



Shabbat Shalom



ARZA Shabbat Celebration

The Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA) is happy to share with you this guide for planning a Shabbat observance in your congregation that highlights our people's connection to the land of Israel through Torah study, story telling, music and of course, food. We hope you will find these materials flexible enough to use with pre-schoolers or seniors, Friday night only or for a complete Shabbaton.

This piece is a part of ARZA's ongoing effort to provide congregations and individuals with meaningful resources to make Israel a more integral part of our Jewish lives. As you plan a Shabbat with an Israel theme, we strongly encourage you to use some of your time to share information about ARZA and the role we play through our

domestic and international agendas. There are many ways for Jews to support Israel, but by doing so through ARZA you can be confident that our values as Reform Jews are reflected in that support and that our concern for tikkun olam in the U.S. and in Israel are given the highest regard.

Here's what you will find inside...

- Recommended Torah portions with Israel connections and a discussion guide
- Sharing Personal Stories in your Community – a suggestion for sharing personal travel stories and experiences during your Shabbat observance
- Songs of Zion – recommendations for bringing the sounds of an Israeli Shabbat into your service
- Israel's Melting Pot – recommendations for bringing the tastes and smells of an Israeli Shabbat dinner into your home or congregational celebration

It would be amazing if every Jew could travel to Israel and experience it first-hand. But until that's possible, ARZA hopes programs like these can help bring Israel to your community. Please use our website, www.ARZA.org as a resource. If you would like to have membership applications and/or hard copies of any of the materials you find

on our website, please contact us at 212-650-4280 and we can be sure to get you anything you need.

Shabbat shalom.



Torah Portions with Israel Connections

A large part of any ARZA/Israel Shabbat involves studying Torah. Because we want to make the program resources for your ARZA/Israel Shabbat as versatile as possible and give you the option of scheduling it at a time that makes sense based on your congregation's calendar, we provide here a number of different suggestions for how several Torah portions might be used to focus attention on Israel. For each Torah portion, you will see text citations, a few comments, and one or more guiding questions. The questions represent only a tiny fraction of the kinds of issues you might want to raise in response to each of the Torah portions, and we hope that you will go on to ask many more questions. The goal is a simple one, namely, to allow our Torah study to deepen and enrich our thinking about the land, the people, and the State of Israel. Enjoy!

Parshat Lekh L'kha

1. God first communicates with Avram in Gen. 12:1. Why is it necessary for Avram to go to the land that God will show him in order to become a great and mighty nation? Is there something special about this particular land? Or is it simply necessary to get Avram out of the place in which he had lived, in order to allow him to see life, the world, and God with "new eyes?"
2. In Gen. 12:7, God promises the land to Avram's descendants, not to Avram himself. Why do you think this is so? What difference does it make for Avram?
3. Almost immediately, in Gen. 12:10, Avram and Sarai leave the land to which God has directed them, and go down to Egypt. Try to imagine (you might even role-play the scene) the conversation between Avram and Sarai as they decide whether to leave for Egypt, and what the consequences will be for their newly formed relationship with God. This is a great opportunity to create some modern Midrash!
4. In Gen. 15, the "Covenant Between the Pieces," Avram starts out by questioning God about the fact that he has no children. God reassures him that he will have offspring. Then in verses 7-8, God promises Avram that he will have the land as a possession (and Avram again questions, "How shall I know that I am to possess it?") What is the relationship between these two issues, offspring and land? What does that relationship say about us as a Jewish people?

Parshat Hayyei Sarah

1. In Gen. 23:1-16, we find the story of Sarah's death and Abraham's purchase of a burial plot from the Hittites. Why do you think Abraham felt the need to buy the land, considering that God had already told him numerous times that the whole land of Canaan would be assigned to him and his descendants? And why was Abraham not willing to accept the burial plot as a gift from the owner (Gen. 23:7-13)?
2. In Gen. 24, Abraham arranges with his servant to secure a wife for his son Isaac from among the women of the "old country," that is, Abraham's birthplace. But the servant is made to promise that under no circumstances will he take Isaac back to the land of Abraham's birth. This raises two questions: Why did Abraham not want Isaac to marry a local girl? And why was Abraham so adamant in insisting that Isaac not go back to Haran? After all, Abraham himself had already left the land of Canaan at least twice (once to Egypt, in Gen. 12, and once to Gerar, in Gen. 20). What do these questions, and our answers to them, suggest about the relationship between land and religious/cultural identity?



