

Study Guide

Choosing Hope: The Heritage of Judaism

The Jewish Publication Society

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*This study guide is primarily designed for book groups seeking a focused conversation about some of the themes discussed in Choosing Hope, as well as for educational settings exploring Judaism and hope. Each unit contains texts and discussion questions that can be used as handouts for classes or in other educational contexts. After the introduction, all units correspond to the nine chapters in Choosing Hope. **CH** followed by page numbers indicates where material in the study guide appears in Choosing Hope. Unless otherwise noted, biblical translations follow the Jewish Publication Society's (JPS) Hebrew-English Tanakh (Philadelphia: JPS, 1999) or The Contemporary Torah: A Gender-Sensitive Adaptation of the JPS Translation (Philadelphia: JPS, 2006). Where appropriate, quotations have been modified (with ellipses and/or bracketed text) to reflect greater gender-sensitivity.*

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Introduction: Talking about Hope

“Talking about Hope” draws on material from the introduction to *Choosing Hope*, as well as from “Hope upon Hope: An Anthology of Jewish Sources.” The complete anthology can be found under *Resources* at choosinghope.net. The goal of this introductory unit is to help readers explore their own understanding of hope and how hope functions in their lives.

What Is Hope? (*CH xiv-xv*)

Take a few minutes and write a short definition of hope. Share it with the group.

Continue by reading the author’s short definition of hope aloud and then discuss the questions that follow.

Hope reflects our embrace of the possibility of a particular, deeply desired future, and hope fuels our actions to help bring it about.

- 1) How does this compare with your definition of hope (or those shared by the group)?
- 2) What are the main differences between the author’s definition of hope and yours?
- 3) This definition stresses the connection between hope and action. How important is the action component of hope to you? Why?

Note: If you are interested in learning more about how the concept of hope has been understood, please see “What Is Hope” under *Resources* at choosinghope.net. This essay explores the work of five individuals who have written works on hope: Jewish philosopher **Joseph Albo** (1380-1444, Spain), philosopher and playwright **Gabriel Marcel** (1889-1973, France), psychoanalyst and developmental theorist **Erik Erikson** (1902-1994, Germany & United States), pioneering researcher on the psychology of hope **C.R. Snyder** (1944-2006, United States), and philosopher **Jonathan Lear** (1948-, United States).

Havel on Hope

Read the paragraphs below and discuss a few of the questions that follow.

A few years before his surprising rise to the presidency of Czechoslovakia (1989–1992), Vaclav Havel (1936-2011), then a leading Czech dissident, had a bizarre accident. Falling into a sewer, he nearly drowned—which drove him to think about hope. He published the following in 1993, a year after Czechoslovakia split in two, which Havel vigorously opposed. Though he served as President of the Czech Republic from 1993-2003, his political role was limited; the prime minister wielded the power.

Hope is not a prognostication—it’s an orientation of the spirit. Each of us must find real, fundamental hope within [ourselves].... You can’t delegate that to anyone else. Hope in

this deep and powerful sense is not the same as joy when things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather an ability to work for something to succeed. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It's not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. It is this hope, above all, that gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now.¹

- 1) What strikes you most about Havel's statement?
- 2) What role does hope play in your life? How has that changed at different times in your life?
- 3) What sustains your hope? Are there aspects of your work that sustain hope? If so, how?
- 4) What diminishes your sense of hope?
- 5) Describe a situation you've lived through in which the question of hope was particularly important.
- 6) Is hope a subject that you discuss often? If so, with whom do you discuss it? What is the nature of those conversations?
- 7) Do you think of Judaism as a source of hope? If so, in what ways?
- 8) Which Jewish festivals, practices, beliefs, or narratives do you particularly associate with hope?
- 9) Is there anything you have read about hope or heard someone say about hope that you have found important? If so, what?

Four Jewish Women on Hope

Below are statements about hope by four Jewish women. Read each one aloud and then discuss the questions that follow.

We are in a battle for the soul of our nation. It's terrifying, but we have confronted dreadful times before ... But I come down on the side of hope ... The arc of the universe does bend toward justice—but not on its own. It bends because people like you and me put our hands on it and bend it. ... So now it's our turn. This is on us. This is our moment. This is our movement. There are very few times in life you can look back and say that because of our movement, our actions, our human shield, we have turned back cruelty and created decency. That we have exercised all our muscles to bend that arc. That we have turned back darkness into hope.

—Randi Weingarten (1957-, United States, President, American Federation of Teachers), 2018.²

Still, at the edge of ... despair there is a kind of determined light which has been called hope. Hope is not an ephemeral thing. It's a reality created out of our long human history of birth and rebirth, in which bravery, mutual aid, stubborn struggle, and imagination have been

powerful enough to shift the awesome downward trajectories of war and oppression.

—Grace Paley (1922-2007, United States, poet, political activist, teacher), 1998.³

Jewish hope has been a questionable asset in this century, and if you are going to feed it to your children, they'd be well advised to live on tight rations.

—Ruth R. Wisse (1936-, Ukraine and United States, Professor of Yiddish and comparative literature emerita, scholar of Jewish history and culture), 1992.⁴

What would it mean to live
in a city whose people were changing
each other's despair into hope?—
You yourself must change it.—
what would it feel like to know
your country was changing?—
You yourself must change it.—
Though your life felt arduous
new and unmapped and strange
what would it mean to stand on the first
page of the end of despair?

—Adrienne Rich (1929-2012, United States, poet, feminist, essayist), 1983.⁵

- 1) Which one of these statements speaks most deeply to you? Why?
- 2) Which one do you find the most challenging? Why?
- 3) What common understandings about hope are reflected in the statements of Weingarten, Paley, and Rich?

¹ Vaclav Havel, "Never Hope against Hope," *Esquire Magazine*, 1993. Brackets and ellipses were added by this author to create a more gender-sensitive text.

² "Hope in Darkness," Remarks by AFT President Randi Weingarten, 2018 AFT Convention, July 13, 2018, <https://www.aft.org/press/speeches/hope-darkness>

³ Grace Paley, *Just As I Thought* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 197.

⁴ Ruth R. Wisse, *If I Am Not for Myself: The Liberal Betrayal of the Jews* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 18.

⁵ Adrienne Rich, "Dreams before Wakening" (1983), in *Your Native Land, Your Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993).

1. Repentance: The Gateway to Hope

The belief that human beings are created in the image of God implies that we possess a core of goodness and the potential to allow that inner divine image to increasingly influence the conduct of our lives. This conviction supports a fundamental hope: the hope that, with effort, we can change for the better. Prayer and the process of repentance, *teshuvah*—along with key rituals associated with the High Holy Day period—strengthen our capacity to fulfill this hope. Here we will explore one of God’s names, *Ehye Asher Ehye*, “I Will be What I Will Be,” as it relates to *teshuvah* and hope, the relationship between prayer and hope, and Maimonides’s understanding of what it means to hear the sound of the shofar. The goal of the unit is to deepen understanding about the relationship between hope and *teshuvah*.

“I Will Be What I Will Be” (CH xvii, 19, 184)

Read the paragraph below and discuss the questions that follow.

At the Burning Bush, when Moses wants to know God’s name, God says it is *Ehye Asher Ehye* (Exod. 3:14). This is translated in different ways but often as “I Will be What I Will Be.” The *Hinne ’ni* prayer, one of the highlights of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur liturgy, describes God as great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent, and then as *Ehye Asher Ehye*. This seems to be the only place in Jewish prayer where God is called by this name.

- 1) If we are created in God’s image, what are the implications of *Ehye Asher Ehye* for our capacity to do *teshuvah*?
- 2) How might you relate this name of God— *Ehye Asher Ehye*, I Will Be What I Will Be—to hope?
- 3) What do you make of the fact that this name of God appears in the liturgy only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?

Prayer (CH 6-8)

Read the selection from Choosing Hope below and then discuss the questions that follow. (Note: the selection runs until the questions begin.)

Teshuvah, repentance, is associated with the month of Elul and the holydays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. But in the weekday Amidah, Judaism’s central prayer, the fifth blessing refers to God desiring our repentance. Prayer itself is an opportunity for *teshuvah*.

The daily liturgy often refers to God as *ha-Makom*, literally, “the place.” When my prayer is focused on *teshuvah*, it is the place for a dialogue with God on the ways my actions have fallen short, and on my deepest hopes about how to be my best self, amidst whatever challenges I’m facing. Sometimes I experience “the place” as outside, beyond me, but more often it feels like an internal place, the image of God within. Either way, prayer is a daily exercise in *teshuvah*. ... In prayer I meet God not as a being that fulfills yearnings or grants forgiveness, but as a partner in sorting out my hopes and facing my regrets. In prayer I ask God’s help in assessing the worthiness of my deepest hopes. And I ask whether those hopes truly reflect my values, because not all hopes are equally justified, and not all hopes reflect our better angels. In the wise words of Proverbs, “The hope (*tochelet*) of the righteous shall be gladness; but the expectation (*tikvah*) of the wicked shall perish” (10:28).¹ Improving the nature of our hopes may itself be a critical element of *teshuvah*.

