

# מִדְרִיךְ הַחֲלָטוֹת

## ***Madrich Hachlatot***

### A Guide to Resolutions

*Vision looks inward and becomes duty.  
Vision looks outward and becomes aspiration.  
Vision looks upward and becomes faith. –Stephen S. Wise*

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## **Our Legislative Process**

Part of the holy work of NFTY is our legislative process. Twice a year, the North American General Board of NFTY conducts the business of this movement at *asefot*, or plenary sessions. Through this parliamentary process, in which we draft, discuss, and vote on various agenda items, our entire membership has a voice in the future of NFTY.

The term “agenda item” is an overarching category for pieces of legislation such as resolutions, amendments to the NFTY Constitution and its By-Laws, recommendations, and other issues that deserve the attention of the North American General Board. In this document, we will refer to the written piece of legislation as a resolution for practical purposes, because even amendments are *resolving* to amend, despite their special treatment by the NFTY Constitution.

This document is considered to be part of ***Choveret Nohalei Asefah – NFTY’s Rules of Order*** and thus the **NFTY Constitution**. Authors of legislation and delegates to the *asefah* are strongly encouraged to be familiar with these documents.

## **Writing a Resolution**

Prior to each *asefah*, the NFTY President will announce an official call for agenda items along with a due date. This deadline is final and unforgiving – all final versions of an agenda item must be submitted before this deadline or risk not being included on what is always a very full agenda. Resolutions can be fine-tuned, reworded, etc., at the general board meeting, but no new resolutions will be accepted after a cut off date decided by the NFTY President or at the meeting itself. Those resolutions that comply with these guidelines will be the only ones on the agenda for the meeting.

### **Resolutions are comprised of five main components:**

#### **1. Heading**

The heading serves as identification for the resolution and informs the reader of the topic to be discussed as well as where, or at which meeting, the resolution is to be submitted.

#### **2. Background**

The background is not mandatory but is helpful in cases where there is a relevant history in NFTY about the topic that the delegates would benefit from knowing.

#### **3. Preamble**

The preamble builds the argument for why the action in the operative clauses should be taken. Clauses in this section are called preambulatory clauses or *whereas* clauses. For each preambulatory clause, the first phrase following ‘whereas’ should set the ‘tone’ for the statement which will follow. Tone has to do with the strength of your conviction about the topic. Therefore, the stronger the phrasing, the stronger the conviction about an issue. \*See Appendix B for a list of suggested preambulatory words.

#### **4. Action**

The action section is the most important part of the resolution. In this section, the operative clauses, or *resolved* clauses, of a resolution tell the reader what action should be taken to solve the challenge set up in the preamble. The operative clauses should be the strongest part of your resolution; debate and any amendments will only be entertained on operative clauses. Language and tone will play a very important part in determining the strength of your operative clauses. Furthermore, the operative clauses are the only part of the resolution that will be recorded in

the NFTY Resolutions Encyclopedia.

\*See Appendix C for a list of suggested operative words.

### **5. Salutation**

This section informs the reader who wrote the piece of legislation and who supports it. There is a difference between the author and those who co-sign the document, for both practical and philosophical reasons. Thus, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Author: The entity who actually wrote the document or came up with the idea should sign under "Respectfully submitted." This entity can be one or several people or an official taskforce. Please asterix (\*) the author that will be given first right to speak during the *asefah*.

- Co-signed: A short list of people after the author. The purpose of the co-signers is to act as a support group for the author during debate. A strong voice in debate is far more important than a name on a piece of paper. The only exception to this guideline is that if the legislation is submitted by a NFTYite without General Board voting powers, the document must be signed by nine other NFTYites.

These co-signers can be individuals, boards, or taskforces.

\*\*As a general rule, pieces of legislation should be long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to maintain interest. If in doubt, aim for the shorter side, especially in the background and preambulatory clauses.  
One can make more arguments in debate.\*\*

### **Special Cases**

There are two special pieces of legislation with additional guidelines: NFTY Life Membership proposals and Study Theme/Action Theme proposals.

## **Guidelines for NFTY Life Membership**

In accordance with Article VI, Section D of the NFTY Constitution, NFTY honors select individuals for their years of outstanding commitment to the youth of Reform Judaism by granting them life membership in NFTY.

