensity and composition than the product of an intrinsically different typology. Symbols, regardless of the differences in their referents, do indeed provide a solid substratum for unity and integration, but they can also have the opposite result (Liebman and Cohen, 1990). Thus, closeness has to be approached and studied from an analytical angle that stresses fragmentation of frameworks and meanings, both individual and collective, while not overlooking new expressions of peoplehood.

Diversity is also expressed through parallel and even contradictory patterns: while inner divisions may act as stimuli for social interaction in spite of the separate channels and networks they provide, the development of a post-denominational Jewish condition, especially, but not only, in North American Jewry (Dashefsky and Winter, 2003; Cohen, 2010) may lead either to wider networks of relations that weaken inner divisions or may diminish the substratum for group closeness. Therefore, basic questions are in need of further formulations. How identities act as a pre-condition for social interaction and shape convergences and divergences in the collective Jewish life? We certainly face difficulties and challenges for measurement; closeness implies varying degrees of intensity, density, durability, frequency, character contents, multiplexity, and the role of Jewish communal institutional spheres, purposes, primordial/elective communities, and present/cyber-virtual communities are among the many factors which interplay.

Both cognitive and affective contents are subject to radical changes that transform the profile of Jewish life and demand to be interpreted with categories that will enable the discovery of new routes of interactions that do not necessarily imply decline or fading of belonging. The textured and multifaceted world of identities we

are exploring suggests that the normative core on which consensus and family resemblance have been constructed is redefined, posing the question about the nature(s), scope, and frontiers of the collective as one dimension. The common experience is thus expressed through different ways of understanding and embodying the 'Jewish self' along several axes—religious-secular, Orthodox-liberal, post-denominational, national-diaspora, particular-general, civic-ethnic, social-occupational, etc. —and extending from support to critical distance, and from solidarity to new ways of commonality, including extremes such as the abandonment of the real or imagined Jewish community (peoplehood).

Jewish peoplehood and identity are not to be seen mainly or exclusively in terms of multiple agencies but in terms of multiple social constructions and structures, which may weaken or enrich Jewish diversity. Thus, the communal, institutional sphere is also significant. Because identity and peoplehood are not free floating, frameworks are not marginal. Therefore contexts and institutions -regional, national and communal- are relevant.

The possibility of developing an index that may be applied to different contexts with a comparative interest is required. While inner axes and the changing profiles of different Jewish centers support the idea-concept of peoplehood, it is interesting to explore the theoretical variances of the different approaches. It is worth bringing into the forefront the idea of *Klal Ysrael* as the worldwide commonwealth in which cohesion and solidarity derived from the historical continuum of shared memory, ideas, tradition, loyalty, religion, and nationalism —be it spiritual, cultural, territorial, or political—involve different arrangements, positions, and certainly diverse levels of awareness of itself (Ben Rafael, 2008; Gorny, 2008).

Social interactions today may be organized and structured with a global dimension as their horizon. The location of countries and the borders between states become more diffuse and porous, with possibilities of fast travel serving to intensify global connections. Communities and identities go beyond national borders and are reconsidering and reconnecting the links between the national and the global. Thus, it refers not only to the historical condition of flows that has defined Judaism, but

also to the new conditions, deriving from changes in the geographical mapping of migration and to the changing geographical dynamics. [Emigration from the FSU after the fall of the Wall or from Latin America during recent decades, for instance, have thus shown new models of identity-building and connectedness of interactions.] The historical global people and its new transnational profile confront new realities, both in its voluntary communal settings and in its sovereign existence.

Thus, equally relevant to underscore, identities today emerge from the complex interplay of particular(s), contexts/environments, communal perimeters and the self. Thus, measuring closeness demands attending to the interaction with non Jews in order to evaluate closeness-distance in a broader continuum of a relational world.

The spatial dimension

Latin America represents a case of the contemporary character of Jewish life, wherein unity and continuity are extraordinarily interwoven with pluralization and fragmentation of identities. Jewish communities are characterized by common grounds while also encompassing much diversity in their experiences.

Overall, transnational conditions and a sense of belonging to Jewish peoplehood marked the experience of Latin American Jewish life from its very beginning, both in its identification and in its organizational patterns. Initial relations with external centers were colored by dynamics simultaneously evincing strong transnational solidarity and the dependent or peripheral character of communities in the making (Senkman, 2008; Judit Bokser Liwerant, 2008).

Differences between Euro-America, multiethnic societies and Indo-America, in which immigration didn't change the original socio-ethnic profile of the population, created different contexts. Generally speaking, Latin America's search for national identities rejected diversity as a menace to its recurrent aspiration for national unity, which was understood as synonymous with national integration, and thus interpreted as part of the essential and repeated Latin American quest to enter Modernity. The communal domain, while prompting continuity, functioned also as the substitute for limited participation in the national life and as the basic framework for identity shaping. Thus, Latin America has been able to contribute one of the most powerful

models of Jewish corporate experience: the ethno-cultural, ethno-national, secularized, cohesive Jewish *kehillah*. The model offered clarity in defining boundaries, a richness of institutions, and unmistakable Jewish contents, coupled with significant acceptance of the surrounding society's social norms and priorities. These were the shared patterns, though the host societies differed in their perceptions of the general role of ethnicity and social stratification. A singular common trait of Jewish life developed in the region: close interaction between ethno-cultural identity and the national dimension, in the mold of Diaspora Jewish nationalism under progressive Zionist hegemony.

Latin America's communities are undergoing radical changes. Today's profile reflects both national/regional transformations as well as Jewish transnational trends, therein discerning new realities. Both changes in external conditions and inner associational variations are reflected in the changing identity patterns of Latin American Jews. A complex dynamic of individualization and affirmation of collective belongingness portrays a diversified world of identities, partly fragmented and fluid, partly hard-cored and with well defined borders. Thus, analyzing Latin America demands an inner comparative approach of at least two communities that may account for the regional diversity.

Globalization and democratization processes have brought Jews a new visibility in the national and public spheres and have widened social interactions. In Argentina, pluralistic identity politics have accepted the notion of an ethno-national and cultural collectivity together with full assimilation into the civic nation in construction. In Mexico, the transition to democracy brought legitimacy to communal collective identity, seen and understood mainly in religious and socio-economic terms. Simultaneously, Jewish communities, related in the national imagination towards Israel, have been growingly perceived as part of a Jewish transnational world whose networks have been clearly recognized.

Among the changes that have taken place, we may point to the rise of religion as part of identity-formation processes and of organized community life. The emerging pattern may be seen in different ways: as part of changing trends in the Jewish world

and also of the general relevance that religion has gained as a result of the so-called 'de-privatization' (Casanova, 1994). It may also be described as disappointment with the secular and political alternatives available, but also as questioning the basic paradigm of peaceful integration into the local national-civic mainstream of being equal while preserving considerable latitude for communal Jewish autonomy. The place of religion and its interaction with the ethno-national and ethno-cultural profiles of Diaspora existence becomes a contested focus. Related to territories and borders—physical, social and cultural—religion is one of the main actors in the unbinding of culture from its traditional referents and boundaries and its re-attachment in new space-time configurations.

Current changes have also affected the centrality of Israel. While the precise direction is still unclear, they may be reformulated in terms of the changing meanings of Israel's centrality as well as in terms of the pluralization of centers. Indeed, Israel's actual place is not necessarily mediated by the classic Zionist paradigm(s).

This widening of identification options among Latin American Jews requires an expanded focus, able to encompass the social and geopolitical spectrum of individual and collective life that has extended beyond the region. Although Latin American Jewry has its origins in large scale immigration, during recent decades migration has tended to flow outwards, from Latin America mostly to the United States, Israel, and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe (mainly Spain), and Canada. Migratory trends reveal a demographic profile characteristic of ongoing global as well as regional and local patterns. In the past thirty years, the number of Jews in Latin America has dropped from 514.000 in the 1970s to the current 394.000 (DellaPergola, 2009). The latest phases of accelerated globalization processes have shown a significant increase in the number of Latin American migrants, and new centers of relocated communal life

Sharing trends of the changing map of dispersion with other Jewries while also exhibiting their specificity, Latin American Jews have been exposed to the impact of the worldwide migration crises driven by macro-level political and economic forces. From an overall historical perspective, then, the transnational dimension of Latin

American Jewry may be seen as a key condition for approaching its past as an ethno-national Diaspora and its present as a community marked by migration patterns and by relocation in new settings.

Transnational trends influence the restructuring of life both within the region and in the new centers. Narratives and parameters of Jewish identities unfold in a context of identity fragmentation and revival. Novel spatial interactions have affected the shaping of institutions, social relationships, and identities, and cultural/geographical identity moments of the transnational world can be traced in Latin American Jews in four continents (Bokser Liwerant, DellaPergola and Senkman, 2009). Processes of reconstitution of identities under the impact of relocation, migration, dual residency, the decline of nation-state imaginaries and the emergence of new ones take place.