Heschel’s view of prayer similarly combines the themes of hope and *teshuvah*:

Prayer clarifies our hope and intentions. It helps us discover our true aspirations, the pangs we ignore, the longings we forget. ... Prayer makes visible the right, and reveals what is hampering and false. In its radiance, we behold the worth of our efforts, the range of our hopes, and the meaning of our deeds. ... The idea of prayer is based upon the assumption of ...[one’s] ability to accost God, to lay our hopes, sorrows, and wishes before ... [God] Prayer is an answer to God: “Here am I. And this is the record of my days. Look into my heart, into my hopes and my regrets.”...

The highest form of worship is that of silence and hope.²

- 1) How do you understand what the author and Heschel are saying about the relationships between hope and prayer?
- 2) What do you find most surprising or challenging in the selection above?
- 3) Is there anything in the selection that might influence your approach to prayer? If so, what is it?

Maimonides on the Shofar (CH 10)

Read the selection below and then discuss the questions that follow.

In the Law of Repentance (3:4), Maimonides says this about the shofar:

Although the sounding of the shofar on the New Year is a decree of the Written Law,

still it has a deep meaning, as if saying, “Awake, awake, O sleeper, from your sleep; O slumberers, arouse yourselves from your slumbers; examine your deeds, return in repentance, and remember your Creator. Those of you who forget the truth in the follies of the times and go astray the whole year in vanity and emptiness which neither profit nor save, look to your souls; improve your ways and works. Abandon, every one of you, [your] evil course and the thought that is not good.” It is necessary, therefore, that each person should regard [oneself] throughout the year as if [one] were half innocent and half guilty and should regard the whole of mankind as half innocent and half guilty. If then [one] commits one more sin, [one] presses down the scale of guilt against [oneself] and the whole world and causes [one’s] destruction. If [one] fulfills one commandment, [one] turns the scale of merit in [one’s] favor and in favor of the whole world, and brings salvation and deliverance to all [one’s] fellow creatures and to [oneself].³

- 1) Maimonides (1138-1204, Spain, North Africa, Egypt, and Israel) links the individual’s *teshuvah* not only with his or her spiritual well-being, but with the future of the world. How do you feel about that?
- 2) What role does hope play in Maimonides’ understanding of what is at stake in *teshuvah*?

¹ Proverbs includes a number of variations on this theme. See Prov. 11:23, 23:17, and 24:13. Note that *tochelet* and *tikvah* can both be translated as “hope.”

²See Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Between God and Man*, ed. Fritz A. Rothschild (New York: Free Press, 1959), 198-200 and 208. The last quoted source comes from Ibn Gabirol’s *Choice of Pearls*, ed. Henry Ascher (New York: Bloch, 1925), p. 66 (number 43).

³Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 3:4, in Isadore Twersky, *A Maimonides Reader* (Springfield, NJ: Berman House, 1972), 76. Brackets and ellipses were added by this author to create a more gender-sensitive text.

2. *Tikkun Olam*: “Turning Hope into Action”¹

Tikkun Olam, repair of the world, embodies a central hope in Judaism, one that is worth working to fulfill, a hope that is neither Pollyannaish nor futile despite the long list of serious problems plaguing our society and the planet as a whole. Analyzing the ancient roots of the expression *tikkun olam* reveals how early rabbinic usage of *tikkun olam* implicitly rejected the dour pessimism of Ecclesiastes to endorse hope over despair. The chapter also explores the relationship between hope and *tikkun olam* as expressed in the Aleinu, the conclusion to all Jewish prayer services, as well as how *tikkun olam* functions in contemporary American Jewish life. Here we will focus on several ancient perspectives on the possibility of improving the world, and also on the view of the revered twentieth-century Modern Orthodox sage, Rabbi Joseph B. Solovetichik (1903–93, Belarus and United States), on working in partnership with God to fulfill the hope of *tikkun olam*. The goal of the unit is to shed light on the relationship between hope and *tikkun olam* and to challenge the idea that *tikkun olam* is a new-fangled concept adopted by progressive Jewish denominations, but lacking deep Jewish roots.

Setting the Stage

Read the paragraph below and discuss the questions that follow.

Theologian Elliot N. Dorff says this about *tikkun olam*:

Jews today speak of *tikkun olam* as a central Jewish precept; concern for literally “fixing the world” by making it a better place, through activities we often call “social action,” is certainly at the heart of a contemporary Jewish perspective on life.²

- 1) How do you understand the concept of *tikkun olam*—repair, mending, or perfecting the world—and how does it relate to hope?
- 2) How important is this concept to you? How has it influenced your life?
- 3) Do you tend to identify this concept with a particular denomination within Judaism or with a particular historical period? If so, why?

Making the Crooked Straight (CH 22-24)

Read the two proverbs below and then discuss the questions that follow.

I have observed all the deeds that have been done under the sun, and lo, all is vanity and a pursuit of wind. What is made crooked cannot be straightened (*lo yukhal litkon*)...

—Ecclesiastes 1:14-15 (Note that the root *tav*, *kof*, *nun*, as in *tikkun*,

appears three times in the Bible, all of them in Ecclesiastes. Also see Ecclesiastes 7:13 and 12:9.)

The crooked stick left on the ground,
With sun and shade attacking it,
If the carpenter takes it, he straightens it,
Makes of it a noble's staff...
—Ancient Egyptian Proverb³

- 1) How does each of these proverbs relate to the concept of *tikkun olam*?
- 2) Which of these proverbs provides a better rationale for hope? Why?
- 3) Which proverb are you more comfortable with? Why?
- 4) How would you contrast the passage from Ecclesiastes above with that from Isaiah below with respect to the issues of *tikkun olam* and hope?

⁵Is such the fast I desire,
A day for men to starve their bodies?
Is it bowing the head like a bulrush
And lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Do you call that a fast,
A day when YHWH is favorable?
⁶No, this is the fast I desire:
To unlock fetters of wickedness,
And untie the cords of the yoke
To let the oppressed go free;
To break off every yoke.
⁷It is to share your bread with the hungry,
And to take the wretched poor into your
home;
When you see the naked, to clothe him,
And not to ignore your own kin.
—Isaiah 58:5-7 (Read on the morning of Yom Kippur)

Tikkun Olam in Early Rabbinic Literature (CH 24-28)

Read the paragraphs below and discuss the questions that follow.

The earliest instance of this term, *tikkun ha-olam*, appears in the Mishnah, the first rabbinic law code or teaching manual, compiled in about 200 CE. It is not completely clear what the rabbis

meant by this expression, but the idea of straightening out something that is crooked in the world or society is not far off the mark.

Fourteen of the fifteen instances of this expression are found in the Mishnah's discussion of the laws of divorce. Here is one example:

[If one sent a bill of divorce to his wife with a messenger, once she received it, the divorce was final.] In earlier times, a man would convene a court in another place and cancel it. Rabban Gamaliel enacted that they should not do so, for the sake of *tikkun ha-olam*. (Mishnah Gittin, 4:1-2)

This Mishnah deals with cases in which a husband sends a bill of divorce to his wife with a messenger, but, unbeknownst to her, he has convened a court to cancel it. Having received an authentic bill of divorce, the woman will think she is free to remarry. But if she does so and bears a child, the child will be a *mamzer*, since the woman is legally still married to her first husband. According to Jewish law, a *mamzer* (often translated as “bastard” or “illegitimate child”) could marry only another individual with the same status. Rabban Gamaliel, leader of the rabbinic community from 20-50 CE, sets down a ruling to prevent this. If the woman receives a properly executed bill of divorce, the marriage is dissolved, and she is free to remarry regardless of her former husband's effort to annul the divorce decree.

- 1) How does the example in the Mishnah relate to the concept of *tikkun olam* as you understand it today?
- 2) What do you make of the fact that these earliest instances of *tikkun olam* relate to the context of divorce and protect the status of women?
- 3) How does this Mishnah relate to the issue of hope?
- 4) Why do you think the Rabbis of the Mishnah coined the phrase *tikkun ha-olam* using essentially the same word, *tikkun*, that Ecclesiastes used to argue that it is impossible to straighten out something that is crooked?

Working with God in Partnership to Repair the World (CH 32-34)

Read the two selections below and then discuss the questions that follow.