Torah Portions with Israel Connections

Parshat Va'yechi

This Torah portion is bracketed at its beginning and its ending by passages that are outwardly similar. In Gen. 47:29-31, Jacob has his son Joseph promise not to bury him in Egypt, but to take him back to Canaan for burial. And in Gen. 50:24-26, Joseph makes his brothers (and, we might assume, their children) promise that, when God “brings up” the people from Egypt to Canaan, they will take Joseph’s bones with them. This raises several interesting questions.

1. How/why did Jacob anticipate God bringing the family up from Egypt to the land of Canaan? After all, at that time the family of Israel/Jacob were still highly esteemed and warmly welcomed guests in Egypt, with enslavement still far off in their future.
2. Why was Joseph willing to be buried in Egypt, as long as his brothers and sons promised to reinter him in Canaan later on, while Jacob wished to be taken to Canaan for burial immediately upon his death? What might these two incidents teach us about relationships with the land in different generations?

Parshat Shmot

At the beginning of the Exodus story, we wonder where, if anywhere, the Land of Israel/Canaan is in the hearts and minds of the Israelites. According to the chronology of the Torah, the Israelites have, by this time, been slaves for a long time. And in the first few chapters of the Book of Exodus, we hear nothing about the land from which their ancestors came, that is, the land of Canaan. Instead, the only references are in Exodus 3:8 and 3:17. In both verses, God promises to free the Israelites from their enslavement and take them to, “...a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the region of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”

1. Why does God describe the land in this way? Why not label it as, “the land of your ancestors, the land of your forefather Jacob” or in some other way that would acknowledge that this people has had a relationship with this land before? Why present the land as if it were a new, and foreign place? [Note that in the very beginning of Parshat Va-era, God does say, “I also established My covenant with them [i.e., with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners” (Exodus 6:4).]

Parshat Mishpatim

Sometimes Torah study makes us uncomfortable. It brings us face to face with ideas that raise difficult moral, social, ethical, or political questions. We may not feel that we can completely embrace everything that we read, but in the end it is important to remember that these texts are ours, and that they are part of our background. Wrestling with them is a valuable – if sometimes disturbing – way to understand who we have been as a people. The end of Exodus chapter 23 (verses 23-33) describes in some detail how God promises to drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan before the Israelites, using plague and terror to make the inhabitants flee. The text also explains why it is important that the inhabitants depart when the Israelites enter the land, “...lest they cause you to sin against Me; for you will serve their gods – and it will prove a snare to you” (verse 33). These verses raise many questions. Here are just a few:

1. How are the Israelites expected to feel about the inhabitants of the land of Canaan? How do you understand the differences between how they felt and how we might feel? Is the situation described in the Torah similar to, or different from, the history of European settlers in the United States and their relationship with the Native Americans who lived here before they arrived?



Torah Portions with Israel Connections

1. What do you think about the threat or danger perceived by the Torah regarding the influence of the indigenous peoples and their religion on the Israelites? Is this sort of threat a reality in today's world? If so, do you imagine that it's the same in Israel and in America?

Parshat Ki Tisa

At the beginning of Exodus 34, God tells Moses to carve two new stone tablets that will replace the tablets Moses shattered in his anger over the Golden Calf. God specifically says that He will "inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets..." (Exodus 34:1). In Exodus 34:28, after we have been told of what is inscribed on these new tablets, we are told that these are the ones that will be called the Ten Commandments. But the commandments on these tablets are very different from those that we generally assume to have been on the first set, namely the Ten Commandments from Exodus chapter 20. This new set starts with another iteration of the warning not to have anything to do with the inhabitants of the land, "lest they be a snare in your midst." (See Exodus 34:11-16). This is in sharp contrast to the broad, universal mandates at the beginning of Exodus chapter 20 ("I am the Lord your God... you shall have no other gods besides Me...") The new set of commandments then goes on to detail such topics as the observance of Pesach and Shavu'ot, and the prohibition of cooking meat in milk

1. Do you think there is a connection between the opening piece of the new set of commandments, dealing with the land of Canaan and its inhabitants, and the very ethno-centric and particularistic laws that follow? If so, what is the connection? Is it just coincidence that the first set of Ten Commandments, with its broad universalism, was not anchored in the land?

