

**The Teaching of Israel in Reform Congregational Schools
Through an Analysis of Textbooks and Educational Resources**

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Acknowledgments

Only the learning that is enjoyed will be learned well.

- Judah ha-Nasi, Talmud

To my mentor and friend, Rabbi Sam Joseph. I appreciate so much your guidance and support. I enjoyed working together, studying together and most of all learning from you. Your passion for Jewish education is truly a source of inspiration to me. Thank You.

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Digest

This thesis explores the teaching of Israel in Reform congregational schools, with an emphasis on educational materials from 1967 to present. The thesis moves in a progression based on two questions: “Why teach Israel in Reform congregational schools?” and “How is Israel taught in Reform congregational schools?” This paper will explore the historical relationship between the Reform Movement and Israel, the development of Israel in the classroom, an analysis of the textbooks used in Reform classrooms, a proposal for a new textbook on Israel and an educators’ weekend *kallah* on Israel education. In addition to the written materials, this thesis is accompanied by a c.d. with additional materials for use with the proposed textbook and the background readings for the educators’ *kallah*.

The first chapter seeks to answer the question, “Why teach Israel in Reform congregational schools?,” by exploring the historical relationship between Israel and the Reform Movement and the development of Israel education. Each generation displays unique features in terms of its relationship to Israel and how those features contribute to the teaching of Israel in the classroom. Included in this chapter is an analysis of a survey conducted by Lisa D. Grant about the teaching of Israel. This survey provides insight into today’s classroom, the perspective of the educators, and curricular materials. The chapter will illuminate the issues and challenges of Israel education that the paper will address in the following chapters.

The second chapter is an analysis of the textbooks used in Reform Congregational schools, published by Behrman House, Union of American Hebrew Congregations,

KTAV and Kar-Ben. Each textbook was analyzed according to a set of criteria and presented in chronological order of publication to gain insight into how Israel is presented throughout the different time periods.

The third chapter is a response to the analysis in Chapter Two. The material in Chapter Three is a proposed table of contents and outline for a new textbook on Israel to be used in Reform congregational schools. The proposed textbook addresses the realities of today's student and the challenges and issues that were presented as a result of the analysis in Chapter Two.

The fourth chapter articulates the rationale, strategies, goals, and objectives for an educators' weekend *kallah* on the teaching of Israel. The chapter presents a model program designed to empower Reform Jewish educators with information to strengthen Israel education in their schools.

Introduction

It was love at first sight. From my head to my feet, I felt an electric charge travel throughout my body. With each step I took, my heart pounded a little bit faster as I got closer to stepping on what I had heard was holy ground. After years of hearing about this incredible place, and a 13 hour trans-Atlantic flight, I was ready. I took the last step off the plane, cushioned by the feeling of standing on the Promised Land. I took a deep breath in, eyes open, really wide, and took a mental panoramic shot of the land I was about to explore for the next two weeks: all of the places that I had heard of sitting around the dinner table; the site of all those stories that had been told in Hebrew school; the source of pride that my rabbi had instilled within me every *Yom Kippur* during his Israel sermon. I was ready to take my relationship to the next level: an in-depth exploration into the soul of the Jewish State. From the moment I dug my hands into the rich soil, I knew I had linked myself forever to this place, planting my own roots, laying my own claim to its beauty. For two weeks I traveled throughout the country in a constant state of awe.

Every aspect of her culture amazed me. The words and phrases I learned in my Day School Hebrew class were commonplace. I understood them; I could communicate with my Israeli brothers and sisters. It was spectacular. In Israel ancient stones told of the history of my people, her walls stained with thousands of finger prints; the language of our Torah was used by an infant calling out for his mother; the olive green uniform with Hebrew letters on the lapel; the seamless intermix of ancient and modern and the richness of her landscape, all fueled my passion for this incredible state.

From that first congregational trip, the summer of 1994, I have been privileged to travel to Israel every summer with congregational families and during every trip I find something more remarkable, I discover something new to be proud of and elements that make me fall even more in love. I have the opportunity to see Israel through the eyes of people for whom this trip is their first experience in the land. Every summer I am able to experience those initial feelings all over again watching their faces, their expressions. As the trip progresses, I see them fall in love with the Land of Israel.

There was never a question growing up about whether or not to support Israel or even whether or not Israel was a source of pride. Israel was described and discussed with highly emotional language, and in black and white terms. A Zionist was who you were; a lover of Zion was second nature. During the Intifada in the year 2001 very few congregations took their trips to Israel but we went. There were those who called my parents crazy, those who thought the members of the trip were intentionally putting their children's lives at risk and those who worried that our group was venturing into a war zone. The thought of canceling the trip was never an issue. Support for Israel was not something we provided only during her times of success, but even more so during her times of trial.

During the High Holy Days, after returning from an Israel that looked very different than ever before, with silent streets, empty stores, barren cities and painful tears, the member of the trip spoke about their experience in Israel before the congregation of 2,000 people. As each person described his or her love for the country, the hope that Israel will rebuild, the message to the congregation was that Israel was not a war zone or

a battle ground soaked in blood, rather the home to our Jewish relatives that were in need of our embrace physically, spiritually and emotionally. These High Holy Days were emotionally charged, as it was only days following the atrocious events of 9/11 and our country was in mourning. My rabbi approached the pulpit, just as he had for so many years before, to deliver his Israel Bonds sermon and instead delivered these words which will forever be at the forefront of my mind:

“...we just can’t wait for that wonderful occasion when we’re going to go back to Israel because almost all of us have been there. When we stood up at the beginning of this sermon, we saw that very few of us went this past year. The chances are, let’s tell the truth, very few of us will be going this coming year as well...I would have everyone in this congregation be there at least once. But the truth is it probably won’t happen. So the second thing I have to tell you is it’s not enough to wait...You’ve got to do something today-now...You’re going to buy a bond today. If you didn’t buy one last year and you walk out of this room without buying a bond today, don’t come back next *Yom Kippur*. Don’t come back. This is not your congregation. Buy your bond today...It’s not a gift; it’s an investment. But for me it’s a bond. It’s a connection and if I don’t make it, I don’t deserve to stand up here in front of you. And if you don’t make it, you don’t deserve to stand out there in front of me. This is a year that every single Jew in this room, every single person who claims to have some relationship to Israel, is going to buy a bond. You’re going

to invest in Israel. The other thing you are going to do is make a commitment in your heart...This is the moment to do it.”¹

The congregation invested close to \$800,000 in Israel Bonds that morning.

This was the environment I was raised in. Israel is home. Israel is ours.

It wasn't until I arrived in Jerusalem for my first year of rabbinical school that I was confronted with opinions from fellow students that were so contrary to my beliefs. It was the first time that I was relegated to the minority because of my passionate and abundant love for the State of Israel. Challenge, debate, harsh words and displeasure in the State of Israel was a common sentiment when discussing Israel's politics, religion and humanitarian concerns. This type of dialogue about Israel was unnatural for me. At the beginning, such discussions felt bitter on my lips, feeling like if you challenged Israel, you were abandoning her. That year was a very difficult one for me, as I was living in the part of the world that I had fallen in love with so many years before. Every step I took I felt uplifted; hearing “*Shabbat Shalom*” from the cashier at the grocery store tickled me, watching the lights of the *chanukiah* sparkle from the lot booths made me proud, looking out of my classroom window at the walls of the Old City inspired me and hearing the official language of the Jewish State fly out of my mouth was bliss. As we studied more, talked more, debated more, I came to realize that there were distinct groups in the class whose perspectives divided into two groups. Both were authentic and true, both preaching their own message and wrought with their own bias. These two groups could be described as passion for Israel and respect for Israel; two highly charged extremes that

¹ Gary Glickstein, “The Bonds Appeal Everyone Remembers,” in *Selected High Holy Day Sermons*. (Florida: Temple Beth Shalom, 2004), 191-195.

are products of how Israel is taught to North American students. The teaching of Israel is painted in blue and white in North American religious schools. Some religious schools focus on planting a love seed in each of the students so that the children might grow and blossom into ardent Zionists and lifetime supporters of the State of Israel. There are those religious schools that teach Israel as a subject in terms of history, geography and social studies, as part of the overall religious school curriculum. These two camps are polarized and are both missing valuable pieces to understanding why Israel matters. Why teach Israel and the role of Israel in the life of American Reform Jews? My experience in rabbinical school led me to explore this area of the teaching of Israel in Reform congregational schools, as I am convinced that Israel can be taught as a *middah*, a Jewish value, while at the same time feeling confident enough in our relationship with Israel to challenge her.

Compromise, trust, dialogue and honesty are the basic elements for entering into any relationship and are no less relevant when building a relationship with Israel. Congregational classrooms provide the forum for creating relationships of substance: a mix of hope, idealism, love, and reality, fear and challenge. Israel should be the platform upon which we as Jews stand, feeling a sense of pride that after thousands of years of being homeless we have a homeland; not just any home, but one of great innovation, achievement, progress and democracy. As Jews we must use that sturdy foundation as a base for change, advocating on behalf of religious freedom, motivate Israel to do better, and encourage Israel to strive to live by the core set of Jewish values for which she stands. Our responsibility is to teach the values, beliefs, achievements, and progress as a

means of promoting further change, greater development and, most importantly, a desire within our students to become supporters of Israel; and even more so partners in an active relationship with the State of Israel.

This project is a product of a desire to develop a substantive medium for the teaching of Israel. The teaching of Israel in Reform congregational schools needs to be updated, revised, and reflect modern Israel. Teaching Israel as a value means it takes the form of a thread that weaves throughout the curriculum each and every year of religious school. In a relationship, the parties involved might not always agree; they might not always see the world in the same way; they might not always feel like embracing or talking. The test of a real relationship is when those involved come together to forge a partnership built on a set of values and love. As educators and teachers of Israel, we have the responsibility to help create that partnership between our students and Israel, to promote a love of Israel and to encourage a relationship with Israel. The relationship must be sturdy enough to weather the pressures and realities that exist outside our classroom doors. We must strive to be honest, proud, thoughtful, meaningful, and current in our presentation of Israel and, most importantly, foster an environment that is conducive to debate, dialogue, and discussion about modern Israel and all that she entails.

This thesis is an exploration of the teaching of Israel in Reform congregational schools through an analysis of surveys, reports recorded by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), statements on Israel produced by the Reform Movement, and textbooks and educational resources used over a period of forty years. This paper discusses the historical relationship between the Reform Movement, Zionism and the

State of Israel as a means to understand the present state of Israel education in the Reform Movement. After analyzing the materials that are used to date in Reform congregational classrooms and studying the responses of educators and teachers in the field, this thesis proposes an outline of a new textbook to be used in Reform congregational schools as well as an Educators weekend *kallah*. The *kallah* serves as an opportunity for educators to address the questions of “Why teach Israel?” and “How to teach Israel in Reform congregational schools.” The emphasis is on how to bring modern Israel into the classroom and the adaptation of new techniques on how to present Israel effectively to the students in today’s North American classrooms.

There is much work to be done to bridge the gap between the blue and the white. The work is important, as there is only one Jewish State and its relative infancy compared to other nations of the world only means we have been given an incredible opportunity to help formulate the way we see Israel as the Jewish State, not only for ourselves and our children but to help formulate how the world at large perceives Israel. This is the state we have been given as members of *Am Yisrael*, the people of Israel, and it is our obligation to form a relationship with her that is substantive, reflective of our own ideals and the physical exemplar of Jewish values.

The purpose of this thesis is to study and analyze the teaching of Israel in Reform congregational schools over the course of Israel’s existence from 1967 until the present, by using text books and educational resources. An in-depth analysis of textbooks developed for the purpose of supplemental religious education in the Reform movement will be my lens in determining aspects of the Land of Israel, people of Israel, Israeli

culture which are significant in teaching students in the religious schools in North America. The analysis will consist of a list of criteria which I will distill from textbooks and educational resources. The goal of the analysis is to develop themes that have remained consistent and at the core of Israel education in Reform congregational schools.

Questions to be addressed in the work include:

1. Why study Israel? In general and as part of a Reform Religious School curriculum?
2. What do textbooks and curricula suggest are the most important topics to be taught in a Reform Religious School setting?
3. How are Israel and Israelis portrayed in textbooks and photographs used in a Reform context?
4. Is the focus of these texts and curricular materials on the past, history of Israel?
5. Are Israel's modern day achievements addressed or discussed in a substantive way, as part of Reform curriculum and educational materials?
6. When teaching Israel from a Reform perspective, are the "warts" of Israel exposed or is there a focus on the glory of Israel's successes?
7. How is Israel portrayed in Reform educational materials/resources? Israel as "weakling" or Israel as "powerhouse." When does this transformation occur?
8. Do these texts address how to develop a relationship with Israel as Diaspora, Reform Jews?
9. How is the Progressive Movement in Israel addressed, taught?

Why teach Israel in Reform congregational schools? Because Israel is the Jewish State, the home that belongs to each and every Jew regardless of where he or she lives, or

his or her political views. Israel is the physical representation of the covenant between the people of Israel and God and we have been charged with the responsibility of caring for her, supporting her and at times challenging her. If we teach Israel correctly, our relationship with Israel will undergo stages of real growth and development as we strive to present Israel in all her glory, encompassing her achievements and her warts.

Chapter One

Introduction

Basic to the entire project is the question: why teach Israel in Reform Congregational Schools? If one were to pose this question to a room of Reform Jews, the variety of answers, perspectives, passions, theological and ideological positions would be astounding. The question to some seems simple while to others it is a deep seated challenge. The lack of a formalized stance by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) or the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) describing what Israel education in a Reform congregational school should look like facilitates the ambivalence and mediocrity of Israel education in Reform congregational schools. Teaching any subject without a crystalized understanding of “why” or “for what reason” is like building a house made only of walls with nothing else inside; no substance, just the framework. The essence, the *neshama* (the soul), of teaching Israel is lost when only the framework, the nuts and bolts, are available.

The relationship between Reform Jews and Israel is declining² from the mere fact that the “why” questions have never been formally addressed. Why is Israel important? Why should I care about Israel? Why teach Israel? Why study Israel? Why is Israel relevant to the everyday life of American Jews? It is not clear to Reform Jews how Israel figures into their Jewish identity. Educators explain fundamental issues such as the importance, relevance, and meaning of Israel using broad generalizations or leave them entirely unexplored.

² Jonathan Ament. "United Jewish Communities Report Series on the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01." United Jewish Communities, 2002. Jewish Data Bank. 51-54.

The importance of Israel has become a generational issue. To the generation who lived during the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, the Jewish State is, without question, crucial to world Jewry. To the generation who lived during the 1960s and 1970s and were active in raising money and funds for Israel, a strong, defensible, viable Jewish State is a source of pride. To the generation who has always known a world with a strong and successful Israel as regional power, the Jewish State is a land that offers challenge³ rather than encourages attachment. Israel education has failed to close the generational gap and continues to rely upon the positions, ideology and emotional attachment of the previous generations. To capture the attention of this generation and those of the future there must be a shift in how Israel is presented and taught, since “the mythic, romantic Zionist/socialist Israel is no longer. Neither is Israel, the ‘poor immigrant cousin’...Instead, we confront a place where ‘milk and honey’ have been replaced by computer chips and *chutzpah*. Neither defenseless nor quaint...Israel today is rich in her modernity and diversity and complexity.”⁴

Therefore, since Israel speaks the language of this generation through technology, modernity, advancement and diversity, educators should follow suit. Otherwise, the Israel of today is not represented in the classroom and today’s Jewish youth and adolescents receive a mass-produced skewed version through a variety of media forums. Israel education must bridge the gap between the mythic Israel and modern Israel. Both

³ Challenges may include, the place of religion, settlements, border disputes, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and terrorism. The State of Israel as regional power creates a tension between the values of Judaism and the modern democratic ideals it preaches. The issue of Israel as a Jewish State also creates a challenge, for there exists a tension between religion and state, the place of minorities, and human rights.

⁴ Daniel J Margolis, "Towards a Vision of Educational Re-engagement with Israel," *Agenda: Jewish Education* Winter (2004): 7

elements are crucial in creating a stable relationship. Understanding and relating to Israel's past, present and future help to build a foundation that moves toward responding to the "why" questions. This, in turn, leads to the active "how and what" elements of a true relationship with Israel.

A discussion of the history of the relationship between the Reform Movement and the Zionist movement will help to shed light on the complexities and the multi-layered nature of the question, "why teach Israel in Reform congregational schools?"

Historical Overview: The Relationship Between the Reform and Zionist Movements

The historical component serves as a fundamental piece to understanding how the relationship between both movements was built. In the nineteenth century Reform Judaism was born and flourished in Europe. Diaspora, through the lens of a 19th century Reform Jew, was "providential, that it possessed a mission to bring the essence of Judaism, ethical monotheism, to the nations of the world."⁵ As Reform Judaism spread to the soil of America, the movement's declaration of official opposition to the Zionist Movement was a result of the fear of accusations of dual loyalty or doubt of American Jews' patriotism⁶.

The First World Zionist Congress was held in Basel by its leader and visionary Theodor Herzl in 1897. Seven weeks prior, the CCAR adopted a resolution denouncing Zionism, calling it a "mischievous misconception of Jewish identity." Following that

⁵ Michael A. Meyer and W. Gunther Plaut, *The Reform Judaism Reader: North American Documents*. (New York: UAHC, 2001), 132.

⁶ The early Reformers were committed to reframing the particularistic elements of Judaism to fit within the ideals of Reform Judaism. Zionism was understood to be a core element of particularism as it advocated for a Jewish State, separation of the Jews and Israel as a Jewish area of concern. Universalism is one of the important factors of the Reform Movement: the notion that all human beings must be treated equally. This concept of universalism was present at the outset of Reform Judaism through avenues such as liturgical changes, rejection of chosenness, rejection of messianic overtones and rejection of a physical return to Zion. The Reform Movement stressed its commitment to outreach, social justice, ethical monotheism, and peace.

resolution, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) proclaimed that, “America was the new Zion and that American Jews required no other.”⁷ Followers of the Reform Movement wanted to avoid alienation, segregation and isolationism from the society in which they were living. The threat of antagonism was real and the promotion of a Jewish State or homeland could be understood by the non-Jewish majority as a case of divided loyalty and separatist motivations. Jews wanted to fit in and wanted to confirm their pride in being American citizens. They no longer wanted to be the subjects of hostility and persecution.

In addition, Reform Judaism maintained that the Jews were not a nation, but a religious community. Judaism as a nation conjured up terms such as chosen, messianic and particular, contradicting the vision of the Reform movement which emphasized universalism, justice, love of human race and one great brotherhood. In its resolution in 1898 the UAHC, in a response to the notion of Judaism as a nation stated, “Zion was a precious possession of the past, the early home of our faith...it is a holy memory, but it is not our hope of the future. America is our Zion.”⁸ Zion, *Yisrael*, was understood as a relic of the past, a distant land where the sacred religious texts were born, a *brit* between God and Abraham, a promise fulfilled by the generation led by Joshua, a homeland of biblical, ie. religious significance, a land only to be praised in liturgical jargon but not longed for. The Zion of the present was a land that symbolized that ancient hope, a land of promise,

⁷ Michael A. Meyer and W. Gunther Plaut, *The Reform Judaism Reader: North American Documents*. (New York: UAHC, 2001), 133.

⁸ Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (1898-1903): 2002.

freedom and freedom from persecution. America, for Reform Jews, fit all of the homeland criteria, giving it new meaning to covenant, promise and hope.

There were members of the Reform Movement who did not consider Reform Judaism and Zionism to be in conflict with one another. In fact, the early Reform Zionists argued that Reform Judaism and Zionism were analogous. Both movements had similar intentions to “terminate the two thousand-year-old tragedy of the Jew...”⁹ Both movements sought to free modern Jews from that which constrained them, be it Jewish law or civil disadvantages. Max Raisin, active Zionist and Hebrew Union College graduate, expressed his vision of the Jewish homeland: “the Jewish state of the future will, as it must, be more than a mere political entity, its spiritual and moral function in the uplift work of its own people and of the entire world must never be lost sight of.”¹⁰ This vision for the future State of Israel worked in tandem with the hopes and ideology of the Reform Movement, “a light unto the nations,” spreading the message of ethical monotheism and upright moral character while fulfilling a spiritual desire.

Forty years after officially rejecting Zionism, the CCAR in 1937 passed a pro-Zionist Resolution. The Reform Movement in its Columbus Platform stated we are “in favor of a Jewish homeland...a center of Jewish cultural and spiritual life in Palestine.”¹¹ The deplorable situation of the Jews of Nazi Germany and Europe enlightened those who once fought against Zionism to embrace its message of a Jewish homeland for Jews around the world who were desperately in need of a safe haven, a state which would open

⁹ Max Raisin, “Convention Sermon: Zionism and Liberal Judaism” *The Exponent*. July (1914).

¹⁰ Max Raisin, “Convention Sermon: Zionism and Liberal Judaism” *The Exponent*. July (1914).

¹¹ Michael A. Meyer and W. Gunther Plaut, *The Reform Judaism Reader: North American Documents*. (New York: UAHC, 2001), 138.

its doors, a spiritual center based on Jewish ethics and a moral code. It was from this moment forward that the Reform Movement would begin to officially develop a relationship with Zionism and eventually the State of Israel.

