

**Program Title:** “Shades of Grey”

**Category:** Israel

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**Created for:** Social Action Weekend Religious and Cultural Program

Please Note: This program may be used "as-is," however; NFTYites are encouraged to "adapt" programs, combining their own elements of innovation with this preexisting program

**Touchstone Text:**

“We must think differently, look at things in a different way. Peace requires a world of new concepts, new definitions.” – Yitzhak Rabin

**Goals/Objectives:**

1. The pp’s will familiarize themselves with various social and political dilemmas faced by Israel and Israeli citizens and their complexities.
2. The pp’s will reflect on the similarities and differences between dilemmas of the Jewish population in Israel to that of the community in North America
3. The pp’s will develop an appreciation to the fact that in great social issue and dilemmas, both in Israel and in North America, there isn’t necessarily a “right” or “wrong”, but different view points and ideologies.

**Materials:**

Menus and detailed descriptions of dilemmas for each group (copies of the appendix)

**People:**

1. 1 PL
2. 10-15 GLs
3. 12-14 PPs per group

**Space Needed:**

Large space for the entire pp and for groups to be able to have intimate conversations

**Timeline:**

- 00:00-00:05 Introduction and split into Groups
- 00:05-00:23 Individual Group Discussions
- 00:23-00:25 Gather Back into Large Group
- 00:25-00:30 Wrap Up

## Detailed Procedure:

### **00:00-00:05 Split into Groups**

PL will introduce the program and divide pp into groups and go to different rooms (or sections of the room depending) where they will be seated to discuss.

### **00:05-00:23 Individual Group Discussions**

GL will say, “Here we have a menu with many different choices. We need to choose which one item from each food-title, that we’d like to start off discussing.” See Appendix.

PPs will pick appetizer. After receiving the topic, the Group Leader will lead the discussion with presenting the issue at hand and then letting the PPs ask questions and state their opinions. When possible, it is important to try and push the PPs to reach some sort of decision about the issue, or go in a “what would you have done” direction. Also as important, especially in cases of consensus within the group is to try and present to the group the other side of the debate and why a decision is not so easy. When possible or relevant, GLs should try and ask about the PPs reflection on the topic when it comes to their personal lives. Could the dilemma presented be relevant to them? Once the group feels the issue has been exhausted, they will order a new one and keep on going until the time is up.

### **00:23-00:25 Gather Back into Large Group**

GLs will bring groups back together to larger programming area.

### **00:25-00:30 Wrap Up**

PL will ask: What have you learned about Israel?” Did anything surprise you? Were there any issues for which the entire group felt the same “right” or “wrong”? The right answer is not always clear and multiple views can be correct – many issues in Israel are not black and white, and many people in Israel live for what they believe is the right answer. In order for us as American Jews to be involved we should all try to keep ourselves informed about the issues going on in Israel. A great way to do that is by checking out the Israel section at the NFTY website and other websites which report on Israel news. An even more engaging way is to visit Israel with one of our amazing NFTY programs (more on that in the NFTY programs presentation later).

## Appendix– Menu and detailed description of dilemmas

# Menu

## DRINKS

**Sparkling Water**  
**Settlement Wine**

## MAIN COURSE

**Aleph Bet Chicken**  
**Christmas Turkey**

## SIDE-DISH

**Mixed National Anthem Salad**  
**Moroccan Cous Cous**

## DESSERTS

**Death Chocolate**  
**Western Walnut Cream Cookies**  
**Wedding Cake**

## DRINKS

### **Sparkling Water**

During the 6 Day War (1967), Israel won a decisive victory against the surrounding Arab Nations and captured large areas of land including the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. Twelve years and yet another war later, Egypt negotiated for peace and recognition of the Jewish State in return for the Sinai Peninsula and Israel agreed. Since then, Egypt and Israel have had peace. Recently, Syria, which remains a hostile nation towards Israel, has offered a peace treaty in return for the Golan Heights. Many Israelis are supportive of trade in return for peace, backed by the United Nations, especially because it would act as a buffer between Israel and Iran, but many others are weary. Some claim that Syria's peace treaty, could be broken at a whim and that the Golan is a strategic high ground for land battle and patrol. Also, originating in the Golan Heights are the rivers that feed the Sea of Galilee ("Kinneret"), a freshwater lake that provides a big part of Israel's water supply. Furthermore, since the war, about 8,000 Israelis have settled in the Golan Heights and would need to be relocated. Should Israel give up the land for a chance at peace?

### **Settlement Wine**

In the most recent round of Israeli-Palestinian settlement negotiations, the Obama administration acted as a mediator. The US suggested that Israel stopped all building for 3 months in Israeli territory, but territory that Arabs viewed as part of theirs in a two-state solution. The Arabs feel that the continued development by Israel will only make a two-state solution harder by having to kick people out of their homes. Israel continues to build on this land to ensure its safety, protect its borders, and allow its citizens to grow. Israel put their building on hold for 9 months, but no peace settlement was achieved. Should Israel stop building for another 3 months to possibly achieve peace or should it continue to build in order to answer the immediate needs of its residents, and postpone the matter for the final stage of the negotiations?