2. How do you imagine the tension between universalism and particularism plays out differently for Jews living in the land (state) of Israel and those living in the Diaspora?

Parshat Acharei Mot

Leviticus Chapter 18 is a grim list of serious sins, mostly sexual in nature. In traditional synagogues, it is read on Yom Kippur afternoon, though most Reform congregations choose a different reading. It details all sorts of people (and others!) with whom one may not engage in sexual relations. After the list is finished, we read, "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for it is by such that the nations that I am casting out before you defiled themselves. Thus the land became defiled and I called it to account for its iniquity and the land vomited out its inhabitants..." (Leviticus 18:24-25).

1. We usually think of behavior as being either good or bad, moral or immoral, without regard for the location in which the behavior takes place. Stealing is wrong, no matter where it is done. But this passage implies that the land of Canaan/Israel has a lower tolerance for certain behaviors. They are "more wrong" there than they might be in other places. What is your reaction to this assertion?
2. When God says, "I called [the land] to account for its iniquity," it sounds as if the land is not merely an inanimate thing, a chunk of real estate, but an actor in the covenantal drama, as much a moral agent as the People of Israel or as any individual Israelite. Does this strike you as strange? Is it simply the literary device known as "personification," or is it something deeper? How does this affect your relationship with, or thoughts about, the land of Israel?



Shabbat Shalom



Torah Portions with Israel Connections

Parshat Kedoshim

Right at the beginning of Parshat Kedoshim there are several laws that come to be known by Jewish tradition as “mitzvot that are dependent on [that is, that only apply in] the land.” These include some of the rules of animal sacrifice, and the rules about not harvesting the corners of one’s field, not picking up produce that falls as you walk down the rows of the field, not going back to collect produce that you forgot, and so on. Later in the chapter, the category is expanded with the addition of the laws of letting fruit trees produce for their first 3 years without harvesting them. According to Rabbinic tradition, these laws, and others, are only relevant inside the land of Israel.

1. What does it say about the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora that there are more mitzvot, more religious obligations or opportunities for spiritual life, inside the land than there are outside of it?
2. Are there mitzvot today that only apply (or apply more) inside the land than outside of it? Are there any that only apply outside the land?

Parshat Shlach Lekha

The plot here is straightforward: God tells Moses to send scouts to check out the land of Canaan. Moses appoints 12 scouts, one from each tribe. They spend 40 days in the land, then they return. Ten of them report an incredibly beautiful, fruitful land of plenty, with fruit so large that they had to carry a single bunch of grapes tied to a pole carried over the shoulders of two men. But there’s a problem: This wonderful, rich, bountiful land is inhabited by hostile giants. In comparison to the Canaanites, they said, “we looked like grasshoppers to ourselves, and so we must have looked to them” (Numbers 13:33). Only two of the scouts, Joshua and Caleb, reassured the people that their conquest would be successful, and that it would be aided by God if they just maintain their faith.

1. What was the purpose of sending the scouts? God had already described the land many times, a land flowing with milk and honey!
2. What was the real task given to the scouts? Were they supposed to be honest reporters, or was this a PR mission? Based on your answer, which of them fulfilled the mission properly, the ten skeptics or the two who insisted that all would be fine? What do we want our leaders to say about Israel? Do we want them to tell it the way they see it, or do we want them to make everything sweet and nice and beautiful?
3. What does the perception of the ten about the comparison between themselves and the Canaanites tell us about our perceptions of ourselves and of Israel?