This award, bestowed upon those whose indelible impact upon NFTY at the North American level has crossed generations, may only be presented to individuals who meet the following criteria:

1. The individual must have committed no less than seven (7) years of direct service to NFTY at the North American level so that all of NFTY is tangibly impacted, in some way, by the gifts of this individual.
2. The individual must have demonstrated a combination of hands-on and support-role mentorship.
3. The individual must embody NFTY's Thirteen Principles, and be seen as a role model to NFTY's constituents.

Proposals to grant life membership to an individual are brought to the General Board of NFTY in the form of a resolution. These resolutions tend to take the following form:

Background: A short biographical sketch of relevant information

Preamble: Arguments that demonstrate the individual's eligibility based on the background

Action: A motion to grant the individual life membership, and in special cases, a clause of commendation

Note: For individuals who have demonstrated significant direct service to the NFTY Region, please feel free to use or modify these guidelines to establish a Regional Life Membership Award.

## Guidelines for Writing NFTY Study Theme or Action Theme Proposals

At the second *asefah* of the year, held at NFTY Convention or at NFTY Veida on opposite years, the agenda includes the selection of NFTY Study and Action Themes for the upcoming year. While many of the members of the General Board will not be involved as NFTY participants in the following school year, we look to the experienced members of this community to help guide the future of NFTY. Doing this important work not only helps ensure that our values continue to be an integral part of NFTY, but also fulfills the *mitzvah* of doing work for the next generation of NFTYites, work from which you may never personally reap the rewards. It is a way to leave an indelible legacy upon NFTY.

The past NFTY Study Themes and Action Themes have varied in scope and content. Resources from past themes are available online at:

NFTY Action Themes - <http://www.nfty.org/resources/actiontheme/archive/>

NFTY Study Themes - <http://www.nfty.org/resources/studytheme/archive/>

Past Study and Action Themes have included:

### NFTY Study Themes:

5772-5773 Hashomer Achi Anochi- Am I My Brother's Keeper? NFTY Studies Our Responsibilities Toward Others

5771-5772 Im Ein Ani Li Mi Li- If I Am Not For Myself, Who Will Be For Me?

5770-5771 HaShevet: The Tribe- NFTY Studies What Makes a Jew Jewish

5769-5770 Bakesh Shalom v'Radaph'hu - Seek Peace and Pursue It

5768-5769 V'ahavta L'rei-acha Kamocho? Love Thy Neighbor As Yourself

5767-5768 Tihyeh Shofeit L'Atzmecha: You Shall Be a Judge for Yourself

5766-5767 P'Kichut Einenu L'Tziyonut: Opening Our Eyes to Zionism

5765-5766 Taking the Reform Jewish Journey:  
Embracing Tradition and Exploring Innovation

5764-5765 Interreligious Understanding: Hearing God's Presence

5763-5764 Conflict at Home and Abroad

5762-5763 All the Jews of the World

### NFTY Action Themes:

5772-5773 R'Fuat Hanefesh- Caring for the Soul: NFTY Addresses Mental Health

5771-5772 Im Ein Ani Li Mi Li- If I Am Not For Myself, Who Will Be For Me?

5770-5771 Anavah: Humility- What Do We Really Need? NFTY Addresses Overconsumption

5769-5770 Kolot B'ad Hasheket - Voices for the Silent

5768-5769 Milchamah: Mah Hee Oseh? War: What Is It Good For?

5767-5768 Kach et HaKoach: Reclaiming the Power of Humanity:  
NFTY Acts to Confront Irrational Fear and Oppression

5766-5767 Shootfei Adamah: Partners of the Earth

5765-5766 R'fuah Sh'leima: The Renewal of Mind, Body, and Spirit

5764-5765 NFTY Acts to Eliminate Slavery, Child Labor and Sweatshops

5763-5764 NFTY Acts to Improve Public Education and Increase Literacy

5762-5763 From the Corners of Our Fields: NFTY's Response to Hunger

NFTY Themes are proposed in the form of a resolution, with the resolved clause being that NFTY adopt the proposal as its NFTY Study or Action Theme for the upcoming year. Please also see appendix D for information from the Religious Action Center (RAC) regarding writing resolutions.