- 1) Whatever was created by God during the six days of creation needs further improvement.”
—Genesis Rabbah 11:6 (fifth- or sixth-century midrash)
- 2) When man, the crowning glory of the cosmos, approaches the world, he finds his task at hand—the task of creation. He must stand guard over the pure, clear existence, repair the defects in the cosmos, and replenish the “privation” in being. Man, the creature, is commanded to become a partner with the Creator in the renewal of the cosmos; complete and ultimate creation—this is the deepest desire of the Jewish people...the realization of

all its hopes.⁴

—Joseph B. Soloveitchik, (1903-1993, Belarus and United States), Rabbi,
Talmudist, philosopher, and revered leader of Modern Orthodoxy

- 1) How do you understand the concept of human beings working in partnership with God to improve the world?
- 2) What might be the roles of God and humanity in this partnership?
- 3) How would you imagine that God views current human efforts to repair the world?
- 4) Describe an activity in which you have participated that relates to *tikkun olam*. What role did hope play in that experience?

¹ I have borrowed the subtitle from the name of a conference sponsored by the American Jewish World Service (AJWS). It was called “*Tikkun Olam* Today: Turning Hope into Action.” AJWS makes explicit the connection between *tikkun olam*, one of its stated goals, and hope. The gala marking Ruth Messinger’s stepping down as president of the organization was called “Messinger of Hope.”

² Elliot N. Dorff, “What Is Tikkun Olam and Why Does It Matter? An Overview from Antiquity to Modern Times,” in *Tikkun Olam*, ed. David Birnbaum and Mark S. Cohen, Mesorah Matrix Series 2 (New York: New Paradigm Matrix, 2015), loc. 336-37, Kindle.

³ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, vol. 2: *The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 145.

⁴ Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1983), 105 and 99. See 107 for additional comments on this theme.

3. Abraham and Sarah: Living in Hope

Abraham and Sarah, traditionally viewed as models of faith, can equally serve as exemplars of hope. Hope plays a critical role in initially bringing God and Abraham into a relationship with one another, and then in leading Abraham and Sarah through the many tests they face. Here we will focus on the *Akedah*, the Binding of Isaac, as a story of hope, through the lens of philosopher and theologian Gabriel Marcel's understanding of hope as the individual's response to the trial. The goal of the unit is to equip readers with a new way of reading one of Judaism's central and most controversial narratives.

The Akedah

Below you will find the story of the Akedah, the binding of Isaac. Read it aloud verse by verse and then continue with the material that follows.

Genesis 22:1 Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test, saying to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." 2[And God] said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you." 3So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. 4On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. 5Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you." 6Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together. 7Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "Yes, my son." And he said, "Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" 8And Abraham said, "It is God who will see to the sheep for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together. 9They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. 11Then an angel of YHWH called to him from heaven: "Abraham! Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am." 12And [the angel] said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me." 13When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, "On the mount of YHWH there is vision." 15The angel of YHWH called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16and said, "By Myself I swear, YHWH declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your

son, your favored one, ¹⁷I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. ¹⁸All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command.” ¹⁹Abraham then returned to his servants, and they departed together for Beer-sheba; and Abraham stayed in Beer-sheba.

The Akedah: A Story of Hope (CH 53-58)

Read each paragraph below and discuss the question that follows it.

Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) was a French philosopher, theologian, and playwright who wrestled with the question of hope in an essay he wrote during one of his nation’s darkest hours: the German occupation of France during World War II. “Hope,” he said, “is situated within the framework of the trial, not only corresponding to it, but constituting our being’s veritable response.”

“Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test,” the tale begins. Let’s look at four elements of Marcel’s approach to hope and see how they relate to the *Akedah*:

- 1) *To hope means you remain humble and uncertain, no matter how strong your hope.*
Hope, writes Marcel, “cannot ever be taken to imply I am in [on] the secret, I know the purpose of God or of the gods ... and [that] it is because I have the benefit of special enlightenment that I” hope.

Can you point to examples of uncertainty in the Akedah?

- 2) *To hope means that you keep on going.* Hope requires the looseness of a skier who manages to take the bumps in stride and stay on course. During the three days of travel to the place where God leads Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham remains patient. He hopes that the passage of time will reveal the way through his trial. He does not stiffen or freeze up. He keeps moving, and his movement creates the space in which the spark of hope burns. New possibilities emerge. Marcel observes that when logic says, “‘There is no way out,’ the inventor or discoverer says, ‘There must be a way, and I’m going to find it ... He who hopes says simply, ‘It will be found.’” That’s Abraham.

Can you recall a situation in which your ability to keep going allowed you to discover new approaches to a difficult situation? Can you describe it?

- 3) *To hope means to behave as if you can see the outcome you desire.* Throughout the ordeal, Abraham rarely speaks, but, when he does, his hope shines through. Marcel says,

“One cannot say that hope sees what is going to happen; but it affirms as if it saw.”

Which verses illustrate Abraham’s imagining the outcome he desires?

- 4) *To hope means staying true to your character throughout an ordeal.* From the beginning of Abraham’s relationship with God and through this test, Abraham evinces an inner strength. He does not complain or despair. When addressed at the beginning, middle, and end of the trial, Abraham gives the same response: “Here I am.” Abraham remains himself throughout.

Sometimes, all you can do in the midst of a difficult situation is try to remain true to your values and essential character. You may not be able to exert any control over the larger situation, so your hope focuses on struggling to live up to your ideals come what may. Can you illustrate this with something from your life or from history?

Doubts, Questions, and Hope (CH 55-56)

Read the paragraphs below and discuss the questions that follow.

During the month of Elul, prior to Rosh Hashanah (and on other occasions as well), traditional Jews recite penitential prayers called *Selichot*. A key element of the service includes a prayer that asks God to “answer us” as God answered other figures in the Bible. The prayer includes nineteen stanzas and begins with these two:

He who answered Abraham our father on Mount Moriah: May He answer us.

He who answered his son Isaac when he was bound atop the altar: May He answer us.

- 1) The Bible makes no reference to Abraham or Isaac asking anything of God on Mount Moriah. What might they have been asking?

- 2) How does this prayer relate to hope? What light does it shed on the *Akedah*?

Read the paragraphs below and discuss the questions that follow.

The Bible tells us that on the third day, after setting “out for the place of which God had told him,” Abraham “saw the place from afar” (Gen. 22:3-4). The Zohar (13th century), Judaism’s classic mystical text, says that this means he saw it “through a dim glass [mirror].” Mordechai Joseph Leiner, a nineteenth-century Hasidic master, explains what that means: “That is, an explicit word did not reach him, and he was perplexed in his heart, and so could have decided the doubt either way.”¹

- 1) *How does the question of Abraham's possible doubt relate to his hope about how he wants the story of the Akedah to end?*

Hagar and Ishmael in the Desert versus the Akedah (CH 58-60)

Below, you will find the story of Hagar and Ishmael in the desert. Read the paragraphs below and discuss the questions that follow.

The story of Hagar and Ishmael in the desert has many similarities with the *Akedah* but differs from it in some important respects. As the story begins, Sarah has recently given birth to Isaac and fears that Ishmael, fathered by Abraham and Sarah's servant, Hagar, will share Isaac's inheritance. She orders Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. God tells Abraham—who is deeply distressed by the matter—to do as Sarah says.

Genesis 21:14 Early next morning Abraham took some bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He placed them over her shoulder, together with the child, and sent her away. And she wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. ¹⁵When the water was gone from the skin, she left the child under one of the bushes, ¹⁶and went and sat down at a distance, a bowshot away; for she thought, "Let me not look on as the child dies." And sitting thus afar, she burst into tears. ¹⁷God heard the cry of the boy, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heeded the cry of the boy where he is. ¹⁸Come, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him." ¹⁹Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and let the boy drink.

- 1) What are the greatest similarities between the stories of the *Akedah* and of Hagar and Ishmael in the desert?
- 2) How would you contrast the behavior of Abraham in the *Akedah* with that of Hagar in the desert? What can you learn from these contrasts about hope?
- 3) Earlier, the book of Genesis indicates that Hagar is an Egyptian, a maidservant to Sarah, and that Sarah mistreats her (Gen. 16:1-6). The Hebrew verb (*l'anot*, "to afflict") used to describe Sarah's harsh treatment of her servant is the same as that used in Exodus to describe Pharaoh's harsh treatment of the enslaved Israelites. Hagar's name is related to the word *ger*, "stranger," a term also applied to the Israelites in Egypt (Lev. 23:9). How might Hagar's status as a "stranger" separated from her people and a poorly treated servant impact her ability to hope?
- 4) The story of Hagar and Ishmael is read on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, and the *Akedah* is read on the second day. What lessons about hope and despair might this pairing be trying to teach?

¹ Mordechai Joseph Leiner (1802-1854), *Mei ha-Shiloach* on Vayerah 2:12, quoted in Jerome I. Gellman, *The Fear, the Trembling and the Fire: Kierkegaard and Hasidic Masters on the Binding of Isaac* (University Press of American, 1994), 25. Gellman includes a number of related texts in his chapter “The Uncertainty.”