The relationship between Reform Judaism and the State of Israel consists of religious, political and spiritual elements. The original promise between God and Abraham, “And the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you...To your seed I will give this land’” (Genesis 12:1, 7), this *brit*, the covenantal relationship, expresses the deep connection the Jewish people have to the land of Israel. It represents the bond between God and *Am Yisrael*; it is the land that we were given, a land of blessing and a land that represents our past, present and future.

In the wake of the Six-Day War on June 21, 1967, the CCAR held an emergency session on Israel. It was at this meeting that Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver submitted a *Statement on Israel* to be adopted by the Conference. The statement begins with a historical overview of the function of the State of Israel as a home in which Jews all over the world could find a safe haven and raise their families in peace. However, since its birth as a state it has had to fight for its right to live. On a daily basis it must struggle for its survival. In addition, the statement reflects Israel’s financial and political struggles. The crux of the statement focuses on the events of the day and the severity of Israel’s situation vis a vis her neighbors, her inhabitants and her overall survival as a state, as a country. Rabbi Silver in his statement calls upon his rabbinical colleagues, the movement and the conference to take a pledge to rally behind Israel.

“As proud rabbis of this people, individually and as a Conference we pledge ourselves to encourage communal discipline in this hour of crisis. Individually and in our congregations we pledge sacrificial support of the Israel Emergency Fund and to the purchase of Israel Bonds. Individually and as a Conference we will use our pulpits and our platforms to clarify the fundamental issues, the facts and the equities.”¹²

The statement by Rabbi Silver was adopted by the members present. The resolutions offered focused primarily on financial commitment. Rabbi Leon Kronish added a special resolution to the statement that, in addition to financial commitments, the UAHC, individual congregations and the CCAR must make a statement that these organizations not only support Israel during periods of war and emergency, but from this point forward their commitment to Israel would be a constant. “To implement our action we need in the CCAR and in the UAHC permanent committees on Israel. We ought to establish in each congregation a permanent committee on Israel...I move this as a specific resolution by this body...”¹³

The ideas and passion displayed at the emergency session on Israel in 1967 was paramount to the relationship between Reform Judaism and Israel. Not only were serious financial and political pledges made, but a shift in ideology took place. The statement addressed details, logistics and concrete examples of how to support Israel. The rabbis present at this meeting addressed their emotional attachment to Israel and importance of

¹² Daniel Jeremy Silver, "Statement on Israel" *CCAR Yearbook 77* (1967): 106-109. For the full statement see appendix

¹³ Leon Kronish, "Response to Statement on Israel" *CCAR Yearbook 77* (1967): 110.

educating their congregants about Israel and her important role in the lives of American Jews. No longer should Israel be thought of as a distant land for persecuted Jews or as a *Tzedakah* project, rather “we declare our solidarity with the State and the people of Israel. Their triumphs are our triumphs. Their ordeal is our ordeal. Their fate is our fate.”¹⁴ In a major ideological shift, Israel was no longer “they,” rather “we.” The CCAR in this powerful statement bridged the gap that was for so long a part of the American Jewish spirit. The threat of dual loyalty was no longer a factor in this new equation. Jews in America were already ingrained into the fabric of the country, serving in most facets of American life. Now was the time to rally behind the Jewish State, support her, stand by her and identify with her. It was now the responsibility of the clergy to educate their congregations about the realities of Israel, to address the congregants’ ambivalence about Israel and to transition those feelings into understanding Israel, and more importantly into support for Israel.

In the 1970s Israel became a centerpiece of the Reform movement.¹⁵ The movement understood that it was the duty of the clergy, teachers and lay leaders to encourage Reform Jews to build a relationship with Israel, enrich their lives through study of Israel, travel to Israel and advocacy for Israel. All of these critical elements of building a connection with Israel serve as links in the chain of tradition and transform the original *brit* into a physical manifestation between *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael*. The

¹⁴ Daniel Jeremy Silver, "Statement on Israel" *CCAR Yearbook* 77 (1967): 106-109.

¹⁵ In the 1970s, Israel began to play a much larger role in Jewish consciousness, and there are certain milestones that are indicative of this. Starting in 1970 all first year HUC students begin their studies in Israel. In 1975, World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) becomes part of the World Zionist Organization. In 1977, ARZA is established and moves the Reform Movement on to the Jewish political stage. In 1976 the San Francisco Platform encourages *Aliyah*.

CCAR and the UAHC committee on Israel translated these concepts into projects. The question they sought to answer was, “How to build a more meaningful bridge between our congregants--and especially our younger congregants (teenagers and college students)--vis-a-vis Israel?” The response was a summer seminar for Reform Rabbis in Jerusalem, a joint program of CCAR and RA committees on Israel, the 1970 CCAR meeting in Jerusalem, tourism and pilgrimages, and the need to establish a mandatory year in Israel for all rabbinical students the first year of the program. These programs were discussed and offered by the CCAR/UAHC Committee on Israel in 1969 by its Chairman Rabbi Leon Kronish and recorded in the CCAR Yearbook 1969.

The time period 1950-1980 is defined by the paradigm “mass mobilization,” whose goal was primarily fundraising and political advocacy for Israel. During this time period Israel’s survival was the top priority and American Jews saw their relationship to Israel as one of first and foremost sending aid and financial support. This phase of the American Jews-Israel relationship “was largely centralized, top-down, consensus-oriented, mediated and idealized. American Jews were mobilized by organizations (UJA, AJC) to donate money to quasi-governmental bodies in Israel (JAFI, JNF).”¹⁶ The need was evident and the mission clear. The responsibility of American Jews was helping to save Israel and providing support. At the 95th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Grossingers, New York, June 18-21, 1984, the CCAR adopted the following resolution:

¹⁶ Lisa D. Grant, and Ezra Kopelowitz. "Strengthening the Connection of American Jews to Israel: A case study of one attempt to transform the place of Israel in Four St. Louis Synagogues". Research Success Technologies December (2009).

“The Central Conference of American Rabbis joins the world Jewish Community in celebrating the 36th anniversary of the founding of *Medinat Yisrael*. More than a refuge for those of our people fleeing oppression, more than a thriving and stable democracy in an area of the world wherein human rights and political freedoms are rare, more even than a living testament to the unquenchable will of our people to survive forms of oppression that mere words will never adequately describe, Israel has become a vibrant and revivifying source of strength for the Jewish people-- its faith, its vision, and its courage. We take this moment to reassert the Reform rabbinate's unswerving commitment to Israel. Our religious schools teach a love for *Zion* and an understanding of Zionism; our labors on behalf of Israel within our local communities have helped forge coalitions of support at a time when Israel has suffered from unwarranted public assault; we actively encourage our young people to participate in NFTY-sponsored high school and college programs in Israel; we nurture through personal example the flourishing of ARZA and *Kadima* chapters within our congregations; we lead our communities into active support for wide-ranging Israel Bonds and United Jewish Appeal activities; we personally participate in the raising of funds for our movement's kibbutzim, *Yahel* and *Lotan*, encouraging as well those who would seek to act upon their Reform Jewish perceptions of *aliya* ; we read, we study, we preach, we experience that which the Land of Israel offers to us.”¹⁷

The resolution demonstrates a passion for Israel and unwavering support for Israel. The resolution comprises two components. First, the Reform Movement supports the land of Israel, a land of refuge for those of our people who are oppressed, a source of strength and centralized community institutions. Second, it serves as a call to action: we will teach about Israel, travel to Israel, encourage aliyah, and fundraise for Israel and Israeli programs.

The resolution touches upon the value of Israel education, “Our religious schools teach a love for Zion and an understanding of Zionism.” Love and understanding are the two core elements that define the process of Israel education from the 1960s-1980s period, portraying Israel as a mythic David amongst the neighboring

¹⁷ *Resolution Adopted by the CCAR at the 95th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*. New York, June (1984): 18-21.

Goliaths. The emotional connection seemed best to establish the initial understanding of the importance of Zion, the Land of Israel and the Jewish State. The Reform Movement had stated with all authority that it stands as one with the State of Israel, and Reform Jews represent a powerful resource for the State of Israel.

The 1990s-present era offered a new set of ideas about a relationship with Israel. Israel transitioned from vulnerable youth to regional power, to a stable and defensible nation. Israel became a world leader in the fields of technology, medical achievement and environmental change. The position of American Jews as the financial support system for Israel no longer resonated as strongly. A call for defense no longer seemed as critical and Israel as a refuge no longer relevant to the lives of American Jews.

American Jews did not sense that the mission was as clear. To combat the paralysis and ambivalence, the paradigm focus shifted to meaningful engagement, to reengage American Jews and to promote attachment to Israel through direct person-to-person engagement and personalized contact between American Jews and Israel. The value that once focused on financial support shifted towards articulating Israel's place in American Jewish life. Thus, the Pittsburgh Platform of 1999 in bold, unmistakable terms, declared the Reform movement's unwavering commitment to the State of Israel.

“We are committed to *Medinat Yisrael*, The State of Israel, and rejoice in its accomplishments. We affirm the unique qualities of living in *Eretz Yisrael*, the land of Israel, and encourage *aliyah*, immigration to Israel. We are committed to a vision of the State of Israel that promotes full civil, human and religious rights for all its inhabitants and that strives for a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors. We are committed to promoting and strengthening Progressive Judaism in Israel, which will enrich the spiritual life of the Jewish state and its people. We affirm that both Israeli and Diaspora Jewry should remain vibrant and interdependent communities. As we urge Jews who reside outside Israel to learn Hebrew as a living language and to make periodic visits to Israel in order to study

and to deepen their relationship to the Land and its people, so do we affirm that Israeli Jews have much to learn from the religious life of Diaspora Jewish communities. We are committed to furthering Progressive Judaism throughout the world as a meaningful religious way of life for the Jewish people. In all these ways and more, Israel gives meaning and purpose to our lives.”¹⁸

The Reform movement in 1999 supports Israel, advocates on behalf of Israel, encourages *aliyah* to Israel, promotes Israel, travel to Israel, and individual relationship to Israel. The addition in this statement is the focus on promoting and advocating for Progressive Judaism in Israel. The language transformed from emotional to political. The transition from the 1984 document to this one is striking. This statement on Israel speaks to the paradigm shift from mass mobilization to meaningful engagement. There is a clear distinction between the Israel community and the Diaspora community as two vibrant independent entities that coexist and a call for each to learn about the other and engage in meaningful relationships with the other. The movement takes a clear stance in this statement that Israel should learn from the Reform Movement, make room for Progressive Judaism and religious expression in the State of Israel.

The idea behind the statement is that if Israel is unwilling to legitimize Progressive Judaism and liberal Jewish expression, the Reform Movement will only continue to see the communities as distinct and separate, thus weakening the relationship. What is missing? Education. Nowhere is teaching Israel to our children mentioned. Nowhere in this platform does the movement declare that Israel education is pivotal in the lives of Jewish children, adolescents, young adults and adults. It is an underlying assumption that Israel will be taught, for how could advocacy, relationship and

¹⁸ “A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism, Adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis at the Pittsburgh Convention” (New York, 1999): 2-6.

connection be attained? Why is this commitment to the State of Israel important? How is Israel central to the identity of a Reform Jew? Relying on assumptions leads to a level of ambivalence and falsehood.

Israel Education in Reform Congregational Schools

Recognizing the overwhelming amount of research that has been conducted over the past thirty years of the American Jewish Population and its relationship to Jewish identity and Israel, this paper will discuss a number of these sources, and will focus on those surveys, papers and studies that relate specifically to teaching Israel in Reform Congregational Schools. Lisa D. Grant, associate professor of Jewish Education at the New York campus of HUC-JIR, conducted an online survey sent to members of the National Association of Temple Educators (NATE), to gather data on the teaching of Israel in Reform Congregational schools. For the purposes of this introduction this survey serves as a conversation starter in an attempt to narrow the focus and address the issues head on.

The survey was conducted in 2006. A total of 100 responses were received. The survey included closed and open ended questions. Grant explains that “the purpose of the study was to explore how Israel education in Reform Congregations measures up relative to this consensus opinion [American Jewish educators have yet to figure out what to teach, how to teach, and most importantly why to Israel] and that American Jewish Education falls short when it comes to significant and enduring Israel engagement.”¹⁹ Based on this survey, respondents were unable to articulate a clear and precise vision for

¹⁹ Lisa D Grant, “Israel Education in Reform Congregational Schools,” *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* Summer (2007): 3-24.

teaching Israel and the key challenges to teaching Israel focus on questions of meaning and relevance.

What do we learn from this survey?

Overall, it is encouraging to know that 99% of the respondents teach Israel as part of the religious school curriculum. Eighty-five percent note that their Temple sponsor Israel trips. The respondents' goals for teaching Israel (in order of priority) are to create positive attitudes towards Israel, teach about history and heritage, build stronger sense of peoplehood, encourage travel to Israel, teach about Israel as the Jewish homeland, teach about contemporary events. At the bottom of the priority list is connect Israel to Reform Jewish life. In terms of curricular objectives, 85% of respondents declare geography (land, people, and culture) as the area of focus for teaching Israel. Only 10% include *Ahavat Zion*, love of Zion, as part of the Israel curriculum. Israel education dominates the 4th-5th grades where there are 6 weeks devoted to Israel study. In Middle school and High school Israel is taught in 2 or fewer weeks, emphasizing politics and current events.

Challenges: Israel as an Island

"Curriculum doesn't exist in a vacuum. The religious school exists within a congregational system including rabbis, and a movement that has failed to centralize Israel or encourage congregant engagement with Israel. Until we address those larger issues, we educators will only be able to work piecemeal."²⁰ The overwhelming majority of respondents claimed that teaching Israel was a challenge. How to make Israel relevant and meaningful, how to counter apathy or resistance and how to respond to the complex reality of the modern State of Israel?

²⁰ Lisa D. Grant, "Israel Education in Reform Congregational Schools," *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* Summer (2007): 3-24.

The main concern is that 60% of respondents claimed that less than half of their religious school teachers had ever been to Israel. This lack of a personal connection is a contributing factor to the challenge of teaching Israel. Israel then truly becomes a distant land. Passion and love of Israel is central to conveying the power of Israel as the religious and spiritual homeland of the Jewish people. We can assume that other aspects of the religious school curriculum are areas of Jewish life that are familiar and comfortable for the teaching staff and prove to be less of a challenge to teach. Lifecycle, holidays and Shabbat are aspects of Jewish culture and tradition that the teachers live and have an emotional connection to. They can speak to the importance, meaning and relevance of those elements to creating Jewish identity. Relating to the material one teaches is critical. If educators are ambivalent about the subject matter they are teaching they will only pass on that ambivalence to their students.

A connection to Israel, its meaning and relevance, must first and foremost be understood by the teachers and educators, otherwise this sense of disconnect will only continue to widen. Jewish educators and congregational school teachers should take the time to reflect on their own relationship with Israel and “ask how we relate to the centrality of Israel in our lives...intensify our study of sources, Israel’s story and history, and consider ways in which both educators and young people might change with Israel as part of a fundamental process of thinking about what it means to be Jewish in the modern world.”²¹ Continuing to focus on Israel as a segment of the overall curriculum with an

²¹ Daniel J Margolis, "Towards a Vision of Educational Re-engagement with Israel" *Agenda: Jewish Education* Winter (2004): 8.

emphasis on subject matter seems to be the safe way out.²² Content is certainly important, but teaching geography, for example, evades the key question of why Israel matters.²³ By teaching Israel as a subject, the Reform congregational school labels Israel as a part of Judaism, not the beating heart, or the spiritual core of our people. Israel cannot be taught as an island, an independent entity. The Jewish people cannot be *Am Yisrael* without *Yisrael*.

A study conducted by Koren and Miller-Jacobs in 2002 of the Greater Boston Area Congregational schools on Israel education found similar results as Grant's study regarding teaching Israel as a piece of the curriculum. Overall they found that Israel was taught as a specific content area rather than integrating it with other aspects of the curriculum. Relegating Israel to a segment of the curriculum makes a statement that Israel does not fit with all aspects of Jewish life, rather it is only a piece of it. Koren and Miller-Jacobs also addressed the ambiguity of goals with regards to teaching Israel, a decline in the emphasis given to Hebrew leading to a weakened attachment to Israel.²⁴

Israel Matters

A curriculum developed by the Melton Center for Jewish Education, "Creating Models of Engagement With Israel", focused on Israel as a central dimension of Jewish character development. "The intent was to inextricably link Israel to Jewish life...[it] does

²² Focusing on Israel as a segment of the overall curriculum makes a statement that Israel is only a small portion of Jewish education rather than the foundation of everything we do as Jews. Emphasizing subject matter such as geography, history, and people evades the realities of Israel today and the complexities of the modern State of Israel. By only teaching about subjects that relate to Israel, congregational schools make a statement that only certain aspects of Israel are worthy of study rather than a holistic approach to Israel education.

²³ Lisa D. Grant, "Israel Education in Reform Congregational Schools," *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* Summer (2007): 20.

²⁴ Daniel J. Margolis, "Towards a Vision of Educational Re-engagement with Israel," *Agenda: Jewish Education* Winter (2004): 6-10.

not say Israel is central to Jewish life, but rather, Israel is an integral/inseparable piece of a larger whole. Israel is integral to everything we know, feel, and do as Jews, then the question of why Israel matters becomes clear.”²⁵ The aim of the project “to make Israel part of the subject matter of Jewish education rather than a subject in Jewish education”²⁶ is important because Israel is part of the physical and spiritual make up of the Jewish self. Israel, the Jewish State, provides world Jewry with authenticity and validity. Israel, the Jewish State, the only democracy in the Middle East, provides a base for the living embodiment of Jewish tradition, moral character, ethical living, legitimacy in world affairs and political strength. These are issues with which to contend. People learn by enhancing their own knowledge base and experiences. The Reform movement must tap into that base and realm of experience by honing in on what their students and congregants know and can relate to. Israel is multi-layered and multi-faceted and must be taught as such in a Reform Jewish context. Israel education in congregational schools should aim to expose the students to the diversity of the Jewish people, offer them one-on-one experiences with Israelis, utilize Israeli products in the classroom, read Israeli newspapers and magazines, listen to Israeli music and experience Israeli culture. The Reform Movement provides opportunities for personal connection through *shlichim* programs, URJ camps and NFTY trips. However, the goal would be to transition these episodic events into a culture of personal experiences that are woven into the fabric of the congregations’ educational system.

²⁵ Lisa D. Grant, “Israel Education in Reform Congregational Schools,” *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* Summer (2007): 21.

²⁶ Melton Center for Jewish Education. “Creating Models of Engagement With Israel”. *JESNA* (2007).

Israel: A Far-off Exotic Land

After Israel's victory over her Arab neighbors in both 1967 and 1973, she assumed the role of David fighting against Goliath. Using the language of the 1960s-1970s, the Reform Congregational Schools taught Israel as this tiny, vulnerable land that had defeated the enemies surrounding her. What was this far-away distant land where Jews were the military giants, the defenders of freedom, glorious war heroes and owners of their political fate? To some the concepts of Jews as heroes or a Jewish military were something of mythology, of great fantasy. For decades post-1967, Israel was taught as military giant, a land of miracles and the men and women who lived there took on myth-like character. The warts of Israel, her realities and wounds, were not shared in the classroom.

The main objective became to force-feed Israel pride by neglecting the complexities, challenges and harsh realities. The Jewish State, the size of New Jersey, struggled with issues such as being surrounded by enemy neighbors, challenging political structure, the debate over the place of religion and the glaring and watchful eye of the international community. By ignoring those realities in the classroom, Israel became a place of mythic proportions, a far-off exotic land, a land of miracles. Over time, these concepts became foreign to the generation of students who have always known a world with a strong Jewish State. The myths and stories, on their own, no longer seemed relevant to the lives of this new generation and maybe future generations. Israel, in its entirety, must be taught, warts and all. Reform Jewish children, teens and young adults, deserve to be taught the truths, the challenges, the technological advancements, the religious debates, the medical innovation, the political woes and the strength of the State

of Israel. Educators must not shy away from exposing Reform Jewish students to the real Israel. By doing so we are allowing them insider access to their homeland. Being on the inside of what the State of Israel is about will only serve as an incredible tool for building a strong and viable relationship between the students and Israel, a connection built on substance, knowledge and experience.²⁷

Why Teach Israel in Reform Congregational Schools?

Before the last decade, observers of American Jewish life noted that the synagogue no longer functioned as the center of Jewish life. Jewish Federation was held in high esteem as the institution that gathered and brought American Jews together. However, in recent years the tide seems to have shifted as the synagogue once again regained its position as a central part of the American Jewish experience. Congregational schools, youth group, adult education, wellness programs and worship are all offered in this one location where members feel they are creating community in an environment where all their senses can be engaged. The synagogue “...has become the holy community, the place where the business of making Jews actually takes place,”²⁸ and must do so holistically. To effectively carry out the the business of making Jews, Israel must be at the core of that process. The reality is that all Jews, regardless of their position on Israel, or their feelings towards Israel, are in fact, in a relationship with Israel. As members of *Am Yisrael*, each Jew carries that name, that title. “We are in a relationship [with Israel], and it is appropriate to develop that relationship by learning more about

²⁷ Arnold Eisen, and Michael Rosenak. *Israel In Our Lives: Teaching Israel: Basic Issues and Philosophical Guidelines* (Jerusalem: The Charles Bronfman Foundation 1997).