Jewish migration involving Latin American countries has not been exclusively unidirectional. Return migration, repeated and circular migration, and bi-local migrants contribute to the diffusion of transnational networks and identities, reflecting essential links with globalization processes.

A last word related to the richness of methodological insights that were circulated. Quantitative and qualitative methods have their different weight, strength and weakness. The possibility to benefit from validations and verification of data created through quantitative methods and the potentiality for generalization contrasts with the otherwise richness of subjectivity and meaning of individuals and social actors. Both might be seen as necessary. To approach the concept of social network as a kind of paradigm or perspective (not only as a method) of social relations which relates individuals and structures is valuable for social distance and social closeness. As a descriptive metaphor –related to opportunities and constraints for social action– it throws light on the changing patterns of interconnectedness that are taking place inside the global and transnational Jewish world.

Ethnicity and Culture as factors of Closeness among Jews

Ron Margolin

Professor Margolin asserts that in order for Jews to maintain a sense of closeness and kinship, the Jewish community as a whole must work to develop cultural and ethnic ties that are both positive as well as pluralistic. Ethnicity alone, or a focus on shared history, is liable to wane and cause a disintegration in Jewish connections, and can lead to negative self-isolationism as well. On the other hand, building on a Jewish culture that already exists, including holidays and rituals, and creating a way for all individuals to participate in varied and unique ways, will enhance and strengthen Jewish connectedness.

A.

The affiliation of Jews with the religious communities that formerly defined them in accordance with a *halakhic* way of life and world-view declined sharply in the modern age. The process which had begun in Western and Central Europe during the nineteenth century caught on in Eastern Europe and later filtered into Arab lands as well.

A number of literary works in the decades leading up to the Holocaust reflect this process and express a deep concern for the survival of a shared Judaism. Many Jews preferred to identify with socialist movements rather than with the Jewish people in general, and those who immigrated to the new world often sought assimilation at any cost in their adopted lands, even disassociating from their families of origin, whether in part or in full. The closeness that had prevailed among them on the eve of the Holocaust was on the wane. Even Zionism as the national movement of the Jewish people distinguished sharply between supporters and opponents. Immigrants of the Second Aliyah and their followers in the pioneer movements hoped to establish an ideal society that would replace the Jewish life of the Diaspora and sever their ties with Diaspora Judaism. The Holocaust in Europe on the one hand and the birth of the State of Israel on the other completely altered this situation.

B.

Nazi anti-Semitism gave rise to a significant change in post-Holocaust Jewish consciousness. The definition of Jews solely on an ethnic basis that ignored the differences between observant Jews and the atheists among them led many to regard the ethnic component of their Judaism as the most significant element. The Law of Return enacted by the Knesset after the establishment of the State mirrors the Nuremberg Laws. The definition of Jews as an ethnic group rather than a religious group or at any rate, as the descendants of a group with common family origins, resulted for many in a self-understood form of Jewish nationalism based on ethnicity. The establishment of a national homeland modified the strictly ethnic basis of Jewish national identity. The new State combined Jewish ethnicity with an identification of Israel as the territorial heart of the Jewish people. A similar situation occurs for immigrants from many places around the world who identify nationally with their countries of origin. The difference for Jews is unique however, and not just because of the complexity of the Israeli situation. More than half of all Jews live elsewhere in the world, particularly in the United States, where they identify more and more as citizens of their adopted lands. In France, the ethnic basis of identity has been replaced by geographical, linguistic and cultural considerations that permit Jews as well as other minority groups to participate fully in national life. The structure of American nationalism is entirely pluralistic in keeping with the character of American society, and is not determined by ethnicity. Even in the new nation states, like those of the former Soviet Union, the ethnic focus of identity has been modified and now reflects linguistic-cultural and territorial considerations. This unique situation explains why many American Jews are able to avoid confusing their national identity with their religious identity by defining Judaism as a combination of ethnic roots and religious substance.

The problematic definition of nationality on the basis of ethnicity greatly troubled David Ben-Gurion who claimed that the establishment of Israel signified much more than the provision of territorial rights for the Jewish people. The nascent State in his view would become a forge where many immigrant groups from all over the world

would be molded into a new nation of Israelis. The aggressive means used to carry out Ben-Gurion's vision resulted in a severe backlash and Israel has been hard pressed ever since to fulfill that dream and to define the relationship between its Jewish citizenry and the assimilated Jews of the world. It is no wonder that for many Jews with clashing views on the proper religious way of life, the memory of the Holocaust has developed into the very cement that binds them together. Beginning in Israel and spreading to many Jewish communities in the United States and throughout the world, beyond the remembrance of the Holocaust and the fear of the modern anti-Semitism (which replaced religious anti-Semitism with racial anti-Semitism), ethnicity has become for Jews widely separated linguistically and geographically, in custom and belief, the most significant factor in their sense of closeness.

C.

Closeness based largely on ethnicity comes at a price. It reinforces a mutual sense of victimization among Jews and may serve as a self-fulfilling perception where no significant hatred for Jews exists, or worse, it excludes many of the positive elements that form a national culture. The secret of Jewish survival over the millennia is the religious tradition that included many constructive features beyond the self-imposed isolation of its people. This isolation too had positive and negative aspects, both unifying the Jewish people and stirring antagonism. The aversion of modern Jews to the separatist nature of Judaism rises out of a desire for full cultural integration, particularly in the light of traditional European hostility. However, a shared positive content need not lead to dangerous isolationism.

D.

Historical knowledge was viewed by the late nineteenth century shapers of Jewish nationalism as a natural cement, a concept shared by all European nations. But history, no longer considered the "queen of the humanities," has lost its influence to shape cultures. This is not to say that we must neglect Jewish history and certainly not the history of the Holocaust, but at the same time we must recognize that

national determinism can no longer be based on historical knowledge which many are not inclined to acquire.

The heightening of closeness among Jews is no doubt the key to the future survival of the Jewish people. The big question we face is how to shape positive contents to be shared by as many Jews as possible. It is important that the inspiration for the commonly held elements should come from Jewish sources and serve to unify observant Jews with secular Jews, and Israeli Jews with Jews in the rest of the world. For Orthodox and Conservative Jews alike, these contents derive from *Halakha*, but to many other Jews in the world today, a Rabbinically defined position is irrelevant, and an educated and conscious choice is preferable to an authoritarian approach to Judaism. What we need therefore are conscious choices, interpretations and structures no less vital than they were in the days of the Mishnah and the Talmud. To elicit acceptance and identification is not to go against *Halakhah*, but to seek religious content that can be shared by as many Jews as possible world-wide. Pluralism is a necessary pre-condition for the enhancement of closeness among Jews and the future promise of the Jewish people in a global world.

It will be necessary for Jews to give the kind of structure to their festivals, rituals and memorial days that speaks to their hearts without stirring antipathy. *Halakhic* uniformity is not viable in such a framework but we should legitimize other ways of creating a sense of belonging and closeness. Secular Jews who gather on Rosh Hashana to blow the *shofar* and read poetry will not sit among the *hasids* of Chabad, but the fact that they are all observing Rosh Hashana should offer a promise of closeness in spite of distance. The zeal for justice, social justice in particular, and the concern for the weaker members of society in the spirit of the biblical commandments and the Talmudic ordinances should unite Jews worldwide and enable them to fulfill their Judaism in practice. An open approach to Jewish sources should ensure that the study of Torah is not solely the prerogative of Yeshiva students. The value of human life as a central Jewish value with its basis in the biblical description of man's creation in the image of God is vital to a common Jewish identity. Developing the principle of responsibility for the life and welfare of human

kind and the continuing survival of the planet in the spirit of the Bible and the *midrashic* literature of the Sages which deals with these issues is likewise of great importance for the creation of Jewish culture. The feeling of closeness among Jews will increase when shared positive elements exert a stronger influence than influences that are divisive. We must also invest great effort among religious communities that reject alternative Jewish lifestyles, as well as among individuals who are unaffiliated but desire a connection with the Jewish people without fear of dissonance between their general sense of values and their Jewish values.

E.

Judaism based only on ethnicity is in grave danger in our freewheeling world. It is only natural that some of the processes of globalization will lead to a diminishing of ethnic bonds. Closeness to friends in one's social network, friendships formed in the work place and through leisure pursuits are no less vital than virtual kinship amongst people with a shared ethnicity. If Jews as a nation desire life, they must devote immense efforts in the development and shaping of Jewish education and an open and inspired Jewish culture merging ancient sources with contemporary life.