## MAIN COURSE

### **Aleph Bet Chicken**

Unlike America, Israel has two nationally recognized languages: Hebrew and Arabic. In an interview a few years ago, Israeli writer Aleph Bet Yehoshua suggested that in order to guarantee the continued Jewish character of the state of Israel, new immigrants should not be granted citizenship unless they can pass a Hebrew proficiency test. He argues that Hebrew defines the cultural identity of the country. Additionally, having people speaking different languages, similarly to engaging with immigrants in the streets of New York City, many of whom know very little English, is very problematic for simple communication. Is he right? How can Israel deal with the fact that a lot of the people who are willing to bind their faith with Israel by making “Aliyah” are not fluent in Hebrew in any way?

### **Christmas Turkey**

In recent years, with the immigration of many Jews from the former Soviet Union, Christmas trees have been seen in the windows and shops around December time. For Russians, Christmas is an important Russian festival, not from a Christian point of view but as a cultural reminder of life in Russia. One pub in down town Jerusalem where many Russians drink has even placed a Christmas tree outside the pub, which also happens to be opposite the municipality. Religious members of the town council are calling for action saying this weakens the Jewish character of society. Are they right?

## SIDE-DISH

### Mixed National Anthem Salad

In recent years, a few of Israel's Arab soccer players have been selected to play in the national team. They are honored, but at the same time confronted with the issue of singing the National Anthem at the beginning of each match. Although they are Israelis, a lot of Arabs feel that the anthem ("Hatikva") and also the Star of David flag for that matter don't really represent them since they are after all Jewish symbols representing Jewish history and yearning to return to their homeland. On the other hand, a lot of Jewish Israelis feel that a player that won't sing the anthem shouldn't be allowed to wear the uniform and play for the national team. This has triggered off a debate regarding the national anthem of Israel since it is only relevant to Jewish Israelis. The suggestion is being made to create a second anthem and national flag that will represent all Israelis, regardless of their religious or cultural affiliation. However, others argue that by doing so the whole idea of the State of Israel being the Jewish state – the Land of the Jews will completely vanish. Those holding that opinion also claim that although Arabs are entitled to complete equality under the law, they need to understand that they are after all living in Israel and not in one of its Arab neighboring countries. Who is right?

English translation	Transliteration	Hebrew
As long as in the heart, within,	Kol 'od balleivav penimah	כל עוד בלבב פנימה
A Jewish soul still yearns,	Nefesh yehudi homiyah,	נפש יהודי הומיה,
And onward, towards the east,	Ul(e)fa'atei mizrach kadimah,	ולפאתי מזרח, קדימה,
An eye still gazes toward Zion;	'Ayin letziyon tzofiyah;	עין לציון צופיה;
Our hope is not yet lost,	'Od lo avdah tikvateinu,	עוד לא אבדה תקותנו,
The hope of two thousand years,	Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim,	התקווה בת שנות אלפים,
To be a free people in our land,	Lihyot 'am chofshi be'artzeinu,	להיות עם חפשי בארצנו,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.	Eretz-tziyon (v)'Y(e)rushalayim.	ארץ ציון וירושלים.

### Moroccan Cous Cous

Israel's teaching curriculum insists that young Israelis learn history. However, a number of controversies have arisen in recent years regarding what history should be included. Should Jews learn Arab history? Should Arabs learn about the golden age of Spain, Herzl, and the Holocaust? Should Ashkenazi Jews learn about the Jews of Morocco and Iraq?

## DESSERTS

### Death Chocolate

An Israeli immigrant soldier is killed in action and is buried in the military cemetery. However afterwards it becomes known that he was not “technically” Jewish, since only his father was Jewish. He was able to make Aliyah under the law of return since the law allows citizenship to anyone with a Jewish grandparent. As a result of his disputed Jewishness, it was demanded that his coffin be reburied in a section of the cemetery reserved for non-Jews. Even righteous gentiles who have fought for Judaism’s sake cannot be buried in a Jewish cemetery. A Jewish cemetery is thought of as holy ground. His mother however who has yet to convert to Judaism demands that since he believed he was Jewish and lived his life in Israel, and indeed died fighting for Israel, he should remain buried in the Jewish cemetery. Should he?

### Western Walnut Cream Cookies

Women of the Wall, or in its more familiar abbreviation, WOW, is a group of mostly religiously observant women who believe that women should be allowed to pray as a group at the [Kotel](#), read from a [Torah](#) scroll and wear [tallit](#). Currently, Israeli law does not permit women to perform these acts at the Kotel, and those who do so anyway are subject to a fine and up to six months in jail. Once a month on [Rosh Hodesh](#), WOW members come together to form a [minyan](#) and pray at the Kotel. They complete the [shacharit](#) service and Hallel in front of the Wall. The women’s portion of the wall is just about one-third the size of the men’s. Recently, when a group tried to read Torah at the Wall, their leader was arrested. Many orthodox believe that women should not be allowed to read Torah publicly, especially at the Wall. Many also believe that a woman’s presence takes away from a male’s focus on prayer, hence why a Mechitza (the separation in a temple) is deemed necessary. Should the women be allowed to read from the Torah at the Wall or is merely an act of provocation against the majority (orthodox) Jews in Israel by breaking the traditions and the accepted way?

### Wedding Cake

Nadav, a Jewish Israeli guy has been going out with Jennie for 3 years before he proposed to her in Tel Aviv. Jennie is a Christian girl who he met and fell in love with while visiting the United States after his military service in the Israeli Defense Force. Problem is that they can’t get married in Israel, as people of different religions cannot be officially married nor legally recognized in Israel. Only Orthodox rabbis are allowed to officiate at weddings. Why do you think the state of Israel allows it? Is this fair?