²⁸ Jack Wertheimer, *Recent Trends in Supplementary Jewish Education*. Avi Chai, 2007.

Israel as it is and Israel as it aspires to be.”²⁹ Every relationship requires learning about the other, engaging in dialogue, finding out more, discovering similarities, common interests, and listening. The recognition that a relationship exists is the first step. The next step is for the Reform Movement, on a national scale and on the local synagogue level, to articulate the importance of Israel to Jewish identity, to the relationship between Israel and American Jews and the reason why teaching Israel is central to making Jews. Once a clear statement exists, it then becomes the responsibility of the educators to “convince North American Jews that a relationship to and optimally a love for Israel, *eretz, medinah* and *am* is integral to Jewish identity.”³⁰

“Judaism is the soul of which Israel is the body.”³¹ Judaism and Israel are not mutually exclusive. Without Israel, the Jewish people are like wandering souls without a body to inhabit. The body, a holy and sanctified vessel, is home to the *neshama*, the soul. Without a body the soul is lost. A body without a soul is empty, void of meaning and purpose. The body and soul work in tandem, inextricably linked to one another. Every morning, we pray *birchot hashachar* (the morning blessings), in which we thank God for our body and its routine functions. We praise God for creating within us pure souls. The morning blessings thanking God for body and soul remind us each morning of the miracle of life, the gift of this holy vessel containing pure and precious souls. Judaism is the soul: a religion, nation, people, tradition and culture which represents the *iykar*, the essence, of what it means to be a Jew. Israel is the body: the holy land, a vessel which

²⁹ Jan Katzew, "Is There Part of Me in the East?" *CCAR Journal* Spring (2007): 60

³⁰ Jan Katzew, "Is There Part of Me in the East?" *CCAR Journal* Spring (2007): 54.

³¹ Michael A. Meyer and W. Gunther Plaut, *The Reform Judaism Reader: North American Documents*. (New York: UAHC, 2001), 201.

contains Jewish history, *Am Yisrael*, political and military strength, religion and state, the promised land. One does not work without the other. One cannot exist without the other.

Israel is the radiating epicenter of Jewish culture, spirituality, tradition and religion. Without Israel, the Jewish people would once again be considered a wandering people, lost souls in search of a holy vessel, souls in search of meaning and purpose. Why teach Israel in Reform Congregational Schools? “Judaism is the soul of which Israel is the body.”³²

³² Michael A. Meyer and W. Gunther Plaut, *The Reform Judaism Reader: North American Documents*. (New York: UAHC, 2001), 201.

Chapter Two

Introduction

In the previous chapter we asked the question, “Why teach Israel in Reform congregational schools?”, explored the relationship between the Reform Movement and Zionism and examined data from surveys in the field measuring the effectiveness of Israel education. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss how Israel is taught in Reform congregational schools through an analysis of textbooks published from 1967 to present, used in a Reform educational setting. Textbooks act as a cultural artifact that reflect the values of a community. Analyzing a set of textbooks on Israel used in Reform congregational schools over a period of forty years will provide the set of core values that the authors and publishers intend for the students to learn and feel about Israel. Before focusing specifically on the textbooks themselves, a discussion of the historical development of the textbook in America and more specifically in the Reform Movement is necessary to understand its place in the corpus of education.

Historical Overview: Textbooks in America

In 1690 colonial America, *The New England Primer*, a textbook with religious and moral lessons, was the primary text studied by students. Other textbooks were imported from England. This text was used for more than a century until the Revolutionary War halted the import of textbooks from England. As a result, schools chose the American Spelling Book, 1783, written by Noah Webster. In 1841 Webster published the text *Early American History* which is considered the first American history textbook.³³ The twentieth century proved to be the turning point in textbook production.

³³ Robin Lindley, "Textbooks and History Standards: An Historical Overview", *History News Network*, August 30, 2010, accessed December 1, 2010, <http://hnn.us/articles/130766.html>.

Sales of textbooks soared from \$7.4 million in 1897 to \$17.3 million in 1913, to \$131 million in 1947, and to \$509 million in 1967³⁴. The debate over the effectiveness of textbooks continues as stereotypes, bias, and subjectivity are constantly being called in to question by a host of groups who feel mainstream textbooks neglect minorities and ethnic groups. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Anti-Defamation League and the Council on Interracial Books are among a number of groups that study textbooks for racial, ethnic, religious and gender bias and make suggestions helping to create better textbooks that reflect the realities of the world around us.

Textbooks in the Reform Movement

One man in particular, Emanuel Gamoran, championed the development of textbooks in the Reform Movement. Arriving in the United States in 1907 at twelve years old, Gamoran continued his traditional Jewish studies at the Rabbi Jacob Joseph Talmudic Academy. In 1917 he received his degree from City College in New York and later received his Masters and Ph.D in the Philosophy of Education from Columbia University. He then attended the Teachers Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He was highly regarded for his ideas and vision for improving Jewish education. Gamoran was appointed as editor of *The Jewish Child*, an educational magazine, which led him to compile an index of stories to be told to children in schools on a variety of subjects.

In 1923 Gamoran was appointed Director of the Commission of Jewish Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC). This appointment by the Union is noteworthy, as Gamoran's Hassidic background and strong Zionist leanings

³⁴ Gerard Giordano, *Twentieth-century Textbook Wars: a History of Advocacy and Opposition*. (New York: P. Lang, 2003).

were contrary to the Union's position at the time. However his talent and vision were recognized by the leaders of the UAHC who believed strongly in his ability to transform Reform Jewish education. His influence was greatly felt in the realm of teacher training, curriculum development and the content of textbooks. Gamoran's textbook production for the Reform Movement is considered revolutionary. Graded textbooks, written for children with a focus on aesthetic appeal, set a new standard for Jewish school texts. He believed strongly in the use of Hebrew language in the textbooks and a strong focus on teaching Hebrew in Reform Jewish schools³⁵. Solomon B. Freehof on Emanuel Gamoran:

"Reform was an innovating movement...It created textbooks on themes never before used in Jewish education, books directly on religious ethics, anthologies of Jewish literature, Jewish post-Biblical history, interfaith books, handwork for young children, etc. Finally this urge towards originality achieved the complete and richly varied, graded textbooks, and a whole school library, besides textbooks, and teacher's guides. the chief human agent in developing the graded textbooks and teacher's guides was Emanuel Gamoran. He came to the Reform movement at exactly the right time. When he came a generation ago to be the educational director, the movement had about three hundred congregations. He worked in the period when it grew to about seven hundred congregations. The sense of an expanding movement, embracing Jews of all types of origins, was exactly suited to his energy and broad Jewishness. The knowledge of modern educational theory which he brought from Columbia, his work with the Jewish educational system in the city of New York, his strong interest in the Zionist movement and modern Hebrew, all fitted well into the developing mood of Reform Judaism in America."³⁶

Gamoran believed:

"...the core of our Jewish education in the future should consist of: (a) The great intrinsic values--especially those which have been referred to as 'value concepts' Israel, Torah, God, Justice and the like, (b) The Hebrew language, (c) Jewish customs and traditions which are of cultural esthetic value, (d) Jewish literature, music and art, (e) Jewish history interpreted as creative living on the part of the Jewish people, (f) Our relation to Israel, (g) Our relation to America and to mankind."³⁷

³⁵ Albert P Schoolman, "Emanuel Gamoran-His Life and Work," *Journal of Jewish Education* 34 (1964): 69-79.

³⁶ Solomon B Freehof, "The Contribution of Reform Judaism to Jewish Education," *Journal of Jewish Education* 34 (1964): 84-86.

³⁷ Gamoran, Emanuel. "Jewish Education in a Changing Jewish Community." *Journal of Jewish Education* 34 (1964): 87-94.

Gamoran's leadership and vision helped to propel Reform Jewish education into the competitive education market by investing in teacher training, distribution of materials suited to enhance the quality of Jewish education and production of textbooks that reflected the core values of the Reform Movement and the teaching of Judaism as a whole. Before exploring the textbooks that have been published and utilized in the Reform Movement for the past forty years, we must first ask the question, "Why use textbooks in Reform congregational schools?"

Judaism: A Text-Based Religion

Judaism is considered a text-based religion. The Torah, Mishnah, Talmud, ancient sacred texts and modern Jewish writings serve as the backbone of our tradition. The Jewish library is a vast resource of established customs, history, laws and spiritual guidance passed down from one generation to the next. Modern Jewish education has translated the ancient form of text based education into the form of textbooks that relate to this generation of student. Textbooks have transformed the traditional notion of Jewish study into a modern tool used to impart Jewish knowledge from teacher to student.

According to Behrman House Inc. textbooks serve three functions:

1. Textbooks offer a coherent and well-outlined approach to a subject area.
2. Textbooks give students the language with which to explore a subject.
3. Textbooks serve as reference works.³⁸

In the majority of Reform congregational schools the Director of Education determines the textbooks used in the religious school classrooms. To understand the set of core values, messages and beliefs about Israel that educators wish to impart to the

³⁸ "How to Use Textbooks Creatively," (New York: Behrman House Inc. 2008).

students, it is appropriate to analyze the textbooks used. The textbooks studied are those published by four major publishing companies and suppliers to Reform congregational schools in the United States: Behrman House, KTAV, UAHC and Kar-Ben.

Methodology

For the purpose of studying how Israel is taught and the effectiveness of Israel education it is necessary to secure a representative sample of textbooks used to teach Israel over a period of forty years. Upon researching the printed and online catalogues of these publishers, the most widely used textbooks for Israel studies in a congregational setting were identified. The textbooks were gathered from the library of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the library of Wise Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio. Each textbook was analyzed according to a set of criteria:

1. What are the goals of the book?
2. How is Hebrew used in the book or is it transliterated?
3. How does the text depict Jewish observance?
4. How are Israelis portrayed? Do they show any ultra-orthodox, non-Ashkenazi, Arabs, Christians, Non-Jews? If so, how are these individual groups portrayed?
5. Is Israel portrayed as vulnerable, small, David surrounded by Goliath?
6. Does anything show Israel as heroic?
7. Are there stereotypes of Israel used such as: *kova timbal*, orange groves, young maidens dancing the *horah*, strong men, agriculture/*kibbutz* life, ELAL?
8. How is the army depicted?
9. How are males and females/ boys and girls portrayed?
10. How are cities described and what does the text say about Jerusalem post-1967?

Each textbook was thoroughly examined to ascertain how the text correlated to the above-mentioned criteria and what the gathered information suggests about Israel education in Reform congregational schools. The textbooks are listed in chronological order of publication. The section following the textbook analysis will discuss any changes to Israel education over the course of forty years. The goal is to analyze whether or not Israel textbooks have addressed current events, concerns, changes and modern advancements. This information which will help serve our discussion on how Israel is taught in Reform congregational schools today as well as how Israel has been taught over the course of forty years. Through the analysis of each textbook and the examination of the individual findings, the expectation is that the subject of Israel in the curriculum in Reform congregational schools has not changed much over the course of forty years and the textbooks used reflect that stagnation.

Textbook Analysis

Essrig, Harry and Abraham Segal. *Israel Today*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1968.

1. To explain Israel to young people of the American Jewish community. To bring out the “adventure” of Israel. To connect the past and present of Israel’s life. Culture and religion are important factors of Israeli society.
2. The title is written in Hebrew with vowels. Hebrew is used throughout the book. Vocabulary words in Hebrew and transliteration are at the end of each chapter.
3. There is an entire chapter dedicated to Israelis of various backgrounds celebrating holidays: Passover *seder*, building *sukkahs*, *Tu B’Shevat*, dancing with the *Torah* for *Simchat Torah*, *Lag Ba’Omer*.
4. Shows a variety of people who represent Israel. Israelis in the fields, working the land. People are shown wearing short shorts with a *kova timbal* on their heads. Israeli “cowboys” on horses herding cattle. Israelis at a Tel Aviv cafe; the non-immigrant Israelis are all Ashkenazi Jews. Bedouins in traditional garb riding on camels. Faces of Israel’s immigrants. Terms used: Oriental Jews, Ethiopian, Jews from Arab lands and India. The Arabs are depicted in very traditional garb, *kafiyas*, riding on horses, herding donkeys and camels. The text also depicts Arab refugee camps. The overall picture of Israelis is strong, healthy, athletic, camping and as “*sabras*”. The text alludes to the ultra-Orthodox but they are not pictured. Young Orthodox boys studying in yeshivas. The secular Israeli in a cafe. The text refers to religion as a challenge and a problem in Israeli society.
5. The underlying message of the book is that Israel is a challenge, and its physical location makes it hard to defend. Experiences many challenges due to her size, neighbors, immigrant absorption, religious problems, the tension between religion and state. The book shows graphs of Israel’s size and is compared to New Jersey. Many figures throughout the text display facts and figures according to population and its relation to neighbors. Stresses her small size but incredible strength.
6. “Israel to the rescue” sends teams all over the world during natural disasters, humanitarian aid missions and operations to rescue Jews around the world and bring them to Israel.
7. Horah, good looking soldiers, most of the pictures are of *kibbutz* life; working the fields, children in the *kibbutz* Kindergarten with young woman as the teacher. The men tilling the land shown with working tools and always well groomed. “Fighters, protector.” Desert and archaeological sites.

8. “Defenders of the State” men and women with guns. Basic training. The IDF as a source of pride. An organized force, parades to honor them. Shows the transition from pre-state civilian troops to strong defense force of the nation.

9. Orthodox boys studying. Girls and boys in school on the kibbutz, playing. Army shows both men and women in basic training but only men as fighters. Separation of boys and girls in Muslim schools. Shows both men and women in government. Women as teachers on the kibbutz, men in the cow pastures.

10. Jerusalem is a survivor having been conquered many times throughout history and it's a city that is bordered by enemies. Tel Aviv and Haifa are not as religious nor as serious. Haifa and Tel Aviv are major cities that are always alive. Jerusalem is a religious, quiet city. Jerusalem is the religious center for three religions and rests on Shabbat. Tel Aviv has cafes, night clubs, universities and big business. Haifa is Israel's hardest working city, with labor unions, Technion and high tech industry.

Grand, Samuel. *The Children of Israel*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1972.

1. To experience Israel through the lives of children who live in Israel. To enhance American Jewish children's understanding of how their Israeli brothers and sisters live. To gain a deeper appreciation of the importance of the land of Israel, its people and the impact Israel has on their lives as Jews.
2. Hebrew, transliteration and definitions in bold. Hebrew is used as a means to connect Israel to the bible, prayer and Judaism. Hebrew is referred to as a unifier since Israel is made up of people from all over the world.
3. Mostly Orthodox Jews are pictured celebrating holidays such as *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur* and *Shabbat*. Secular Israelis are depicted celebrating *Sukkot*, *Tu B'Shevat*, *Purim*, *Hanukkah*, *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* and *Shavuot*. *Kibbutz* celebrations, Israeli scouts camping, Israeli dance and parades.
4. Primarily Ashkenazi. European descent with few pictures of Sephardic Israelis. Orthodox Jews are shown studying in Yeshiva. North African Jews in the desert playing soccer. Arab children shown in tent city, poor. Both secular and Orthodox Jews depicted.
5. Shows a sample of pictures of Israeli children in underground bomb shelters, bunk beds, and carrying their clothes and food to the shelter. No explanation is offered to explain the picture.
6. Israel and Israelis as living, alive, strong, secure. Very cooperative.
7. Primarily idealized images. *Kibbutz* life, *horah*, *kova timbal*, Israeli scouts, and Israeli dance.
8. N/A
9. Equal representation.
10. The majority of the book shows Israelis who live on a *Kibbutz* and farmland. Jerusalem, a special city. Mostly religious pictures. A city that is a mix of old and new.

Kubie, Nora Benjamin, and Marc R. Silverman. *The Jews of Israel: History and Sources*. New York: Behrman House, 1975.

1. A sociological and historical examination of Israel and the people who live there. The goal of the text is to show the historical link between the Jewish people and Israel and the achievements of the Jewish people to rebuild the Land of Israel.
2. No Hebrew used in the book.
3. Israeli holidays and Jewish holidays. Discuss the religious holidays, *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot*, *Simchat Torah*, *Pesach* and *Shabbat*. The Israeli holidays: *Yom Ha'Atzmaut*, *Yom Ha'Zikaron*, *Yom Ha'Shoah*. The text distinguishes between the religious and the non-observant and how they celebrate the above-mentioned holidays. The religious attend services the non-observant stay home or go to the beach.
4. Israelis as pioneers, secular, many different faces, cultures and backgrounds. Most images are of the army throughout the years in defense of the country and even civilians helping to defend the country. Arabs and Bedouin shown in their villages. Discussion of Palestinians and pictures of refugee camps. Christians in the old city and an aerial view of the men's section of *Kotel*.
5. Majority of the text relates to Israel being surrounded by enemies, great focus on Israel's wars and battle for survival. Discussion of terrorism and the threat of destruction. The phrase "David surrounded by Goliath" appears in text. Israel as vulnerable.
6. Many idealized images of victorious soldiers and tiny Israel as a hero and victor of all wars. Strong and innovative. The images throughout the text show Israel as a powerful force regardless of her size and experience.
7. Images of pioneers rebuilding the land, *kibbutz* life, *kova timbal*, camping and youth group, orange groves, tilling the land and defending the land.
8. Young and strong. Heroic and proud. "Purpose is to defend not to conquer." "Heroism and self-defense." Army as a group of young people who fight for their survival and defend their home.
9. Men in the army fight. Woman teacher on the *kibbutz*. Men and women both are pioneers and till the land. Children play and learn together.
10. The regions of the country are divided and their specialities discussed. The north is agriculture, the bread basket of Israel. Tel Aviv is a beach metropolis and business center. Haifa is the center for high-tech and factories. Jerusalem is spiritual hub of three major religions. A united city post-67 shown by the idealized image of the soldiers at the *Kotel*.

Elon, Amos. *Understanding Israel*. New York: Behrman House, 1976.

1. To understand Israel's complexities, uniqueness, and all of the elements that make her Israel. A sociological approach to the study of Israel. To demonstrate that Israel regardless of her size, location and youth has achieved so much, is a source of pride for Jews everywhere and the set of Jewish values the country lives by.
2. Transliteration and definitions. Hebrew is described as more than a language, it is reflected in life, history and society.
3. N/A
4. Many Faces of Israel. Christians, Arabs, Pioneers. More depictions of the pre-state period. Orthodox Jews. Ashkenazi.
5. Israel as a fighter amongst hostile neighbors. Israel has fought for its creation and survival. Humble beginnings.
6. Israel as victor of war and builders of a nation from a dream.
7. Not an overwhelming amount. Children dancing the *horah*. Volunteers picking oranges on a farm. *Kibbutz* life.
8. Majority of the representation of Israel in the text is from army depictions. From humble beginnings to powerhouse of the region. The soldiers are young, good looking and strong. Shows war images, battles, tanks, ships, planes and soldiers placing an Israeli flag on Mt. *Hermon*.
9. Equal representation. Children referred to as the future.
10. Jerusalem has been the capital of Israel since 1948. A holy city for three religions. A city under siege. A united city post-67.

Essrig, Harry and Abraham Segal. *Israel Today: new edition*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1977.

1. Most widely used text book in Reform and Conservative Religious Schools. The goal is to provide an insider's view of Israel's current position in politics, challenges for the future. To offer a fresh look at the Israel of today. Expand upon the challenges of Israel in terms of religion, politics, occupied territories and refugees. Show modern and ancient and the contrasts that are present in everyday Israel.
2. Hebrew words are written in Hebrew letters, transliteration (Sephardi pronunciation) and defined parenthetically.
3. There is an entire chapter dedicated to Israelis of various backgrounds celebrating holidays: Passover *seder*, building *sukkot*, *Tu B'shevat*, Dancing with the *Torah* for *Simchat Torah*, *Lag Ba'Omer*.
4. "From camels to motorbikes" more cosmopolitan view of Israeli cities, rather than just a focus on agriculture. Showing Israel as more built up, not as a third world country. More pictures of religious men and women.
5. Israel needs help. Israel needs financial help due to the heavy burdens of war and its position in the Middle East and the lack of natural resources. Israel is subject to her small size and the amount of time spent on defending herself leaves Israel with a great burden. Israel is the David surrounded by Goliath.
6. Heroic in the sense that Israel lives by a set of core Jewish values saving life, rescuing captives, educating its youth and building the land from swamp to metropolis.
7. Many. Young Israelis dancing the *horah*, strong idealized images of young pioneers building the land, *kibbutz* life, children's houses, orange groves, *ELAL* and Israeli helicopters. Secular Israelis at the beach, religious Israelis in the *yeshiva*. Strong connection with nature, cattle and *kova timbal*.
8. "Defenders of the State" men and women with guns. Training, source of pride. An organized force, parades to honor them. Shows the transition from pre-state civilian troops to strong defense force of the nation. Israel as victor of the wars and a source of pride for all Israel. Technologically advanced and modernized weaponry. The Israeli Defense Force as a force. Strong, vibrant young men and women.
9. Girls learning to type and learning specific trades. Men in combat. Both men and women pioneers in the fields and in government.