Shabbat Shalom



Sharing Personal Israel Stories With Your Community

In an ideal world, we would get all of our congregants to travel to Israel frequently. Sadly, this isn't an ideal world, at least not yet! So for the time being, those who have not traveled to Israel often respond in powerful ways to personal stories of Israel told by their friends and neighbors. Hearing someone tell the personal story of a chance encounter with a shopkeeper in Machaneh Yehudah (the outdoor Jewish marketplace in Jerusalem), or the tale of the long conversation with a soldier on a bus from Eilat to Jerusalem, can sometimes be far more moving than a more "professionally crafted" narrative that one might read in a book or see in a film.

To take advantage of the power of personal stories, find five or six individuals in your congregation who have had relatively recent Israel experiences. Ideally, they should cover a range of ages. Also, their experiences should be diverse (i.e., do not look for 5 alumni of last summer's congregational trip, but instead, one such alumnus, plus a professional who had a six-month sabbatical there and a college student who just returned from a Junior Year abroad and an Israeli living in the States who just spent a summer visiting family there, etc.).

Finally, they should all be fairly articulate. Ask each of them to write a 3-5 minute personal Israel experience. It's important not to ask them for "the most special..." or "the most spiritual..." – this makes the stakes too high. Ask them to make sure the experience is personal, meaning that you don't want them to explain what the Kotel is, or

why Mt. Herzl is important, but rather that you want them to talk about what they experienced at whatever the place/moment was. Make sure these written narratives are submitted in advance to the rabbi or someone else for editing and approval. Then have the writers read their narratives at appropriate places throughout the Shabbat service on your ARZA/Israel Shabbat. If possible, try to link some piece of each story to a theme of the service. As an added element, your rabbi might want to speak about Israel in a

way that references these stories and ties them all together. Finally, you might invite congregants to chat with the story-tellers after the service during the Oneg Shabbat or Kiddush. At the oneg, be sure to have information available about traveling to Israel and/or launching your own trip.

"God created human beings because God loves stories."

- Elie Wiesel



Ethnic Shabbat Meals

Many of us think of falafel and hummus when we think of Israeli cuisine and brisket and chicken come to mind when we consider Shabbat dinner here in America. As you plan a Shabbat dinner with an Israel theme in your home or in your congregation, consider a meal that reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of Israel. Below are some recipes that have their roots in Morocco, Russia, Ethiopia and Poland – just a few of the countries that fill Israel’s melting pot.

Morocco

Immigrants from Morocco largely came in the early 1950’s, however, in 1956, Morocco declared its independence, and Jewish immigration to Israel was suspended. In 1963, emigration resumed, allowing more than 100,000 Moroccan Jews to reach Israel. *Dagim shel Shabbat*, Sabbath fish, is a delicious way to honor their influence on Israeli culture and cuisine.

Moroccan Fish Tagine with Peppers and Olives

1/2 cup vegetable oil
 1/4 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
 3 large garlic cloves, chopped
 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
 1 tablespoon Hungarian sweet paprika
 2 teaspoons ground turmeric
 1/8 teaspoon crushed saffron threads
 4 6-ounce white fish fillets (such as halibut or orange roughy)
 1 pound carrots, peeled, thinly sliced
 1 1/2 pounds tomatoes, thinly sliced
 1 large onion, thinly sliced
 1 lemon, thinly sliced (Meyers lemon if you can find it)
 1 teaspoon salt
 3/4 teaspoon ground pepper
 1 medium-size red bell pepper, seeded, cut into 1/4-inch-wide strips
 24 brine-cured olives (such as Kalamata)
 Additional chopped fresh Italian parsley

Mix first 7 ingredients in medium bowl. Add fish and turn to coat. Refrigerate 2 hours, turning fish occasionally.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Arrange carrot slices over bottom of 13x9x2-inch glass baking dish. Layer half of tomatoes, half of onion and half of lemon over. Season with half of salt and pepper.

Drain marinade from fish; reserve marinade. Arrange fish atop lemon slices. Top fish with remaining tomato, onion and lemon slices. Season with remaining salt and pepper. Top decoratively with red pepper strips and olives. Pour reserved marinade over. Cover dish with foil. Bake 30 minutes.

