

The Zionist Ideas: A Guide for Synagogue Educators

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Part One: Our Common Educational Goals

Dear Rabbi and/or Synagogue Educator,

We are very excited to announce the launch of our new book *The Zionist Ideas*, a book we hope will serve as a valuable educational tool and contribute to the ongoing conversation surrounding compelling topics in the Jewish world. *The Zionist Ideas* is both a textbook and a guidebook - it includes excerpts from Zionist thinkers from the beginning of the modern movement until today, exploring opinions from across the religious, political, ideological and socioeconomic spectrum. This anthology of great Zionist thinkers enjoins enthusiasts all over the world to enter into and participate in this great exchange of ideas. This is where your role is essential.

We are launching two educational initiatives in conjunction with the launch of this book. First, Americans, Canadians, Brits, and Israelis have already signed up to host Zionist Salons - self-guided, text-based, communal conversations about “What Zionism means to me” in the twenty-first century. (On a practical level, the website www.zionistideas.com provides information and guides for leading different conversations.) To celebrate Israel’s 70th birthday this year, beyond the hail of falafel balls and mountains of blue and white cookies, let us join together to encourage fellow Jews to host Zionist Salons in their homes and around their board rooms, in their schools and in their shuls. We could offer them training sessions on how to facilitate a meaningful education event – or simply encourage them to make use of the step-by-step “how-to” guides found online.

Just as the city of Chicago a few years ago started a lovely initiative to have everyone read the same classic book during one designated month in the middle of the winter, wouldn’t it be grand to have all your congregants reading – and debating – *The Zionist Ideas* sometime this year, as the whole nation of Israel celebrates this most momentous occasion?

Additionally, we are offering more formal and rigorous intellectual interactions within in the synagogue – which this guide will address. This guide offers triggers for 10 three-part mini courses, which you may adapt for the needs of your own community as you see fit.

Our project surrounding *The Zionist Ideas* aims to emphasize two seemingly contradictory notions:

The first, that Zionism is a big tent. Within our diverse communities, from across the ideological and religious spectrum, Jews can find elements of Zionism that appeal to us, allowing us to contribute in our own unique way to the greatest Jewish project of our time.

The second is that this tent has both red lines (which we agree not to abrogate, such as negating Jewish peoplehood or statehood) and, more importantly, the tent also has blue-and-white lines, fundamentals upon which we all can agree, starting with the most basic definition of Zionism as the movement of Jewish national liberation. Our most basic and most inclusive definition of Zionism is as follows: We affirm that the Jews are a people with collective rights to establish a state in their homeland, Eretz Yisrael – and now that the state has been established, our job is not

just to defend it but to perfect it, while using it as a principal foundation for our Jewish identity, wherever we may live in the world.

The Zionist Ideas is structured around 18 chapters, plus an introduction. In a university setting, This textbook would be the basis of a 20-part course that would follow the book, chapter by chapter, with one concluding session. This guide assumes that such a model would be overambitious and unsustainable in a communal setting. Therefore, we offers a series of frameworks for Mini-courses that focus on different elements within the Zionist conversation. We hope that you may take some of these ideas and adapt them to the specific educational and intellectual needs of your community.

We fully understand the challenges and demands faced by communal leaders and educators today. Finding high-quality, attractive and inspiring educational content may often prove to be a difficult task. Therefore, we have set out a number of short courses (approximately three sessions each), based on *The Zionist Ideas*, that are aimed towards realistic educational opportunities within your schools or communities. Each session will be based on both textual reading and opinion-based conversation, providing opportunities for enhancing knowledge and enriching discourse. (And obviously, the more the merrier - feel free to mix and match).

The following is a partial list of suggestions for these Zionist educational seminars. The page numbers refer to the texts in *The Zionist Ideas*:

1. **Zionism: The Basics**
2. **What Caused Zionism: Anti-Semitism, Assimilation, or Idealism?**
3. **Israel: How Does This Country Reflect the Zionist Idea?**
4. **Three Zionist Dilemmas: Universalism vs. Particularism, Jewish State Vs Democratic State, Exceptionalism Vs Normality.**
5. **What is Identity Zionism?**
6. **How Can Proud Americans be Good Zionists too?**
7. **Zionism and Anti-Anti-Zionism Today.**
8. **Orthodox Zionism: Skeptics or Champions?**
9. **Conservative Zionism: Still Zionist After All These Years?**
10. **Reform Zionism: The Zionization of Reform Jewry**