4. Exodus: Hope at the Heart

The Exodus has evolved into Judaism's master story of hope and is central to the underpinnings of Jewish law, ritual, and reckoning of time. The narrative of enslavement and liberation from Egypt has also spawned a fascinating midrashic and interpretive literature on themes of hope versus despair and on the importance of using memories of the Exodus as a basis for nurturing empathy rather than vengeance. Here we'll focus on hope versus despair in texts involving the birth and infancy of Moses, the relationship between leadership and hope, and two questions you might discuss at your Passover Seder. The goal of the unit is to give readers a taste of the importance of hope in the Exodus narrative, a topic that receives far too little explicit attention.

Moses's Mother: Ki-Tov, "He Is Good" (CH 76)

Read the passage below and discuss the questions that follow.

Moses's mother, Yocheved, looked at her infant son, "and when she saw how beautiful (literally, *ki-tov*, or he 'is good') he was, she hid him for three months" (Exod. 2:2). In the first chapter of Genesis, when God creates the world, the phrase *ki-tov* appears five times.

Jewish educator Erica Brown writes that we might expect Moses's birth to be seen as "an event that seems only worthy of mourning given Pharaoh's dictate." But Yocheved doesn't see it that way. Brown says this:

The mother of this child sees what others cannot. She sees hope where others see only despair. She sees new life. She sees a future. She, too, makes a pronouncement about the birth: *ki tov*—it "is good" (Exod. 2:2). That child is Moses, future savior of the Jewish people, who does create a new vision of Jewish life. Through his leadership, Jews move from being a tribal slave entity to being a free nation with their own homeland. That creation is presaged by two words of hope at a time of persecution: *ki tov*.¹

- 1) Share three things that God may have hoped when creating the world.
- 2) How do you understand the relationship between creativity—or birth—and hope?

Miriam and Her Father: Hope vs. Despair (CH 74-75)

The Talmud tells a story about Amram, Moses's father, and Miriam, his sister. Read the summary of the story below and discuss the questions that follow.

Upon hearing of Pharaoh's decree to drown newborn Israelite males, Amram [father of Miriam and future father of Moses], "the greatest man of his generation," said, "We are

laboring in vain.” He reasoned, Why have children if Pharaoh will kill them? So he divorced Yocheved, his wife. And the rest of the Israelite husbands follow suit. Miriam confronts her father, saying, “Pharaoh decreed against the males but you decree against the males and females. ... In the case of the wicked Pharaoh, perhaps his decree will be fulfilled, perhaps not, whereas in your case, because you are so pious, your decree will certainly be followed.” Whereupon Amram remarried Yocheved and the rest of the men took their wives back. ... The Talmud continues the tale: As a child, Miriam prophesied that her mother would give birth to a son who would redeem Israel. When he was born, light filled the room. Amram kissed Miriam on the head, saying, “Your prophecy has been fulfilled. When they threw him into the river [in the basket], he slapped her on the head and said, “Where is your prophecy?” And thus it is written, “And his sister stood from afar in order to know what would be done to him” (Exod. 2:4)—to know what would become of her prophecy.²

- 1) How do you understand the Exodus as a story of hope?
- 2) What role do God and human beings play in fulfilling the Israelites’ hope for liberation?
- 3) In what ways might this selection from the Talmud illustrate the struggle between despair and hope?
- 4) How does this story seem to characterize men in contrast to Miriam, a child who is some seven years older (according to the midrash) than Moses?³ What might Miriam’s age suggest about hope?
- 5) If you were to frame arguments for and against the Israelites’ continuing to bear children in the face of Pharaoh’s decree to drown newborn Israelite males, what would you argue?

Leadership and Hope (CH 77-78)

Read the paragraphs below and discuss the questions that follow.

A number of sources identify Moses as a symbol of hope. One story recounts a dream by Pharaoh that his advisor interpreted as foretelling the birth of an Israelite male—referred to as the “hope of Israel” (*tikvat Yisrael*)—who would destroy Egypt and liberate the Israelites. To thwart this, the advisor recommended drowning all the newborn Israelite males.⁴ A tenth-century midrash describes God’s initial appeal to Moses at the burning bush: “For you Israel has waited. For you Israel has hoped.”⁵ A third legend holds that Moses had ten names, one of which was Yekutiel. Rearranging the Hebrew letters, the midrash reads the name as *yikavu El*, “they will hope in God” and explains that “Moses gave the children [of Israel] hope in their God in Heaven. And at the Red Sea when Moses told the people not to fear, they had hope in his words.”⁶

“Hope and the ability to see a better future and create it,” writes Erica Brown, “have been the underlying strength of Jewish leadership for millennia.” A Harvard Business School study on

leadership similarly concluded, “The overall positive emotional tone crafted by resonant leaders is characterized by a sense of hope.”⁷

- 1) How important is it for leaders to inspire hope? Can you share an experience of a leader who has inspired hope in you?
- 2) Erica Brown writes: “Hope and the ability to see a better future and create it have been the underlying strength of Jewish leadership for millennia.” By this standard, how would you say Jewish leaders of today measure up?
- 3) Do you tend to think about Moses as a figure connected with hope? Why or why not? What qualities does Moses possess that you identify with hope?

For Your Passover Seder

- 1) Although the traditional Passover Haggadah does not include the word “hope,” it is full of hope. Either before or during the Seder, ask your guests to look through the Haggadah and to share passages that speak to hope. See if your group can agree on which passage in the Haggadah contains its most powerful statement of hope.
- 2) The Passover Haggadah says, “In every generation we should see ourselves as if we had gone out of Egypt.” How does this relate to hope?

¹ Erica Brown, *Inspired Jewish Leadership: Practical Approaches to Building Strong Communities* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2011), loc. 1386-1391, Kindle.

² See Babylonian Talmud Sotah 12a-13b.

³ See Exodus Rabbah 1:13, which mentions that she is five years old some two years before Moses’ birth. See also Tosefot on Bekhorot 4a for the relative ages of Miriam and Aaron.

⁴ Quoted in Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1968), vol. 2, 254. See *Sefer Ha-Yashar* (Venice: n.p., 1625), 128b, <https://hebrewbooks.org/44477>.

⁵ Tanḥuma Exodus on 3:10. See John T. Townsend, *Midrash Tanḥuma: Exodus* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1997), 15.

⁶ Leviticus Rabbah 1:3 and Pesikta Zutrata on Exod. 2:10.

⁷ Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, *Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope and Compassion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2005), 150, Kindle.

5. The Covenant: Hope in Israel's Relationship with God

The daily morning prayer service, and the trials of history, ancient and modern, provide fertile ground for exploring the evolving meanings of covenantal hope in the relationship between God and the Jewish people. Here we'll consider two theologies of covenantal hope, one biblical and the other contemporary; a talmudic story about a dialogue between God and Abraham regarding the destruction of the Second Temple; and the views of two theologians, Emil Fackenheim and Irving Greenberg, on the state of covenantal hope after the Holocaust. The goal of the unit is to acquaint readers with a novel covenantal theology of hope and to deepen appreciation for the durability of covenantal hope, albeit with significant reconceptualization, even in the face of the Holocaust.

Two Theologies of Covenantal Hope (CH xx-xxii)

Read the following paragraphs and discuss the questions that follow.

Traditional ideas about the covenant God and Israel focus on God's redemptive promise in exchange for Israel's faithfulness to God's precepts. When Israel sees itself as living up to its part of the bargain, and God does not provide salvation, covenantal hope bridges the gap between promise and fulfillment. When Israel breaches the covenant, God responds with a punishing hand or at least turns away and denies comfort. The verse below from Psalms encapsulates this theology.

I long for Your deliverance; I hope for Your word. My eyes pine away for Your promise; I say, "When will you comfort me?"... I hope for Your deliverance, YHWH; I observe Your commandments (Ps. 119:81, 82, 166).

Contemporary thinkers, such as Modern Orthodox theologian David Hartman (1931-2013, America and Israel) have thought about covenant quite differently:

God's covenantal consciousness has transformed history from a divine drama into a story of human achievement. Rather than hold God responsible for the world we live in, a covenantal perception of history understands that divine self-limitation has presented us with a world waiting to be shaped by human action. ... Covenantal consciousness means we admit that the darkness is present—but it is present as episodes in human history; it can never be allowed to wipe out our hope for a covenantal future.¹

- 1) How do you understand the relationship between hope and covenant?
- 2) Which of these two understandings of covenant is closer to your thinking? Why?

- 3) The selection from Psalm 119 includes two expressions of longing or hoping for “Your deliverance.” The plain meaning of the text suggests that an individual is longing or hoping for deliverance *by* God, i.e., God is the Deliverer. But these verses can also be read to mean that one is longing and hoping for the deliverance *of* God, meaning for God Godself to be delivered, as it were. For example, Exodus Rabbah (30:24), a medieval midrash, comments on a verse from Isaiah, “‘For soon My salvation shall come’ (Isaiah 55:1). It doesn’t say *your* salvation, but *My* salvation ... For had not the verse explicitly said so [that God awaits salvation], it would not have been possible to say it!” If we read Psalm 119 this way, what would be the implications for covenantal hope?