A Look at American Jewry -- Past, Present and Future

Alfred H. Moses

In this article, Ambassador Moses argues that the American Jewish community must look beyond its past and European roots to insure its survival. The key to its future lies in finding a source for future creativity, perhaps through the establishment of a center focusing on Jewish peoplehood that would receive unanimous support, or through a greater emphasis on Jewish knowledge, the Hebrew language, and ritual observance in order to maintain Jewish distinctiveness.

Jewish Survival

“Am Yisrael Chai!” is usually thought of as a chant of triumph, proclaiming the miracle of the creation of the Jewish state in the ancestral Jewish homeland, 2000 years after the destruction of the Second Temple and the dispersion of the Jewish people. In the ensuing 62 years, Israel has survived, prospered and grown despite external threats to its existence. But, “Am Israel Chai” does not belong to Israel alone. The survival and, yes, triumph of American Jewry is just as amazing. American Jewry has survived, prospered and grown in the face of the twinned internal threats of assimilation and its more benign helpmate, indifference. No one can argue with the fact that Jews as individuals have prospered in America, but so, too, has the Jewish community. The same can be said for Jewish communities elsewhere, such as in Western Europe, parts of South America, Canada, Australia and other countries. Why?

In explaining Jewish survival, sociologists talk about the Jewish instinct for self-preservation as a minority after centuries of Christian and Muslim oppression, a tradition that emphasizes community over the individual, Jewish literacy associated with a religious tradition that extols learning and the centuries-old prohibition on Jews owning land, belonging to guilds or engaging in most forms of everyday commerce, leaving open chiefly money lending and trading that led Jews to enter into the professions and finance. This is all well and good as far as it goes, but it does

not withstand critical analysis. Other oppressed minorities have disappeared; religious traditions have waxed and waned. The emphasis on learning is not unique to Jews, nor is a sense of community. Each explanation in its turn leads to another question, causing one intellectually frustrated, non-Jewish sociologist to come happily to the “irrefutable” conclusion that “the Jews are God’s chosen people.” If so, there is still some explaining to do.

Rather than looking for explanations of why Jews have survived, it would be more useful, I suggest, to look at the present condition of the Jewish community in America. Admittedly, this is analogous to a doctor treating the symptoms without first diagnosing the underlying causes, but it is much easier and a lot more useful for people like me who find theories interesting to debate but not much help otherwise. The bottom line for this writer is that, despite 200 years of alarming identity erosion among America’s Jews, the commitment of the Jewish people to survival as a self-identified and, in important respects, still a distinctive community in America remains intact.

The same can be said of Jewish communities elsewhere. Some are remnants of once vibrant Jewish communities that were devastated by the Holocaust, depopulated by the attraction of Zionism, oppressed by Islam and communism or affected by larger population shifts. But other, largely newer, Jewish communities are flourishing. For all practical purposes, Berlin was “Juderein” 65 years ago; today it has some 150,000 Jews, largely from the former Soviet Union. The Jewish rebirth in Germany is an historical phenomenon, repeating the emigration of Jews from East to West 200 years earlier, but it is not the only one to be reborn, leading one to conclude that there are common factors at work that are both peculiar to Jews and common to Jewish communities wherever they exist. However, it is enough for now to look at American Jewry, a community that is enormously complex, variegated and multilayered, and, to its credit, probably unmanageable. If you were to ask who speaks for American Jews, the answer is either no one or everyone.

We know a lot about American Jews

One thing for sure: We American Jews know more about our collective selves than has ever been known about any group in the annals of human history. One can assume that this intense self examination stems from our concern about the future identity and commitment of the American Jewish community and our uneasiness living in a world inhabited by more than two billion Christians (a third of the world's population), almost as many Muslims and assorted other religions that dwarf our miniscule numbers.

We know, for example, that synagogues are gateway institutions. About 80 percent of American Jews become members at some point in their lives. Another 20 percent are totally unaffiliated. Putting it another way, about one-half of American Jews are either unaffiliated or loosely affiliated. In answers to surveys, they identify themselves as simply Jewish, full stop! This self-identification is not without meaning in today's America where, even if both parents are Jewish, you can identify yourself any way you want without much fuss. We also know that Jewish intermarriage skyrocketed over the last 50 years, reaching close to 50 percent of marriages in the United States involving at least one Jewish spouse. The numbers seem to be leveling off for reasons that speak, in part, to the growing percentage of Orthodox, which historically has had higher birth rates and lower intermarriage rates, and the awakening by the non-Orthodox to the threat of a vanishing Jewish community. Over 300 secular colleges and universities in the United States now teach courses in Jewish studies that instill pride among college-age Jews and, for non-Jews, dispel the notion that Jews in America are an arcane cult not penetrable by those not born Jewish. In the second half of the last century, attendance at Jewish day schools increased enormously, reinforcing Jewish identity and knowledge not only for students but for their parents as well, a point easily overlooked. And, lastly, the Jewish community, in ways subtle and not so subtle, has promoted intra-faith marriage.

There are a lot of other factors out there that impact on our lives as Jews. Like other Americans, we are on the move south, west and places in between. Jews are better

educated, represent a higher percentage of the work force in the professions, arts, sciences and technology than the general public and have reaped the benefits economically. Jews are more liberal politically than other white Americans, particularly white males.

We know that the Orthodox are only 12 percent of the American population, yet constitute 38 percent of the children in America receiving a Jewish education and have more children than non-Orthodox families, leading demographers to predict that the Orthodox will constitute a majority of American Jews before the end of the century.

Turning Inward

About 20 years ago the American Jewish community woke up to the fact that the core problem for American Jewish survival was not what others had done to us but what we were doing to ourselves as a community, lacking Jewish knowledge, education and commitment. Like POGO, we had met the enemy and it was us. As might be expected, there was no shortage of opinions as to what was needed to ensure long-term Jewish survival. Education became the catch word. There are now more than 200,000 students enrolled in Jewish day schools. This is almost twice the number of Yeshiva and equivalent students in pre-Holocaust Europe. Programs to foster Jewish self-awareness such as Birthright Israel, its brothers, sisters and assorted progeny are deservedly getting attention and support, while the traditional Jewish defense organizations scramble. One, the American Jewish Congress, which led the legal fight for Jewish rights in the 1940s and 1950s, has all but disappeared. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is increasingly focused on combating criticism of Israel, while the American Jewish Committee has moved from proclaiming it is America's Oldest Human Rights Organization to a new tagline: "Global Jewish Advocacy," meaning, I suppose, defense of Israel and endangered Jewish communities around the globe.

This turning inward by the organized Jewish community, most prevalent among the Orthodox, can have other consequences as well. Despite the strong Jewish vote for

Barack Obama in the 2008 Presidential election, who is to say that as the threat from outside the Jewish community recedes and the community's focus stays fixed on strengthening Jewish internal life, Jewish voting patterns will not shift as well. Political support in America for Israel has already moved from the liberal agenda to the more conservative. It is increasingly the Orthodox and politically conservative members of the Jewish community who unreservedly support Israel, neither questioning its settlement policy nor calling for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They support Likud and the religious parties in Israel, not Tzipi Livni's Kadima or Ehud Barak's Labor Party. For unaffiliated or loosely affiliated Jews, the opposite is likely to be true. A more conservative political profile in Israel, supported by the Christian right in America and like-minded elements in the Jewish community, may widen the gap between Jews supporting Israel at any price and those who want to see Israel as a light unto the nations fulfilling its earlier Zionist calling.

If you have any doubt about this, look at the reaction in the American press to Israel's interception of the Gaza flotilla in June of this year. Some on the left, Jews and non-Jews, responded with angry denunciation of the killing of nine "humanitarians" on board the Turkish vessel *Mavi Marmara*. Israel's conservative defenders wrote about Israel's right to defend itself against the Turkish Jihadist organization IHH. I have seen the same split in my own Modern Orthodox Synagogue. That same week I delivered the *drash* on the Torah reading of the week. In that reading titled *Shelach Lecha*, God commands Moses to send men to spy on the Land of Canaan. My talk centered on sending us to help others, the poor, the sick and the oppressed, so we may become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The response was split between conservative/traditionalists on one side, the less traditional/left on the other. In this same vein, a good friend of mine vocally laments the situation in a large American Jewish organization he once led where, as he sees it, there is no longer room for open discussion on major policy issues. Dissent from the organization's line gets short shrift. Even in my Modern Orthodox community there is an increasing pull from the rabbinate on the right on issues affecting conversion, acceptance of modern Biblical scholarship and theological premises

generally. This, too, can affect the future voting patterns of American Jews. However the Israel card ultimately plays out, in this writer's opinion, the American Jewish community is too large, independent in its thinking and moored to its sense of place in America, to move politically in lockstep with the current mood in Israel, and too tied to the liberal agenda based on its perceived minority status and, for lack of a better term, Jewish mindset, to move en masse from its liberal moorings.