1. **Zionism: The Basics.**

- a. Political Zionism and Labor Zionism - The Pioneers. This session involves a close reading of the earliest Zionist thinkers. Readings will include Theodor Herzl (p. 11-18) and A.D. Gordon (p. 49-54). What do you think motivated Herzl more -- escaping anti-Semitism or building a model Jewish democracy? How would he balance any tensions between Jewish tradition and modern democracy? Why was returning to the land so important to A.D. Gordon? Was Gordon's focus on pioneering a distraction from the Zionist agenda to save Jews and build a state -- or a true step toward its fulfillment?
- b. Revisionist and Religious - The upstart Zionisms. This sessions explores the more traditional, nationalistic and religious thinkers within the Zionist camp. Readings will include Ze'ev Jabotinsky (p. 67-74), Menachem Begin (p. 220-224) and Rabbi A.Y. Kook (p. 92-97). What is the main thrust of the early Revisionist Zionism? Do Menachem Begin's writings more closely resemble European Romanticism or hardline Nationalism? And how could Rabbi Kook's mystical redemptive ideas relate to other, more secular, forms of nationalism?
- c. Cultural and Identity Zionisms - the lifestyle Zionisms. This session seeks to go beyond questions of power and explore questions of who we are as a people and what we want the State of Israel to look like. Readings will include Ahad Ha-am (p. 105-112), Amos Oz (p. 190-194) and S.Y. Agnon (p. 275-277). What precisely distinguishes Cultural Zionism from political and religious Zionism? What is the relationship between

Judaism and Zionism according to Ahad Ha'am and Amos Oz? What does Agnon mean that he 'Considers himself born in Jerusalem' -- even though he wasn't?

2. **What caused Zionism: Anti-Semitism, Assimilation, or Idealism?** Is our support of Zionism based upon internal ideas and motivations or external threats? Each session should focus on a different explanation. Readings regarding anti-Semitism will include Leon Pinsker (p. 8-11), Theodor Herzl (p. 11-18), and Gershon Shaked (p. 282-284). To what extent do all three elements play a particular role? What element does fear play in the writings of Pinsker? How feasible was Herzl's vision and how does it relate to the contemporary State of Israel? How much of Shaked's ideas hinge on his perception of the surrounding gentile culture? Readings regarding Assimilation can include Herman Wouk (p. 313-314) and Anne Roiphe (p. 287-289). Readings regarding Idealism can include Irwin Cotler and Gadi Taub (p. 352-356).

3. **Israel: How does this country reflect the Zionist Idea?** Much like the United States, Israel is the product of an idea, and of a series of intense debates. One way of understanding Zionism and the country it produced is by looking at some of those fundamental ideas – and then tracing how they are expressed in Israel today. Throughout these sessions, we will analyze both the obvious facts (such as Hebrew constituting a building block of Israeli identity and Jewish national revival) as well as other, more contentious ideas, like the search for a proper balance between Synagogue and State. These sessions focus upon five essential ideas: Jewish self-defense, Ingathering of Exiles, Israel as a Values Nation, Hebrew, and a Jewish democracy.
 - Jewish Self-Defense: Readings will include J.H. Brenner (p.42-44), Ber Borochov (p.47-49) and Menachem Begin (p.220-224). How do each of those texts relate to Israel's role in fulfilling Zionism's prime directive: to defend Jews against anti-Semitism. How does Brenner's diagnosis of the Jewish condition relate to the need for self-defence? Do Borochov's socialist teachings alleviate the problems of anti-semitism? How? Can you explain what is so important about Begin's understanding of the phenomenon of 'the fighting Jew'?
 - Ingathering of Exiles: Readings will include Isaiah Berlin (p.154-157), The Law of Return (p.152-153), David Edan (p.236-237), Albert Memmi (p. 164-167), and Erez Biton (p.455-458). How do each of those texts address Israel's role in welcoming Jews from all over the world? Do you think Berlin and Biton's expectations or hopes regarding the society created by Jewish State were naive, optimistic or readily achievable? Do you think that the contents of the Law of Return is justified in all circumstances, or only in its specific post-Holocaust historical circumstance? What convinced Albert Memmi to finally adopt a Nationalist understanding of the Jewish people? Is David Edan's ideology conceivable without its religious trappings and background?
 - Israel as a Values Nation: Readings will include David Ben-Gurion (p. 147-152), Golda Meir (p. 185-187), Leonard Fein (p. 200-202), and Ruth Gavison (p.367-369). How do each of those texts relate to Israel's role in serving as a light unto the nations? What are the values preached by David Ben-Gurion's "Jewish Revolution" and Golda Meir's "Nationalism"? And what do you think Fein's intentions are when

he speaks of the importance of “protecting the Jewish Soul”? How does Gavison manage to reconcile potential contradictions within her worldview?

