

DAY 4

The focus of today as Hofshi, freedom. We began with the concept of Democracy. Robbie states that it is difficult to detach the idea of a Democracy and a nation. The concept is even if I disagree with you I need to trust that you have my best interest at heart.

Jabotinsky asserted that as long as there is a majority of Jews in the country we can have a full democracy. Ethnic democracy. Not our job to assess the idea. Different type of democracy than America.

What is Deliberative democracy and how is that instructive? Americans role in Israel.

Text study with Chaya. PARDES. The Sages taught that four entered the orchard (paradise) to deal with the loftiest secrets of Torah. And they are as follows. Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Aher and Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva said to them that when you arrive in paradise (come from your own world to another world) and you see something, don't name it, absorb it, breath.

Four different people and four different things happen. Ben Azzai stands at the gate and doesn't enter and dies. Ben Zoma looks in and sees something too complex and loses his mind. He was attracted to keep going in but didn't have the tools to deal with what he saw. Aher becomes a heretic, he cuts down the Jewish Community in a way that nothing further could grow. Rabbi Akiva goes in and comes out safely. He was the right age, right emotional state and engaged in those ideas and came out safely.

My take away from this text on a day we are focusing on freedom is, don't go in to a challenging place alone, only go when you have the tools to deal with what is there, and don't take your assumptions and your reality and place it as an overlay on a different paradigm.

We explored Makom's 5-fold approach to Qushiyot (challenging questions) to ask and answer the question of how RSNS uses them as a mapping tool.

Elephants in the Room-we must engage with what is burning inside the participants. If we marginalize the Israel related issues that are of central concern to our participants, then we risk marginalizing Israel for them and marginalizing them from the Am (the Jewish people). This approach requires courage, honesty, and optimism.

Local Vistas - No one size fits all. Every country, and every community within every country, has its own cultural assumptions which influence the ways they may engage with Israel or any topic. These must be addressed and incorporated into the programming.

Multi-vocality - We do not believe in presenting both sides, we believe in presenting many sides. One's understanding of issues will always be strengthened when placed in dialogue with different understandings. Yet the need to present a multi-vocal Israel is not just a matter of educational technique. It is a much truer representation of Israel's complex nature. There is not just religious and secular or Jews and Arabs...

A Jewish conversation - when engaging with modern-day Israel we must draw on and refer to other wise Jews and their writings throughout the generations. In this way we place Israel in the context of living in a Jewish civilization, and ensure that Israel will not be an optional add-on, but rather a central element of our Jewish lives. We need to integrate Israel in the all of Education.

Bettering, not battering - it is this final andragogy that we see as crucial. Programming must point to opportunities for the participant to make a difference. It can never be enough to intelligently learn of Israel's flaws without being introduced to those organizations and people who strive to fix them. We suggest that the successful engagement with Israel leads people to slip off the fence and take a stand to work at bettering, not battering Israel.

We were asked to explore in our school and in our congregation how do we address Israel through the lens of Lihiyot (to be), Am (peoplehood), Hofshi (freedom), b'artzanu (in our land).

I broke it down to two categories in which we engage with Israel and Israel Education (I am sure I have left stuff out, will need to revisit this when I return and I am open to input) and places the concept in which I believe we approach it through 4HQ.

1. Connection with larger Jewish Community around Israel.

Israel parade- lihiyot, Am, Hofshi

Israelfest-lihiyot, Am

Yom HaZikaron-lihiyot, Hofshi, b'artzanu (Am)

Shinshinim, living people telling of their life story-lihiyot, Am, b'artzanu

Shaliach-Am

2. Congregation

Communication when something happens

Israel trip-lihiyot, Am, Hofshi, b'artzanu

Israel committee-came out of anti-semitism Committee-lihiyot, Am, b'artzanu

Pj Library-Song and story and art activity-Am

Gan Shalom-Mock Trip to Israel, Israeli flags, wear blue and white, Am, b'artzanu

Synagogue school-if a teacher feels passionate about Israel. Now relegate it to

Shinshinim-lihiyot, Am, b'artzanu

Bro's Hodesh-?