Finally, what does the memory of the Holocaust portend for American Jewry? Even if the tragedy of the Holocaust, followed by the miracle of the creation of the State of Israel, lives forever in the memory of the Jewish people, it is now 65 years since the death camps were liberated, all the Holocaust memorials have been built, the history has been written, and the memoirs of survivors collect dust on library shelves. The vast majority of American Jews were not alive during the Holocaust and did not bear witness to the tragedy. They do not include themselves among the silent in the face of evil. The memory of the Holocaust will not touch them as it did my generation or even be a major element in their Jewish being. Grim pictures of Jews in the death camps speak to them of the past, not the future on which American Jewry will be built. In a word, the Holocaust is losing its emotive force for the simple reason that most Jews in America do not believe that we stand alone or that everyone is against us.

The Road Ahead

Where does this leave us? There will always be factors that divide us. My father, born in 1887 in Statesville, North Carolina, consistently voted Republican. It was the "respectable" thing to do, he said. My mother, a college graduate, many years his junior, was a lifelong Democrat. The family survived without a lot of angst and multiplied; so, too, has American Jewry. We are a community of individuals, not an individual community. Think of the Jewish community as Russian wooden nesting dolls. Each of the smaller dolls is different in appearance and size. One is a Chasid, another a Wall Street banker, the third a Reform woman rabbi, the next a public school teacher followed by a "techie," and then a neurosurgeon from Puerto Rico who converted when she married her Orthodox Jewish husband from Monsey, New

York, and on and on. Each, emerging out of the big doll named Jewish, has an equal claim to legitimacy and in defining the limits and boundaries of the Jewish community.

What are the factors that bring together such a diverse mixture of life styles, interests, religiosity (or absence thereof), occupations, and "*weltschmerz*," to form the Jewish community in America and are they likely to continue? I want to leave aside exogenous happenings, and that includes anti-Semitism, about which we can, and probably should, do little. This is a problem for the anti-Semites. If we truly want anti-Semitism to disappear, we should begin by abandoning our distinctiveness. If we lose our distinctiveness and become like everybody else, anti-Semitism will disappear and so will we.

At this point we need to look at the ties that bind us as a community, recognizing at the same time that there will always be divisions among us. If it were otherwise, we would not be human, and certainly not Jewish.

European Roots

Where to begin? Looking back a century or more, we see millions of Jewish immigrants coming to our shores. What did most Jewish emigrants have in common? The Jewish religion? Not really. A Jewish identity? True for most.

But at the outset most Jewish emigrants, like other groups coming to our shores, had two things in common: They were poor and they did not speak English. Learning English came first. One generation later American Jews spoke English, wrote in English and thought in English. They composed literature, songs, inspirational ideas, all in the American idiom. The next time you listen to Kate Smith sing "God Bless America," remember it was written by Irving Berlin, a cantor's son. So, too, "White Christmas." Arguably, first generation American Jewry was the most creative, not only in Jewish history, but in American history as well.

Economic advancement was less swift but just as dramatic. When measured by commonly accepted standards of success in America, Jews do not fit on the Bell

Curve, whether it be in the arts, science, law, medicine, finance, business ownership or the media.

In the beginning, American Jewish life was formed by European Jewish ideas and personalities. During the last two centuries, over three million Jews emigrated from Europe to the United States, more than one million since the rise of Hitler 70 years ago. European Jewry of yesteryear has carried over to the United States. The over-confined, self-absorbed, complacent, didactic, routinized Jewish life of Central and Eastern Europe burst forth with fresh energy and vigor on American soil.

No Jewish Hall of Fame would be complete without the names of Solomon Schechter born in Romania, Mordecai Menahem Kaplan born in Lithuania, Abraham Joshua Heschel born in Poland, Joseph Dov Soloveitchik born in Lithuania, and Menachem Mendel Schneersohn born in Russia. All emigrated from Europe to the United States, where Schechter became the principal architect of Conservative Judaism, Kaplan founded the Reconstructionist Movement, Heschel, a towering Jewish personality, influenced Jews broadly through his writing and teaching, Soloveitchik became the unchallenged leader of modern Orthodoxy, known simply as “the Rav,” and Schneersohn, the Lubavitch Rebbe, was responsible for the movement’s success in enlisting Jews to return to Orthodoxy.

This is past tense. We can no longer look to Europe or to European Jewry for fresh ideas or even inspiration. Jews from the former Soviet Union were the last wave of Jewish emigration from Europe to the United States.

Exit The Past

We are now on our own, a community of 6 million, more or less, self-identified Jews. Except for the *Haredim* who isolate themselves from the larger community, we are part of the American Way. What happens across America affects us the way it does non-Jewish Americans. Let’s face it. We have adapted a large part of our Jewish heritage to the American Way.

For liberty we have Chanukah.

For freedom we remind everyone that we were once slaves in the land of Egypt.

Talk about terrorists? Remember Amalek?

Drone bomb terrorists? Remember what Samuel did to the king of the Amalekites?

If it is the environment -- Hey, we celebrate Tu B'Shvat.

Now that we are on our own, we need to ask ourselves where will the creative force come from to keep Jewish life alive in America? Stripping away all the superfluity, there are two things American Jews and most other Americans hunger for: *Connectedness and bringing meaning to our lives in ways that fulfill our spiritual needs*, not always in that order and not always in combination with each other.

Jewish Connectedness

Admittedly, Jewish connectedness is hard to explain. It does not lend itself to critical analysis. Its tribal origins, so poignantly expressed in Joseph's Biblical words, "*Achei anokei mvkesh*" (I seek my brethren), no longer describe a nation of 12 tribes, but a people loosely bound by tradition that encompasses religion, history and culture. However explained, Jewish connectedness is real. All of us have experienced it in our own way. Regardless of national origins, life styles or interests, a common thread binds us. We react intuitively, if not always cerebrally. When we read about a Jew, good or bad, would our reaction be the same if that person was not Jewish? The honest answer is no.

Connectedness, not "Bowling Alone," is what most of us yearn for. The old neighborhoods are gone. Traditional family ties are weakening. No longer can we look to our extended families for support. The corner Jewish grocer and dry goods owner have been replaced by supermarkets and national chain stores. Where have all the Jews gone in small town America? Their names are remembered, if at all, in faded letters on storefront windows.

How do we reconnect? And if not with our extended families, with whom? How do we channel the universal yearning for connectedness into a Jewish enterprise? What better way to reinforce Jewish peoplehood than creating a “Mercaz Am Yisrael” (Center for the Jewish People) in Israel to display and demonstrate the diversity and connectiveness of Jewish life around the world -- historical, family connected, shared-destiny past, present and future, a never-ending panorama of Jewish possibilities bound by a common identity thread.

Remember, too, that cyberspace has no boundaries. Connectedness can now be universal. We can connect to Jews in Australia, to Jews in South Africa and, of course, to Jews in Israel. Our family has now expanded from an extended family of, say, 30 to a Jewish universe of 14 million.

The many scores of adult Jewish education programs across America are providing connectedness in another way, through education. Let’s look at making Modern Hebrew the lingua franca of the Jewish people. Impossible, you say? But as Leon Wieseltier commented some years ago, “If American Jews can build swimming pools in their backyards, they can learn Hebrew.”

There are hundreds of other programs out there that need to be encouraged and supported in transforming Jewish connectedness from the family and the neighborhood to the Jewish people more broadly. For 3,000 years we have been institutionalizing the Jewish religion, through Torah and its commandments, the First and Second Temples, followed by synagogue building wherever Jews have lived. Where are the institutions that celebrate Jewish Peoplehood? These are precious few, making the case for a Mercaz Am Yisrael all the more compelling.

The Search For Meaning

However, for me the most challenging issue is the spiritual one, not for the Orthodox but for the 88 percent of American Jews who are not Orthodox and the more than 50 percent who are loosely affiliated, if at all. How do we take that which has come to us as absolute and make it relevant, and how do we take that which is relevant for us and make it absolute? If the answer does not lie in the certainty of belief (and

that would seem to be increasingly the case), the answer, at least for me, lies in the *sanctity of the search*.

Maybe this has always been true. Surely there is much in our religious tradition that emphasizes the centrality and importance of the *search* even if we seek and do not find. Is it not the very act of seeking that distinguishes man from beast and negates the conclusion that all is vanity? The Torah portion that comes most readily to mind is that of Jacob struggling with the angel, wrestling with his doubts, seeking certainty, only to be denied entrance into the realm of the certain. So, too, Moses who sought certainty by looking upon God, only to be told no. But the *search* goes on. Is this not the foundation and ultimately the reason for Jewish study?