Covenantal Hope and the Trials of Ancient History (90-95)

Read the following paragraphs and discuss the questions that follow.

The dark times of ancient Jewish history put Israel’s covenantal hope to the test. We can see this in a story the Talmud recounts about the destruction of the Temple. (Note: The story is inspired by Jeremiah chapter 11, in which God pledges to destroy Israel for having broken the Covenant. The chapter includes the words, “Why is my beloved in My house?” (11:15) and God’s comparison of unfaithful Israel to an olive tree (11:16) that will be destroyed. Those interested might want to read this chapter.)

At the time of the destruction of the Temple, the Holy One found Abraham standing in the Temple. Said God, “Why is my beloved in My house?” Abraham replied, “I have come concerning the fate of my children” ... Said God, “Your children sinned and have gone into exile.” “Perhaps,” said Abraham, “they only sinned in error?” God disagreed. “Perhaps only a few sinned?” God disagreed again. “Still,” Abraham pleaded, “Did you remember the covenant of circumcision ... And perhaps if You had waited, they would have repented.” God still disagreed. Then Abraham put his hands on his head, wept bitterly, and cried, “Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is no hope for them?” Then a Heavenly Voice said, “As the olive tree produces its best only at the very end, so Israel will flourish at the end of time.” ... Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said, “Why is Israel likened to an olive-tree? To tell you that as the olive-tree loses not its leaves either in summer or in winter, so Israel shall never be lost either in this world or in the world to come.” Rabbi Yochanan said, “Why is Israel likened to an olive-tree? To tell you that just as the olive produces its oil only after pounding, so Israel returns to the right way only after suffering.”²

- 1) What tensions between the concept of covenant and the hope for Divine salvation does this story raise?

- 2) How might this story relate to Abraham's arguing with God on behalf of the innocent residents of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:16-33)? What parallels and differences do you see?
- 3) How do you feel about God's response to Abraham that compares Israel to an olive tree?
- 4) How do you understand the two interpretations of Israel as the olive tree? How does each relate to hope?

Covenantal Hope and the Holocaust: Emil Fackenheim and Irving Greenberg (CH 95-101)

Read the following paragraphs and discuss the questions that follow.

Emil Fackenheim (1916-2003, Germany, Canada, and Israel) was ordained as a Reform rabbi at Berlin's Liberal seminary before the war began. In 1939, he spent three months in a concentration camp until the Nazis released him with orders to leave Germany. Among the most profound writers on the Holocaust, he wrote extensively about covenant and hope in the post-Shoah era. The selection below comes from Fackenheim's article, "The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz."

You have abandoned the covenant. We shall not abandon it. ... You have destroyed all grounds for hope? We shall obey the commandment to hope which you yourself have given up! ... The times are too late for the coming of the Messiah? We shall persist without hope and recreate hope—and as it were divine Power—by our persistence. [To allow Auschwitz to destroy] four thousand years of believing Jewish testimony [would be doing] wittingly or unwittingly, Hitler's work.³

- 1) How do you react to the defiant tone of Fackenheim's hope?
- 2) Are you persuaded by Fackenheim's argument that Jews' abandonment of covenantal hope would mean doing Hitler's work? Why or why not?
- 3) In the post-Holocaust era, do you feel that Jewish loyalty to covenantal hope can be commanded? Why or why not?

Read the following paragraphs and discuss the questions that follow.

Modern Orthodox theologian Irving Greenberg (1933-, United States) believes that, in our era, responsibility for fulfilling the messianic vision of covenantal promise has shifted from Divine to human hands. Greenberg argues that, after the Holocaust, loyalty to covenantal hope can no longer be commanded. In contrast to a traditional Jewish view that God enters into an exclusive covenant with Israel, Greenberg believes in covenantal pluralism—that God enters into covenantal relationships with multiple peoples.

The total assault on Judaism and on the Jewish people was an attempt to stamp out the covenant, the witness, and ultimately the presence of God who is the ground of life and covenantal hope. ... What happened to the covenant? I submit that its authority was broken but the Jewish people, released from its obligations, chose voluntarily to take it on again. ... Modern history has shown that democracies can ask for and elicit more total sacrifices from their citizens than even the great tyrannies can dare demand of their people. This encourages us to hope that the age of voluntary covenant will be marked by more encompassing religious life, greater commitment to justice, and an overall higher level of spiritual achievement by the Jewish people. The age has already started with unprecedented spiritual heroism in the response to the Holocaust. One may pray that we may be worthy—and that the best is yet to come.⁴

- 1) What are the implications of Greenberg's notions of a voluntary covenant?
- 2) How do you respond to the idea of covenantal pluralism?
- 3) How would you compare Greenberg and Fackenheim's views on covenant and hope?

¹ David Hartman, *From Defender to Critic: The Search for a New Jewish Self* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2012), 186 and 184, Kindle.

² Babylonian Talmud Menachot 53b. The Hebrew word translated as "hope" is *takanah*, which literally means "repair" or "remedy." Numerous translations render this as "hope," e.g., the Sonico Talmud and Yaakov ibn Chaviv's *Ein Yaakov: The Ethical and Inspirational Teachings of the Talmud*, trans. Abraham Yaakov Finkel (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1999), 762. God's responses to Abraham include biblical citations that this author omitted for ease of reading.

³ Emil L. Fackenheim, "The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz," in *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses during and after the Holocaust*, ed. Steven T. Katz, Shlomo Biderman, and Gershon Greenberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 436-37.

⁴ Irving Greenberg, "Voluntary Covenant," in *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses during and after the Holocaust*, ed. Steven T. Katz, Shlomo Biderman, and Gershon Greenberg, 543-56.

6. The Book of Job: Hope for Vindication

Often considered to be one of the Bible's darkest books, the story of Job contains a surprising number of references to hope—and its absence. In place of the traditional reading, which focuses on the question of how a just, all-powerful God allows the innocent to suffer, *Choosing Hope* interprets the story as the painful journey of a man—who has experienced catastrophic loss—from near-suicidal despair to hope and re-engagement with the world. Here we will begin with a brief summary of the book of Job, followed by a statement about Job and hope from Elie Wiesel's Nobel Lecture, and then the exploration of two interrelated themes that support Job's hope: his desire to take God to court and his yearning for vindication. The goal of the unit is to make one of the Bible's most profound and poetic books more accessible and relevant to contemporary readers.

Job 101 (CH 103-104)

Read the following summary of the book of Job and then the excerpt from Elie Wiesel's Nobel Lecture and discuss the questions that follow.

Job, is a blameless, upright, wealthy man, with a large family. The Adversary, *ha-Satan*, wagers with God that if Job's life circumstances were to decline, he would curse God. In short order, Job's ten children die, bandits steal his flocks and cattle, and he develops painful sores all over his body. Four friends visit Job and, in numerous conversations, try to convince Job that he must have done something to deserve his plight. Job's wife makes brief appearance and urges Job to curse God so he will die, bringing an end to his suffering. But Job steadfastly maintains his innocence throughout. Initially crushed with grief and despair, Job sees his spirits rise when he sets his heart on seeking vindication by calling God to court and proving his own innocence. Near the book's conclusion, God shows up and interrogates him about his inability to comprehend the majesty of God's creative powers. Job says, "I recant and I relent, being but dust and ashes." The book ends with God telling Job and his friends that Job was right all along, and they were completely wrong. God tells Job to pray for his friends, after which God restores Job's fortunes (his wealth doubles), and Job sires ten more children.

From Elie Wiesel's 1986 Nobel Lecture, "Hope, Despair and Memory"

Let us remember Job who, having lost everything—his children, his friends, his possessions, and even his argument with God—still found the strength to begin again, to rebuild his life. Job was determined not to repudiate the creation, however imperfect, that God had entrusted to him.

Job, our ancestor. Job, our contemporary. His ordeal concerns all humanity. Did he ever lose his faith? If so, he rediscovered it within his rebellion. He demonstrated that faith is

essential to rebellion, and that hope is possible beyond despair. The source of his hope was memory, as it must be ours. Because I remember, I despair. Because I remember, I have the duty to reject despair. I remember the killers, I remember the victims, even as I struggle to invent a thousand and one reasons to hope.¹

- 1) Do you agree that Job lost his argument with God? Why or why not?
- 2) How do you understand Wiesel's statement that "faith is essential to rebellion?"
- 3) What is the relationship between memory and hope?
- 4) What do you think Wiesel means by his statement that he "struggle[s] to invent a thousand and one reasons to hope"?

Taking God to Court (CH 114-117)

Read the following passages from the book of Job and discuss the questions that follow.