Increase oven temperature to 400° F and bake until fish flakes easily and vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes. Garnish with additional parsley and serve with rice or couscous.

Source: Bon Appétit, May 1995

Russia

The massive immigration of Russian Jews to Israel in the last two decades of the 20th century guaranteed that the cuisine, both of the Tsars and the peasants, would become a permanent part of the Israeli culinary scene. This version of a Russian hamburger is the epitome of Russian comfort food but would be a wonderful appetizer (meatball sized) or main dish on your Shabbat table.



Ethnic Shabbat Meals

Russia Continued

Kotlety

1 lb ground chicken (beef or turkey will also do if you prefer them to the chicken)
1 small-medium onion, very very finely chopped
1 garlic clove, finely minced
1 egg
1/2 cup bread crumbs (or a piece of white bread, or Challah, soaked in a bit of water)
1/2 tsp cumin
1 tsp salt (you might need more, play around with the recipe)
1/2 tsp freshly ground pepper
Olive oil or vegetable oil for frying

Mix all the ingredients above (except the olive oil) together in a bowl. Grab another bowl and pour cold water in it. You will need the cold water to rinse your hands in between shaping each patty, so that the meat doesn't much stick to your hands.

Heat the oil in a non-stick skillet on medium-high heat.

Dip your hands in a bowl of water. Take enough meat to form a patty that is about 3 inches long and 2 inches wide (about 1 inch thick) and place the formed, shaped patty on the pan where the oil should sizzle upon making contact with the patty. Repeat the shaping and placing of the patties until your pan is full, rinsing your hands between each patty. You want to sear each side for a few minutes until they're a happy brown color and then lower the heat to medium-low and cook for about 20 minutes or until, when you cut into one of the patties, you see absolutely no pink. Remove the meat patties from the pan and repeat the exercise if you have leftover ground meat mix.

Source: <http://www.accidentalthedonist.com>, recipe by Sassy Radish 11/15/07

Ethiopia

According to the Jewish Agency, by the end of 2008, there will be 110,000 Israelis of Ethiopian descent living in Israel. The majority of Ethiopian immigrants (Beta Israel) arrived in the last two decades coming from the Gondar region of Ethiopia but others are from Tigrai. They are mostly descendants of Ethiopian Jews who converted to Christianity, sometimes under duress, in the late 18th and 19th century. Traditionally, Ethiopians eat with their fingers, tearing off bite-sized pieces of injera bread to pick up mouthfuls of different dishes. But this delicious dish will taste just as good with a knife and fork!

Vegetables with Garlic and Ginger (Vataklete Kilkil)

6 small red potatoes, scrubbed
3 lg. carrots, scrubbed, cut into pieces
1/2 lb. fresh green beans, cut into 2" lengths
1/4 cup oil
2 onions, coarsely chopped
1 lg. green pepper, finely chopped

2 jalapeños, stemmed, seeded, minced
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons finely chopped ginger root
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon white pepper
6 green onions, cut into 2 inch lengths

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Drop in the potatoes. After 5-6 minutes, add the carrots and green



Ethnic Shabbat Meals

Ethiopia Continued

beans and cook for another 5 minutes. Drain in a colander. Set aside. In a stewpot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions, green pepper, and jalapeños. sauté for about 5 minutes. Do not let brown. Then stir in the garlic, ginger, salt, and pepper. Stir for one minute.

Add the reserved vegetables and toss gently until coated. Sprinkle on the green onions. Cover the pot and cook over low heat for about 10 minutes. Vegetables should be tender-crisp.

Sources: <http://www.jewishagency.org> <http://www.global-gourmet.com>

Poland

This delicious dessert, distinctly Jewish in origin, is now considered part of the repertoire of any good Polish cook in Israel as well as in Poland.