10. Greater Israel is more technological, more built up. Shift from the *kibbutznick* model to business and trades. Shows culture (opera, dance, ballet, art).

Fine, Helen. *Behold the Land*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1978.

1. Importance of teaching Israel to reach children who did not experience the miracle of Israel's rebirth and development. Deliberate focus on the present and the things that make Israel what it is. Overall goal is to develop personal and lasting relationship with their fellow Jews of Israel.
2. Hebrew is used throughout the book as chapter headings as well as the title of the book.
3. *Purim* in Tel Aviv: costumes, parades, carnivals and a big party. Jerusalem: read the *megillah* at the *kotel*, *purim spiels* and send gifts to children. *Pesach*: at a *kibbutz*, everyone attends the *seder*. *Shavuot* at a *moshav*: farm settlements celebrate by bringing the first fruits, tractor rides, parade.
4. All illustrations. Not much "color" diversity. Arabs depicted only with *kafiyas*. Religious Jews: men with black hats and *tallitot*. Arabs in their own villages with donkeys.
5. Israel struggles to exist in peace. In discussion of the war terms used: miracle, proud, victory, "winning of Jerusalem", "our Holocausts are over."
6. Throughout the text book, each chapter has a segment called "Heroes of Zion" with bibliographic information of different men and women whom the author considers to be Heroes. Military and government positions mostly.
7. *Kibbutz* life, *kova timbal*, farming, Israeli orange, *ELAL* plane.
8. "The Largest School in Israel", strong, paratroopers, defenders, miracles of war.
9. Women working in specific trades, sewing, cooking, teaching, tour guides. Men working in the fishing boats, in the fields and studying. Boys and Girls play and learn together, and work on the *kibbutz*.
10. Jerusalem is the holy city and core for three religions. Tel Aviv and Haifa is where business is and universities. The north is where people live on a *kibbutz* and work together.

Hill, Jeri, Laszlo Matulay, and Ezekiel Schloss. *Let's Explore Israel*. New York: KTAV, 1978.

1. An activity book that engages students in a variety of puzzles, stories, crossword puzzles and fill-in-the-blank assignments that allow the students to travel around Israel and experience Israel. Fly over to Israel on *ELAL*.
2. One activity that uses Hebrew letters as a code that the students decode into English. Discusses *ulpan* in the chapter of new *olim*.
3. The only holiday discussed is *Shabbat*. Students celebrate *Shabbat* in the “all-Jewish city”, of Tel Aviv at the great synagogue for *Shabbat* services.
4. In a cultural setting shows men with *kippot* but not “religious”. The entire book is illustrated. Israeli kids and the tourists wear the *kova timbal*. The people are all shown to be of European descent. Orthodox men with black hats, young men with *peiya*s, and books and women with covered heads and modest clothing. Only depicts the men’s side of the *kotel*. Arab market: men with *kafiyas* bargaining. Arab woman balancing bread on her head. Bedouins offering camel rides, nomads in tent cities with goats. Israeli cowboy image. Not many Israelis depicted mostly American tourists are shown.
5. As a historic gem, a democratic state, a multitude of nationalities. The map at the beginning of the book shows Israel as a small nation surrounded by neighboring countries but with a large *ELAL* plane flying over the enlarged “ISRAEL” letters covering the whole of the country.
6. Heroic in the sense that Israel’s accomplishments are incredible especially because of how young and small Israel is. Israeli artists, hospitals, college campuses, zoos and history.
7. *Kova timbal* is everywhere even on the tourists. Strong fishermen, camping. Transition from *kibbutz* and agricultural life to the adoption of fish farming.
8. Not depicted but brief mention of War of Independence and Six Day War.
9. Tourists, men study and are shopkeepers. Men in synagogue. Girls in class with woman teacher.
10. Summary at the end of each chapter going in to brief overview of each city visited. Blanket statements of Jerusalem as a united city post-Six Day War. Haifa as the industrial city with the Technion. Tel Aviv, heart of Jewish culture and the “all-Jewish city.”

Frankel, Max and Judy Hoffman. *I Live in Israel: A Text and Activity Book*. New York: Behrman House, 1979.

1. To engage students in a variety of activities and learning exercises that will promote their Israel education. Learn about Israel through her symbols, people, children, location, achievements, language, and newspaper articles.
2. All of the cities in Israel are written in Hebrew letters. Transliteration and definitions used throughout the text in bold.
3. The holidays are discussed in the chapter on *Mea Shearim*, the ultra-Orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem. *Shabbat* at home and in the synagogue, *Sukkot* with an orthodox family. *Tu B'Shevat* celebrated by a group of school children planting trees.
4. Ashkenazi and Non-Ashkenazi represented. Orthodox, secular Jews. Jews and Arabs in the market together. Arabs in *kafiyas*, Christians in the old city.
5. A dream realized. Modest and humble.
6. N/A
7. *Kova timbal*, *kibbutz* life, nature images, working the fields, cattle, orange groves, multiple pictures of *ELAL*, camels, fishermen.
8. In 1967, Israeli soldiers fought and died for Jerusalem so that Jews and Israelis can pray at the *kotel*.
9. Equal representation.
10. Our home. Jerusalem as a holy city, holy to three religions. "In Jerusalem Arabs and Jews work together everyday". Biblical ties, mix of old and new. Religious. Tel Aviv, Beersheva, Haifa and Eilat show pictures of secular Israelis at the beach, business and fishing.

Burstein, Chaya. *What's An Israel?*. Maryland: KAR-BEN, 1983.

1. To figure out through activities, puzzles, coloring and story what an Israel is. A travel book through Israel.
2. Hebrew words written in English and defined.
3. Only religious observance is Shabbat and is depicted in the section on Safed where men are praying in a sanctuary and a page of ritual objects to color. Everyone lights candles, eats *challah*.
4. Religious people at the *kotel*, Arabs with sheep and donkey, secular Jews, Ashkenazi predominant, archaeologists A page of Faces of *olim*: India, Morocco, Poland, Yemen, Ethiopia, United States, Argentina
5. No real mention of Israel's neighbors.
6. Heroic in the sense that Israel has so much to offer, rescues Jews around the world and brings them home.
7. *Kova timbal*, dancing the *horah* (shows how to do the *mayim* step), nature, and *kibbutz* life.
8. Soldier standing at attention on Massada, port of Haifa mention of the navy. Pilot in a zooming plane flying over Haifa.
9. Equal representation.
10. Place where Jews live, *kibbutzim* and cities, cows and cats, and camels. People love ice cream, basketball, soccer, swimming, hiking. Busy cities with cars, donkeys, religious, secular. Shows a variety of activities to engage in throughout the country. Snorkel in Eilat, pray in Safed, go to modern stores in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem holy sites, farms in the north. You can drive through the whole country.

Schachter, Sara, and Sol Scharfstein. *All About Israel*. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1984.

1. To demonstrate the pride Israelis have as Israelis and Jews. American Jews and Israelis share a reverence for the Jewish symbols, holidays, peoplehood and the national symbols of Israel. The book aims to show how Jews, regardless of where they live, are one nation- a shared history. The text will explore every facet of Israel as a country, a people, nation, language, diversity and the cities that make up the State.
2. Every chapter ends with a vocabulary and concepts section with Hebrew words (no transliteration) and their definition that reflect the essential words of the chapter.
3. An entire chapter is devoted to the holidays Israel celebrates. Phrases such as “National holidays”, “Very special times”, “Jews celebrate in their homeland”, “Their holidays”, “Celebrate return of our people to our beloved Israel”. The text shows Orthodox Jews celebrating the major festivals. *Sukkot* at a school with a *sukkah* and the pilgrimage at the *kotel*. *Simchat Torah* men wearing *tallitot*. *Chanukah* focus on the Israeli *dreidel*. *Tu B'Shevat*: farming, planting trees. *Pesach*: more secular pictures, *seder*, soldiers eating *matzah*. More diversity of people celebrating *Pesach*. *Yom Ha'Shoah*, *Yom HaZikaron*, and *Yom Ha'atzmaut* only secular Jews in the pictures. *Tish B'Av* Orthodox reading psalms. A chapter on *kibbutz* Festivals; grape harvest, sheep-shearing.
4. Variety of peoples are portrayed. Shows diverse people as citizens. Depicts, Arabs in *kafiyas*, Orthodox, different immigrant groups from their beginning days as new *olim* to contributing citizens. Secular Israelis and Religious. Shows farmers, business people and factory workers. Discussion of Sephardim, Oriental, Ethiopian, and Russian Jews. Chapter on all of the major religious groups, the Druze and Bedouin in Israel; detail of their customs and their place in Israel.
5. There is mention of Israel's size throughout the book. A “tiny country” surrounded by neighbors who seek its destruction. There are chapters in the text book devoted to discussing every war and terror threat in detail but ends with “Israel lives”.
6. Heroic in the sense of great accomplishments in the realms of culture, technology, army, farming and overcoming great adversity.
7. Not many. In the culture section there are pictures of Israeli dance teams dancing the *horah*.
8. The chapter on the army discusses the basic details of the mandatory army service for men and women 18 years of age. The section discusses the different divisions and their emblems. Pictures show women division marching, men with guns, reservists with their families. Soldiers addressed as Pioneers and Fighters. The IDF is seen as a large school

that provides schooling and education for its soldiers and immigrants, to gain a deeper understanding for the country and its history.

9. Equal representation.

10. Each city is discussed in detail, its location, famous spots and what it offers for the country.

Bamberger, David. *A Young Person's History of Israel*. New York: Behrman House, 1985.

1. Discuss what makes Israel so special. How did Israel come into being and how does it sustain itself? History of ancient and modern Israel. To demonstrate the biblical tie of the Jews to Israel.
2. All transliteration with definitions.
3. N/A
4. Arabs in *kafiyas*. Ultra-Orthodox are shown in the Old City of Jerusalem. Orthodox Christians in the Old City of Jerusalem. Russian immigrants, Ethiopian immigrants, Arab women baking *pita* outdoors. Israelis mostly depicted as Ashkenazim except the depictions of Jews from Arab lands but they are shown as immigrants.
5. Israel is surrounded by nations who attack them. Discuss the history of Muslim rule, diaspora, small in size, vulnerable nation that must defend itself.
6. Everyday people defend the state from the Irgun to now. Pictures of the Exodus ship and others bringing Holocaust survivors to Israel.
7. Black and white photos showing modern strong men farming, doing business.
8. *Hagganah*, *Irgun* and the development of the IDF. "Fighting for Survival". The IDF builds Israel and engaged in efforts to bring about peace.
9. Equal representation.
10. Miracle. Old city and new. Modern, advanced technology, tourism friendly, culture, home, education, university and strong sense of achievement.

Cohen, Barbara, and Michael J. Deraney. *The Secret Grove*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1985.

1. The goals are to teach students that stereotypes and hatred are learned behaviors. This story teaches the students a brief history between Israelis and Palestinians through a story of two children who meet in an orange grove and get to know one another.
2. Transliteration with definitions.
3. N/A
4. Shows Israelis with cannons fighting in War of Independence. Israeli children playing soccer, Israeli children in school. Arab child with *kafiyas*. Jewish child with *kippah*.
5. Depicts Israel as having to fight war and terror.
6. N/A
7. Live on a *kibbutz* in the North and play in the large orange grove.
8. Army fighting in the north of Israel during War of Independence.
9. Males fight in combat. Girls and boys in school. Boys play soccer.
10. The focus is on the north of Israel, a *kibbutz* in Kfar Saba.

Rossel, Seymour. *Israel: Covenant People, Covenant Land*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1985.

1. To understand the relationship between the Jews and the Land of Israel through the notion of covenant. To discuss Israel as the place where past and present merge and how just being Jewish binds one to the land of Israel. The book focuses on the land of Israel, its beginnings and its accomplishments. The ultimate goal is to show how attachment and belief shape us and make into the kinds of Jews that we are.
2. Hebrew used throughout the book, Hebrew, transliteration and definitions.
3. Not holidays but religion in Israel is given its own section. Discuss the *Dati* movement, ultra-Orthodox, Reform and Conservative movements in Israel.
4. Show immigrants from Morocco, Yemen and Oriental Jews. Palestinians in refugee camps. Ben Gurion, Moshe Dayan, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin. Israelis are a diverse people. Ashkenazi and non-Ashkenazi shown. Secular and Orthodox.
5. A country that has had to fight for its survival. Maps that show neighboring countries and land size before and after wars. The fight for independence, *Yishuv* period and then statehood. Shows how even before declaration of statehood the Jewish people have had to fight for their right to have a country and live in Israel.
6. Yes, idealized soldier images. Pre-statehood and how the *Haganah* and *Irgun* fought for survival with little means. Out of the Holocaust Israel is born.
7. *Kova timbal*, young girls dancing the *horah*, pioneers tilling the land (men and women), Israelis as young, strong and vibrant. Orange groves, *kibbutz* life.
8. Young and vibrant powerhouse that began as a civilian group pre-statehood scraping any material together to a legitimate defense force that fights for the survival of the country.
9. Equal representation.
10. Discuss the beginnings of Israel to its birth as a strong nation. Modern Israel is discussed in terms of the wars and how they affected the development of the country.

Pasachoff, Naomi. *Basic Judaism for Young People: Israel*. New Jersey: Behrman House, 1986.

1. Connection between land, language and people. Link the past (bible) to modernity. Bring history alive. Regarding aliyah the text states “families not too different from yours make aliyah every year, as do many young people on their own.”
2. Hebrew used throughout. Transliteration only used in chapter titles. Chart of *Alef Bet*. Hebrew is the language of Jews who live in Israel.
3. Only white bearded religious men are engaged in any Jewish rituals. No visual images of people celebrating holidays. The holidays mentioned are Passover, *Shavuot*, *Sukkot* and *Shabbat* accompanied by the biblical verses that command the Jews to celebrate the above-mentioned holidays. Wedding custom pictures of Yemenite Jews
4. Show specific group of immigrants but the people of Israel are depicted as Ashkenazim. Show a picture of two Ethiopian little girls to discuss Operation Moses and *aliyah* in general. Arabs are specifically depicted in *kafiyas*, at sheep markets. One picture of two Orthodox children in *Mea Shearim*. Young Israelis: camp, youth groups, members of organized groups.
5. Israel as the eternal homeland for the Jews, Jews long to be there. God created the whole world so the Jews’ claim to Israel is staked in the beginning of the world. Focus on Ben Gurion and Golda in terms of building *Medinat Yisrael* not focus on neighbors or the war.
6. Operation Magic Carpet, Operation Ezra and Nehemiah, Operation Moses, and the smuggling of Jews out of Nazi Germany.
7. Idealized images throughout the text. *Aliyah* is for “other nations” in need of rescue. Operation Magic Carpet, Operation Ezra and Nehemiah, Operation Moses, and the smuggling of Jews out of Nazi Germany.
8. Not depicted but brief mention of wars Israel has fought.
9. Equal representation.
10. Jerusalem discussed in terms of liturgical yearning for rebuilding of *Zion* and a return to *Zion*. Jerusalem is the only city pictured. Center for three major religions; shows pictures of all religious groups in Jerusalem.

Nover, Elizabeth, and Richard Rosenblum. *My Land of Israel*. New Jersey: Behrman House, 1987.

1. The best way to learn about a place is to visit and immerse yourself in the land. The goal is to take the student on a journey through Israel with activities such as coloring, writing about the experience, puzzles and word games.
2. Short Hebrew Dictionary of common terms with Hebrew, transliteration and definitions.
3. Celebration of *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, the birthday celebration of Israel. Parades and banners of pride.
4. Ultra-Orthodox Jews, Arabs with *kafiyas*, modern Israelis depicted with *kova timbals* and shorts. Christians depicted with crosses. All illustrations-no photos.
5. The distinction is Israel is an old country and a new State. Celebrate Israel's Birthday. "It is important for everyone to be able to visit their special places" with picture of Arab, Jew and Christian.
6. Israel is described as a dream fulfilled by everyday people. Individuals built the State with their own hands. Herzl raised money to build country, Golda Meir made people see that Israel should be an independent Jewish State. David Ben Gurion helped build the first *kibbutz*, Henrietta Szold helped start Hadassah Hospital.
7. *Kova timbal*, nature focused, orange groves, *kibbutzim*, planting trees, and shopping in the outdoor markets.
8. N/A
9. Equal representation.
10. Deserts, Farmland, Fishing. Summary of major cities of Israel.

Gold-Vukson, Marji, and Micheal Gold-Vukson. *Imagine...Exploring Israel*. Rockville: Kar-Ben Copies, 1993.

1. Stimulate thoughts and ideas about Israel within the students. An opportunity for the students to write, draw and imagine what Israel is to them.
2. Transliteration and definitions.
3. *Yom Ha'atzmaut* the festival to celebrate with a parade and a float that represents the pride of Israelis in their country.
4. Only depictions of people are on the cover with Orthodox men and women praying at the *kotel*, men and women picking oranges, men and women on the beaches and in a boat in Eilat, a *kibbutz* and mosques.
5. Israel is both modern and old. No real portrayals only outlines for the students to draw their own portrayal of Israel.
6. N/A
7. Camels, goats, nature images, desert and farmland.
8. N/A
9. Equal representation.
10. Map of Israel has symbols for every major city reflecting something special about that particular place. Cultural center with museums and zoos. Archaeological sites and findings.

DuBois, Jill. *Israel*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1993.

1. Familiarize students with the attitudes, beliefs, and lifestyles of the people who live in “one of the most controversial countries in the world.”

2. N/A

3. Orthodox and Secular Israelis celebrating holidays. The major holidays are described in detail. *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* have a religious explanation. *Sukkot* and *Simchat Torah* are described as holidays that all Israelis celebrate. Israeli holidays are Memorial Day and Independence Day, day of memory and then major celebrations around the country.

4. Jewish Ethnic groups, Arabs, and Christians all depicted. The text describes the differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, North African Jews, Soviet Jews and Ethiopian Jews. Israelis are from a variety of backgrounds. Israeli Arabs, Druze and Bedouins. A realistic approach to the kinds of people that are called Israelis.

5. Israel is a small and young country. Israel is a controversial country in world affairs. Vulnerable during the early years of statehood.

6. A dream that became reality.

7. N/A

8. Plays a major role in the lives of Israeli youth. A source of pride. A school that educates its soldiers on the place they are fighting for. Shows a picture of soldiers sitting together, taking a break, not shown in combat.

9. Equal representation.

10. Three largest cities, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa. Jerusalem is the capital and a mix of the old and new. Jerusalem was unified after 1967. Center for all three religions, mostly the Old City. Jerusalem is where the government of Israel resides. Tel Aviv, young city, major city, industrial area, it's a modern metropolis. Haifa, industrial area, and port city. Brief section on the occupied territories.

Burstein, Chaya M. *Our Land of Israel*. New York: United American Hebrew Congregations, 1995.

1. American Jews have a connection to the land and people of Israel. The goal is to show the connection American Jews have to Israel. Meet a variety of Israelis, people who call Israel home. It is easier and more profound to care about people when you get to know them; the premise for the textbook. The goal is for the reader to connect to Israel through personal relationships.
2. Each chapter has a section “Say it in Hebrew” with words and phrases in Hebrew with transliteration and definitions.
3. A whole chapter devoted to teaching the holidays. “Israel celebrates”, holidays are for everyone in Israel. *Tu B’shevat*, plant trees. *Purim*: dress up and parades. *Pesach*: rain, spring cleaning, vacation time and seders. Strong connection to nature with the holidays. *Yom Ha’Shoah*: air raid for two-minutes, *Yom HaZikron*, memory. *Yom Ha’atzmaut*: party for independence, climb on army tanks. *Lag Ba’Omer*: Orthodox men to Bar-Yochai’s grave and cut the hair of the little boys and bonfires. *Shavuot* celebrated on the kibbutzim. Full Cycle includes *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot* and *Simchat Torah*.
4. Depicts immigrants from the beginning of statehood, living in tents and Ethiopians. Israel as “vegetable soup” the cultures don’t mix well each preserves their own traditions and culture. Show people at the beach, skiing, hiking, fishing. Many different faces make up Israel. Show kids at school, playground, and soccer. There is a whole chapter on religious Jews in Israel. Shows secular, liberal, Orthodox praying in their own way. Chapter on Hebrew Union College Jerusalem campus and Reform Rabbis in Israel. A chapter on Arabs in Israel, religion, and their villages. Discusses Christians and Druse.
5. Well-rounded portrayal of Israel. Discusses wars in the beginning of the book to frame the history and rebirth of Israel. Arabs attacked Israel, had to fight neighbors.
6. Israel as the strength in the region. Stresses Israel’s victory in the wars.
7. *Kibbutz*, *horah*, *kova timbal*, *ELAL*
8. Whole chapter on the army. Ingrained in the culture of being an Israeli. Detailed history of the *Haganah*, the *Irgun* and the IDF. Words used such as “*shalom*”, “*milchama*” in the dictionary section. Discusses the wars and peace treaties. Many problems with terror. Idealized images such as handshakes, soldiers at the *kotel* post-1967.