- **Hebrew:** Readings will include Eliezer Ben Yehudah (p.104-106) and A.M. Klein (p.270-272). How do each of those texts relate to Israel’s role in reviving Hebrew? What did Hebrew do for Israel? For the Jewish people? What is the meaning of Ben-Yehuda’s question ‘is the language up to it’? Why is this important? What is the significance of all the natural metaphor and imagery in Klein’s work?
- **Jewish Democracy:** Readings will include Meir Bar-Ilan (p.99-101), Yeshayahu Leibowitz (p.241-243) and Yuli Tamir (p.342-344). How do each of those texts illuminate Israel’s religious and democratic dilemmas? Is Bar-Ilan suggesting that Israel be a Jewish theocracy? Why does Leibowitz, a religious Jew himself, call the secularity of the State “essential”? How does Tamir conceive of the cultural role of the State?

4. Three Zionist Dilemmas: Universalism vs. Particularism, Jewish State Vs Democratic State, Exceptionalism Vs Normalism. This group of sessions shall explore the three paradoxes at the heart of Zionism, and various perspectives on these issues may be drawn from a huge array of Zionist thinkers. Each of these discussions really may be extended to fill several hours by themselves!

1) To what extent does Zionism emphasize Jewish particularity, and to what extent may it be reconciled with cosmopolitanism or universalism? Readings will include: Ze’ev Maghen (p.344-346) and Letty Cottin Pogrebin (p.284-286). How important is the tribal element in Maghen’s conception of Jewishness? How does Pogrebin reconcile her universalism with her Zionist or Feminist identity?

2) How “Jewish” must the Jewish State be, particularly when Jewish notions conflict with Democratic values? Readings will include Ruth Gavison (p.367-369) and Rabbi Yaakov Medan (p. 422-424). What are the different ideological assumptions, or starting points, of Gavison and Medan? Are the equally ‘Jewish’ and ‘Zionist’?

3) Is the point of the Jewish State to be a ‘light unto the nations’, held to a higher moral standard than everyone else, or is the Jewish State supposed to be a State like all others, indistinguishable from other young democracies? Readings will include The Declaration of Independence (p.145-147) and Amos Oz (p.190-194). To what extent is the Declaration written with upon the assumption of exceptionalism? or normalcy? And how does Amos Oz understand this tension within the Zionist idea?

5. What is identity Zionism? These sessions seek to explore the ways in which Zionism may be commensurate with several other identities, such as Feminist, Environmentalist, or Racial Minority. Readings will include the works of Jonathan Sacks (p.476-479), A.B. Yehoshua (p.451-455) and Einat Ramon (p.467-469). How large a part do you think Zionism should play within the self-identity of a Jew? Is Zionism always going to be exclusionary, to a certain degree? How does Sacks understand the role Israel plays in the identity of a Jew worldwide? Does A.B. Yehoshua think that Jews living in the Diaspora are somehow not quite as ‘Jewish’? How does Ramon manage to synthesize her disparate forms of Identity?

6. **How can proud Americans be Good Zionists too?** Over the past century, there has developed a rich history of important and proudly American Jewish thinkers defending the Zionist cause. To what extent can one be a Zionist from a distance? What should be the relationship between Zionists at home and abroad? Must the State of Israel heed the advice of ‘Armchair Zionists’? Readings will include Louis Brandeis (p.128-131), Jacob Blaustein / David Ben-Gurion (p.302-304), Simon Rawidowicz (p.304-306) and Alan Dershowitz (p.479-481). Do you think Brandeis is correct that multiple national loyalties are possible? Do you think Blaustein’s response to Ben-Gurion ought to be the standard American response to those who insist that they make Aliyah en masse? To what degree do you think that the Jews in the U.S.A. can or should serve as the ‘Babylon’ of Rawidowicz? Is Dershowitz’s model of communal symbiosis the same as Rawidowicz? Can you identify any similarities or differences?

7. **Zionism and anti-Anti-Zionism today:** How Should Zionism be formulated in the Twenty-First Century? How can we construe the Zionist project as an important and progressive cause, deserving of the attention and support of the Civilised world? To what extent should we be proactive in pushing the case for Zionism worldwide? We will analyse the modern case for Zionism. Readings will include Ellen Willis (p.491-495), Gil Troy (p.440-443) and Yair Lapid (p.443-446). Why does Willis diverge from her cosmopolitan peers on the issues of Zionism and Israel? What are a) the most positive and b) the most anti-negative reasons for Zionist identity that you can find in the excerpts from Gil Troy and Yair Lapid?