9:32 He [God] is not a man, like me, that I can answer Him,²

That we can go to law together.

9:33 No arbiter is between us

To lay his hands on both.

9:34 If He would only take His rod away from me

And not let His terror frighten me,

9:35 Then I would speak without fear of Him;

For that is not the way I am.³

13:3 Indeed, I would speak to the Almighty;

I insist on arguing with God.

13:15 Though He slay me, yet I will hope in him,

Yet I will argue my case before Him.

19:6 Yet know that God has wronged me;

He has thrown up siege works around me.

19:7 I cry, "Violence!" but am not answered;

I shout, but can get no justice.

23:3 Would that I knew how to reach Him,

How to get to His dwelling-place.

23:4 I would set out my case before Him

And fill my mouth with arguments.

23:5 I would learn what answers He had for me

And know how He would reply to me.

23:6 Would He contend with me overbearingly?

Surely He would not accuse me!

23:7 There the upright would be cleared by Him,

And I would escape forever from my judge.

31:35 O that I had someone to give me a hearing;

O that Shaddai would reply to my writ,
Or my accuser draw up a true bill!⁴

1. C. Fred Alford, psychoanalyst and author of *After the Holocaust: The Book of Job, Primo Levi, and the Journey to Affliction*, says the following about Job's plan to take God to court: "We learn... that Job only appeared to be God's humble servant. In reality, Job was filled with pride—indeed, hubris—imagining that he could put God on the witness stand almost as though God were another earthly power."⁵ Do you tend to agree? Why or why not?
2. How does the notion of taking God to court relate to the concept of hope?
3. If you were able to call biblical figures to support Job in his arguing with God, whom would you call and why? How might instances in the lives of Moses or Abraham support Job's willingness to contend with God?
4. There is a difference between the way that a particular word in Job 13:15 is supposed to be written and how it is to be read and understood. The *k'tiv* (how it should be written) is *lamed alef*, which means "no" or "not," but the *k'ri* (how it is to be read) is *lamed vav*, which means "to him" or "in him." Either way, when read aloud, both words would have the same sound—*lo*. Some translators follow the written word and others the read.

Though He slay me, yet I will hope in Him—Old Jewish Publication
Society (read)

Look, He slays me, I have no hope—Robert Alter (written)

Given the context, which do you prefer? Why?

5. It is possible that the author of Job intentionally created this ambiguity. If so, what might this say about hope?

Hope for Vindication (CH 121-125)

Read the following passage and discuss the questions that follow.

Job says:

^{19:7} Look, I scream I cry, "Outrage!" and I am not answered,
I shout, and there is no justice.

^{19:10} He [God] shattered me on all sides—I am gone.

He uproots my hope like a tree.

^{19:21} Pity me, pity me! You are my friends;

For the hand of God has struck me!

^{19:22}Why do you pursue me like God,
Maligning me insatiably?
^{19:23}O that my words were written down;
Would they were inscribed in a record,
^{19:24}Incised on a rock forever
With iron stylus and lead!
^{19:25}But I know that my Vindicator lives;
In the end He will testify on earth—

- 1) What contemporary parallels do Job's plight evoke for you?
- 2) What is the closest you have been to feeling unjustly accused? What kind of vindicator (or vindication) were you seeking? What role did hope play in the experience?

¹ Elie Wiesel, [Nobel Lecture](#), December 11, 1986, "Hope, Despair and Memory."

² The use of masculine pronouns in Job often communicates a sense of emotional distance between Job and God, as well as the sense that Job is being overpowered by a warrior who is cutting Job to pieces. The imagery of combat seems to justify retaining masculine pronouns when referring to God here and subsequently in Job.

³ New Jewish Publication Society Translation (NJPS, 1999), except the last line, which is from Robert Alter's *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2018).

⁴ NJPS, except Old Jewish Publication Society (OJPS, 1917) for the first line of 13:15. The use of masculine pronouns in Job often communicates a sense of emotional distance between Job and God and the sense that Job is being overpowered by a warrior who is cutting Job to pieces. The imagery of combat seems to justify retaining masculine pronouns when referring to God here and subsequently.

⁵C. Fred Alford, *After the Holocaust: The Book of Job, Primo Levi, and the Path to Affliction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 190.

7. Jewish Eschatology: Hopes for the World to Come

The hope that somehow death will not have the final word has been central to traditional Judaism for the last two millennia. Despite its pronounced focus on *this* world, Judaism has spawned a vast eschatological literature about yearnings for the world to come (*Olam ha-Ba*) and related hopes for resurrection of the dead, immortality of the spirit, and the messianic era. In contrast to much of rabbinic literature, which imagined the Messianic Age as a miraculous, sudden rupture within the normal course of history, Maimonides envisioned a gradual messianic process occurring completely within the bounds of this world. Despite the ascendancy of post-Enlightenment rationalism, which led the Reform movement to remove traditional liturgical references to resurrection of the dead, in recent years these references have begun to reappear, suggesting a renewal of the age-old hope for life after death. Here we'll explore resurrection of the dead—as it appears in the book of Daniel, early rabbinic literature, and traditional Jewish liturgy—immortality of the soul, and the role of science in extending, if not conquering, death. The goal of the unit is to acquaint readers with the reality that ideas such as resurrection of the dead, commonly identified with Christianity, have ancient roots in Judaism, as well as to facilitate conversation on a range of eschatological ideas not often directly addressed in Jewish educational settings.

Resurrection of the Dead and Judaism (CH 133-140)

Read the following paragraphs and discuss the questions that follow.

The hope for resurrection of the dead has held an important place in Judaism for at least two millennia. It makes its first definitive appearance in the book of Daniel, thought to have been composed in 164 BCE during the Maccabean Revolt:

Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, others to reproaches, to everlasting abhorrence. And the knowledgeable will be radiant like the bright expanse of sky, and those who lead the many to righteousness will be like the stars forever and ever. (Dan. 12:1-3)

Eighteen hundred years ago, the Mishnah, Judaism's first law code, declared:

All Israelites have a share in the world to come ... And these are the ones who have no portion in the world to come. One who denies ... resurrection of the dead (*t'chiyat ha-meitim*) ... (Sanhedrin 10:1)

The second blessing of the Amidah, Judaism's central prayer, repeatedly refers to God's giving life to the dead. Long omitted from Reform prayer books, these references have returned as an

option, in brackets, in *Mishkan T'filah*, the Reform Movement's most recent *siddur* (published in 2007). The traditional version of the prayer reads as follows:

You are forever mighty, Adonai: giving life to the dead, You are a mighty savior. [From *Sh'mini Atseret* to the first day of Passover, add: You cause the wind to blow, and You cause the rain to fall. From the first day of Passover to *Sh'mini Atseret*, add: You bring down the dew.] You sustain life with kindness, giving life to the dead with great mercy, supporting the fallen, healing the sick, and freeing the captive, and keeping faith with sleepers in the dust. Who is like You, master of might, and who resembles You, a ... [Sovereign] who causes death and causes life, and causes salvation to flourish. You faithfully give life to the dead. Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives life to the dead (*m'chayei ha-meitim*).¹

Note: Translations of the Mishnah or Talmud commonly translate *t'chiyat ha-meitim* as "resurrection of the dead." Prayer books however, generally translate *m'chayei ha-meitim* as [God Who] "revives the dead," "gives life to the dead," "resuscitates the dead," etc., avoiding the term "resurrection," although the Hebrew could well be translated that way.

- 1) When you encounter expressions in Jewish sources that espouse resurrection of the dead, how do you understand this hope?
- 2) If you see a friend you have not seen for twelve months, the Talmud prescribes reciting the following blessing: "Blessed be God, who gives life to the dead, *m'chayei ha-meitim*."² How might this blessing inform your thinking about the blessing in the Amidah above?
- 3) *Mishkan T'filah*, the Reform Prayer Book, offers the following commentary on the above blessing in the Amidah: "The resurrection of the dead, which may be taken literally, is best understood as a powerful metaphor for understanding the miracle of hope. Winter gives way to spring."³ How do feel about this kind of interpretation?

Immortality of the Soul (CH 135-136, 146-148)

Read the following extract from the Conservative Movement's 1988 Statement of Principles and discuss the question that follows.

For the individual human being, we affirm that death does not mean extinction and oblivion. This conviction is articulated in our tradition in the two doctrines of the bodily resurrection of the dead and the continuing existence, after death and through eternity, of the individual soul.

In the course of our history, both of these doctrines have been understood in widely varying ways. For some of us, they are literal truths which enable us to confront death and the death

of our loved ones with courage and equanimity. Others understand these teachings in a more figurative way. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, omnipresent in our liturgy, affirms in a striking way the value Judaism accords to our bodily existence in our concrete historical and social setting. Beyond this, we know that our genetic make-up will persist through our progeny, long after our deaths and as long as humankind survives.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul affirms that our identities and our ability to touch other people and society does not end with the physical death of our bodies. Great personalities from the beginning of history remain potent influences in the world. On a more personal level, our friends and the members of our families who are gone are still palpably alive for us to this day.