What I said earlier about our ability to relate our Jewish tradition to the contemporary scene in America is not fanciful. It is real. In a word, it is the cornerstone to build upon, to make Jewish tradition relevant. It is the clay for us to mold. To succeed, first we need to be Jewishly knowledgeable. But knowledge alone is not enough. We also need to see in that knowledge value for us in how we live our lives as Jews.

If I may add one more word, the knowledge, and the value we see in that knowledge, has to be protected, preserved and passed on. Now I am talking about *ritual observance*. Without it, all *water runs to the sea*. Jewish survival depends on our being distinctive. Much of our distinctiveness is bound up with ritual observance. Without that, we would have disappeared long ago like the other nations of the earth. The issue is not modernity versus tradition, but survival versus disappearance. Until recently, “kashrut” and “kipot” were the exclusive province of the Orthodox. But then something happened. Non-Orthodox American Jewry looked into the abyss of non-distinctive Jewish life and recognized a threat to Jewish survival. Jewish ritual is returning in the non-Orthodox world. To measure the change, 60 years ago “kipot” and “talitot” wearing were *verboten* in Reform congregations that were racing to “Americanize” themselves. Today they are much in evidence across the Jewish religious spectrum.

I am not suggesting that Orthodoxy is the wave of the future for American Jewry. This will only happen if the rest of American Jewry largely disappears through assimilation or indifference, and if this were to happen, it would be an enormous loss for the Jewish world. Orthodoxy is an anchor of sorts, but as Lubavitch and other Orthodox groups know, much of their support comes from less traditional Jews. Call it “guilt feeling,” “remembrance of days past,” or a sense that only Orthodoxy is authentic Jewry. Regardless of why non-traditional Jews support Orthodox causes, Orthodoxy cannot be the totality of American Jewish life. The Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist all contribute enormously to the sum of Jewish life in America. Each represents an American Jewish yearning that, if left unfulfilled, would create a vast void that is not likely to be filled by anything that we currently describe as Jewish.

Did the religion emerge from the people, or did the people emerge from the religion? Which is primordial? Regardless of the answer, at this point we need both to survive, and, if we are to remain true to our past, to be a creative, energizing force for ourselves and, let’s hope, the world.

Conclusion

I happen to think that the diversity of views and constant turmoil in the Jewish community is a good thing. It is a sign that the Jewish community is alive and (say it softly) well. No one knows what the future holds. Demographers and other professionals invariably get it wrong. The answer, I suppose, depends upon whether you are a Jewish optimist or a Jewish pessimist. I am on the side of the optimists. Historically, those who wagered against a Jewish future have lost. Maybe it is wishful thinking, but I believe that reinforcing our sense of Jewish peoplehood and continuing the search for meaning in our religious tradition, while at the same time recognizing that ritual holds an important place in our Jewish lives, will carry the day. It always has.

The Closeness Index and Peoplehood Capital

Dr. Shlomi Ravid

Dr. Ravid contends that in discussing the reality of Jewish closeness, we cannot forget the importance of Peoplehood capital: the advantages and benefits that emerge from being part of the same collective. While programs like Birthright can achieve short-term closeness, to truly achieve sustainable Peoplehood capital, with the resulting trust and sense of partnership, we must educate towards a sense of shared purpose and future.

At a focus group with young students I ran about a year ago, I asked them to try and quantify the notion of Peoplehood Capital. My favorite response was the one that described arriving at a town with no acquaintances where bumping into local Jews led to an invitation to Shabbat dinner. One may dismiss this gesture as insignificant but getting invited by total strangers into their home and fed dinner just because one was a member of the Jewish people represents real measurable capital on numerous counts.

The concept of social capital tries to capture and measure normative expressions of closeness. What by virtue of belonging to the group and the closeness of its members becomes capital that group members can access and benefit from on the social level? It can be expressed in sustainable higher degrees of empathy, trust, responsibility and care. It is not "personal" and does not depend on prior acquaintance between the group members though it reflects the generalized sense of closeness in the group.

The Closeness Index tries to measure different expressions of the density of the existing Jewish network that reflect the Jewish Peoplehood social capital, but also aspires to point us to ways to further enhance that capital. One way to look at the phenomenon is to say that we sense a certain closeness to other Jews by virtue of the existence of social capital and a special bond with others members of this group. It is rooted in our sense of sharing a common fate, history and mission captured by the norm of "*kol yisrael areivim ze ba-ze*" (all Israel are responsible for each other). One may even say that this sense of shared responsibility for the Jewish people and

its civilization is at the foundation of the Jewish communal enterprise altogether. However, the closeness Jews share is not only a reflection of past Jewish social capital. It also builds and enhances current and future Jewish Peoplehood capital. It is this "future" social capital which will be the focus of this article.

There are several explanations as to the decline of Jewish social capital in modern days. Clearly the notion of being persecuted and abused throughout the world for thousands of years contributed to a collective notion of "*im ain ani li mi li*" (if I am not for myself, who will be?) and the solidarity of the persecuted. In a sense, Jews had to develop a supplementary communal system to survive as a people in an alien world. Circumstances seem very different in the post WW2 western world and after the creation of the State of Israel. Possibly the last major campaigns on behalf of Jews in distress were the campaign to free Soviet Jewry and to bring the Ethiopian Jews to Israel. So is the weakening of the Jewish solidarity a result of the lack of unifying outside threats or have Jews found new opportunities to develop solidarities with others at the price of their fellow Jews (another outcome of modernity)?

While the simple answer is probably that both are factors, it is important to differentiate between them as we search for ways to build future Peoplehood capital. In the case of the solidarity of the persecuted Jews who were forced into building their system as a means to survive as a people and as individuals--they did not really have a choice. The open society poses, however, a new challenge of competition in the market of identities, associations and networks. Jews today are not forced into being active participants in the Jewish enterprise. They need to choose if to engage with their people and how. The considerations here are very different and questions of meaning, added value and identity formation take center stage.

Part of the interest in unpacking the sources of our closeness is the hope to isolate specific variables that contribute to our association. This can help developing focused interventions that will impact those variables towards the enhancement of the sense of closeness. Taglit (Birthright) is an excellent example for trying to impact

affective and cognitive aspects in the relation of young Jews with Israel and the Jewish people, in order to connect and engage them with the Jewish enterprise. The question that it raises is whether this form of intervention can indeed enhance sustainable Jewish Peoplehood capital in the long run?

There are two dimensions to this question which I would like to address. The first questions if such a short experience, though intense and rich, can actually impact the sense of closeness in the long run. It appears that the consensus is that the experience is too short and requires additional post-trip intervention in order to reach the goal of engaging the participants in the Jewish enterprise. The second dimension that relates to our current conversation has to do with the relationship between closeness and social capital. While closeness is a necessary precondition for the creation of social capital, it is not necessarily sufficient. For the affective and cognitive closeness to turn into a normative sustainable capital, some form of a contract or covenant between the members of the group is required.

This realization is crucially important when we are seeking ways to enhance the density of Jewish Peoplehood capital. There is no question that bringing Jews together to interact, bond and learn about each others is the first step in creating closeness and a connection to the people. However, if we fail to understand that part of that meeting has to be a significant conversation on why the Jewish enterprise is important and relevant to them, we risk short lived, ad hoc impact. In other words one simply cannot bypass the value oriented - identity focused conversation. At the end of the day social capital is based on sustainable value mediated commitment to the group and its members.

In the August newsletter of PEJE Rabbi Josh Elkin shares the following story:

I had the address of the shul in Paris where I was hoping to say Kaddish for my mother. I walked up and down Rue des Tournelles, where the shul was supposed to be, but I couldn't find it. After a few loops, I ventured out to the neighboring streets, practicing how to ask for directions in French. Still no luck. Though I really wanted to find that shul, it was getting dark, so I started to head back to the hotel. Then, up

ahead, I saw a fellow Jew: black suit, black kippah. I quickened my step, caught up with him, and, still thinking in French, asked if he knew where the shul was. He wasn't very responsive. I tried again, with slightly different words. At that point he looked at me and simply asked, "Ivrit"? Ah, that was easy. So I asked him again, in Hebrew, where I could find the shul. He immediately gave me the correct address and walked away.

We know Hebrew unlocks the mysteries of our ancient texts, but I hadn't appreciated until then how it also unlocks the gates of trust. Given the uncomfortably high levels of anti-Semitism in Paris, he wouldn't divulge the shul's location until he knew I could be trusted. The fact that I knew Hebrew gave him that assurance.

Never before had I thought of language as engendering trust, but this encounter made the connection seem obvious. Sharing a language means sharing a piece of your identity; it means establishing an instant state of belonging, especially when you're traveling in a foreign country. My shared knowledge of Hebrew with that French Orthodox Jew, whom I will likely never see again, promoted trust.