8. **Orthodox Zionism: Skeptics or Champions?** These sessions will explore the various strains of religious Zionism, and how the State of Israel may be conceived to have religious value. Which kind of Religious Zionism is most compelling and meaningful in your eyes? Should the State of Israel be conceived as a mystical renewal? Should we focus upon its religious achievements, its miraculous survival against all odds, or its opportunities for fulfillment of religious commandments? To what extent ought we to encourage an integration between synagogue and state? Readings will include Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik (p.238-241), Rabbi Z.Y. Kook (p.243-244) and Yeshayahu Leibowitz (p.241-243). What kind of differences can you discern between the historical and legalistic Religious Zionism of Rabbi Soloveitchik and the mystical and cosmic approach of Rabbi Kook? To what degree can Leibowitz be considered a Religious Zionist?

9. **Conservative Zionism: still Zionist After all these years?** The Conservative movement has travelled a long way over the past century, and the movement’s attitudes towards Zionism has equally shifted over time. These sessions will explore the evolution of the Conservative relationship with the Zionist cause. To what extent does the Conservative movement retain a consistent outlook regarding Zionism? Is their Zionism more religious, cultural or nationalistic? How has their outlook evolved over time? Readings will include Solomon Schechter (p.126-128), Milton Steinberg (p.137-139), A.J. Heschel (p.245-247), and Arnold Eisen (p.433-435). What does Schechter mean by Zionism constituting a ‘bulwark against assimilation’? What are the many kinds of Zionism that Steinberg advocates? How would you contrast the spiritual and metaphorical approach of Heschel

and the practical and institutional ideas of Eisen? Do either one of them represent the 'genuine' Conservative movement more than the other?

10. **Reform Zionism: the Zionization of Reform Jewry.** From hostile skeptics to enthusiastic supporters, the Reform movement has also embarked on a remarkable transformation with regards its relationship to Zionism. These sessions will consider this evolution of attitude toward the Jewish State. To what extent does Zionism clash with the Reform movements' more universalistic outlook? Is there something uniquely "Reform" to the Reform Zionist texts here - how does it differ from Orthodox and Conservative Zionism? How can we compare the Reform movement's attitude to Israel before and after the declaration of the State? And note the bold move here -- Reform and Conservative rabbis are included in "Religious Zionism" -do they belong in that school of thought, or in Diaspora Zionism - why and why not? Readings will include 'A Statement of Principles of Reform Judaism' (p.497-499), Eugene Borowitz (p.310-313), and David Ellenson (436-438). Why do you think the Statement includes the sentence "Israeli and Diaspora Jewry should remain vibrant and independent communities"? Do you agree with Borowitz that Israel became the new Jewish 'Sacred Cow' in America? what are the implications of this? Do you think that the Reform movement has, in the words of Ellenson, successfully maintained the dialectical tension between universalism and nationalism? Is this, in fact, achievable at all?

Part III: Three Zionist Salons

The following few pages offer a model of three classic versions of the ‘Zionist Salon’, that is, an educational conference of textual study and group conversation, facilitated by a moderator or educator.

A) Salon One - Zionist Identity Salon

Admittedly, this first sample is an extended and in-depth example of the Salon; many educators would choose a smaller, less text-oriented version of the Salon, or perhaps a less comprehensive topic. Please take a few minutes to review this fundamental Zionist conversation, introducing the layperson to the six schools of thought within Zionism - and see the kind of format and text-based discussion that may be facilitated through these Salons.

Introduction (to be read out by Moderator or participant):

Many people today identify as a Zionist. This label is proudly worn by people from all corners of the world and from all parts of the religious, political and cultural spectrum. However, it must be understood that Zionism today means something very different to when the term was first coined over a century ago. For many years, Zionism involved a tireless battle towards the creation of a State of Israel, as the founding fathers had envisioned. For many years after that, the battle of Zionism became to ensure the survival - political, military and economic - of the fledgling Jewish State.

However, many of the issues that concerned and motivated earlier generations of Zionist are not relevant to us today. Israel exists; moreover, it possesses a strong military and a durable economy, and there do not seem to be immediate existential threats to its survival. Moreover, the world has changed over the past decades, and the State of Israel has changed with it. Suddenly, a new set of questions are appearing on the intellectual horizon of every thinking Zionist: What does it mean to be a Zionist in this day and age? What are the big issues that need to be resolved to ensure the flourishing of the State of Israel? And how can we formulate a robust and exciting Zionism for the 21st Century?