- 1) Discuss your hopes and beliefs about what, if anything, follows death—an embodied, physical resurrection of the dead, immortality of the soul, living through the memories of others, or other possibilities.

Who Conquers Death? (CH 152-154)

Read the following passage and discuss the questions below.

Modern Orthodox theologian Irving Greenberg argues that, in the modern era, God has turned over to human beings the responsibility for bringing about redemption. He is also committed to the idea that, ultimately, life will triumph over death:

Judaism is a religion of life against death. Death negates redemption; it is the end of growth, of freedom. ... In a world growing toward life, death is a “contradiction” to God, who is pure life. In the end, therefore, death must be overcome. “God will destroy death forever...” (Isaiah 25:8). Judaism’s ultimate dream, then, is to vanquish death totally.⁴

- 1) Bearing in mind Greenberg’s belief that human beings bear the ultimate responsibility for redemption, what are the implications for the role of science in vanquishing death?
- 2) How do you understand the following medieval midrash in light of advances in medicine and biotechnology?

This is how God spoke to the righteous: “Behold, you are My equals... *If you produce what is noble out of the worthless, you shall be as My mouth* (Jer. 15:19). Even as I ... resurrect the dead, so shall you.”⁵

¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, ed., *My People’s Prayer Book: The Amidah* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2013), loc. 1601, Kindle.

² Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 58b.

³ See Elyse D. Frishman, *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur* (New York: CCAR Press, 2007), 246. For further contrast in the Reform movement's evolution on this subject, see the [1999 Pittsburgh Platform](#) and especially the [commentary](#) on it. See also Judith Z. Abrams, "The Continuity of Change in Jewish Liturgy," in *Platforms and Prayer Books: Theological and Liturgical Perspectives on Reform Judaism*, ed. Dana Evan Kaplan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 119-28.

⁴ Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way* (New York: Summit, 1988), 182-83.

⁵ Midrash on Psalms 116:8.

8. Israel: Hope in the Homeland

The return to Israel from the lands of their exile has constituted a perennial hope for Jews, but it remained for the Zionist movement in the late nineteenth century to transform these longings into reality. Hatikvah (The Hope), a poem that would eventually provide the core of Israel's national anthem, gave expression to Jewish yearnings. With statehood in 1948, new hopes emerged: to build a society that would fulfill the promises of Israel's Declaration of Independence, a nation upholding "full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race or sex." As in any democratic society, these kinds of promises are more easily made than kept. The gaps between promise and fulfillment led former Israeli president Reuven Rivlin to launch a movement to create "Israeli hope." Interviews with activists from many sectors of Israel's diverse population reveals an extraordinary commitment to forge hopes into reality. Here we'll explore the notion of Zionism as a revolution, Theodor Herzl's view of hope, and the work of several Israeli activists to sustain hope in their country. The goal of the unit is to enable readers to strengthen their hope for Israel based on the historic success of Zionism and also the contemporary efforts of Israeli activists.

Zionism As a Revolution (CH 157)

Read the following and discuss the questions below.

The return to Zion has been a central hope in Judaism over the ages. Small numbers of Jews did return to settle in Israel over the centuries, but most traditional Jews opposed large-scale efforts of this kind because they thought it constituted a dangerous interference with God's redemptive timetable. The traditional hope is expressed in the prayer recited just before the morning *Sh'ma*:

Bring us safely from the four corners of the earth, and lead us in dignity to our land, for
You are the Source of deliverance.¹

Zionism, the movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine, embodied a new, revolutionary approach to the fulfillment of an ancient hope. Instead of waiting for God to return the Jewish people to Israel, Zionists took matters into their own hands.

In 1897, Max Nordau, Vice President of the first World Zionist Congress, held in Basel, Switzerland, described the change of mind among Jews who had waited long enough:

They no longer hope in the advent of the Messiah, who will one day raise them to Glory.
... [They] hope for the salvation from Zionism ... not the fulfillment of a mystic promise

of the Scripture, but the way to an existence wherein the Jew finds at last the simplest but most elementary conditions of life, that are a matter of course for every Jew of both hemispheres: viz, an assured social existence in a well-meaning community, the possibility of employing all his powers for the developments of his real being instead of abusing them for the suppression and falsification of self.²

- 1) How might you harmonize the sentiments expressed in the traditional prayer above with those in Nordau's statement? Are they necessarily opposed to one another?
- 2) What ideas about hope do you take away from Nordau's statement?
- 3) How do you think about the relationship between Zionism and hope?

“If You Will It...” (CH 161-165)

Read the following paragraphs and discuss the questions that follow.

On September 3, 1897, not long after the First Zionist Congress, Theodor Herzl wrote in his diary:

Were I to sum up the Basel Congress in a word—which I will guard against pronouncing publicly—it would be this. At Basel I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, certainly in fifty, everyone will know it.³

Herzl died in 1904, but he left the Zionist movement with solid foundation on which others could build. In 1917, the Balfour Declaration expressed support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In 1937, the Peel Commission supported the concept of partitioning Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. In 1947, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine recommended terminating British Mandatory control over Palestine and supported the idea of partition. Both were accepted by the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947. Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948—fifty-one years after the First Zionist Congress.

“If you will it, it is no dream.” Something of a Zionist mantra, this phrase was coined by Herzl in the frontispiece of *Altneuland* (Old/New Land), his 1902 utopian novel about the Jewish state. In the novel's epilogue, Herzl elaborated on the relationship between dream and action:

But if you will not will it, it is and will remain a dream ... [Herzl now refers to the book as a child and to himself as its father.] You will have to make your way through hostility and misrepresentation, through a dark, evil forest. But if you meet kindly people, my

child, greet them in the name of your father. He believes that dreaming is as good a way of spending our time on this earth as any other, and *dream and action are not so far apart as is often thought*. All the activity of mankind was once a dream ...⁴

Researchers on hope would call Herzl, and those who built the Zionist movement and later the state, Super-Empowered Hopeful Individuals (SEHI's), people who

believe the future will be better than the present—for everyone—and that they can make it happen. They believe that changing the world is a realistic goal despite every obstacle imaginable.⁵

- 1) How do you feel about Herzl's understanding of hope as reflected in his statements about dreams and action?
- 2) What lessons about hope would you draw from the fact that fifty-one years separate the first Zionist Congress in 1897 and Israel's independence in 1948?
- 3) How do you imagine Herzl might react to those today who feel more despair than hope in connection with Israel's future?
- 4) How do you understand the relationship between leadership and hope?

Israeli Hope (CH 171-173, 191-194)

In 2015, Israeli then-President Reuven Rivlin launched a program to build what he called “Israeli hope,” a foundation for shared expectations among all sectors of Israeli society that each has a stake in the country's future. Many Israeli NGO's are working toward the same goal, sometimes focusing on the question of hope itself and how to strengthen it. For his research on the chapter on Israel in *Choosing Hope: The Heritage of Judaism*, the author interviewed a range of Israeli activists on what sustains hope for them and their communities.

One of these interviewees was Shir Nosatzki, a founder of an organization called **Have You Seen the Horizon Lately?** In 2018, its first year of operation, the organization sponsored a series of ten-minute, TED-style talks on themes relating to Israel's future.

Here are two examples of the seven talks:

- **“Is Our dispute Something Special?” by Maya Savir, author**
What is the connection between seaweed and reconciliation? The author Maya Savir traveled to South Africa and Rwanda in connection with her philanthropic work, with the objective of teaching her partners there how to grow the nutritious spirulina seaweed as a solution to the serious issue of famine. She found communities that had surprising reconciliation processes following long and bloody disputes that had seemed unsolvable,

and she asked to learn from them what reconciliation actually is. However, are we really ready and prepared to learn from the experience of others?

- **“Imagine Something You Have Never Seen” by Prof. Eran Halperin, Head and Founder of aChord: Social Psychology for Social Change at The Hebrew University, Jerusalem**

Countless struggles are consuming Israel: from the large rallies for social justice, passing through the #MeToo campaign, to the demonstrations against corruption. Only one “tiny” issue has been forgotten by the general public: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Will this collective amnesia cause us to miss a golden opportunity for resolving this conflict? Prof. Eran Halperin, winner of the Erik Eriksson Early Career Award (awarded to the youngest, most promising researcher in the world), has dedicated the last years exactly to this question and has come up with brilliant answers.

Watch one or more of these seven talks. Note: At this point the website of Have You Seen the Horizon Lately (<https://israel.co.il/en/the-opening-event-2/>) is under construction. Videos with English subtitles of some of these talks (including those of Maya Savir and Eran Halperin) are available at <https://vimeo.com/user19458553> Go to “show more videos.”)