9. Egalitarian. Women and men in prayer, secular and progressive. Children in school, playground. Show pictures of Israelis doing the same things that Americans do. Show Jewish and Arab children hugging.

10. Teaches about all of the cities in Israel. Very different around the country, climate, location and attractions. Israel as a cultural center. Jerusalem has its own chapter. Jerusalem as the center for 3 religions, old and new.

Rivlin, Lilly, and Gila Gevirtz. *Welcome to Israel*. New Jersey: Behrman House, 2000.

1. Travel to Israel with an Israeli girl, meet her friends and learn about Israel from an Israeli perspective. Two main goals: learn why Israel has played an important part in the story of the Jewish people. Understand how modern Israel came to be. “Welcome to our Homeland”.
2. End of every chapter has “My Hebrew Dictionary” with Hebrew letters and definitions. Hebrew words written in the chapter are in transliteration with the definitions.
3. The holidays are described as national holidays. There are no depictions of the holidays. There is a discussion of *Shabbat* and the role of *halakhah* in State affairs. Discussion of the Orthodox view of religion in the state and the desire to increase the stringency of *Shabbat* in the country.
4. Israel is diverse. Every nationality is depicted. Sabra, immigrant, *olim*, Orthodox, Arabs in *kafiyas*, Ethiopians, Jews from Arab lands. Israelis are shown in many ways. Non-Ashkenazi Jews are represented.
5. Maps throughout the text show Israel as a tiny nation surrounded by enemy neighbors. Israel “plagued” by many wars. The text asks the question to the students to discuss why Israel is described as David surrounded by Goliath.
6. Israel as a living miracle. Heroic in the sense of the revival of Hebrew, *ELAL* which transported millions of immigrants to Israel. Many accomplishments and a home to so many peoples. Holds true to Jewish values, and rescue operations.
7. No idealized images, no *kova timbal*. Shows tension between secular and religious and a mix of old and new.
8. The IDF is the glue that holds the country together. Women and men all beautiful, gentle, soft. Follow an ethical code, honor Jewish values most importantly the value of the sanctity of human life. Pictures of Yitzhak Rabin, and Yasser Arafat.
9. Equal representation.
10. Jerusalem is beautiful, glorious, old, new, culture and history. Divided city but post-67 united. The Old City is discussed more and dominates the pictures. New city has museums, zoos, parks and memorials. Tel Aviv the city that never sleeps, culture, business, sports, beaches, university, mall, stock exchange. Haifa, the Technion, high tech industry, engineers, and medical achievements.

Rouss, Sylvia A., and Katherine Kahn. *Sammy Spider's First Trip to Israel: A Book About the Five Senses*. Minnesota: Kar-Ben, 2002.

1. To engage young children in travel to Israel using all of their senses. Sammy takes the reader on a journey throughout the whole of the country, with vibrant colors and fun activities.
2. Transliteration with definitions. A few common words.
3. *Shabbat* is the only holiday mentioned and it is depicted in a synagogue, similar to how *Shabbat* is celebrated in America.
4. All illustration but skin color varieties show Israel as a diverse place with a number of nationalities and cultures. Arabs in the old city full black covering for women, Arabs with goats. Secular Israelis at the beach and in the bustling streets of Tel Aviv. *Kibbutzniks*.
5. Vibrant, exciting country with vast landscapes.
6. N/A
7. *Kova timbal*, dancing at the Western Wall, *kibbutz* life, nature and *ELAL*.
8. N/A
9. Equal except for Arab women who are completely covered with animals at their side.
10. Shows highlights of north of Israel, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Gallagher, Michael. *Countries in the News: Israel*. Minnesota: Smart Apple Media, 2008.

1. To bring to light the latest issues, historical background, up-to-date facts on Israel.
2. N/A
3. No discussion on actual holiday observance rather a focus on religious expression and Jewish rituals. *Shabbat* as a day of rest, *kashrut*, prayer and life-cycle events central to Jewish religious expression in Israel.
4. Show a variety of Israelis from a number of backgrounds. Chapter devoted to the differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, Jews from North Africa, Ethiopia, and Russia. The pictures of Jewish Israelis are definitely ethnic. Palestinians are depicted in refugee settlements with cattle and women in traditional garb. Secular and religious communities are differentiated. Chapter on the settlers in the West bank.
5. Israel as a controversial country with many factors that infringe upon its safety. On the first page of the textbook the map shown is zoomed out thus making Israel almost impossible to locate. Constant threat of attack.
6. Heroic in the sense that Israel has survived all the conflict, terror and wars that have followed her history. Out of the Holocaust Israel was born.
7. Ethiopians in traditional garb, *kibbutz* life and working the fields with bare hands.
8. Young, strong and vibrant group. “Backbone of the nation”, “Citizens at Arms”. No pictures of combat, only training and group exercises among men and women.
9. Equal representation.
10. “Israelis adore Jerusalem”. Jerusalem is discussed in religious terms as a holy site and one that has biblical ties. Other regions of Israel are discussed in terms of products of war.

Singer, David. *Yisrael Sheli My Israel: People and Places*. Los Angeles: Torah Aura, 2009.

1. The textbook connects significant people in Jewish history from biblical days to the present with landmarks, cities and sights in Israel. The goal is to make the country come alive by bridging the familiar with the unfamiliar. The textbook seamlessly blends the ancient with the modern and the past with the contemporary in all aspects that make up the State of Israel.

2. Transliteration with definition. One section, *ulpan* time, has the Hebrew words, the transliteration and definition of some important Hebrew words to learn.

3. No specific reference to religion per se however the text intertwines Jewish tradition, text, customs, and biblical passages to show the religious and cultural aspects of the Jewish State.

4. This text uses photography and shows a more contemporary view of today's Israeli.

There is a section devoted to each ethnic group in traditional garb as well as those who are more assimilated. There are not many pictures of people, there is more of an emphasis on places and people with a place in the historical narrative of the state.

5. The map at the beginning of the textbook challenges the reader to try and find Israel on the map to demonstrate its small size relative to Israel's neighbors. A part of the text is devoted to describing Israel and her neighbors in addition to dividing the region into the good and bad neighbors.

6. The text focuses on the biblical connection between the land and the Jewish people. The text also highlights significant people whose vision and leadership helped them overcome great odds to establishing the State.

7. The images in the textbook fall into two categories: past and contemporary. The photographs reflect the Israel of the past and the Israel of the present. It is a balanced mix.

8. Picture of a soldier praying at the kotel and a chapter on Moshe Dayan discusses in brief detail the events of the 1967 war and the capture of the Old City. Images of soldiers during that operation.

9. Equal representation.

10. The textbook takes the reader on a journey through the land of Israel and the major cities by connecting each place with a significant person in Israel's history. Each city is shown in a modern photograph and an illustrated link to biblical days or periods throughout Jewish history.

Lehman-Wilzig, Tami, and Ksenia Topaz. *Zvuvi's Israel*. Minnesota: Kar-Ben, 2009.

1. A trip through Israel following *Zvuvi* the fly. The book is beautifully illustrated and has short details describing the city or site *Zvuvi* takes the reader. To show Israel as a beautiful country with a variety of people, experiences and landscapes.

2. Transliteration with definitions and a short glossary of common phrases.

3. N/A

4. Depicts a variety of people who are called Israelis. All illustrations. Arabs are depicted with traditional garb and *kafiyas*; shown as vendors and peddlers. Bedouin in the desert with camels and carrying bread on head.

5. Israel as vibrant, lush and bustling cities.

6. N/A

7. No idealized images. Shows Israel in a more modern setting. Shows the *kibbutz* of today with technology and modern advancements. Modern landscapes, cities, buildings.

8. Brief. A picture of the air force museum and a host of airplanes in the *Negev*.

9. Equal representation.

10. Advanced, modern cities each with specialized qualities. Deserts, farmland, cities, technology and beaches.

Tzadka, Yigal. *ZimZoom: Bringing You the Latest Buzz...from Israel and Around the World*. Jerusalem: Good Times Publishing House, 2010.

1. To provide the latest information from Israel and around the world in relation to Jewish topics, Israel and Jewish people. Geared for a variety of age groups with articles, activities, cultural news and holiday information. The text puts a modern spin on age old issues, discussions, topics and events.
2. Modern Hebrew written in Hebrew, definitions, word banks and transliteration. The text is also linked to an online database where students can hear the Hebrew passages read aloud.
3. This particular segment was published for the High Holy Days so there is a significant amount of information about the holidays and how they are celebrated in a modern context in addition to offering ways to be green and celebrate the holidays. The text also shows contemporary ways Israel celebrates the holidays with a mix of both traditional and non-traditional Jews.
4. Depicts a variety of people. Israelis, Americans, Jews and non-Jews and how these groups relate to one another not only in Israel but around the world.
5. Israel as a cool, vibrant, modern and happening place. A section on news in review, current events occurring in Israel and making world headlines.
6. N/A
7. No idealized images. Shows Israel as a modern State and a strong connection to world community.
8. N/A
9. Equal representation.
10. Advanced, modern cities, pop culture, contemporary with an ancient texture.

Findings

The textbook analysis provides a sampling from textbooks used in the Reform Movement for forty years regarding Israel education. Following is a discussion of common themes discovered after careful review of each textbook.

The major themes of the textbooks fall into three categories: connection (relationship), shared history, and pride (achievements). The texts educate American Jewish students about their connection to Israel by demonstrating the impact Israel has on the lives of Israeli Jews and the Diaspora, providing opportunities to gain an understanding of who are Israelis and how they are similar to American Jews in certain ways. Each textbook devotes a certain percentage of the text to show the historical, i.e. biblical, link between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. This demonstrates that each Jew, regardless of where he or she lives has within them a deep-seated, religious attachment to the land of Israel and its people. Finally, the text aims to develop within the students a sense of pride for the land of Israel in terms of her accomplishments and achievement. One author in particular notes that the purpose of the textbooks is to “teach Israel to those children who didn't experience the miracle of Israel’s birth.” All of the textbooks aim to develop a personal relationship with Jews of Israel. Each textbook makes a valiant attempt to portray Israel as a source of pride, wonder and strength to the students. The magazine, *ZimZoom*, published by Good Times Publication House in Jerusalem, is an excellent resource for Reform congregational schools. The magazine brings to life contemporary issues, events and information about Israel and the Jewish people and makes it relevant to American readers. They profile celebrities who are either Jewish or have an interest in Judaism, discuss Israeli news that is making headlines

around the world and utilizes modern Hebrew to discuss interesting facts about Israel with a word bank provided. In addition, each magazine is linked to the website so students can hear the Hebrew passages read aloud. The material is relevant, interesting and the layout is accessible.

The majority of the textbooks use Hebrew in some way. Most use transliteration with definitions and the others have sections either at the end of each chapter or a separate dictionary section with Hebrew words and their definitions. Hebrew is a way to build connection between American Jewish students and Israelis. By teaching Hebrew in congregational schools the students have the opportunity to learn the language of their Israeli brothers and sisters, as a common thread between both groups.

In terms of how Israel is portrayed the next group of data exposes some of the faults in Israel education. Over a forty year range the following findings demonstrate that Israel is taught as a static subject. Israel is shown as a segmented society. Overall Israelis are depicted as Ashkenazi and non-Ashkenazi Jews are described as immigrant groups who were rescued and brought to Israel post-1948. Non-Jews such as Arabs and Christians are depicted in traditional garb. Arabs are always shown in *kafiyas*, in their own villages surrounded by animals or in the market place. Christians are depicted in full length robes with long cross necklaces around their necks. Each textbook makes an attempt to show Israel as a diverse country with many ethnic groups and a large immigrant population. Only in the texts published in the twenty-first century do the faces of Israel begin to resemble the true dynamic of Israel's population.

The David and Goliath image is prevalent throughout the majority of textbooks, regardless of the publication year. Israel is presented as a challenge, hard to defend, surrounded by enemies, as vulnerable, humble and modest. Israel is presented as David, not only in terms of wars or enemies, but also in terms of how the country itself is presented. Israel is presented as small in stature, and modest in lifestyle. The stereotypes are present throughout each book: *kibbutz* life, orange groves, *kova timbal*, Israelis working the fields, religious Jews live in Jerusalem and secular Israelis live in Tel Aviv. The images are consistent and have not transformed over the years, rather they have remained as the dominant images of life in Israel.

In terms of Israel's heroism it is through images of young, dynamic and strong soldiers that Israel, as great heroic figure, is transmitted. The stories of Israel's wars are told in romantic language, images of glory, and few warts are presented. The trope is that Israel's wars were unprovoked and each time Israel was not prepared, but miraculously Israel came out the victor. The defenders of the state are young boys and girls who ensure the survival of the country.

What is missing? Israel business endeavors, its membership in the global community, the advancements in medicine and science, Israel's position in the stock market, its civilized nation, high-tech industry, a leader in start-up companies and two-way relationship with the United States are all aspects of Israel that are absent from these textbooks. The analysis shows that the publishers are strong in relaying a positive, heroic and humble image of the Jewish State. Although those aspects are critical in building a relationship, they are not sturdy enough to maintain the relationship on their own. The

student in today's religious school classroom has incredible access to obtain information through a variety of different media, making the task of teaching Israel even more complex. Responding to the present challenge of Israel, more specifically modern Israel, in a productive manner is vital to ensure a lasting, formidable and substantive relationship between Israel and religious school students. The next chapter will propose an outline for a new textbook created for this generation of students to be utilized in a Reform congregational school. Modern Israel, its challenges and successes, a relationship with Israel, teaching why Israel matters and history as a means to create future will all be addressed in the outline of the proposed textbook.

Chapter Three

Textbook Proposal

Based on the analysis of textbooks used in Reform congregational schools over a period of forty years, this chapter will propose an outline for a new textbook on Israel that responds to the needs of today's North American student. The main objectives of the textbook are to present Israel as relevant to the lives of American Reform Jews, to present Israel as she stands today, to build a level of trust and honesty in the presentation of Israel, and to stimulate interest in Israel's culture, politics, technology, society and people. The aspect that is central to creating a text which can accomplish building a relationship with Israel, mythology and reality, is that the text must respond to the fact that today's students have incredible access to information and can investigate virtually on their own. This textbook is envisioned to serve as a guide to begin and eventually enhance the conversation about Israel and to serve as a resource that helps teach Israel as a value, not as a subject, in the religious school curriculum.

The analysis and research conducted, for this thesis shows the overwhelming majority of educators agree that the greatest challenge to their Israel education program is modern Israel.³⁹ This textbook's focus will be on modern Israel from a different perspective than war, terror and occupation. It will show Israel as a democratic state in the Middle East, the only Jewish State, a member and contributor to the global community, an immigrant- absorbing nation, a land of struggle, a place of religious debate, and a nation that in its infancy has produced great innovation. It will also

³⁹ Lisa D Grant, "Israel Education in Reform Congregational Schools," *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* Summer (2007): 3-24.

emphasize Israel's need to balance being a living embodiment of Jewish values and a political entity entrusted with the duty of protecting her citizens.

The following pages will include the outline of the proposed chapters with commentary (in bold). The commentary will address the order of the chapters, the chapter titles, an overview of topics contained in the chapter, and the goals and objectives of each chapter. In addition, a c.d. with pictures, helpful websites to be used in class, and music to reflect modern Israel will accompany this outline to provide additional resources for teachers who would potentially use the textbook in their classrooms. The goal of the c.d. is to blend history and modernity, to shed light upon Israel's pop culture scene and to provide a tool for educators to make Israel relevant and interesting to their students. The table of contents is as follows:

Table Of Contents

Chapter One: Zionism and the Birth of Modern Israel

Chapter Two: Declaration of Independence

Chapter Three: Politics, Policy and the Pursuit of Peace

Chapter Four: Israel's Resources, Natural and Man-Made

Chapter Five: *Am Yisrael*: Israelis

Chapter Six: Cities and Sites

Chapter Seven: The JEWISH State

Chapter Eight: The "News" of the Day

Chapter Nine: Culture, Trends, and Start-up

Chapter Ten: Israel and "US"

Commentary and Discussion

The textbook aims to relate in every chapter the connection between American Jews and Israel. This connection is important to highlight so students can understand that the relationship is one rooted in history as well as a continuing effort. The chapters are divided by time period, not by military events and conflicts. This is a deliberate shift in focus to emphasize that Israel is not defined by its military engagements, but rather by its development and challenges as a democratic state. The chapters are in chronological order, divided into time periods and the specific events that define each period. The chapter titles summarize the topics to be addressed specifically. The order of the text allows the reader the opportunity to develop a comprehensive view of Israel and the shifts that occur throughout its history. Each chapter is like a transparent cube representing each time period, allowing the reader to examine that period of time from every angle. The cubes (i.e. chapters), although independent from one another, fit together to create a solid structure (i.e. knowledge base). It is important for the students to experience Israel as a multi-dimensional unit made up of significant individual parts. This textbook aims to respond to the overly simplistic mixed messages confronting today's students about the modern State of Israel. As was mentioned previously, today's students have access to information through a variety of sources. The religious school classroom is not their main source of information on the State of Israel, yet the message they are receiving there is in stark contrast to Israel as portrayed by the media. Following is a detailed discussion of each chapter, its contents, goals and objectives. The terms that require commentary and discussion are in bold.

Chapter One: Zionism and the Birth of Modern Israel

Birth of Modern Israel

Students in today's religious school classroom were born to a world that always knew the presence of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel, thus their knowledge of its beginnings is limited. The message transmitted is primarily through educators who also have no recollection of a world without Israel. Therefore, coverage of the events leading up to independence are relatively superficial and devoid of emotional connection. This is similar to how American students learn about the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the events leading up to the founding of the United States of America. This text will attempt to combat the sterile approach to the events leading up to the founding of the State by utilizing primary sources of the *chalutzim*, pioneers, such as the poet Rachel and David Ben-Gurion, who left their families to build the State of Israel with their own hands. It is from their words, letters, and ideas that the students will learn of the significant events that led up to the development of a Jewish State in Israel.

Goals:

1. The State was built by the hands of young teenage pioneers whose determination fueled their Zionist dream.
2. The birth of the State of Israel was a monumental shift in perspective for world Jewry specifically and the world community in general.
3. The term Zionist has certain implications, positive and negative, when used in a variety of contexts throughout history and today.
4. Israel and Zionism are two words that are interconnected in many ways but have stark differences.

Objectives:

1. Students should be able to describe the *Yishuv*, pre-Statehood, period of Israel.
2. Students will be able to verbalize who the *chalutzim* were, what their intentions were, and how they contributed to the Israel of today using primary sources.
3. Students will be able to define words such as: Zionist, *Yishuv*, *Chalutzim*, *Kinneret* and discuss how they relate to the birth and sustainability of the Jewish State.

Chapter Two: Declaration of Independence

Independence

The word independence has many different meanings and interpretations when used in the context of the State of Israel: independence from British Mandate; an independent entity surrounded by hostile neighbors; the independent democratic state in the Middle East; to be independent and independent from allies throughout different time periods. In a classroom environment, it is important to explore this word and its different meanings based on the context in which it is being used. Independence can mean strength and stability as well as vulnerability and being alone. The period of the 1940s through the 1950s reveals a great deal about the mindset and culture of Israelis. Born out of the Holocaust, Israel absorbed a great number of Holocaust survivors who, arriving directly from out of the camps, were handed weapons to defend the newly recognized independent State of Israel. This determination to shed the vulnerable, survivor label was widespread throughout the country. In fact, the Holocaust was not mentioned or taught in Israeli schools until the 1960s. This attitude, compared to the sabra fruit, harsh on the outside and sweet on the inside, is dominant in Israeli culture and can be attributed to a

survival mechanism felt throughout the country. The country experienced a transition from Holocaust to *chutzpah*. It is important for students to have a sense of perspective and the pulse of the society based on the situation of the country during that particular time frame.

Goals:

1. The Declaration of Independence was a transformative document, putting to an end the 2,000 year old wandering story of the Jew.
2. The Declaration of Independence forever changed the notion of diaspora and offered a challenge to Jews around the world.
3. Being an independent entity, Israel find itself in positions of great strength and positions of tremendous vulnerability.
4. The signing of Declaration of Independence forever changed the position of Jews living in Israel and abroad.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to judge the value of the document using external documents from other nations of a similar standard.
2. Students will be able to recognize unstated assumptions within the Declaration of Independence and reveal what those assumptions say about the culture of the place.
3. Students will be able to analyze the details of the War of Independence and the psychological ramifications for Jews and Arabs as a means of creating a back story for the tension between Israel and her Arab neighbors.

4. Students will be able to generate examples of how independence was understood as displayed in music and pop culture during the 1940s-1950s to create a picture of Israeli society in its infancy.

Chapter Three: Politics, Policy and the Pursuit of Peace

Politics

The political scene of the 1960s through the 1980s saw great change and challenge. At this time Israel had relations with America and the world community as it found allies among members of the global community. The dominant political party of Israel was the *Mapai*⁴⁰ (would later merge with Labor) party which had dominated the political arena since the declaration of statehood. However, in 1977 all of this changed with the election of Menachem Begin, leader of the *Herut*⁴¹ party (would later merge with *Likud*). In 1969 Israel elected a woman to serve as Prime Minister, Golda Meir. Devoting class time to shedding light on the political structure of the country is crucial to understanding how the country functions. With changes in the populace's sentiment comes great insight into what the citizens want and need. Discussed in this chapter will be the wars fought during this time, within the frame of the political strategy, and the political implications for Israel being a member of the world community.