Fortunately, we are not alone in being confronted with this question. Some of the most profound and important thinkers on the contemporary Jewish scene have also given some thought to this question, and have come up with a wide array of fascinating answers. Hopefully, through reading and discussing some of the following contemporary texts, we will be able to arrive at a more considered, complex and robust definition of our own Zionism.

As we will be going through the sources, we will be asking pointed questions regarding its content. Additionally, we will also attempt to analyse these authors’ viewpoints, and categorize each thinker into one of the six classic Zionist schools of thought. A quick refresher for what these six categories entail.

Political Zionism: Theodor Herzl’s pragmatic yet utopian Zionism, his nineteenth-century Romantic liberal nationalism harnessed toward establishing a democratic Jewish state in Palestine, the Jewish homeland, prioritizing securing a state to save Jewish lives.

Labor Zionism: The utopian yet pragmatic Zionism of the kibbutz and the moshav championed rebuilding the Jewish self by working the land. Thinkers such as A. D. Gordon and Berl Katznelson challenged the intellectual, urbanized, ghettoized European Jew to take up the mission of developing the agriculture of Israel, while passionately advocating Marxism and universalism. Although distinctly secular, Labor Zionism fostered an enduring love for *Eretz Yisra’el*, the Land of Israel.

Revisionist Zionism: Ze’ev Jabotinsky’s pragmatic, passionate, yet classically liberal democratic Zionism. Revisionists considered themselves Herzl’s purest followers, accentuating the political goal of achieving a Jewish state as soon as possible to save as many Jews as possible. “Eliminate the Diaspora, or the Diaspora surely will eliminate you,” Jabotinsky warned bluntly, characteristically, in 1937. Although caricatured as a result as lacking in vision, these European Romantics were passionate about peoplehood, their common past, and their homeland.

Religious Zionism: This spiritual Zionism, harmonizing Jewish Orthodoxy and Zionism, rooted Zionism in Judaism’s traditional land-based nationalism. According to adherents such as Abraham Isaac Kook, Jews could only fulfill all the *Mitzvot* (commandments) in their homeland. Seeing the political state as the pathway to mystical salvation, religious Zionists accepted their secular allies. The State of Israel is perceived as “the foundation of God’s throne in the world.”

Cultural Zionism: Ahad Ha’am’s more secular spiritual Zionism called for cultivating the Jewish homeland as a national cultural center to revive Judaism and Jewish pride. With a literate Eastern European Jew’s love of Jewish culture, Ahad Ha’am envisioned Israel as the Jewish people’s spiritual, intellectual, cultural, and religious center. Israel would be the center of the wheel, connecting together all the disparate Diaspora communities.

Diaspora Zionism: Louis Brandeis and Henrietta Szold developed this philanthropic, support-oriented Zionism reconciling American patriotism with Jewish nationalism. They emphasized Zionism’s liberal democratic character while broadening the definition of a Zionist to include supporters of the Zionist idea. In the Diaspora, Zionism offered—and often became—a recipe for Jewish renewal the American migration lacked.

We have provided a number of sources here from contemporary thinkers currently active in the Zionist or Israeli scene. We have arranged them into the six classic categories of Zionist thought, one thinker for each category. The following quotes are arranged as they appear in Gil Troy’s book *The Zionist Ideas*.

Another way to approach this conversation is to simply introduce the texts without the labels at first - but in that order. After reading the six texts -- read the short descriptions of the 6 schools of thought - and then place the six into their respective schools. (Of course, feel free to argue about

whether each selection is appropriate for that school - and even if those 6 categories make sense to you.)

Political Zionism:

Michael Oren is a Member of Knesset for the Kulanu party. A former fellow of the Shalem Centre and former Israeli Ambassador to the U.S.A., he is the author of numerous books on American Foreign Policy and the Middle East.

I grew up just about the only Jewish kid on the block, and the almost daily trouncing I took from the neighborhood gang taught me a great deal about power and the hazards of lacking it... My Zionism was less Herzlian than Schwartzian - as in the beat generation poet Delmore Schwartz. If Herzl said, "If you will it, it is no dream" then Schwartz said (as the title of his 1937 short story put it) "In dreams begin responsibilities. "I wanted the responsibility. So I moved to Israel, became a citizen, and joined the army. I put on those red paratrooper boots the first time and was overwhelmed by the realization that I was a member of the first Jewish fighting force in 2,000 years, a Jew from New Jersey lucky enough to live at a time when I could serve a sovereign Jewish state... Today, as an Israeli, I must confront questions that derive from having power. I had to decide, for instance, whether to support the construction of a fence which may provide greater security against terrorist attacks, but which evokes the very ghetto walls that Zionism aspired to topple.