After you have watched each talk, discuss the following questions.

- 1) How did these talks make you feel?
- 2) Did you learn anything in this talk that make you more hopeful about Israel’s future? If so, what?

After you have finished watching the talks, discuss the following question.

- 1) Prof. Eran Halperin studied the impact of this series of talks. He found that at two weeks and at six months after the talks, attendees retain signs of change. Compared to the control group, more of the attendees believe that Palestinians can change and that the conflicts is solvable. They also take more responsibility for the conflict, identify more as peace activists, and are more motivated to participate in events that promote peace. Might any of these talks have a similar effect on you?

¹ Versions of this prayer that are close to our own appear in the ninth-century prayer book of Amram Gaon and in the commentary on the prayer book by Eleazar ben Judah of Worms (c. 1160-1238).

To see this prayer in a British Library manuscript of Amram Gaon’s prayer book that dates from the fourteenth or fifteenth century, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or_1067, 16v, ten lines down from the top of the left column.

² [Address by Max Nordau](#) at the First Zionist Congress (August 29, 1897).

³ Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries* (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), [581 \(Sept. 3, 1897\)](#).

⁴ Theodor Herzl, *Alteneuland* (Haifa: Haifa Publishing, 1960), first page without number and 218, italics in original. For the epigram, the translation has been altered from “fairy-tale” to dream, as is often done, and is carried over to the beginning of the epilogue. Subsequent references to “dream” follow the translation and the original German, *Traum*..

⁵ Shayne Lopez, *Making Hope Happen: Create the Future You Want for Yourself and Others* (New York: Atria, 2013) 213. Futurist Jamais Cascio coined the term SEHI in his [March 24, 2008 blog post](#).

9. Jewish Humor: The Currency of Hope

Hope and humor are closely related, and, fortunately, the Jewish people are endowed with deep wells of both. Evidence from the Bible's first mention of laughter—when Abraham and Sarah hear God's promise that the superannuated couple will have a child—to the presence of humor among Jews in concentration camps attests to the observation that laughter is “hope's last weapon.”¹ Sampling two genres of Jewish comedy, jokes about the Messiah and the schlemiel, sheds further light on the intertwining of hope and humor. Here we'll touch on a comment by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on hope and humor, the biblical debut of laughter, and a medieval midrash imagining a conversation between Moses and God about the golden calf that once again plays with the association between humor and hope. The goal of the unit is to remind readers of the importance of laughter and of being able to find humor even in—or especially in—dark situations.

The Relationship between Humor and Hope (CH 196-200)

Read the following statement by the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (1948-2020), former Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, and discuss the questions that follow.

Those who can laugh at fate redeem it from tragedy. One who rejects his enemy's interpretation of events cannot be made a victim. Psychologically, he or she remains free. Humour is first cousin to hope.²

- 1) How do you understand Sacks's statement?
- 2) How might you explain the relationship between hope and humor?
- 3) Can you think of an example from your own life in which humor served as an expression of hope?

The Beginning of Jewish Laughter (CH 200-202)

Read the paragraphs below and discuss the questions that follow.

Laughter makes its biblical debut in Genesis with the story of the birth of Isaac—in Hebrew, *Yitzhak*, which means “he shall laugh.” Laughter and hope intersect at the very heart of Judaism's founding narrative. The moment arrives with the fulfillment of an essential element of God's covenantal oath to Abraham: that he and Sarah will produce offspring.³ God informs Abraham that his wife shall conceive a son, but, given their old age, hope for a child seems absurd. Incongruity, a common element of humor, reigns supreme:

Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed, as he said to himself, “Can a child be born to a man a hundred years old, or can Sarah bear a child at ninety?” God said, “Nevertheless, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac...”

Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years; Sarah had stopped having the periods of women. And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment—with my husband so old?” Then YHWH said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I in truth bear a child, old as I am?’ Is anything too wondrous for YHWH ...?” Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with me” (Gen. 17:17, 19; 18:11-14; 21:5, 6).⁴

- 1) How do you understand the relationship between hope and humor in this passage?
- 2) Isaac’s birth requires Abraham and Sarah the couple to resume apparently long-abandoned marital relations. If you imagine this scene, what role might humor play in it?
- 3) What do you make of the fact that this long-awaited child of covenantal promise and hope is given the name Isaac, “he shall laugh”?

Hope, Humor, and the Golden Calf (CH 199)

Read the paragraphs below and discuss the questions that follow.

Rabbinic literature is occasionally quite humorous. Here is an example from a medieval midrash on the book of Exodus:

When Israel worshipped the golden calf, God’s wrath waxed hot against the people. “But Moses implored (*va’yichal*) God” (Exod. 32:11), saying, “They’ve only given You an assistant. You are annoyed with them? You will cause the sun to rise, and it will cause the moon to rise. You will look after the stars, and it will look after the constellations. You will cause the dew to descend, and it will cause the winds to blow.”

God: “Are you making the same error as they did? Surely there is nothing real in that calf.”

Moses: “If that’s the case, why does your anger wax hot against Your people?”⁵

- 1) What strikes you as funny in this midrash?
- 2) How might this midrash reveal Moses as a high-hope individual?
- 3) Rashi argues that the word *va’yichal* in Exod. 32:11 is related to a Hebrew root connected with hope (*yod, chet, lamed*), as in, “Hope [*tochelet*, root, *yod, chet, lamed*] deferred sickens the heart...” (Prov. 13:12).⁶ If Rashi is correct, what light might this shed on the relationship between hope and humor in this midrash?

Laughter in Hell (CH 208-210)

Read the paragraphs below and discuss the questions that follow.

Some may find it surprising, but humor flourished during the Holocaust, even in the camps. Here is a joke recounted in Steve Lipman's classic *Laughter in Hell: The Use of Humor during the Holocaust*:

Two Jews had a plan to assassinate Hitler. They learned that he drove by a certain corner at noon each day, and they waited for him there with their guns well hidden. At exactly noon they were ready to shoot, but there was no Hitler. Five minutes later, nothing. Another five minutes went by, but no sign of Hitler. By 12:15 they had started to give up hope.

"My goodness," said one of the men. "I hope nothing's happened to him."⁷

- 1) How do you feel about events associated with the Holocaust being the subject of humor?
- 2) What makes this joke funny? How might this be a joke about hope itself?
- 3) Lipman reports that a psychoanalyst suggested that this kind of humor reverses the roles of the oppressed and the oppressor. How do you understand this?
- 4) Can you think of a particularly dark time in your own life when you used humor to help get through it?

Please Tell a Joke!

If you are using this study guide in a group setting, ask everyone to share a favorite joke. After each one, discuss ways in which that particular joke may reflect hope.

You may want to refer to the statement below from *Choosing Hope (CH 196)*:

Like an artist considering a landscape and choosing the proper vantage point from which to depict it, both hope and humor enable us to see a bit beyond what's staring us in the face. Both are often most palpable in times of duress because they provide the means to envision, or briefly enter, a more palatable world. Hope and humor involve taking a step back—even a small one—from our travails. This allows us to formulate a thoughtful response, rather than reacting on the basis of pure emotion, which often only exacerbates the situation.

¹ Harvey Cox *The Feast of Fools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 157.

² Jonathan Sacks, *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility* (New York: Schocken, 2005), 186.

³ A number of writers on Jewish humor have commented on this. See, for example, Arthur A. Berger, *The Genius of the Jewish Joke* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 32-35; and Ted Cohen, *Jokes: Philosophical Thoughts on Joking Matters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 52.

⁴ Based on Onkelos's Aramaic translation of the Bible, Rashi (on Gen. 17:17) distinguishes between Abraham's laughter, which he interprets as rejoicing, and Sarah's, described as sneering. For our purposes, the point is that Abraham and Sarah use the same Hebrew words when they speak of laughter. For a good treatment on humor and hope in the stories involving Isaac, see Joel S. Kaminsky, "Humor and the Theology of Hope: Isaac as a Humorous Figure," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 54, no. 4 (October, 2000): 363-75.

⁵ Exodus Rabbah 43:6. The midrash is based on Exod. 32:11: "But Moses implored (*va'yichal*) YHWH his God, saying, "Let not Your anger, YHWH, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with Your great power and with a mighty hand."

⁶ Note that according to the Brown-Driver-Briggs *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, the verb *yichal* (root: *chet, lamed, hey*) is not the same as *yachal* (root: *yod, chet, lamed*) which is connected with hope. However, Rashi (Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 55a) and Tosafot (BT Rosh Hashanah 16b) do connect *va'yichal* in Exod. 32:11 to *tochelet* (root: *yod, chet, lamed*)—as in "Hope [*tochelet*] deferred sickens the heart..." (Prov. 13:12). See also Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 32a and the Septuagint on Exod. 32:11.

⁷ Steve Lipman, *Laughter in Hell: The Use of Humor during the Holocaust* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1991), 16.