⁴⁰ The *Mapai* party was created in 1930, eighteen years before the existence of the State of Israel. David Ben Gurion, in the early 1930s, led the party and was dominant through the initial stages of Israel's government. In 1965 the party merged with other coalitions to form the Labor Party.

⁴¹ In 1948 Menachem Begin formed the *Herut* Party in Israel. In 1973 following the Yom Kippur War Menachem Begin forged partnerships with other coalitions to form the *Likud* Party, which would create a political upheaval in Israel when the reigning Labor Party would lose to the newly formed *Likud* Party led by Menachem Begin.

Pursuit of Peace

The handshake seen round the world occurred in 1979 between Menachem Begin, Anwar Sadat and Jimmy Carter, which would translate to a peace treaty signed between Israel and its neighbor Egypt. The pursuit of peace was promoted by both leaders, but what is most significant is the aftermath of the signing of the document. The consequences of the peace treaty impacted both leaders individually. The Arab nations and the Palestinian Liberation Organization condemned the treaty, Egypt was suspended from the Arab League for ten years and in 1981 Anwar Sadat was assassinated. Menachem Begin's political career suffered after this signing and he resigned in 1983. Although both men achieved a more stable relationship and peace for the region, they both suffered personally as a result of the circumstances that followed them. The pursuit of peace comes with great challenge for the individuals involved, but also for the region. However, the result of the traumatic events following the signing of the peace treaty is a reality where two nations have lived side by side in quiet and peace for 31 years. In this chapter students will be exposed to the realities of making peace and the implications of that peace for all involved.

Goals:

1. The political structure of Israel is a metaphor for Israeli society: complex, diverse and an underlying sense of fragility.
2. It is a reality that peace does not always mean "peace" rather a piece of mind or state of being.
3. The presence of the little blue *tzedakah* box in synagogues and religious school classrooms around North America served as a physical symbol for American Jews'

collective response to Israel's call for support and the beginning of a strong relationship between both entities.

Objectives:

1. The students will be able to conceptualize Israel's political system and develop opinions about its structure as a representative body of the State of Israel.
2. Students will be able to synthesize the information gained in this chapter about peace and politics and outline a peace plan following the events of the Six-Day War .

Chapter Four: Israel's Resources, Natural and Man-Made

Resources

Resources are defined as a country's collective means of supporting itself or becoming wealthier, as represented by its reserves of minerals, land, and other assets. Discussing Israel's geography, location in the Middle East, demography, and topography framed as resources provides an opportunity to gain further insight into the mentality of the people and society who inhabit this land. A discussion of geography void of the above-mentioned factors leaves little room for an in-depth view of how Israel survives based on its limited natural resources. Israel's natural resources have allowed the country to blossom, but the man-made resources developed by Israelis have made Israel flourish. For example, the Dead Sea provides natural minerals that have created an incredible industry of Dead Sea products and medical treatments. Using this example, the text will explore how this one resource has trickled down and throughout the country: the *Ahava* Dead Sea Products are manufactured on *Kibbutz Mitzpe Shalem* which has shed its communal, shared living to become the source of a multi-million dollar business, with its product sold around the world. The *kibbutz* joins with *Ein Gedi* and Gaon Holdings, the

largest holding company in Israel, to create a product that is sold in department stores around the world and online. Recognizing Israel's severe water crisis, an example of a man-made resource, the national water carrier that transports water from the North to the South of the country. This resource not only increased the quality of life, but as a result of the Israeli-Jordan Peace Treaty, Israel agreed to transfer 50 million cubic meters of water annually to Jordan. The textbook will explore examples such as these and more, utilizing the resources as a springboard for a conversation about how these resources contribute to the society as a whole, rather than just mentioning all of the resources and their effect.

Goals:

1. Innovation is an Israeli survival mechanism as demonstrated in the abundant man-made resources responding to the limited natural resources of the country.
2. The resources of Israel are not separate entities rather they contribute to the whole of society and reflect the mindset of the nation.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to relate to Israel's use of its landscape as a metaphor for Israel's resilience and innovative spirit.
2. Students will be able to identify Israel's resources and illustrate the impact they have on the country.
3. Students will bridge the connection between American Jews and Israel by exploring the creation of the Jewish National Fund, the purchasing of tree and water certificates as a symbol of the relationship between American Jews and Israel on a deeper level; understanding support in broader terms beyond just dollars and cents.

Chapter Five: *Am Yisrael*: Israelis

Am

What is the definition of a people, or a nation? What are the components of *Am*? In the case of *Am Yisrael*, two basic components exist: religious and political. In a religious context, *Am Yisrael* means something completely different than *Am Yisrael* in a political context. However, in Israel these lines tend to blur and it is in that blurring that the real debate exists. Through that prism, Israel becomes even more complex. What is Israel's responsibility to those seeking refuge within her borders, religiously, and as a result what are the political and societal implications? How are non-Jews treated in a Jewish State and what are the consequences of being a minority within Israel? The word *Am* provokes great debate and challenge and the word itself sparks an emotional response at every angle.

Goals:

1. Israel still serves as a promised land, a land with religious and spiritual allure. The students will meet the many different people and groups who call Israel home.
2. Israel is an immigrant-absorbing nation who takes great risk, politically and militarily, to bring oppressed Jews around the world home to Israel.
3. Being members of *Am Yisrael* *Am* has advantages, implications and challenges.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to discuss the operations Israel has conducted to bring Jews from around the world home to Israel.
2. Students will be able to categorize each group in Israel based on their rights, responsibilities, and their role in government.

3. Students will look classify certain groups such as Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Ethiopian, American, French, Arabs, Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, Sudanese, and Thai people living in Israel and how they live and contribute to the make-up of Israeli society.

Chapter Six: Cities and Sites

Cities

An exploration of the cities of Israel is instrumental to understanding the cultural make-up of Israeli society. What is important about a specific city, what does it offer, and who lives there are all important questions to explore in relation to the major cities of Israel. More than just touring each city the text will offer insight into how each city functions as a microcosm of the State. The issues, challenges, neighborhoods and interplay of past and present will be discussed in this chapter of the textbook.

Goals:

1. Cities in Israel are like no other in the world as they are classified by very specific distinctions: Jewish, Arab, Palestinian, territories, and settlements.
2. A relationship with Israel is intensified when exposed to the land, sights, cities and cultural makeup.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to discuss the significance of each city and how each city according to its classification functions as a piece of the whole.
2. Students will be able to identify the distinctive features of the major cities and their contributions to Israel society.

Chapter Seven: The JEWISH State

Jewish

As a Jewish State how does Israel define who is a Jew and what are the religious implications of such a definition? What are the political ramifications of such a decision? The debate over who is a Jew is one not relegated to halls of study around the world as a philosophical and theological discussion. In Israel it is one that has severe political consequences for the state, the individuals who live there and those who seek to make *aliyah*. What does it mean to be a Jewish State? What does that label mean? Should Jewish law dictate the law of the State? Within a Jewish State what are the groups that are represented and what are the groups that are under-represented?

Goals:

1. One land, multiple labels: Israel, The Jewish State, *Yisrael*, *Zion*, and Palestine. Each label carries its own description, history and meaning.
2. Religious life in Israel is complex and diverse. Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Secular Jews live in Israel but the role they play in the religious life of Israel are stark and controversial.
3. The Jewish State: whose state? Orthodox control of the Rabbinate in Israel has incredible implications for Jews who do not religiously identify as such and thus leaves the question of who is a Jew to the strictest of interpretation.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to compare and contrast the various movements of Judaism as they are practiced in the United States and Israel and discuss the issues produced.
2. Students will be able to debate the challenges and advantages of the label “The Jewish State.”

3. Students will be able to justify the values by which a Jewish State abides and the challenges presented to abide by those values.

Chapter Eight: The “News” of the Day

News

What news makes it in to the classroom today? The time period from the 1990s to the present will be discussed in terms of the news clips, media coverage and spot light placed on Israel and the Middle East region. The “hot button” issues which define the period will be outlined in this section, allowing the students to learn about each issue from many angles. The late 1990s-2000s brought much attention to Israel. Words such as terrorism, bombs, shelter, buses, target killings, *matzav*, the wall, and suicide bombings were used when speaking of Israel. This section will explore these terms and their impact on the society, Israelis, Palestinians, America, tourism, and the global community. How did Israel change as a result of the *matzav*, the situation, during this time period? How did the world’s perspective of Israel change?

Goals:

1. Israel’s political and cultural landscape was altered during 1990s-2000s as Israel faced a new enemy: suicide bombers and targeted terror.
2. The type of news dominating the media coverage during this time period exposed the bias and unbalanced view of the world media towards Israel.
3. Israel transitioned from newborn nation to world power under the scrutiny of the world community.

Objectives:

1. Students will assess the terms that dominant this period of Israel's history and extrapolate from them meaning, implication and their place in Israeli society.
2. Students will be able to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the different perspectives of the issue.
3. Students will have the opportunity to read newspaper articles and watch videos of media coverage throughout the time period and discuss the perspectives, bias and information portrayed in the media and its significance.

Chapter Nine: Culture, Trends, and Start-up

Culture

Every country, state, city, school, and organization is built upon a set of underlying cultural assumptions that make that certain place distinct. These cultural assumptions are specific to the place and the people that create that particular community. To gain insight into a place like Israel one must study these cultural aspects that relate to the everyday operations of the place and learn about the people that inhabit it. The text will focus on pop culture, music, poetry, short stories, newspaper articles, fashion, and magazines from Israel that can help the students glean information for relevant primary sources that contribute to the makeup of modern Israeli society. What do these sources suggest about Israeli culture and what are the similarities and differences between Israelis and Americans based on pop culture items that the students can relate to?

Goals:

1. Pop-culture and trends of modern Israel and America have much in common but its where they differ that exposes the underlying nature of the culture and the people who live there.
2. Israel's successes in the realms of music, technology, business, and the environment is a source of pride and excitement about the modern nature of the State.
3. The 21st century has elevated Israel's cultural scene with a host of celebrities visiting Israel and top music groups performing in Israel as part of their world tours.

Objectives:

1. The students will analyze Israeli music, books and short stories to develop a picture of Israeli society through the words of today's Israeli youth.
2. The students will seek to identify the underlying cultural assumptions that are intertwined in the fabric of Israeli society and discuss their significance to Israel as a whole.

Chapter Ten: Israel and "US"

US

Israel and U.S. (the United States) and us (American Jewish community): what overlaps in the relationship between both groups and what are the inherent differences? As American Jews do we relate to Israel as "us" and "them" or as one people and what are the factors that contribute to this understanding? It is important for the students to gain from this chapter the relationship between the United States and Israel and, more specifically, the relationship between American Jews and Israel (see chapter one of this thesis). In addition to providing an historical perspective, the text will also shed light on a

number of programs that have developed to bridge the gap between American Jews and Israel such as NFTY, *schlichim*, High School in Israel, year-in-Israel programming etc.

Goals:

1. NFTY, birthright and congregational trips to Israel are a powerful tool in creating strong relationships between American Jews and Israel.
2. Programming that bridges the gap between American Jews and Israel is crucial to maintaining a viable relationship, and one that will thrive.

Objectives:

1. To build a relationship with Israel based on familiarity with the historical context and supporting involvement in the programming available to the students.
2. Students will be able to discuss ways they can build a relationship with Israel through programming and education.

Chapter Four

An Educator's *Kallah*: Rationale

In the previous chapters of this thesis two foundational questions of Israel education were explored: “Why teach Israel in Reform congregational schools?” and “How is Israel taught in Reform congregational schools?” The research and material presented two areas in need of improvement: the textbooks we use and teacher training. The previous chapter is a proposal for a new textbook to be utilized in Reform congregational schools written for this generation of students. The textbook aims to meet the students where they are and strives to make Israel relevant to their everyday lives. The goal of the textbook is to serve as a guide by which teacher and student can create a substantive relationship with the State of Israel and is to be used as a starting point for further engagement with the land, culture, history, and people of the Jewish State.

This chapter will address the second area in need of improvement, teacher training. The following pages include an educator's *kallah* (workshop) for those who teach Israel or who are interested in making a permanent place for Israel in their classroom and/or religious school. The workshop addresses the concerns of teachers, educators and clergy that were evident as a result of my research (surveys, articles and journals). The overall concern was lack of confidence when it comes to teaching Israel, questions such as: What is our stance? What is our position as a school? Why is Israel relevant to our lives as American Jews and American Reform Jews? Secondly, Israel is taught as a subject in the overall curriculum. Therefore, very little time is given to the subject and only certain elements are relayed to the students. Thirdly, teachers expressed

that teaching modern Israel was a major challenge and thus it remained unexplored in the classroom. Israel's history is a vital piece of Israel education, not the entirety. Finally, teachers expressed the desire to engage with Israel on a personal level to enhance their own attachment and knowledge. This workshop took these concerns into consideration and built sessions to address them specifically. It is important to listen to the men and women who are in the classroom each and every week and develop an opportunity for them to come together and work to build their confidence as Israel educators.

The workshop is designed as a three-day intensive course during which participants will be immersed in activities, small group work, individual reflection and will be challenged to confront their own relationship with Israel and the impact they have as Israel educators. The goal is to have the educators not only explore other people's texts, ideas and curriculum, but have the opportunity to analyze what they are using in their own religious schools and enhance it or revamp it by working with other educators in the workshop. The sessions relate specifically to the goals and objectives of the entire workshop. Participants are asked to keep a journal so by the end of the workshop they can see their progress: where they started, where they currently stand and where they are going in terms of Israel education. The workshop is designed to be conducted over a weekend so participants can celebrate *Shabbat* together to experience how Israel is a fluid theme in the liturgy, to eliminate the distractions the weekday brings, and to allow for three full days of learning.

Day One, Friday, is designed to allow the participants to examine their own beliefs about and connection to the land and people of Israel. Session One asks the

participants to create a list of enduring understandings about Israel education. This enables an honest discussion about what the educators want to impart to their teachers, students and parents who engage in learning opportunities in a religious school environment. This exercise forces the participants to put into writing their own understandings of Israel education. Session Two gives them the opportunity to discuss with colleagues the place of Israel in their classroom and how Israel can be a member of the classroom environment. Session Three responds to the sense of ambivalence that Reform Jewish educators express about how to relate to Israel as Reform Jews. This session provides a historical background on the relationship between the movement and Israel. This session is important so educators feel a sense of empowerment and feel prepared to discuss why Israel matters to American Reform Jews. Session Four provides participants with textbooks to analyze how Israel has been taught over a forty-year period. Examining how Israel is taught can only help to build a comprehensive, accurate and realistic view of Israel today. The analysis is important to understanding how Israel is viewed in an educational setting and any changes or consistencies woven throughout forty years of text. The final section of the first day is comprised of *Kabbalat Shabbat* services with Israel prayers and reading inserts, *Shabbat* dinner with local *schlichim* and a panel discussion with *schlichim*. The purpose of this final section is to respond to the need of educators to engage in personal relationships with Israelis and to learn from them what modern Israel means to them and to the education process. This is an opportunity to learn about the *schlichim* program so educators can engage with the Israeli *schlichim* in their area. This is an ideal way to begin the process of building meaningful relationships.

The second day, Saturday, begins with a *Shabbat* morning service and *Shabbat* lunch. The first session of the day initiates the process of engaging with Israel head on: confronting issues, vocabulary, questions and concepts that present themselves as challenges at the outset. The goal is to ask tough questions, engage in dialogue and debate with one another the realities of modern Israel. This environment allows discussion among colleagues to help create answers and educational models to bring these tough issues and questions into the classroom. The second session of the day offers the opportunity for participants to analyze current curricula designed for tackling modern realities of Israel. The participants will be asked to evaluate what the curricula do well, how they need improvement and whether they are effective for students in our religious schools. The final session of the day is a discussion with a NATE representative about the guidelines for Israel education produced in 2007. This is an opportunity to have a conversation about how to effectively use the guidelines and NATE's intention in creating such a document. This will allow educators the opportunity to be better educated about the Association's vision of Israel education.

The third and final day of the workshop is devoted to integration of modern Israel as an overarching value and an opportunity to engage on a deeper level with Israel than Israel day with falafel. The day will offer participants the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with local clergy and educators about the role of Israel in their congregations and the vision for their schools regarding Israel education. This conversation will help stimulate the participants, as the final session is the opportunity to create a vision statement for Israel education in their own religious schools at home. This is an important

exercise that takes place after three days of study, dialogue, analysis and reflection about the land and people of Israel. This vision statement will be the product of hard work, reflection, and collaboration. Its purpose is to educate teachers, students and parents of the religious school on why Israel matters, the centrality of Israel and Israel as a value of Jewish education.

Following is a description of the general strategies for implementing an educators *kallah*, goals, objectives and essential questions for the workshop.

General Strategies for Implementing an Educators *Kallah* on Israel Education:

1. Involve and train religious school teachers and educators. (see chapter 1)
2. Provide information: materials, readings, ideas to improve Israel education, increase knowledge, create a *chavurah* of Israel educators, create a bank of resources and materials and build relationships.
3. Make the material relevant: the workshop includes sessions on the place of Israel in your classroom, the historical relationship between the Reform Movement and Israel, building personal and meaningful relationships with Israel and Israelis, and the opportunity for discussion with clergy and NATE representatives with the intention of creating ways to express Israel's relevance and importance in our religious schools.
4. Emphasize Israel as an Overarching Value: discuss ways in which Israel can be integrated into the entirety of the curriculum, rather than as a subject. Build a connection between Israel and Reform Judaism so the relationship does not feel forced or inauthentic. Israel is a core value of Jewish education.

Goals

Participants will:

1. Examine their own beliefs about and connection to the land and people of Israel
 - Articulating one's belief in and relationship to Israel is crucial to the process of teaching Israel to students. Being able to formulate a personal statement on why Israel matters will benefit the development of Israel education and strengthen the program itself.
2. Understand Israel as an overarching value of Reform Jewish Education
 - The workshop will explore the historical relationship between the Reform Movement and Israel as a means to understanding the place of Israel in the corpus of Reform Judaism. Israel as a value changes the way we approach the whole of Israel education; no longer does it remain a subject in the curriculum, rather it is woven throughout the entirety of the religious school curriculum.
3. Analyze current models of Israel education
 - Analyzing developed curricula in the field or those brought to the workshop by the participants allows a forum for discussion and brainstorming of how to improve the materials that already exist, analyze what they do best, and create new materials based on readings and sessions offered by the workshop. Most importantly, this workshop creates a forum for educators to work together, learn what materials and resources are available and create a collaborative working environment
4. Engage in a relationship with Israel based on substance, knowledge and experience
 - The foundation of any solid relationship is based on knowledge, trust, experience and honesty. Engaging in a relationship with Israel requires the same factors for it to be a

healthy and substantive one. How can we create relationships like these between our congregational school's students and Israel, between our teachers and Israel and between our congregation and Israel? Once this is established, the learning environment will flourish and grow.

5. Learn about resources and organizations focused on teaching Modern Israel

- We will explore the resources, organizations and materials available to you as educators that will help supplement the Israel program in your congregational school. The workshop is created to facilitate relationships between the participants to build a *chavurah* that can rely on one another for guidance, brainstorming, ideas and ways to implement Israel education. You are not alone.

Objectives

1. To develop a place for Israel in my classroom

- The workshop will offer the participants tools to help build a place for Israel in their classroom that is sustainable and substantive. In addition to tools, the program offers a group of individuals the opportunity to engage in dialogue about how to teach Israel, and the important areas of study, integration and innovation that come with Israel curricula. Each participant is asked to bring his or her Israel curriculum, if applicable, to the workshop to share ideas, concepts, and values about Israel education and ways to improve the current model. This is a safe environment and one that encourages growth.

2. To create a vision statement for Israel education in my congregational school

- Due to the lack of a formal unified statement on Israel education by the Union of Reform Judaism it is important to verbalize a response to the question, "Why teach Israel in Reform Congregational Schools?" A method to empower your teachers is to

provide them with a vision statement for Israel education in your congregational school.

This puts into practice the notion of Israel as a value and also allows the teachers to be informed of the school's position as well as offers them a reason for why Israel matters to the congregation and its students.

3. Update the Israel curriculum to reflect modern Israel

- As reflected in the textbooks presently used in Reform congregational schools, the depiction of Israel presented is one of the past. Current events have proven to make the Israel of today a challenging subject area, left relatively unexplored in the classroom. How do we bridge the gap between the past and present in order to create a vibrant future for Israel education? Using textbook and curriculum analysis and articles on Modern Israel, we will explore ways to update, re-imagine, re-envision, and re-vamp Israel education in congregational schools to make it relevant and accessible for our students and teachers.

Essential Questions

The participants will be given the following questions in their packet of materials to be answered on their own time, review their answers and add any additional thoughts at the conclusion of the three-day workshop.