Michael Oren, *Jews and the Challenge of Sovereignty*, (2008)

Guiding Questions:

1. Importantly, Oren equates Zionism with responsibility. What kind of responsibility do you think he means here? And how important is this concept to Zionism in general?
2. There are many questions regarding Israel's use of power in the 70 years since its creation. What kind of philosophy regarding power is Oren advocating for here? How might such a worldview be conceived by young Jews today?

Labor Zionism:

Stav Shaffir is the youngest female Member of Knesset in Israel's history, having been elected as a member of the Labour party in the 2013 elections when she was 27. An outspoken advocate for social justice, she is considered a leading voice for the younger generation of Israelis. Her areas of advocacy include social housing, LGBT rights, and egalitarian prayer space at the Western Wall.

Real Zionism means dividing the budget equally among all the citizens. Real Zionism is taking care of the weak. Real Zionism is solidarity, not only in battle but in everyday life, day to day in everyday life. To watch out for each other. That is Israeliness. That is Zionism.

Stav Shaffir, Speech in Knesset, January (2015)

Guiding Questions:

1. Shaffir clearly thinks that there is a strong link between social justice and Zionism. Why? What is the nature of this connection?
 2. Is there anything specifically Jewish in Shaffir's approach here? How could such a thinker possibly understand the relationship between religion and State in Israel? And what influence might that have on contemporary government policy?
 3. Can one formulate a Zionism without the principles that Shaffir states here? What would be lacking?
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Revisionist Zionism:

Israel Harel is a regular columnist for Haaretz. He is the founder of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, which he headed until 1995, and has been a journalist in Israel since the 1960s.

What do you need this for, ask journalists from abroad. There is only one answer: we are here because this is the only place in the world where Jews are sovereign; where, in their own country, they can take in other Jews, like those from Ethiopia, still suffering from persecution; where they can speak, study and write in their own language; and where, without feeling like a minority, they can uphold the morality of the prophets...

A negotiated agreement involving the removal of settlements will not end the conflict. As far as the Arabs are concerned, the conflict will only stop when the Jews of Tel Aviv or Petach Tikva are removed. This is Arafat's "Strategy of Stages".

Israel Harel, We Are Here To Stay (2001)

Guiding Questions:

1. Why is it so important for Harel that Jews not 'feel like a minority'? What does minority status do to Jewish communities around the world today? If Jews can continue to live peacefully in countries where their minority status is protected, what is the need for Zionism in the 21st Century?
 2. Harel insists that, historically, the Arabs will not accept a Jewish State of any size. Is this still relevant to Zionism today? Is it still important how we are treated by our Arab neighbours?
 3. Can the Jewish State survive if the arab neighbours keep on waging war? More interestingly, can the Jewish State survive in a peaceful Middle-East?
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Religious Zionism:

Rabbi Yaakov Medan is the dean of Yeshivat Har Etzion (Gush), a flagship Religious-Zionist institution in Alon Shevut. He is an expert on the Bible, and is one of the most influential Rabbis in the contemporary Religious-Zionist sphere.

The Jews are one family, the offspring of our three patriarchs and four matriarchs, a single historical unit. The Jewish people, delivered out of Egypt by the Almighty, joined in a mutual covenant with God on Mount Sinai. The Jewish people entered this covenant as a people and not as individuals, and the commandments we keep have a collective, not individual, significance. This is the meaning of the mutual responsibility that connects all Jews, which refers not only to a shared struggle for existence and mutual aid, but also to the collective fulfillment of the commandments required to uphold the Sinai covenant. Mutual responsibility became even more powerful once a distinct association was established for the sake of a single purpose, a single ship: the State of Israel. In my view, this association must be for the sake of Heaven.

Rabbi Yaakov Medan, the Medan-Gavison pact.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why is the religious history that he invokes (the Biblical Patriarchs, etc.) so important to his worldview.
2. Rabbi Medan mentions the commandments given at Mount Sinai, yet most Jews today do not adhere to them. What is the place of Jewish practice in a Zionism of the 21st Century? Are they merely a relic of the past, or can they be used for the future?
3. In Rabbi Medan's worldview, what does the term 'Mutual Responsibility' mean? How can it be used in a more general Zionist sense? Must it have religious connotations?

Cultural Zionism:

A.B. Yehoshua is an author, novelist, critic, essayist and Professor of Literature at Haifa University. He is a well-respected public intellectual in Israel and abroad. His works have been translated into 28 languages.