Fruited Rice Pudding

1 cup uncooked rice
1/4 cup sugar
1 Tbsp. vegetable shortening
1/2 cup blanched almonds or walnuts
1/4 cup each cooked pitted prunes, raisins and dates
1/4 honey

Cook the rice in 2 cups of water for 30 minutes. Drain and add the sugar and shortening. While the rice is cooking, oil a heatproof casserole with a 4-5 cup capacity. In a mixing bowl, combine the nuts, fruits and honey. Arrange half of this mixture in the casserole so that it covers the bottom and comes up the sides. Spoon half the rice over the fruit mixture and over this spoon the remaining fruits and honey.

Top with the remaining rice and cover with aluminum foil.

Place the casserole on a rack inside a large pot, pour in boiling water to come 3/4 up the sides of the pudding dish, cover the pot and steam for 45 minutes.

Remove the cover and let the steam evaporate before removing the inner bowl. Remove the foil, place a serving plate over the rice and invert in one rapid motion so that the pudding will sit on the serving plate. May be served hot, cool or well chilled.

Serves 4-6

Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mfa.gov.il>

It is important to note that as Reform Jews from North America continue to make aliya, they have had their own influence on Israel's cuisine. In some congregations around the world, the Israel ethnic food dinner might include steak and fries or macaroni and cheese!

For more information go to: [The Foods of Israel Today](#) by Joan Nathan, March 2001.



Songs of Zion

**“Sing unto the Eternal a new song! Sing unto the Eternal, all the earth!”
- Psalm 96**

When we sing, we tap into a very deep, very powerful part of our souls. Melody is not something we process with the same critical faculties as those we use to analyze, evaluate, or debate ideas. Rather, songs allow us to connect with an experience on a deeper level, a level beyond thought and ideas. Given the huge complexity of the issues surrounding our relationship with Israel, singing gives us an opportunity to express our love for the land and the people on a more basic level.

In March of 2008, ARZA produced the Israel at 60 Program Guide (www.arza.org/6030) as a resource for the observance of Israel’s 60th anniversary. That guide offers recommendations for musical accompaniment to the Yom Ha’Atzmanut observance as published in *Mishkan T’filah* (pp 538-553) that would work beautifully in any Shabbat service. Those suggestions are offered below.

The following resources are available from Transcontinental Music Publishing (www.URJBooksandMusic.com).

Page 538: Psalm 122 (Samachti B’omrim Li) Charles Osborne #991488XSATB Choir with keyboard accompaniment Y\$2.00Z

Page 539: Im Tirtzu (Debbie Friedman) Complete Shireinu p.107

Page 541: Yerushalayim Shel Zahav/Jerusalem of Gold (Naomi Shemer) Complete Shireinu p. 229

Page 542: Ma Navu (Joseph Spivak) Complete Shireinu p.143

Page 545: Pitchu Li (Shlomo Carlebach) Complete Shireinu p.166

Page 546: Ki Mitzion (N. Shachar) Complete Shireinu p.314

Page 546: Bashanah Habaah (Nurit Hirsh/Ehud Manor) Complete Shireinu p.30

Page 549: Lu Y’hi (Naomi Shemer) Complete Shireinu p.140

Page 551: Al Kol Eleh # 991450 (Medley of Shir L’Shalom and Al Kol Eleh) arr. Josh Jacobson --Solo/SATB with keyboard accompaniment (\$2.25) or Complete Shireinu p. 5

Page 552: T’filah (L’Shlom Hamedinah) David Burger -- #992018--SATB Choir with keyboard accompaniment (\$2.50)Z

Hatikvah #993317 Solo/Unison Choir with keyboard accompaniment (Hebrew and English) \$2.50Z or Shireinu p. 80

Additional Israel-themed musical resources are available in the *Our Israel: A Reform Response* booklet, page 11, also available online at www.arza.org/programs/zionism.

Note to Cantors: A newly created, annotated spreadsheet of over 60 available Israel-related choral music pieces is posted on the ARZA website at www.arza.org/6030 as part of the downloadable Israel at 60 Resources. This listing includes *Or Chadash*, by Andrea Jill Higgins, which was commissioned by the American Conference of Cantors and ARZA in honor of Israel’s 60th Yom Ha’Atzma’ut and premiered at Biennial 2007.