What Elkin captured in this anecdote is that the knowledge of Hebrew provided a sign of a shared identity and common belonging between the two members of the people. The French Jew assumed that a Hebrew speaking person is committed member of the people and therefore worthy of his trust. He took the Hebrew knowledge as an indication of broader commitment to the Jewish enterprise that entitles the other to Peoplehood capital. The lesson for those seeking to enhance the existing Jewish Peoplehood capital, especially in young Jews who do not necessarily share the world view of the two described in the above anecdote, is that we need to infuse efforts to bring Jews closer to each other with a joint search for the meaning and purpose of our identity as a collective. Without a current, engaging and substantial commitment to a common future the nature of the "closeness" is doomed to be superficial and to eventually dissipate.

Israel and the Jewish World – A New Relationship

Gidi Grinstein and Netaly Ophir-Flint

In this paper, the Reut Institute team outlines Israel's changing relationship with the Jewish World. It first presents the main ideas upon which the relationship was built, and then analyzes the changing reality that has led to a growing rift between the two communities. The main conclusion is that the ideological basis of the emerging new relationship is a Renewed Zionism which blends Peoplehood with Jewish Nationalism.

Introduction and Background

1. This paper offers a conceptual framework regarding the future of the relationship between Israel and the Jewish world. It outlines the traditional relationship – the ethos and historical foundations of the relationship – and analyzes the changing reality that has led to a growing rift between the two communities.
2. The urgency of this topic derives from the large gaps in expectations between Israel and Diaspora communities that often cause tension and friction; from the increasing financial, structural and political difficulties of many Jewish institutions in Israel and overseas; from difficulties in engaging the younger generation of world Jewry with Israel; and from the attack on Israel's legitimacy in recent years.

The 'Old Relationship' Between Israel and World Jewry

3. The relationship between Israel and world Jewry has been based upon an unwritten 'covenant' that stemmed from Classical Zionism and was shaped by the Holocaust and the miracle of the rebirth of the State of Israel. This covenant generated values, priorities, working assumptions, patterns of behavior and institutions that have dominated the relationship for decades:
 - Classical Zionism negated the Diaspora and engaged in a systematic attempt to dismantle it through a strong call for Aliyah;

- State-building was the major effort of the Jewish people and the Government of Israel was the exclusive representative of this endeavor;
 - Israel was to become a model society that would make world Jews 'proud', as well as provide them with a 'safe haven';
 - The Jewish Diaspora was to provide financial and political support to Israel, as well as immigrants (*Olim*);
 - The 'blood for money' narrative legitimized a rich uncle-poor nephew mindset and a 'wealthy Diaspora' supporting 'needy Israel'. At times, the Diaspora even financed activities that were within the direct responsibilities of the Government of Israel;
 - The identity of Israelis was fully realized through their Jewish nationalism, that rejected Diaspora heritage and diminished the importance of Jewish tradition, texts or rituals;
 - The relationship was managed by an 'Old Boys Network' that included the lay leaders and key professionals of the prominent Jewish institutions, representatives of the Government of Israel and the leadership of JAFI;
 - A permanent and vibrant Israeli Diaspora did not fit with Classical Zionism, and its existence and needs were ignored;
 - While every Jew around the world was expected to be keenly interested in Israel and to mobilize for its financial and political support, Israelis showed relative disinterest in and often even arrogance towards world Jewry.
4. However, over the past years, it has become clear that powerful trends have been undermining this 'covenant' to the point of rendering it irrelevant.

Trends Undermining the 'Old' Relationship

5. Trends in North America include: growing interest in direct relationships that no longer require the existing communal institutions; increasing disinterest in

and even alienation from Israel; rise of *Tikkun Olam* as a cause that mobilizes many; and growing importance of community life.

6. At the same time, Israeli society has been transforming as well: Israel has become relatively secure and prosperous, even while its central government has been subject to a prolonged crisis of governance; community life in Israel is surging, and more Israelis are engaging with their Jewish heritage; many Israelis travel for education and work, and an Israeli Diaspora seems to be a permanent fixture for the foreseeable future.

A 'New Relationship': Renewed Zionism based on Peoplehood

7. As a consequence of the above, we have seen a number of ideological, conceptual and practical developments that have altered the relationship:
 - Classical Zionism has been evolving into a New 21st century Zionism, which blends nationalism with the concept of Peoplehood and views the mission of Israel in the broader more nuanced context of the Jewish people;
 - Negation of the Diaspora is being replaced by the understanding that a vibrant Diaspora is an imperative for long-term survival of the Jewish people;
 - A strong call for 'aliyah' has morphed into encouraging lifecycles of commitment to Israel and movement between Israel and the Jewish world;
 - Israel is no longer viewed as a model society by many. For some Jews it has even become a moral liability.
 - The rich uncle-poor nephew mindset is being replaced by an expectation for synergy, mutuality and partnership among equals, as Israel ascends to first-world prosperity;

- In the past, world Jewry underwrote Zionism and the significant budgetary needs of the Israeli government. Now it seeks its unique voice in Israeli society;
- The narrative of state-building and *mamlachtiyut* ('statism') has been replaced by a focus on community-building and embracing diversity;
- Power to shape the relationship has expanded from limited purview of the Government of Israel and a few 'big *machers*' to countless direct philanthropists and peer-to-peer and community-to-community connections;
- Israelis have embraced their Jewish heritage, and Israel's public sphere has been filled with spiritual innovation. In the past, progressive Judaism was exported to Israel. Soon, Israel will be enriching world Jewry with its cultural and substantive creativity.

The Six Pillars of the 'New Relationship'

8. Numerous conversations and interviews have led us to conclude that at the ideological basis of the new relationship is a renewed Zionism, which blends Peoplehood with Jewish nationalism and focuses on the following six efforts:
 - **People's structure: a world wide network of prosperous and resilient communities** – This effort focuses on expanding and strengthening the Jewish network by establishing communities where there are Jews but no community life, connecting individuals to communities, and strengthening the connections among existing communities primarily in former communist countries, Israel and Israeli Diaspora;
 - **People's mission: *Tikkun Olam*** – In the past two decades, the powerful energy of *Tikkun Olam* has been directed toward improving the human condition around the world. This mission offers a unique opportunity for partnership and synergy, whereby Israel has the actual on-the-ground knowledge and experience of development work, while the Jewish world has the ethics and the resources that are essential for it;

- **People's state: A secure and prosperous Israel offering a unique Jewish experience** – Israel has a unique status among the Jewish people, irrespective of whether it is framed as its center. Therefore, the new relationship must promote a vision of Israel that successfully balances its security, democracy, prosperity and Jewishness, which allows world Jewry to rally around Israel and to partner for its success.

For this purpose, Renewed New Zionism must place greater significance on Jewish identity of Israelis; partner with the Jewish world to enhance Israel's prosperity; credibly commit to securing a Jewish majority by ending the control over the Palestinian population and to promoting equality and partnership with the Arab citizens of Israel;

- **People's language: Hebrew** – The Hebrew language is the tool for global communication between Jews and for engaging the richness of our history and culture;
- **People's culture and tradition** – A pillar of the new relationship is the joint commitment towards the preservation, development and dissemination of the collective wisdom of Jewish culture, rituals and traditions through text study, art, literature or poetry and in a way that enriches individuals, households and communities;
- **People's fight against anti-Semitism and the delegitimacy of Israel** – This effort includes the cooperative efforts on the part of the Jewish world, the government of Israel, and Israeli communities to combat anti-Semitism and the growing attack on Israel's right to exist.

From Vision to Reality: One Organization at a Time

9. The breakdown of the old relationship is evident across the Jewish world. Significant resources have been reallocated away from those who still represent it, and large constituencies have shifted loyalties. In this reality, resistance to change and inability to adapt is perilous to the point of being existential.

10. Jewish institutions have adapted to this changing reality to varying degrees. Some have shifted their vision, mission, strategy and allocation of resources, while others have been more stagnant and resistant. At the same time, new initiatives have sprung up, philosophically based on the concept of peoplehood and embracing one or more of the pillars of the new relationship.
11. Like in any other network, effectuating change in the Jewish world requires identifying the 'hubs' and focusing on impacting them, as they have significant influence on the entire Jewish network or large sections thereof.

Future directions: Call me a People

Shelley Kedar

In this concluding paper, Kedar describes the concept of 'familial space' as a current peoplehood practice that can guide towards a stronger future. The focus on the broader idea of family is proposed as an individual-collective prism, through which one can consider herself/himself as an individual while simultaneously sharing membership in a people.