Girls Rosh Hodesh-lihiyot, Am, Hofshi

Kadima Israel class-Am, Hofshi, b'artzanu

Zionism class 2x a month-Hofshi, b'artzanu

Cafe Israel, Israeli movie nights that show what it is to be in the land. Connecting the diaspora Community to People in the land of Israel and their pop culture-Am, B'artzanu.

We left our wonderfully intense discussion in the dungeon of the hotel, with no windows and fluorescent light and went to the Israel museum for a fantastic lunch in a room that had wall to ceiling windows. From salads to breads and pastas to cheesecake. A multi course meal in a beautiful space. We began our time in the space with Robbie making the statement that visual arts don't reach out to you. You need to take time with it. As a group we sat at 6 pieces of work.

We were asked to sit with the piece (exactly what Rebecca instructs us to do). What do you see, feel . . .

Nimrod. Pre-Jew. Who are we. MRD to rebel. A hunter, a local of the earth. This is the entrance of the museum, looking out at the olive tree. Reinvention of the Jew. Of this land, no legs in statue. The pillar is the stability.

To the aid of the seaman. Social and political art. Dock workers went on strike. Ben Gurion said they have to go to work. Kibbutznikim deciding who to support. Economic freedom.

Digging. Color of the land, shaped of the land. Yet, foreign to the land. B'artzanu. Individual freedom not there, collective freedom, able to love as Jews there.

Beautiful architecture. Two images one on top of the other. Image of modernity and future. Image of what you need to get to freedom.

An allegorical wedding. Jeremiah weeping as Jerusalem is over on left. Wondrous marriage in the Middle East, under huppah, middle and the last panel is redemption.

Jericho First. Palestinian artist 2002.

Beginning of the peace process from Oslo. A Lion eating the gazelle. Both lost but there is a perpetrator and a victim. All war. Two people. Freedom of the lion. About land of Jericho. Isaiah 11:6

We were given time to explore the museum and find one piece of art that you can best teach 4HQ with. (By the way all I think of is the game HQ I play at 3pm and 9pm EST when I write or hear 4HQ.)

I spent time at three exhibitions. The Zoya exhibition, an Israeli-Russian artist whose work addresses Russian aliya and life in Israel was entertaining and profoundly timely. I chose a piece from her work. The Ai Weiwei exhibit was a call to the public to be informed about what is going on around you, to cast doubt in the status quo. His big questions are, is what we are told true? Is what we see real? His answer is maybe, maybe not. The last exhibit I went to was the design work of Reisinger, who did many Yom HaAtzmaut posters. Many iconic images were his creation.

After a debrief session we had a free time for dinner. Aaron and I went to a hip Sushi restaurant for appetizers and then to a pasta place for our main course.

We met my group at 10:15 pm to go on a Cholent and Challah tour of Mea Shearim. We had to dress modestly and Chaya walked us through the streets and took us into stores that sell their specialty for Shabbat. The best gefilte fish and Kugel place. The best challah place. The best cholent place. I ate nothing but found it interesting to observe. Most stores were closing when we got there and Chaya was surprised both by the lack of people around and the closing of the stores. We learned later that there was a new ruling this week by the head of the Mir Yeshiva that all stores need to close by 11 pm. The story behind the new rule is that it used to be the yeshiva

boys would take a break to eat and the breaks got longer and longer and they wouldn't return quickly back to the yeshiva to study (could you believe they study after 11 pm!). Since the Rosh Yeshiva has a far-reaching authority, he was able to say that all stores close at 11 pm so that the boys return to Yeshiva to study!! His rule, which was stated a few days before, was instituted within those few days. It was amazing to look back on the experience with that knowledge. The first place let us in but closed a drape behind us and kept on saying "forbidden, forbidden" (in Hebrew). The last place we went they said that there was a Rabbi in the cholent place and he didn't want women to enter and the restaurant was willing to give up our business for the sake of him.

The focus was freedom today. The PARDES text reminded me to not name the things I see but breath and observe. So that is what I tried to do.