

Shalom NFTY,

In Judaism there is a concept which encompasses *Torah Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, and Am Yisrael*. These three attributes form what is referred to as the “*Triangle of Judaism*”. This “Triangle” has become the basis of our curriculum for the Heller High and NFTY in Israel Programs. Through this lens, Judaism may be contoured to the needs of the community and the individual concurrently.

Therefore, it is with an unwavering commitment to Torah, Eretz, and Am Yisrael, that I, Maxwell Fink, am running to be NFTY’s next Religious & Cultural Vice-President for the year of 5779-5780.

Torah Yisrael: Our Faith. In 1885, at the conception of Reform Judaism, the Pittsburgh Platform was adopted and so with it our movement began. An excerpt from the platform states that “We recognize Judaism a progressive religion”. NFTY has epitomized what it means to be progressive Jews. Each region has been working to develop their own unique identity in regards to spirituality. It is my vision to further support each region by imploring each RCVP to understand the Keva and Kavanah (routine and intention) in their faith based experiences, as well as the lives of those affected by their work. As we are a progressive people, I hope for us to become aware of and appropriately address the dogma that may come at times with worship in NFTY, as well as strive to understand why we do what we do.

Eretz Yisrael: Our Land. In NFTY’s 13 principles, we affirm the centrality and importance of a Jewish State to our movement. Three years ago, NFTY conducted a wide scale study of our priorities and perceptions in regards to Israel. It would be my initiative to take this information as well as further our research. This will be followed by assembling a team of teens as well as adults from all across the Israel spectrum and appropriately continuing the creation of an Israel Education Curriculum that aligns with our values and priorities. Israel has yet again come into the forefront of NFTY’s priorities. We must address the differences within our movements membership and use that to our advantage. It is important that we define and affirm our values so as to remain as one body.

Am Yisrael: Our People. When we talk about the culture and the community we actively create, we must consider how the spiritual and programmatic experiences work in tandem to form a singular body that is Am Yisrael. The most crucial aspect of our faith is learning from our ancestors... L’dor V’dor - From Generation to Generation. It is incumbent upon us to learn the history of Reform Judaism, NFTY, and the Jewish People as a whole, in order to shape our movement’s future. Through developing a comprehensive education curriculum and standards, NFTY may better unify and understand what drives us.

An emphasis of Torah, Eretz, and Am Yisrael are crucial to the future and longevity of our movement. Moving forward, we must strive towards strengthening and further our progress. It is written in Pirkei Avot, “There is no person who does not have their hour and there is no thing that does not have its place.” As NFTY, we are the people, these are the things, and now is the time.

L’Shalom,
Maxwell Fink