1. Why does Israel matter to me as a Reform Jewish educator?
2. Why teach Israel in my Reform Congregational School?
3. Does teaching modern Israel threaten to destroy the “miraculous” nature and allure of the Jewish State?
4. Can we afford to be honest?

For the Facilitator

The schedule, lesson plans and instructions for each session are included in the following pages. The background readings for the workshop, divided by day and session, are included in the appendix section of this thesis and a c.d., with the sample curricula and handouts, is included. The workshop is intended to be a learning experience for everyone who is involved. It is important at the beginning of the workshop to ensure participants that this is a safe environment conducive to learning and sharing of ideas openly. Participants should not interrupt others, nor make value judgments about other positions. Lecture materials refer you to the previous chapters of this thesis for additional reading and background information; the instructions, materials and session outlines are included in the appendix section. The workshop is designed to be conducted either in a hotel with conference/meeting rooms or a synagogue with ample meeting spaces. A binder with divisions by day and session would be most helpful for the participants. Background reading is divided up for each session. All of the material is saved electronically and on c.d. and can therefore be emailed or c.d.s mailed to participants if they are interested in keeping it “green.” Participants should be encouraged to bring laptops or other devices with them to the workshop to access not only the materials but online resources as well during the sessions and small group work if necessary.

Most importantly, as the facilitator you serve as a representative of Israel education. Your goal is to inspire, guide, encourage and develop your group of educators on this journey of Israel engagement. Your role is to help create an environment that is open for dialogue, ideas, emotion, creativity and innovation. This is a learning environment that is safe and conducive to expressing one’s ideas and thoughts in a

productive manner. The workshop aims to create a *chavurah* of Israel educators whose participants can rely on one another once they return home to their congregational schools and begin to implement what they have learned and seek to improve.

B'hatzlacha! “...Now Go and Study It.”

Israel: It's Not Just Blue and White
Educators *Kallah*
Schedule

Friday

Before arrival each participant should have read the literature in Appendix S.

8:30 Workshop check-in and registration

9:00 Welcome, overview of goals, objectives and workshop materials (see appendix A)

9:30 Session One: Israel as an Enduring Understanding (see appendix B)

10:45 Break

11:00 Session Two: The Place of Israel in my Classroom (see appendix C)

12:15 Lunch

1:15 Session Three: A Historical Overview of the Reform Movement and its Relationship to Israel (see appendix D)

2:30 Break

2:45 Session Four: Re: Envision, Imagine, Do: Textbook Analysis (see appendix E)

4:00 Prepare for Shabbat

6:00 *Kabbalat Shabbat* (see appendix F)

7:00 *Shabbat Dinner* with *shlichim* from the local area

8:15 Session Five: Panel Discussion with *shlichim*: Building Personal Relationships with Israel (see appendix G)

9:30 Debriefing (see appendix H)

Saturday:

9:00 Breakfast

10:00 Shabbat Morning Service *Mishkan T'filah* (see appendix I)

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Session One: small group rotations: Israel, What Comes to Mind? (see appendix J)

3:00 Break

3:15 Session Two: Relating the “News” Reality of Israel (see appendix K)

4:30 Session Three: Conflict, Crisis and Change (see appendix L)

5:00 Break

6:00 Dinner with NATE representative

7:15 Session Four: NATE representative: The Creation and Production of the NATE Israel Guidelines (see appendix M)

8:30 Debriefing (see appendix H)

Sunday

8:00 Breakfast

9:00 Session One: The Three C's (see appendix N)

10:15 Break

10:30 Session Two: From *Yom Yisrael* to *Yisrael Yom Yom* (see appendix O)

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Session Three: The meaning of Israel for Reform Jewish Students, Congregations and Educational Venues. (see appendix P)

2:15 Session Four: Why Teach Israel? (see appendix Q)

3:30 Evaluations (see appendix R)

L'hitraot!

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This thesis asked two foundational questions: 1) Why teach Israel in Reform congregational schools? and 2) How is Israel taught in Reform congregational schools? Primary and secondary documents, surveys, textbooks and educational resources were pivotal in helping to formulate answers to those questions that would serve to shed light on Israel education in the Reform Movement. Focusing the research on the years between 1967 to the present allowed for a comprehensive view of the educational environment and the attitude towards Israel during four decades of teaching in the classrooms of Reform religious schools. I embarked on this journey to explore Israel education because of recent statistics and articles written in the past few years about how American Jews feel less connected to Israel, how young Jews do not believe Israel is relevant to their everyday lives and the rise of anti-Israel propaganda on college campuses around the country. All of these realities led me to evaluate the curricula, textbooks and research to understand where the relationship began to tatter over the years, where the gaps in the system occur and ultimately to propose ways that Reform educators can improve Israel education to lead to a strengthening of the bond between American Jews and Israel and more importantly to formulate substantive relationships between American Reform Jews and the State of Israel.

Before exploring what is being taught in the field it was important to understand the historical relationship between the Reform Movement, Zionism and the State of Israel. CCAR statements on Israel, the creation of Israel committees in the UAHC, CCAR and Congregations suggested a new approach to Israel and Israel's significance in

the lives of American Reform Jews. These developments laid the ground work for Israel support to trickle down from an institutional level and financial relationship to become a staple part of the education system in the congregational setting. When Reform rabbis began to urge their congregations to support Israel financially during times of trial, this was a natural transition to begin teaching the next generation about the Jewish State that their parents and grandparents were personally helping to sustain and support. Until about the 1980s, emotional language was a key element in building serious relationships with Israel. By the 1990s Israel was facing new enemies: suicide bombings, targeted killings and, even more dangerous, the international media. The media bias and attack hurt Israel's image and anti-Israel sentiment was a dominant trait amongst the international community. This caused great discomfort in the movement's education system, as Israel became a hot topic and too complex for religious schools that had only a limited amount of classroom time.

The Process

Over the course of my research I have found that Israel education, although substantive, authentic and abundant, has experienced relatively little change over the course of forty years. Israel is presented in today's classroom with similar themes as it was forty years ago as a newborn, modest nation with myth-like war stories. By analyzing textbooks used in Reform congregational schools over a period of forty years, the paper was able to demonstrate the type of information transmitted in the classrooms of our schools and the core works of material teachers use to present Israel. The pictures and illustrations in the overwhelming majority of the textbooks analyzed were outdated, with very little diversity and Ashkenazi Jews were dominant whereas any other ethnic

groups were considered immigrants. The *kibbutz* as a central aspect of Israeli society still held, the view of Orthodox Jews as observant, secular Israelis as celebrating holidays at the beach and Israel as a desert nation were trends prevalent in the textbooks. Overall the material reflected a vision of Israel that is no longer current or contemporary. Israel education is heavily weighted on history, geography, and people. While those subject areas are important elements to understanding Israel, little attention is paid to modern Israel or creating opportunities to develop a serious relationship with Israel that can test, challenge, debate and support. The only modern elements that are introduced into segments of the curricula are centered on conflict in the Middle East. There is relatively little mention of Israel's success in the areas of medicine, technology, the environment, science, and culture. Israel is seen as an entity of its own rather than as a member of the collaborative world community.

What I have learned throughout this process by studying surveys and research is that educators and teachers admit that they stray away from teaching modern Israel in the religious school classroom because of its complexity and the lack of classroom time to present the issues and realities that come with the teaching of modern Israel. The materials, for example produced by ARZA and the URJ, that relate to modern Israel focus on terror, war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, because of the limited time schedule, those issues are left unexplored since students do not have the background knowledge to gain insight from such a lesson. Another interesting finding, based on the study conducted by Lisa D. Grant, was some teachers feel apathetic towards the teaching of Israel due to the lack of a formalized statement on Israel education by the URJ. The

teachers themselves questions why teaching Israel matters to Reform Jewish students, especially those teachers who have not visited Israel before or who do not have a relationship with Israel. This is a crucial piece of information that has enlightened my understanding of why Israel education is not up to par with other areas of Jewish education. It makes sense that teachers perform better when they are teaching material that is relevant, significant and meaningful in their own lives and that they can connect with and speak about from personal experience.

Proposals

As a result of the research, articles, textbooks and historical documentation read during this process I proposed an outline of a textbook to be used in Reform congregational schools as well as an Educators weekend *kallah*. These two proposals respond to the information gained and analysis of materials reviewed while engaging in this project. The proposed textbook creates a new model for the teaching of Israel. The sections of the textbook are divided into specific events that contributed to the establishment and life of the Jewish State. Each chapter contains themes that shape the perspective of the country and the people who live there during a particular period of time in Israel's history. By constructing the textbook in such a way, it gives the students the opportunity to gain an insider's view into the land of Israel, the people who live there, the elements that make the state successful, issues of religion and state and the accomplishments of the state. War and conflict are elements that are present in the book but exist in context as to when they occurred, rather than as one big chapter encompassing the events as a package. The goal is for the students to understand events,

accomplishments, treaties, political environment and social structure in a meaningful way and their place in the scope of the nation's history.

The proposed educators *kallah* is a response to the survey conducted by Lisa D. Grant where educators and teachers verbalized concerns: 1) Educators felt they were unable to answer the question "Why does Israel matter?" 2) Educators felt that modern Israel was too complex and challenging to introduce into their religious school classrooms 3) Educators felt it was difficult to teach Israel since they had no real relationship with Israel. The purpose of the weekend is to create a *chavura* of educators who can reach out to one another and share materials to improve Israel education in their schools. The weekend is also an opportunity for educators to gather, study, learn, worship and analyze the current state of Israel education and to contribute to increasing the quality of Israel education. The sessions and programming offer a variety of topics, speakers, activities and experiences that respond to the issues raised by educators in the field. Most importantly, the *kallah* strives to help educators create ways for their students and teachers to build a substantive relationship with Israel and Israelis. Any sound relationship is based on trust, honesty and communication. We need to create an environment in our synagogues and in our religious school classrooms that infuses those elements regarding Israel education. The students in today's classroom have incredible access to information and therefore their knowledge of Judaism, and more specifically Israel, can come from a variety of sources. However, the information they receive at religious school should be focused on developing a relationship in which students can

challenge, support, advocate, discuss and learn about all facets of Israel that will lead to true engagement.

A topic not addressed in this thesis is the powerful impact the NFTY and Birthright trips to Israel have on the lives of the participants. Nothing is more transformative than seeing Israel, feeling Israel and being immersed into the culture of Israel first hand. Since 1999, Birthright has sent 225,000 Jewish young adults ages 18-26 on a 10-day free trip to Israel. Thousands of sixteen and seventeen year old Reform Jewish teens have traveled to Israel, joining their peers from across America in the land of Israel for a 4-6 week experience of a lifetime. The impact of these trips is remarkable as Jewish teens have the opportunity to experience Israel with members of their own cohort, create memories, friendships and an impression of Israel that cannot compare to trips of another kind.⁴²

My Ideal Vision for Israel Education

If I were to create my ideal vision for Israel education it would be one in which Israel is a vibrant thread that is woven throughout every aspect of the educational program in the congregation. Some ideas that I would implement to enhance Israel education in Reform congregational schools would be:

- A clear statement by the Reform Movement on Israel education and the philosophy of Israel education would be distributed to every religious school and educator in the Reform movement to define in specific terms the movement's position on Israel from the perspective of teaching Israel, how to teach Israel and answer why Israel matters.

⁴² More information regarding specific data, research and information about these two programs can be found on their websites: <http://www.birthrightisrael.com> and <http://www.nfty.org/>

- ARZA would send age specific email blasts on Friday mornings that teach a fun fact about Israel that families could discuss around their *Shabbat* dinner tables and teachers could incorporate into their religious school lessons.
- A trip to Israel for religious school teachers and their directors of education to create a personal connection to the land, the people and the culture. This trip would enhance the quality of education by providing a hands-on approach for teachers to gather information, resources and most importantly a visual of the place they will be teaching their students about. This trip would be subsidized by the Union for Reform Judaism and participants would have opportunities to visit Reform congregations in Israel.
- The World Union for Progressive Judaism would distribute to North American congregations beautiful posters of and educational resources about progressive synagogues and their members in Israel that could be hung in the religious school classrooms to begin the conversation about Reform Judaism in Israel.
- A curriculum developed based on the question “Why does Israel matter to me as a Reform Jew?” to be used during youth group retreats and high school level programming.
- A website developed for the purpose of providing relevant and contemporary educational materials on modern Israel geared for Reform religious schools.
- ARZA representatives should travel around the country to different synagogues and offer educational seminars to educators and teachers to create innovative techniques to incorporate Israel into the everyday workings of the religious school classroom and, more broadly, the culture of the religious school. This collaboration could help foster a

relationship that would encourage teachers and students to become more involved in ARZA and raise the next generation of ARZA supporters who could help transform the religious landscape of Israel.

- Scholarships to NFTY and High School in Israel as gifts to *B'nei Mitzvah* students are a wonderful gesture that synagogues around the country give, but there needs to be a pre- and post-discussion of what those programs are and the transformative nature of them so the students can be enthusiastic about attending. Youth group events with students who have just returned from Israel and the students who are next in line should take place so that the information comes from their peers.
- Israeli music, movies and literature should be accessible within the religious school environment and not just as part of an Israel day program. A database of programmatic tools assembled by the URJ in categories: holidays, current events, fun facts, *balagan* (issues), Israel and “us”, religion, and the state of the State. The material would be targeted for Reform congregational schools with ideas of how to infuse Israel into the curricula. The goal is to seamlessly weave Israel into the culture of the religious school as a whole. By doing so, religious schools make the statement that Israel is part of the essence of who we are as Jews.

As Jewish educators we are charged with the responsibility of teaching Jewish values to our students that they might live their lives accordingly. Israel should not be understood as a subject matter or a piece of the religious school curriculum, rather as a value of Judaism. The reality is that every Jew, regardless of his or her political position on Israel, is in a relationship with Israel. As a member of *Am Yisrael* each Jew carries that

name. Judaism is the soul: religion, nation, people, tradition and culture represent the *iykar*, the essence, of what it means to be a Jew. Israel is the body: the holy land, a vessel which contains Jewish history, *am*, political and military strength, religion and state, the promised land. One does not work without the other. Israel is the radiating epicenter of Jewish culture, tradition and religion. The people of Israel and the American Jewish community are two vibrant independent entities that depend greatly on one another. Engaging in a meaningful relationship based on education and dialogue is crucial to understanding why Israel matters to Reform Jews.

Appendix A

Welcome, Overview of Goals, Objectives and Workshop materials

Participants will be given badges to hang around their necks with their names and home synagogue to be worn throughout the three-day *kallah*. The facilitator will lead this opening session by going over the goals, objectives, essential questions, schedule and reviewing the workshop materials provided. In the participants' packets will be the Our Israel: A Reform Response Questions for Self-Reflection exercise provided by ARZA (below). Have the participants fill out this form before starting Session One.

Goals

Participants will:

1. Examine their own beliefs about and connection to the land and people of Israel
 - Articulating one's belief in and relationship to Israel is crucial to the process of teaching Israel to students. Being able to formulate a personal statement on why Israel matters will benefit the development of Israel education and strengthen the program itself.
2. Understand Israel as an overarching value of Reform Jewish Education
 - The workshop will explore the historical relationship between the Reform Movement and Israel as a means to understanding the place of Israel in the corpus of Reform Judaism. Israel as a value changes the way we approach the whole of Israel education; no longer does it remain a subject in the curriculum, rather it is woven throughout the entirety of the religious school curriculum.
3. Analyze current models of Israel education
 - Analyzing developed curricula in the field or those brought to the workshop by the participants allows a forum for discussion and brainstorming of how to improve the materials that already exist, analyze what they do best, and create new materials based on readings and sessions offered by the workshop. Most importantly, this workshop creates a forum for educators to work together, learn what materials and resources are available and create a collaborative working environment
4. Engage in a relationship with Israel based on substance, knowledge and experience
 - The foundation of any solid relationship is based on knowledge, trust, experience and honesty. Engaging in a relationship with Israel requires the same factors for it to be a healthy and substantive one. How can we create relationships like these between our congregational school's students and Israel, between our teachers and Israel and between our congregation and Israel? Once this is established, the learning environment will flourish and grow.
5. Learn about resources and organizations focused on teaching Modern Israel
 - We will explore the resources, organizations and materials available to you as educators that will help supplement the Israel program in your congregational school. The workshop is created to facilitate relationships between the participants to build a

chavurah that can rely on one another for guidance, brainstorming, ideas and ways to implement Israel education. You are not alone.

Objectives

1. To develop a place for Israel in my classroom
 - The workshop will offer the participants tools to help build a place for Israel in their classroom that is sustainable and substantive. In addition to tools, the program offers a group of individuals the opportunity to engage in dialogue about how to teach Israel, and the important areas of study, integration and innovation that come with Israel curricula. Each participant is asked to bring his or her Israel curriculum, if applicable, to the workshop to share ideas, concepts, and values about Israel education and ways to improve the current model. This is a safe environment and one that encourages growth.
2. To create a vision statement for Israel education in my congregational school
 - Due to the lack of a formal unified statement on Israel education by the Union of Reform Judaism it is important to verbalize a response to the question, “Why teach Israel in Reform Congregational Schools?” A method to empower your teachers is to provide them with a vision statement for Israel education in your congregational school. This puts into practice the notion of Israel as a value and also allows the teachers to be informed of the school’s position as well as offers them a reason for why Israel matters to the congregation and its students.
3. Update the Israel curriculum to reflect modern Israel
 - As reflected in the textbooks presently used in Reform congregational schools, the depiction of Israel is one of the past. Current events have proven to make the Israel of today a challenging subject area, left relatively unexplored in the classroom. How do we bridge the gap between the past and present in order to create a vibrant future for Israel education? Using textbook and curriculum analysis and articles on Modern Israel, we will explore ways to update, re-imagine, re-envision, and re-vamp Israel education in congregational schools to make it relevant and accessible for our students and teachers.

Essential Questions

The participants will be given the following questions in their packet of materials to be answered on their own time, review their answers and add any additional thoughts at the conclusion of the three-day workshop.

1. Why does Israel matter to me as a Reform Jewish educator?
2. Why teach Israel in my Reform Congregational School?
3. Does teaching modern Israel threaten to destroy the “miraculous” nature and allure of the Jewish State?
4. Can we afford to be honest?

OUR ISRAEL: A REFORM RESPONSE QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

Please use this self-assessment to help focus your own thoughts and opinions. You may choose to keep your answers private, or to share them in the course of later conversation.

I think of the Jewish People as one family, in Israel, North America, and around the world.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

I consider myself a part of the Jewish People

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

Israel plays an important role in my life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

Israel plays a significant role in my Jewish self-perception.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

I feel an obligation towards the State of Israel.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

I feel an obligation towards the People of Israel.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

The recent conflict has strengthened my connection to Israel.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

The recent conflict has weakened my connection to Israel.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

As a part of the Jewish People, I feel that Israel has been fighting on my behalf.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

As a citizen of a Western Democracy, I feel that Israel has been fighting on my behalf.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

I am comfortable discussing my relationship with Israel with my friends and colleagues.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
strongly strongly
disagree agree

OUR ISRAEL: A REFORM RESPONSE is an ARZA sponsored program for congregations of the Union for Reform Judaism

www.arza.org arza@urj.org 212.650.4280



⁴³ Our Israel: A Reform Response. Washington DC: ARZA, 2008.

Appendix B

Israel as an Enduring Understanding

This session will be an introductory session encouraging participants to get to know one another as well as understand their relationship to Israel and their thoughts on Israel education as they stand now.

- I. Participants will count off by threes. Each number will meet in a specified location in the room.
- II. In these small groups participants will exchange names, reason for attending the workshop and answer the question: Israel matters to me because... and the follow up, Israel matters to me as an educator because...
- III. Each group will be given a large sheet of butcher paper and asked to create a list of Enduring Understandings for teaching Israel.
 - **Enduring understanding:** Enduring understandings are statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom. They synthesize what students should understand—not just know or do—as a result of studying a particular content area. Moreover, they articulate what students should “revisit” over the course of their lifetimes in relationship to the content area.
- IV. Once the list is compiled the group will hang its list on the wall nearest the group’s location and each group will travel to each list to study the lists of the other groups. Notice what is similar and what is different (if anything) about the respective lists.
- V. All groups will come back together and discuss what they learned. Create one list of 5 Enduring Understandings to be used for the purposes of this workshop.

Materials:

- Butcher paper
- Scissors
- Markers
- Scotch Tape

Appendix C

The Place of Israel in my Classroom

I. Participants will be broken up into three groups according to the age group they teach or are interested in learning more about in terms of how to teach Israel to a specific age group.

Group A: Upper Elementary School

Group B: Middle School

Group C: High School

II. All participants will be encouraged to have copies of their religious school curriculum and or Israel curriculum to use as a base. The participants will be asked to brainstorm ideas of how best to integrate Israel into their classroom.

III. Guiding questions:

- Currently, where is Israel in my classroom?
- How do I portray Israel in my classroom?
- Is Israel a subject or a value?

IV. In pairs, choose an aspect of your curriculum ie. Hebrew, Lifecycle, Holidays, Jewish life (customs, traditions) and develop a lesson plan(s) with Israel as an integrated thread that weaves throughout the lesson.

V. Present your lesson plan to your group. After the presentations share some feedback with one another to see if the proposed lesson would work, suggestions of how to make it better and ideas for implementation.