There is no "chosen people," just individuals

Not everyone is ignorant and not everyone honest

These are Jews and these are Jews

A person remains a person

Do not call me a people...

Shalom Hanoch, 1997

Shalom Hanoch's song reflects to a great extent the loss of that basic sense of involvement and of mutual responsibility among individual Jews; that same sense that intertwined those same individuals so that together they became a collective or a group which is generally referred to as "the Jewish people." The emphasis that Hanoch places on the concept of "person" and its apparent opposition to the concept of "people" reflects the particularistic paradigm characterizing the global reality of this century. In other words, Hanoch's opposition demonstrates that for over a decade, since the turn of the millennium, the belief has been that if one is an individual (a particular, personal) then one cannot possibly also be a part of any kind of group or collective, let alone – "people".

We, at the International School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies within Beit Hatfutsot, would like to claim otherwise: that it is possible to define the **Jewish "me"** in **personal-collective** terms of Jewish identification. Such a definition can lead directly

to the possibility that today individual Jews have a **personal choice** to become part of this collective referred to as “the Jewish people,” and to create meaningful and varied ways of belonging to that people.

Over the last two hundred years a disturbing dichotomy has begun to develop between two perspectives regarding individual identification with the Jewish people: “religion” has been separated from “people.” These concepts, which in the past were integrated and intertwined with each other, have become so divided as to make it difficult to imagine that they ever existed hand in hand. The meaning of “religion” and “people” and their integration with each other, is reminiscent of the canonical statement of Ruth the Moabite: “your people are my people, your God is my God...” [Ruth 1:16]. Perhaps this seems too sweeping. And yet research shows that today this statement is in fact well founded [for example, see the research results of the Guttman Institute—Levy, Levinsohn, and Katz, 2002]. For the most part, Jews in Israel express their identification with the Jewish people in nationalistic terms, such as “people,” whereas Jews outside of Israel express their identification in religious terms. And even if the picture were reversed between those that see themselves in terms of “people” and those that see themselves in terms of “religion,” can we not assume that there are additional paths towards identifying with the collective entity that go beyond these two possibilities? And, moreover, doesn’t this dichotomy deny the existence of a common denominator between Jews, whether they be in Israel or around the world? Today, in the context of the ongoing deliberation over MK David Rotem’s Conversion Bill, it appears that the question of a common denominator amongst Jews is being revisited: so is it possible to have a Jewish people that is one, united, intertwined?

The founding pedagogic principle of the International School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies (ISJPS) within Beit Hatfutsot, now marking its fourth year since being established, is that **contained within the collective Jewish identity is a wide variety of Jewish individualistic identities**. Thus, the ISJPS proposes that the term Jewish “peoplehood” be used as a definition that contains within it a number of perspectives for identifying with the Jewish collective. “Peoplehood,” as an

educational, implementable concept and value, entails the recognition that the wide variety of Jewish identities and ways to identify Jewishly (beyond religion and people—they can also be shared memory, or the Hebrew language, or Jewish culture, or even shared values) is supported by a virtual shared **space** that is called the Jewish people-- space, and not common denominator, and for good reason. The term space demonstrates that, on the one hand, it can be broad and varied, and on the other hand, this space is defined: unified, but not uniform.

And while it may seem that the senses of "familiness," partnership and reciprocity, are deteriorating, the concept of "peoplehood" comes to demonstrate that the notion of shared space is actually characterized by the idea of family: aspects of the collective or the community that join Jews to each other, like the connection between members of the Jewish family, Jewish neighbors, and Jewish institutions, and Jewish people wherever they are world wide. This is, in fact, **family space**. In general, the concept of "family" refers to the complex social systems whereby each member contributes to the well being of the whole, and it is the prime place for individual friendship. Thus, while "family" and "parents" can be narrowly seen only as symbolic representations of the primary way for how one comes to belong to the group (for instance: through birth), they can also in fact represent a more complex system of influence, connected to many parts of identity beyond this, like religion, culture, and education.

It appears that today the family is the most important space for creating meaningful Judaism, and that family reflects the passage from the "mega-narratives" (for e.g., Zionism, Diaspora, etc.) to "personal stories" (the great educational emphasis placed on exploring family roots among Israeli grade seven students is an excellent example on how the emphasis has been placed on the person-family story as an avenue for creating a collective identity and connecting to peoplehood). Beit Hatfutsot in general, and the ISJPS in particular, asserts that it is precisely the subjective perspective of the individual as a part of the wider family that captures the greatest potential, possibly more than any other concept or perspective-- that "a person remains a person," but it is also possible that he/she be called a people! How

appropriate this is for an era when technology has shrunk geographical distances and we are able to “think global and act local” (attributed to the urban planner, Patrick Geddes, 1915)—if only we could imagine a global Jewish people that would have the strength and support to discuss local issues (from the Conversion Bill to the Haiti earthquake response, and all others...).

The notion of “peoplehood” that guides the educational philosophy of ISJPS, seeks to abandon the old dogmatic search for a single shared principle of the Jewish collective. Rather, we search for the complex systems and multiple common denominators, sometimes only overlapping in parts. In our time, it will be a mistake to think that the notion of belonging to the Jewish people could exist in terms of just one structure, and through those terms one could infer different perspectives of “belonging.” It is probably much more appropriate to speak of “family” or “families” of Jewish identities and identifications. We believe that education in light of the notion of “peoplehood” allows for a continuity in Jewish identity, such that one can speak of belonging without demanding absolute unity. In general, perhaps it's time to abandon the dream of complete “uniformity” אֲחִידוּת or “unity” אֲחָדוּת and instead put our efforts towards the old objective of “togetherness” יחדות a term coined by Rabbi Soloveitchik (in his article “The Voice of my Beloved Knocketh, 1974), which comes to describe how “the personal experiences of the individual blend together to form a new unit—a people.”¹ Thus, Jewish peoplehood education integrates the knowledge, emotion, and action necessary for cultivating an active member of the extended Jewish family for generations to come, such that any member of this family will recognize the languages and ways in which the other family members base Jewish policies, and will be able to be an active partner in familial decisions on all levels. Our task is to make it possible for each individual to find his/her place and personal way in the family space, and, along with this, to help tease out shared connections and contexts between the individual and others in order to strengthen the shared space.

¹From *Fate and Destiny: From the Holocaust to the State of Israel*, Rabbinical Council of America, 1992 P. 54

It would be too much to ask Hanoach to revise his song or to rewrite it completely, but it is possible to hope that the paradigm of "peoplehood" will spread beyond "those in the know" and will allow many more to see themselves "part of the story," (this is Beit Hatfutsot's intentional slogan) in their own particular way. However, the future is only a matter of time. This is an obvious concept and yet, to end this collection of articles referring to the Jewish Peoplehood Closeness Index, a research of our present – one is challenged to think about "what's next?" Well, next is now. As Dr. David Passig explains it – the future is bound to happen, we just need to make sure we navigate our present towards it.

And so "call **me a people,**" beginning now.

Contributors

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Zvika Arran is the Jewish Peoplehood Closeness Index Product Development Coordinator and a lecturer at the Nonprofits Management Masters program at Ben Gurion University. He was the founder and former CEO of Midot – the Israeli charities’ rating service. Zvika is a lawyer and received his M.P.P. from the Public Policy Graduate School, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Jonathan Boyd, *Peoplehood and Closeness*

Jonathan Boyd is currently the executive director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, a London based think tank. He was previously a research fellow at the Institute and has also worked with the UJIA and the Joint Distribution Committee’s International Centre for Community Development.

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Professor DellaPergola is a professor of Jewish demography and statistics at The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, of the Hebrew University and is considered a leading authority in his field. He has held numerous fellowships and visiting professorships, and in 1999 he was awarded the Marshall Sklare Award for distinguished scholarship.

Gidi Grinstein, *Israel and the Jewish World – A New Relationship*

Gidi Grinstein is the Founder and President of The Reut Institute, designed to enhance the strategic capacity of Israel by incorporating long-term thinking into its on-going decisions and actions. Gidi previously served as the Secretary and Coordinator of the Israeli negotiation team on the Permanent Status Agreement between Israel and the PLO in the Bureau of Prime Minister Ehud Barak. He served as an economist in the Israeli Navy and holds the rank of Captain (Res.).

Nimrod Goor, *The Jewish Peoplehood Index Project: The First Two Years*

Nimrod Goor is a partner at DKLH Energy, an investment firm which invests in renewable energy projects as well as a partner at Precede Technologies, a cleantech technology entrepreneurship and investment firm. In addition to founding and serving in a variety of executive roles in high-tech companies, he is a graduate of the Wexner Heritage Program, and has been active in various non-profit organizations in the US and Israel including AIPAC and the Gvanim Association.