For me, Jewish values are not located in a fancy spice box that is only opened to release its pleasing fragrance on Shabbat and holidays, but in the daily reality of dozens of problems through which Jewish values are shaped and defined, for better or worse. A religious Israeli Jew also deals with a depth and breadth of life issues that is incomparably larger and more substantial than those with which his religious counterpart in New York or Antwerp must contend. Am I denouncing their incomplete identity? I am neither denouncing nor praising. It's just a fact that requires no legitimating from me, just as my identity requires no legitimating from them. This Jewish-Israeli identity has to contend with all the elements of life via the binding and sovereign framework of a territorially defined state. And therefore the extent of its reach into life is immeasurably fuller and broader and more meaningful than the Jewishness of an American Jew, whose important and meaningful life decisions are made within the framework of his American nationality or

citizenship. His Jewishness is voluntary and deliberate, and he may calibrate its pitch in accordance with his needs.

The Basics of Zionism, Homeland, and Being a Total Jew (adapted from various essays, 2017)

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the essential differences between Israeli and non-Israeli Jews in the eyes of A.B. Yehoshua?
2. Why is it important, for Yehoshua, that the “Israeli Jewish identity must contend with all the elements of life”? What part does that play in his Zionism?
3. Is running a State more “Jewish” than being a guest in someone else’s State? Is the classic image of the “Wandering Jew” less Jewish than the current Israeli Jew? How does that impact our Zionist outlook?

Diaspora Zionism:

Alan Dershowitz is an American legal scholar and author. He was the youngest full professor in the history of Harvard Law School, where he spent most of his career. The author of over thirty books, he has spent many decades defending Israel and Zionism in the public sphere.

I am a committed Zionist. I believe passionately in the Jewish state. If I had several lives to live, one of them would be as an Israeli. I hope to continue to spend a considerable amount of time, even more as I approach retirement, in Israel. But I am an American, and I love America and believe in its future. I am thankful that as a Jew, I always have the Israeli option available to me and my family if the militia, the skinheads, or the Farrakhans were ever to come to power here... The time has come to articulate a new, more positive Zionism, responsive not to the anachronistic realities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but to the new realities of the (hopefully) post-Anti-Semitic era of Jewish life in the twenty-first century...

We must, of course, never forget the recent pervasiveness of anti-Semitism and the possibility of its recurrence. But we must also prepare ourselves for the prospect, admittedly unique in Jewish history, of an era without external enemies... Israel - like Judaism itself - must remain a positive option to be freely chosen out of love, not merely a negative response to hatred and fear.

Alan Dershowitz, *The Vanishing American Jew* (1997)

Guiding Questions:

1. Dershowitz states that he sees himself as an American, not an Israeli. What effect does this have on his Zionism? Can one be considered a fully committed Zionist if one does not make Aliyah, or send one’s children to serve in the I.D.F.?
2. Should a Jew who lives in the Diaspora be listened to when it comes to deciding Israel’s policies? Should he/she have a vote on election day?
3. Dershowitz talks of an Israel that is post-Anti-Semitism. Do you think that Israel and Zionism could flourish in a world that loves Jews? Would Israel still be important, or even necessary, for the Jewish nation?

4. Is the voice of Diaspora Jewry important for a 21st Century Zionism? If so, in what way?

Final thoughts:

While reading and discussing these texts, you will have noticed that these thinkers all espouse different types of Zionism. Whilst they were all undoubtedly supportive of the basic idea of Zionism (a sovereign Jewish state in our ancient homeland), they all approach Zionism from different perspectives, and often draw different conclusions regarding the nature of Zionism.

All of these thinkers tell a specific part of the story. All of them contribute an important strand to the grand tapestry that is Zionism. More importantly all of these thinkers challenge us to ask some penetrating questions about our own formulations of Zionism:

- Is the State of Israel only to be used as an escape route for Jews, to be used for convenience, or must all Jews contribute towards it?
- Must the State of Israel always battle for survival? What are the prospects for the State if peace is achieved?
- Must Israel always have a religious component, or is a secular state more desirable?
- Does Zionism just speak to your Jewish identity – or to your broader identity as a human being? In other words, do you compartmentalize your Zionist identity, or does it help you integrate different factors, such as being a Jew or a human being?
- Does Zionism have a future outside of the State of Israel?

All of these questions are important for formulating our Zionism that can compete in the marketplace of Ideas in the 21st Century. Zionism must become a robust, optimistic, complex, multi-faceted, exciting and pride-inducing ideology. That is our mission.

Now, it's your turn.