## Requirements for Submitting NFTY Study Theme and Action Theme Proposals

In addition to the legislation itself, the NFTY Study Theme and Action Theme proposals are unique among other agenda items, in that they also require additional programmatic elements in their submissions. There are options for the number of submissions in each category, as each individual theme submission may be more programmatically sound within a particular learning or programming style.

**Programmatic Submissions:**

- Short Paragraph Description of the Theme
- 1 Full-Length Program in NFTY Program Format – Optional
- 1-3 Text Studies – Title, NFTY Program Format with only Detailed Procedure
- 6-10 Activities – Title, NFTY Program Format with only Detailed Procedure
- 8-12 Touch Stone Texts
- Resource List (organizations, websites, books, articles, etc.) – 1 sentence explanation with each source

**Why is this required?**

Since programming is the primary vehicle through which NFTY explores the Study and Action Themes throughout the year, it has become a requirement that the theme authors also send variety of programmatic elements along with the theme resolution, to demonstrate how this theme can affect and inspire participants through programming. The programmatic submissions will be utilized throughout the year to serve as an effective model of the implementation of the NFTY Study or Action Theme for NFTY regions and TYGs. You may submit or modify programs you have already implemented if it is an accurate representation of your theme proposal.

**Overview of Submissions Necessary for NFTY Study Theme and NFTY Action Theme Proposals**

If you choose to submit a NFTY Study Theme or Action Theme proposal, the following items must be included in order for your entry to be complete:

- Resolution
- Program Samples
  - Short Paragraph Description
  - 1 Full-Length Program – Optional
  - 1-3 Text Studies
  - 8-12 Touch Stone Texts
  - 6-10 Activities
  - Resource List (organizations, websites, books, articles, etc.) – 1 sentence explanation with each source

## **Grammar, Spelling, Punctuation, and Accuracy**

A piece of legislation with poor grammar and spelling will slow down the *asefah* and is likely to be poorly received by the NFTY General Board. Please use a dictionary and other resources to proofread and hone your writing. Some suggested sources beyond dictionaries: “Politics and the English Language” by George Orwell and *Elements of Style* by Strunk and White.

A resolution is, in fact, a very long sentence, and thus requires special standardized punctuation. Please follow the example from Appendix A – “Sample Resolution to Paint the Barn Door Blue.”

Accuracy is paramount in the *asefah*. Be sure to check all of your arguments and assertions to make sure they are indeed fact. It is to your benefit to cite all facts and information within your resolution, especially statistics or elements of the NFTY Constitution. Use footnotes or in-text citations as appropriate.

## **Intent**

While the sample resolution Appendix A is intentionally of a light nature, its purpose here is to show structure, format, and potential tone. For the business purposes of NFTY, it is our hope that all resolutions will be submitted to help make thoughtful and meaningful change to the holy work we do as a movement. With proper intent, our debates will be as those of Hillel and Shammai – for we are taught in Pirke Avot, that all arguments for the sake of heaven will lead to good.

## **Selected NFTY Study or Action Theme Submissions**

Upon selection of NFTY Study and Action Themes by the NFTY General Board with a simple majority vote, the incoming NFTY North American Board will contact the authors of the selected themes in order to collaborate and create an effective and meaningful implementation plan for the selected theme. The creation of the implementation plan will focus on how NFTY will consistently disseminate information about the programmatic aspects of selected themes to NFTY regions and TYGs and how NFTY will actively partner with the URJ and its affiliate organizations in the coming year.

## **Appendix A: Sample Resolution**

### **Sample Resolution to Paint the Barn Door Blue**

Submitted to the NFTY General Board at Mechina 5710

Background: In 1943, NFTY purchased a barn. For the last seven years, the official NFTY barn door has been painted red.

WHEREAS the paint on the official NFTY barn door has been peeling over the last 7 years and is due to be repainted, and;

WHEREAS some NFTYites are deeply concerned, as red is commonly known as a/the color of aggression, and;

WHEREAS blue would better match the setting of the barn, therefore;

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the NFTY General Board approve this motion to paint the barn door blue, and;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the barn door will be painted blue by the next meeting of this General Board, and;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NFTY General Board condemn the previous decision to paint the barn door red in an open letter to its membership, and;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the attached program on color awareness be run at NFTY Veida 5711.