David Gordis, *Jewish Peoplehood: 2010*

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Avraham Infeld, *Adoption, Not Conversion*

Avraham Infeld is the founder of Melitz, an organization that fosters pluralistic Jewish identity, and is currently Chairman of the Board. He has also served as the first Director of Birthright Israel, International President of Hillel, Chairman of the Board of Israel Experience and has held numerous leadership positions in leading organizations centered on building Jewish identity. He currently, serves as President of the Chais Family Foundation, committed to the advancement of excellence in education in Israel and to the advancement of Jewish Identity education in the Diaspora.

Shelley Kedar, *Future Directions: call me a People*

Shelley Kedar is the current Director of the International School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies within the Beit Hatfutsot. Previously, she was the Director of Professional Development for Jewish Educators at the Lokey Center for Jewish

Education and the Coordinator for Jerusalem at the Melitz Center for Jewish-Zionist Education and. She also served as the educational emissary to the UK Liberal Jewish community and has over 15 years experience as a teacher and facilitator in the field of Jewish education.

Shaul Kelner, *The Practice of Peoplehood*

Professor Kelner is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University, where he specializes in the sociology of contemporary Jewish experience. He is the author of *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage and Israeli Birthright Tourism..* He has also been a Fellow at the Hebrew University's Institute for Advanced Studies and a visiting scholar at Tel Aviv University.

Ezra Kopelowitz, *Three ways by which Jews connect to the Jewish People*

Dr. Ezra Kopelowitz is a sociologist specializing in the Jewish world and Jewish Education. He is CEO of Research Success Technologies, a company specializing in data management and research solutions for non-profits. Ezra is former director of research at the Department of Education of the Jewish Agency. He researches and publishes on issues of Jewish education and Peoplehood in the context of Israel-Diaspora relations and American and Israeli Judaism and his forthcoming book, *Building Jewish Peoplehood: Challenges and Possibilities* (co-edited) will be published later this year.

Judit Bokser Liwerant, *The Jewish World- A World of Diversity*

Professor Bokser Liwerant is director of The Graduate School of Political and Social Sciences, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. She also heads the Academic Committee of the Universidad Hebraica. Professor Bokser Liwerant was a member of the National Commission Against Discrimination, where she contributed to the enactment of the Federal Law against Discrimination and antisemitism. In 2002 she was appointed a member of the Human Rights Council.

Ron Margolin, *Ethnicity and Culture as factors of Closeness among Jews*

Professor Margolin is a senior lecturer at Tel Aviv University as well as a research fellow at The Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. He is the author of *The Human Temple: Religious Interiorization and the Structuring of Inner Life in Early Hasidism*.

Alfred H. Moses, *A Look at American Jewry -- Past, Present and Future*

Ambassador Moses is currently the Chairman of the International Council of Beit Hatfutsot. He served as US Ambassador to Romania and Special Presidential Emissary for the Cyprus Conflict. In 2002 he received the *Marc Cruce* medal awarded by the President of Romania. He is a long-time partner and now senior counsel for the Washington, D.C., law firm, Covington and Burling.

Netaly Ophir-Flint, *Israel and the Jewish World – A New Relationship*

Netaly is the Director of Strategic Development at the Reut Institute, a non-partisan, not-for-profit policy-group based in Tel-Aviv. She currently spearheads a policy team studying Israel's changing relations with World Jewry. In the past, Netaly worked in a variety of positions at the Shalem Center research institute, including project manager of the 'Herzl Day Law Initiative', and in the department of media relations.

Shlomi Ravid, *The Closeness Index and Peoplehood Capital*

Dr. Ravid, is the founding director of the International School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies at Beit Hatfutsot, is a member of the founding team of the Jewish Peoplehood Hub. A pioneer in peoplehood education, he is the author of many peoplehood curricula and research and was the founder of the Center for Israel-Diaspora Cultural Relations.

Yoav Shoham, *The Jewish Peoplehood Index Project: The First Two Years*

Professor Shoham is a professor of computer science at Stanford University, an authority on artificial intelligence, and a high tech entrepreneur. He is active in

matters relating to Israel and the Jewish world, and co-founded the Jewish Peoplehood Index project.

Mireille Surowicz, *The Jewish Peoplehood Index Project: The First Two Years*

Mireille Surowicz is currently the Project Manager of the Jewish Peoplehood Closeness Index. Since her Aliya, she has been involved in Israel's Third (NGO) Sector, working for Yad Vashem, the Reut Institute, and the Metzilah Center. Each one of these positions dealt with the many facets of Jewish Peoplehood. Mireille completed her MA in Nationalism and Ethnicity at the London School of Economics.

ענת דותן עמר 1977 - 2010

תפיסת המציאות ומבטה על החיים:

"אמון במערכת יחסים מתחיל באמון בעצמך"
"חפתיע אותי כל פעם מחדש איך שינוי גישה משנה הכל"

ציטוט שמצא חן בעיניה -

WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET
WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE

כשסבתא מלכה נפטרה היא כתבה לסבא מושיק על בסיס ציטוט מחסכת ערכין "חייב אדם בבנו: לחולו, ולפדותו, ללמדו תורה, אומנות\להשיאו אישה ויש אומרים להשיטו במים" אני מודה לאלהים שסבתא לא מלה אותי(!) ועל ההכרה שאם היה צורך היא הייתה פודה אותי בעבור כל הון. היא לימדה אותי אומנות של לב ושלא כל האצבעות שוות ושהשוני הזה מאפשר ליד לנוע ולתפקד בכ"כ הרבה דרכים וצורות, ולא לסגור דלתות. היא לא זכתה להשיא אותי אבל תמכה ויעצה לי והיא לא לימדה אותי לשחות אבל בהחלט לצוף בכל מצב ולחייך... "

ב"ש (ילדות מוקדמת) ניו יורק (ילדות מאוחרת)

כפר סבא (נערות)

ניו יורק (תואר ראשון קולומביה ו JTS)

הר גילה (צה"ל)

הונדורס

ירושלים (תואר שני)

סידני

(שליחות ציונית)

Peoplehood Index project

מושב שחר

(נישואין ולידת בנה רותם- יאיר)

כפר סבא - תנצב"ה

הברכה שלה לעצמה בהגיעה לגיל 30 (שלש שנים טרם פטירתה)

החלמתי אברק את עצמי אקראת יום ההולדת שלי.

זה כנראה התגזעתי. והיכולת להסתכל ולראות את עצמי יותר כסידי הרחוקה. והעובדה שפה 7 מעלות, ומשום, ואי אפשר לערוך פיקניק המוני אכבוד יום ההולדת ה 30.

מה המלה המדויקת לתאר את ההרגשה להיות בת 30?

מסקרן? (לא יכול להיות שיצמחו לי יותר משלוש שערות אפנות)

מפחיד? (מה אם יצמחו לי יותר משלוש שערות אפנות?)

מעניין? (לאיזה צבע אני אוכל לצבוע אם יצמחו לי יותר משלוש...)

מזניב? מעניק השראה? מרגש?

מי שכבר עבר/עברה את זה מעדיף שזה מעט מפחיד, אבל שמסתכלים מעבר אל של עצמך אפשר לראות את ההזדמנות האדירה של אדם שלמד בשנות הצעירות שלו מציאות, מחשינות שולל ומהתרגשויות גדולות שהובילו לאירועים מכוננים. מה שבאחד זה שיש לי היום בחוץ שא לא היה לי בעבר.

אז אני מאחלת לי למצוא הנישה הזו בה הלב שלי הולם באינטנסיביות והחיוך שלי מים קודם כל את הפחדים שלי ואז את המחסמים של הצד השני. מאחלת

למצוא את השקט, להיות מנוח. לקחת את האתגר שב"אבד" ואת היכולת לשכפל אותו שאני ביחד. מאחלת לעצמי ללמוד עוד ועוד, להמשיך להיות ממוזיקה ומאוב, להמשיך לחקור ולגלות, להיות בריאה פיזית ונפשית.

מזה לשפף הברכות והאהבה שמורעפות עלי, על שבוכתי לחלוק רגעים קטנים כגדולים עם אנשים יוצאי דופן.

מאחלת שמתגשם אהבתי, שאמשיך למצוא אופן ובעקר שאמצא את הדבר הזה בו שוכנת משוקתי ושאליו אני מתאוה. הכי חשוב, להיות מסוגלת לקחת את הברכה הזו בתור נקודת התחלה בעוד כמה שנים, להתרשק על הפסיון ולחיות בצורה הכי טובה שאני יכולה.

יום ההולדת שלי.

"ולדורות ההמשך: אהבו את עצמכם עם כל המתנות שיש בכם וזכרו שאף אחד לא מושלם ומחילה חשובה כמו אהבה"