Materials:

- Sheets of blank paper
- pens/pencils

Appendix D

Historical Overview of The Reform Movement and Its Relationship to Israel

I. Participants will remain as one group for this session. The session will be conducted as a conversation.

Talking points:

- The relationship between Israel and the Reform Movement (the lecture will be taken from the material in Chapter One)
- The importance of Israel as a generational issue (see Chapter One)
- Force-Feeding Israel Pride (see Chapter One)
- The challenges of Israel's present and today's Reform Jewish student(see Chapter One)

II. Discussion:

- Infusion of myth and reality
 - Participants will be asked to recall a great Israel story, myth, miracle that they were taught as a child. What was the impact? Was it formative? How do you relate to it today?
- Can we afford to be honest?
- How do we transform Israel's past into a more effective tool in the classroom?

Appendix E

Re: Envision, Imagine, Do

Participants will break up into groups of four, preferably with a group of people they have not worked with before. Each group will be given two textbooks used in Reform congregational schools. Each group will be given a set of criteria to analyze the texts. The overarching question is, “How is Israel taught in Reform congregational schools?”

The groups will be asked to act as if they are cultural anthropologists sent to study the educational resources of the Reform Movement regarding the State of Israel.

- I. Each group will be given a piece of paper with the following questions:
 - A. What is the overall message of the book?
 - B. What does this text suggest about the State of Israel?
 - C. What do the pictures suggest about Israeli culture, people and the State itself?
 - D. How does the text portray Israel?
 - E. Is the text effective?
- II. Groups One and Three, Two and Four will come together to discuss the books they have analyzed and the goals of each book. Discuss the answers to the questions above.
- III. Come back together as one large group and, after analyzing the texts we use, discuss the question, “How is Israel taught in Reform Congregational Schools?”
 - A. Does that message resonate with today’s classroom and student?
 - B. What does it suggest about the people that the materials were designed for?

Materials:

Textbooks

Handout

Pens/pencils

Background information see Chapter Two

Central Text: “Teaching Israel in Reform Congregational Schools” A Survey by Dr. Lisa Grant

Appendix F

Kabbalat Shabbat Service Outline

Mishkan T'filah with Israel readings to be distributed to participants prior to the service

Page	Prayer	Notes
539	<i>Im Tirtzu</i>	
120	Candle Blessings	
122	<i>Kiddush</i>	
126	I begin with a Prayer	
Iyyun T'filah	<i>Iyyun T'filah</i>	Sages going out into the fields in Safed dressed in all white to usher in the Shabbat Bride. The moment is heightened when the Shabbat Bride meets the People of Israel.
138	<i>L'cha Dodi</i>	
144	<i>Chatzi Kaddish</i>	
146	<i>Barchu</i>	Rise, face towards Jerusalem as we join together as one community for the call to worship.
	Mine, In Every Sense	Participant will read the poem (chosen ahead of time)
152	<i>Shema</i>	
154	<i>V'Ahavta</i>	Chant together
549	Not the One...	Participant will read the poem (chosen ahead of time)
158	<i>Mi Chamocha</i>	
163	<i>V'Shamru</i>	

Page	Prayer	Notes
543	This Wall has heard...	Participant will read the poem (chosen ahead of time)
166	<i>Amida</i>	
545	Jerusalem, the face...	Participant will read the poem (chosen ahead of time)
176	<i>Modim Anachnu Lach</i>	
552	<i>Avinu Shebashamayim</i>	
SILENT PRAYER	SILENT PRAYER	
180	<i>Oseh Shalom</i>	
586	<i>Aleinu</i>	
595	There are stars...	Participant will read the poem (chosen ahead of time)
598	<i>Kaddish Yatom</i>	
553	In One Land	Participant will read the poem (chosen ahead of time)
552	<i>Hatikvah</i>	closing song

Appendix G

Panel Discussion with *Schlichim*: Building Personal Relationships with Israel

A group of *schlichim* will assemble and individually present how they became *schlichim* and why they believe their presence in American Jewish communities is important.

I. After the *schlichim* have presented their individual stories the facilitator will ask them to respond to the following questions:

A. What motivated you to participate in the *schlichim* program?

B. What do you believe is the most incorrect assumption that American Jews hold of Israelis?

C. In your opinion what is the most important thing American Jewish students should know about Israel and why?

II. Open the floor for Q&A

III. Oneg

Appendix H

Debriefing

Participants will be asked to keep a journal throughout the three-day intensive workshop. At the end of each day, participants will be given time to reflect on the day's activities and sessions. It is strongly suggested that the participants record these reflections, as it is crucial for the learning process to document one's journey. Guided questions could include:

1. What did I learn today?
2. Where did I come from in terms of my relationship with Israel?
3. Where am I going in terms of my relationship with Israel?
4. Today's lessons challenged me because...
5. Today's lessons inspired me because....
6. As an educator I will use this information as a guide in my school to...

Appendix I

Shabbat Morning Service Mishkan T'filah

Page	Prayer	Notes
290	<i>Mah Tov</i>	
292	<i>Elohai Neshama</i>	
293	<i>Nisim B'chol Yom (Israel)</i>	participants will be asked to write one miracle about Israel to be read during this time.
303	<i>Ashrei</i>	
306	<i>Halleluyah</i>	
312	<i>Chatzi Kaddish</i>	
313	<i>Barchu</i>	
313	<i>Yotzeir</i>	Or Chadash to tune of Hatikvah
316	<i>Ahavah Rabbah</i>	
318	<i>Shema</i>	
319	Love Adonai...	
321	Sing the Song...	
322	<i>Mi Chamocha</i>	
324-328	<i>Amida</i>	
329	<i>Yismechu</i>	
332	For the Expanding...	
334	<i>Sim Shalom</i>	
335	<i>Elohai N'tzor</i>	
362	<i>Torah Service</i>	
377	Prayer for the State of Israel	
586	<i>Aleinu</i>	
598	<i>Kaddish Yatom</i>	
660	<i>Yerushalayim Shel Zahav</i>	closing song

Appendix J

Small Group Rotations Israel, What Comes to Mind?

Essential Questions:

1. How can we decide what to teach our students about Israel if we ourselves are confused about the current state of affairs in Israel?
2. What sources of authority and inspiration can we draw upon in order to teach a coherent, authentic and yet hopeful message about the future of Israel?
3. Why should American Jews care deeply about the State of Israel?
4. What actions can American Jews take to support members of the Jewish family who live in Israel?⁴⁴

I. In small groups participants will be asked to write down the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the following words

- Homeland
- IDF
- *Kotel*, Western Wall
- Diaspora
- Jerusalem
- Halakhah
- *Zion*
- Israel

II. Participants will be encouraged to engage in an honest, even emotional, discussion about what the words above mean to them and discuss terms that are missing from the list that came to mind as a result of this list.

III. As a group, begin to extrapolate the essential questions listed above and create a list of themes that result from this conversation.

IV. The groups will come back together and each will present some of the ideas, themes and terms that were produced as a result of the small group activities. What are some common themes, ideas and terms that were elicited from the whole group? Discuss ways we as educators can effectively respond to some of these challenges, ideas and terms in the classroom.

⁴⁴ Jan Katzew, *For the Love of Israel*, (New York: United American Hebrew Congregations, 2002), 1-4.

Appendix K

Relating the “News” Reality of Israel

Participants, in groups according to age range they teach, will be given a curriculum that was designed to teach about a specific “news” reality or event in Israel that made headlines. Terrorism, Water Shortages, Immigration, Diaspora-Israel relations etc.

- I. In your specific groups, split up the parts of the curriculum among the group participants. Each member will respond to a set of questions:
 - A. What event, need or reality is this curriculum hoping to shed light upon?
 - B. What is the goal of the curriculum?
 - C. What is the curriculum hoping to achieve?
 - D. How is Israel portrayed?
 - E. Are the lessons effective?
- II. Come back together and discuss your individual sections. Does your evaluation of the content reflect that of your group members? If so, how? If not, how ?
- III. Based on your knowledge as an educator, what are some curricula, that we did not study together, that do a good job of teaching modern Israel, the realities and current events? What are some resources that we can share with one another that can serve as guides to better teach Israeli current events and news highlights?
- IV. The facilitator will bring the group back together and on a large sheet of butcher paper will write the question: “Can we afford to be honest?” Participants will be asked to write their responses on an index card and turn it in to the facilitator. The facilitator will compile the list and distribute it at the beginning of the next day’s sessions.

Materials:

Curricula

Highlighters

pens/pencils

paper

butcher paper

markers

index cards

Appendix L

List Your C's

Participants will be asked to compile a list under each “C” category (Conflict, Crisis and Change) that they feel is most challenging to teach, confront or discuss in their classrooms. Each individual list will be collected by the facilitator, compiled and utilized in a later session.

CONFLICT	CRISIS	CHANGE

Materials:

Handout of the chart

pens/pencils

Appendix M

NATE representative: The Creation and Production of the NATE Israel Guidelines

I. Participants will be given a copy of the NATE Israel Guidelines 2001

The speaker will present to the group:

- How this document came into being and the intentions behind creating it.
- The process of creating a set of Israel guidelines
- Why it was necessary to produce such a document.
- How this document is meant to be used.
- The intention behind creating this set of guidelines regarding Israel.

II. The floor will be open to Q&A and participants will be encouraged to engage in dialogue with the NATE representative.

Materials:

Copies of the NATE Israel Guidelines

pens/pencils

Appendix N

The Three C's

I. The workshop facilitator will have taken the compiled list and organized the terms according to categories from the submissions of the previous day. The facilitator the day before would have taken the categories and created scenarios based on the themes in the list. One corner of the room will be designated “conflict”, another “crisis” and the other “change.” Each station will have a scenario written under it. Participants will be broken up into three groups. The task: Each scenario occurs the day before a religious school session. As the educator, how do you handle this particular scenario in school the next day?

Examples:

Conflict

A new video game has just been released where players are given the opportunity to explore the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with one click. Players can be either the Palestinian Prime Minister or the Israeli Prime Minister to try to bring peace to the volatile region.

The *New York Times* reported this morning that:

“Last week, in an effort to solve the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, I withdrew settlements in the Gaza Strip. But then a suicide bomber struck in Jerusalem, the P.L.O. leader called my actions “condescending,” and the Knesset demanded a stern response. Desperate to retain control, I launched a missile strike against Hamas militants. I was playing Peacemaker, a video game in which players assume the role of either the Israeli prime minister or the Palestinian president. Will you pull down the containment wall? Will you beg the United States to pressure your enemy? You make the calls and live with the results the computer generates. Just as in real life, actions that please one side tend to anger the other, making a resolution fiendishly tricky. You can play it over again and again until you get it right, or until the entire region explodes in violence.”

As a Temple educator:

You have heard your students talking about this game and how they have been blowing up the other side. How do you respond?

Would you consider using this as a tool to teach the conflict? Why or why not?

<http://www.peacemakergame.com/game.php>

Crisis

June, 2006, three young Israeli soldiers are taken captive: one by Hamas and two by Hizbollah in Lebanon. The kidnapping launches Israel into a war with Lebanon and a continued mission into Gaza. The captors are asking for thousands of prisoners to be released in exchange for the Israeli soldiers.

Follow up information: One year later the bodies of the two soldiers taken by Hizbollah were exchanged for the release of a few hundred prisoners from Israeli jails. The third soldier is still being held captive by Hamas, four years later. No international humanitarian group has been allowed to visit him.

This event happens the night before a planned Family Education day on Israel. The goal of your original program was to have your families travel through Israel by going to different stations that represent cities and sites around Israel. You are trying to promote travel to Israel as a fun, adventurous and safe destination for a family vacation. Do you address the event of the previous day? If so, how and what is your plan to integrate the events with your original goals and objectives?

Change

Fishing for peace

“As one of the largest seafood producers in the Middle East, Israel's innovative fish-farming industry is booming. Just a few miles down shore in Gaza, however, where unemployment is said to be as high as 45 percent, fishermen can barely eke out a living. Still, the fish farming potential in Gaza is significant. The local demand for seafood is high, but much of it is currently imported. And the extent of the opportunities for fish farming is substantial, the students report, but also increasing rapidly.

As a stepping-stone to a fully developed industrial zone, the students are convinced that the Nets of Peace start-up has the potential to attract investment, create employment, increase prosperity, lead toward economic growth and strengthen the link between Palestinians and the rest of the Mediterranean business community. They are also hopeful that it may increase the possibilities for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. In the first phase, they envision a number of fish farms, each one providing 200 to 350 jobs, in addition to other temporary work opportunities for construction and installation teams. Technical and professional training and workshops in marketing and sales are also part of the plan.”

The developers of this program “Nets of Peace” are 5 Israeli graduate students who have created an opportunity to be agents of change. You read about this program over the weekend. Monday begins your lesson on Tikkun Olam and what it means to repair the world. How could you use this information in your unit on Tikkun Olam? Would you use this article or do you feel it would lead the discussion on a separate path? Please share your thoughts and if you do decide to use the information, how do you think it could be used most effectively?

<http://www.israel21c.org/201010128394/social-action/teaching-gaza-to-fish>

Appendix O

From *Yom Yisrael* to *Yisrael Yom Yom*

The purpose of this session is to expose educators to the music, culture, innovation, and trends that represent modern Israel and today's Israeli. The goal is to expose the participants to online resources that can help them bring modern Israel into the classroom.

Small Group Rotations:

Group One: *Shirat HaSticker*

Shirat HaSticker is a popular Israeli rap song performed by *HaDag Nachash*. The lyrics of the song come from a host of political bumper stickers seen throughout Israel.

- Participants will be given a handout with song lyrics in Hebrew and English. The facilitator will project the you tube clip onto the screen and let the participants watch the music video once through. The facilitator should encourage the participants to not read the subtitles but rather to just watch the video and jot down what they see.
- After the video is over the participants should share their initial reactions to the video
- The facilitator will play the video again, this time asking viewers to pay more attention to the words of the song and the message the artists are trying to convey.
- The facilitator will then pass out a stack of bumper sticker slogans with their explanations. The participants each will have a sticker and will be asked to think about its significance and share their thoughts of why it is in the song, its purpose, its message and groups who would use it.
- Each participant will share his or her sticker and their thoughts with the group.
- What does this song and video suggest about today's youth in Israel?

Group Two: Israel21c

Israel21c is a website with a focus beyond conflict and crisis. Israel21c is a “non-profit educational foundation” that brings news of Israel's innovation in the areas of technology, environment, health, culture, people, and social action.

- Participants will be asked to explore the website. Each person will be asked to explore one of the areas that are highlighted on the website.
- After exploring, the participants will be asked to create a short lesson using one of the facts, stories or innovations that they found to be most interesting for the age range they teach.
- Participants will be asked to share their lessons, ideas, and thoughts with the group and will then be asked to save their pages to create a composition of all the ideas and lessons created by their colleagues.
- How can this website be incorporated into the Israel education program? Is this an effective tool to teach Israel?

Group Three: Jerusalem Post

Either online or hard copy editions of the Jerusalem Post will be made available to the group.

As a group, participants will be asked to look at the paper from the point of view of social anthropologists.

- What does the paper say about the culture of Israel?
- What does the layout suggest about those reading this paper?
- What is the overall mood of the country based on the articles?
- Is this a country at peace, war, or strife?
- Is this a successful country?
- Are the people happy?

After answering the questions above, in addition to your own ideas, thoughts and reactions to the paper, develop what being an Israeli means strictly from an anthropological viewpoint.

- What did you learn about this people?
- What did you learn about this place called Israel?
- Who lives there? Why do they live there?
- Does this place hold any significance? If so what?

Appendix P

The Meaning of Israel for Reform Jewish Students, Congregations and Educational Venues

Local Reform clergy will be asked to join the workshop to facilitate this session. The guiding piece is Rabbi Jan Katzew's "Is There Part of Me in the East?" from the CCAR Journal Spring 2007. Participants will have been asked to read the article before the session.

- I. The clergy members will speak briefly about their relationship to Israel and their vision for Israel education in their own religious schools. Discuss any challenges, successes, special programs they are most proud of?
- II. The group will divide up depending on the number of clergy. The goal is to have one clergy member facilitating each group. The clergy member will lead the discussion. They will be asked to discuss questions addressed in the article.
 - A. What part of us is in Israel?
 - B. How do we confront the challenge of educating North American Jews to internalize the proposition that Israel is home, a place where a vital part of them "resides"?
 - C. Make a list: Replace heart in the following sentence: My _____ is in the East?

III. Vocabulary list for Israel education

IV. Vision Statement for Israel education

Materials:

Handout of the article

pens/pencils

paper

see chapter one

Appendix Q

Why Teach Israel?

This session is an opportunity for the whole group to share reflections, feelings, thoughts, and ideas about Israel education and how those might have changed as a result of the work done at the workshop.

- I. Participants will be asked to separate and find their own space in the room to be alone. They will be asked to review the self-reflection exercise which they filled out at the beginning of the workshop and notate any changes as they sit after a three-day intensive workshop. Consider the following:
 - A. How has my understanding of Israel education changed?
 - B. How am I going to use the materials, resources and knowledge gained at this conference when I return home?
 - C. Have my opinions changed?
 - D. How can I better teach Israel in my classroom?
 - E. How can I relay the importance of Israel to my students, their parents and colleagues?
- II. Participants will be asked to write a brief summary of what they accomplished over the past three days, what they will bring back to their home congregational schools, and three actions they will take or three ideas that they will implement in their schools as a result of this workshop.
- III. Participants will come back together as a large group and will share their three actions or ideas. The facilitator will compile the list so every participant will have a complete list of ideas and actions to bring home with them to stimulate their Israel curriculum and program.

Appendix R

Evaluation of Israel Educators' *Kallah*

Thank you for joining us on this incredible journey. We are delighted that you are committed to the process of Israel education. Your interest in revamping and re-imagining Israel education excites us, as we will continue to work together to improve Israel education in Reform congregational schools. Please take your time in filling out this evaluation form, as your answers and comments will only help us serve our educators better in the future.

1. Which of the additional literature distributed before and during the weekend were helpful to you and why?

2. What was the most enlightening part of the weekend?

3. What was the least helpful program of the weekend and why?

4. What educational piece do you feel was missing?

5. Do you feel the program was true to its stated goals?

6. What was the most empowering aspect of the weekend?

7. Do you desire to have further training? If so, in what?

8. Please use the other side to make additional comments.

Name: _____

Synagogue: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Appendix S

Background Reading for Day One

Session One:

1. Group Work by Discipline--A closer look at what educators want to accomplish

A closer look at what educators want to accomplish. Institute for the Study of Modern Israel. Georgia: Emory University. 2008. 172-178

2. Statement on Israel by Rabbi Daniel Silver

Silver, Daniel Jeremy. "Statement on Israel." *CCAR Yearbook* 77 (1967): 106-113.

Session Two:

1. On the Teaching of Israel in Jewish Schools

Rosenak, Michael. "On the Teaching of Israel in Jewish Schools." *Jewish Education* 42 (1972-3): 9-18.

2. Israel in Your Classroom

Segal, Abraham. *Israel in your Classroom*. New York: United American Hebrew Congregations.

Session Three

1. Report of Committee on Israel

Kronish, Leon. "Committee Report on Israel." *CCAR Yearbook* 79 (1969): 86-89.

Session Four:

1. Israel Education in Reform Congregational Schools

Grant, Lisa D. "Israel Education in Reform Congregational Schools." *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* Summer (2007): 3-24.

2. Towards a Vision of Educational Re-engagement with Israel

Margolis, Daniel J. "Towards a Vision of Educational Re-engagement with Israel" *Agenda: Jewish Education* Winter (2004): 6-11.

3. Re-Imagine Israel Education

Ezrachi, Elan. "Re-Imagine Israel Education." *Agenda: Jewish Education* 18 (2004): 11-16.

Appendix T

Background Reading Day Two

Session One:

1. Torah At the Center: Israel Module

Katzew, Jan. "Israel Module." *Torah at the Center* 7 (2004): 1-20.

2. Torah at the Center: Teaching Israel

Katzew, Jan. "Teaching Israel." *Torah at the Center* 4 (2001): 1-16.

Session Four:

1. NATE Israel Guidelines

Litman, Lesley. "NATE Israel Guidelines." Presented at the NATE Board of Directors Meeting, Lisle, IL, March 19, 2001.

Appendix U

Background Reading Day Three

Session One:

1. Teaching Israel to U.S. Kids Poses Extra Challenge for Educators

Wiener, Julie. "Teaching Israel to U.S. Kids Poses Extra Challenge for Educators." *JTA*. April 17. Accessed November 2010. <http://jta.org/>

Session Two:

1. The Journey of Israel Through Its Popular Music

"The Journey of Israel Through Its Popular Music." *Israel At 60 Weekend*. Washington D.C.: ARZA. 2008.

2. How You Can Counter The Lies and Misconceptions

"How You Can Counter The Lies and Misconceptions." A Simon Wiesenthal Publication. 2002.

Session Four:

1. 10 Hebrew Words for Israel at 60

"10 Hebrew Words for Israel at 60." *Israel At 60 Weekend*. Washington D.C.: ARZA. 2008.

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