Respectfully submitted,

\*The Senator, Mr. Peabody Frey Goldman  
NFTY-Kutz President

Co-signed:  
Mike Fuld, NFTY-Kutz SAVP  
Caryn Roman, NFTY-Kutz PVP

### Appendix B: Suggested Preambulatory Words

Acknowledging	Contemplating	Fulfilling	regard for	Realizing
Affirming	Convinced	Fully	reviewed	Recalling
Alarmed	Declaring	aware	viewed with	Recognizing
Anxious	Deeply disturbed	believing	apprehension	Referring
Appreciating	Desiring	bearing in	Keeping in mind	Referring
Approving	Deploring	mind	Mindful	Regretting
Aware	Determined	Grieved	Noting	Reiterating
Bearing in mind	Emphasizing	Guided by	further	Seeking
Being convinced	Encouraged	Having	with approval	Stressing
Cognizant	Endorsing	adopted	with deep concern	Taking
Concerned	Expressing	approved	with regret	into account
Confident	Appreciation	considered	with satisfaction	into
Conscious	Deep appreciation	decided	with grave concern	consideration
Considering	Expecting	examined further	Observing	note
		received	Reaffirming	Welcoming

## Appendix C: Suggested Operative Words

Accepts	Confirms	its regret	resolves	Supports
Adopts	Congratulates	sympathy	Instructs	Takes note of
Affirms	Considers	thanks	Reaffirms	Transmits
Appeals	Decides	the belief	Recognizes	Urges
Appreciates	Declares	the hope	Recommends	Welcomes
Approves	Deplores	Further	Regrets	
Authorizes	Designates	invites	Reiterates	
Calls upon	Directs	proclaims	Renews its appeal	
Commends	Expresses	reminds	Repeats	
Concurs	its appreciation	recommends	Resolves	
Condemns	conviction	requests	Suggests	



## **Appendix D**

### **Writing a NFTY Resolution: How the RAC can help you**

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) is a joint instrumentality of the Union for Reform Judaism and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The RAC is the hub of social justice and legislative activity for the Reform Movement, advocating in Washington DC on issues of importance to the Reform Movement. As you begin to think about writing a resolution to be considered by the NFTY General Board please do not hesitate to contact us – we are here to help you. We even have a Legislative Assistant whose specific job it is to help out NFTYites in this process. Please be in touch with the NFTY SAVP to get the contact information for the current RAC Legislative Assistant who works directly with NFTY.

#### **Choosing a Resolution Topic**

- When choosing a resolution topic it's important to be specific about the issue and your goals; without specificity it becomes very difficult to successfully implement resolutions.
  - Brainstorm.
  - Follow the news; see what the big issues of the day are.
  - Call the RAC and ask to speak with the Legislative Assistant who works on the issues you are considering; we can help you figure out what the big issues are or help you narrow your focus.

#### **Writing a Resolution**

- When writing a resolution do your research first by getting accurate and reliable information. Where can you find this information?
  - Look at the Issue Pages on the RAC's website ([www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)) to find background information on your issue
  - Call the RAC (202.387.2800) and ask to speak with the Legislative Assistant who is in charge of the specific issue. Get the most up-to-date information and find out if there is any legislation currently going on in that area.
  - Look at the online Resolution webpage of the URJ (<http://urj.org/docs/reso/>), to see if any resolutions on your issue have been passed. If you call the RAC we can help you do this as well.
  - Make sure your resolution has action items that are both advocacy-based and direct action-based.

#### **Implementing a Resolution**

- Writing a good resolution is only half of the battle; you then need to find a way to implement it. How can you make sure it is put to good use?
  - Brainstorm. Think of fun and creative ways for your resolution to have lasting power. What projects in support of the resolution can a TYG undertake?
  - Reach out to others: other groups within the region; other groups within the synagogue; other groups within the community.
  - Call the RAC. We might already have relevant programs that NFTY can get involved in.
  - Ask the RAC which of our coalition partners work exclusively in that area, they too can be a great resource for you