



Mapping & Sharing our Israel/ Zionist Narratives in a Constructive Learning Conversation

Each one of us have experiences, and knowledge that make up our narrative which forms our identity. This is also the case in our relationship with Israel/Zionism. A learning conversation (machloket leshem shamayim) as opposed to a combative argument has the goal of participants learning about themselves and others in order to sharpen understandings of a complex topic. There is room for disagreement, but with in a spirit of deep respect, listening, learning, openness and growth.

Instructions:

- (a) Setting up groups:
 - Split into groups of 4-5.
 - One group member should facilitate the conversation. (Watching time, and encouraging that all participants are actively listening to each other and engaging in constructive communication.
- (b) Mapping our stories (5 min.):

Each participant takes 5 minutes to write up their story or narrative in relation to Israel Zionism (can be in point form). The following are some guiding questions for attempting to retell your personal story.

- 1. When did you first hear/learn about Israel/Zionism?
- 2. When did you first come to Israel?
- 3. Describe a moment that you were proud to be associated with Israel/Zionism?
- 4. Describe a moment that you were embarrassed to be associated with Israel/Zionism?
- 5. How do feel your Jewish identity influenced your relationship to Israel/Zionism?
- 6. What is one book and/or one experience you wish all Jews in the world would read/experience so that they too could share in your relationship to Israel/Zionism. Explain why that book or experience.
- 7. Where do you get your news about Israel? What news do you trust/ not trust? How do you respond to news that may be contrary to what you would expect to hear?

(c) Sharing stories (25 min):

- Each participant has 5 min. to share their story within the small group.
 Clarifying question can be asked for a minute after each participant shares.
- Listening participants should write down specific points that either opened them up to new information valuable to their own story, as well as points that they experienced as being difficult and contrary to their own opinions.

(d) Engaging in a Learning Conversation (30 min):

- Participants share one question they have for another participant in a respectful manner always speaking from within their own experience and asking others from within their experience and stories. These questions can be about one point they felt challenging or perhaps "missing" from another participant's experiences / story, explaining why.
- Facilitators can also propose questions to be discussed, for example (choose 1-2!):
 - 1. How do you relate to the Biblical commandment according to the Ramban: "We are commanded to inherit the Land which G-d may He be blessed and exalted, gave to our fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that we may not leave it in the hands of the other nations or leave it to be desolate."?
 - 2. How do relate to the Kerry Peace initiative (even though we do not know the exact details of this proposal it is based upon a Two State solution).
 - 3. How should Israel/ the American Jewish community relate to the BDS? (This is an increasingly hot topic both in the US and Israel as more and more companies have been divesting in Israel).
 - 4. What does it/ should it mean that Israel is a Jewish and Democratic State (Judaism in a Democratic state or Democracy in a Jewish State?)
 - 5. What should be the role of the American Jewish community regarding Israel? (This can relate back to the previous two questions or other questions).
- Facilitator ensures that the conversation on these questions be in the spirit of learning and not attacking, keeping in mind the context of each participant and 9Adar!

(e) Sum up: 5 min.

- Each participant shares one sentence/ very short thought that they learned from the conversation and will take with them in their own story as well as for helping to foster more constructive conversations about Israel in general.
- We will do a very quick round of key take homes people have for ensuring the Israel conversation be a machloket leshem shamayim.