After all that we have discussed today, it is important not to allow the final question of “**What does Zionism mean today?**” to go unanswered. It is for you to answer that question for yourselves, in as few or as many words as you would like:

What Zionism means to me:

Salon Two - A Zionist Salon For Those Wary of Attending One

This is a conversation for those uncomfortable with the word “Zionism” or attending a “Zionist Salon.” It is essential for this conversation to work that everyone be open to listening to one another, and learning from one another. It also helps to set a friendly, even light tone – and to acknowledge that, at the end we may have to agree to disagree.

Introduction - To be read out by the moderator or participant:

Welcome to this group discussion about Judaism, Israel and our collective future.

Before embarking upon this conversation, there are four basic assumptions that we are going to make about our topic at hand.

One: that whatever missteps Israel the country – like any country -- has made, Zionism as a movement, an idea, a value, and a word, has been demonized and systematically delegitimized. Note how the United Nations—the forum of world nationalisms -- singled out only one form of nationalism, Jewish nationalism, and called it racism).

Second, that ironically, most people bothering to sit down and talk about this topic will have at least some positive association with Israel – especially in the age of Birthright when so many young people and their families have visited there – and, due to the tight-knit nature of the Jewish world, many of us know so many Israelis.

Third, that, in a fair world, the word “Zionism” would be less problematic than the word “Israel.” Zionism is the idea that we are a people with rights to our homeland and the movement first to establish a state on that homeland and now to perfect that state; Israel is a country that, like all countries, does good things and does bad things. If you are critical of Israel in some ways, you’re a thinking human being - whereas if you are an anti-Zionist, you reject Israel’s basic rights to exist.

Fourth, consider the “Trumpportunity” -- that, in the Age of Trump, the 77 percent of American Jews who hate Donald Trump but remain proudly, fiercely American, understand that you can be very critical of your government, of your country’s leaders, yet still remain patriotic, still feel that country is yours. Why can’t we be critical of Israel, without question our love for it, too?

So, underlying this whole conversation is the real question – as a Jew, do you feel deeply connected and committed to Israel, the Jewish democratic state, the great Jewish people project of the 21st century? If so, you stick with it, because we are one Jewish people indivisible and intertwined despite our differences (and nearly half our people live there now). And you can use Zionism – or at least some schools of Zionist thought – to help perfect that state.

That is why in 1948, we talked about the Zionist *Idea* – that powerless Jews need a state as refuge, immediately, and as an opportunity to flourish and express Jewish values long-term. Today, seventy years later, we talk about the Zionist *IdeaS* with an “s” added, to welcome people from left to right, religious and non-religious, old and young into the conversation about what Zionism

and Israel can mean to me as Jew, as a person, even if I never visit – and how some of these ideas can help Israel become a model of Jewish nationalism and liberal nationalism – as it seeks to be in its Declaration of Independence.

So, after this introduction, we can safely say that the most important thing you can do is what you are doing right now - get involved, become part of the story, add your voice to the ongoing conversation regarding the Jewish Future.

Instructions for the Moderator:

I. As a warm up, start by having everyone around the room introduce themselves and say their favorite Israeli – it could be a friend or relative, a celebrity or a leader, an historical figure or even a fictional character. Note, when it's done – that people relaxed, that the association with Israel was multi-dimensional, that it went far beyond politics, the Kotel, Bibi, and Palestinians.

II. Ask how it might have been different if you asked who is your favorite “Zionist” – or simply ask if the word “Zionism” would evoke the same feelings as the word “Israeli” did. You will probably uncover ignorance – many American Jews can't name a Zionist- and discomfort – many are likely to connect Zionism, more than Israel, to occupation, Palestinians, etc –when it should be the other way around. (Another way into this is to compare what the words “Jew” or “Judaism” evoke, then the word “Israeli,” then the words “Zionist” or “Zionism”).

III. Read two definitions of Zionism – A.B. Yehoshua's and Gil Troy's (in the introduction) – Compare and contrast. What do both have in common? Ultimately, they all rest on the formula of the great Russian Refusenik Natan Sharansky, who believes that all people want to belong and want to be free – it's about identity and freedom, it's about Jewish and democratic – those are the two strands in the Zionist DNA.

IV. Read Amos Oz's line: my Zionism “is hard and complicated”; Leonard Fein on the joys of risking “a collective nervous breakdown“ by being two kinds of Jews, two kinds of Zionists; and Letty Cottin Pogrebin – Zionism as “fueled by the fires of self-determination” and “affirmative action for the Jewish people.” What do they mean - how do they help advance our understanding of Zionism? Does their acknowledgment of complexity make things easier – note how frequently others try to simplify the conversation about Zionism – while recognizing how complicated our ties are, say, to America. Can't we be equally loyal – and critical – regarding our homeland and home/land of our birth?

V. Read Gil Troy, Stav Shaffir and Natan Sharansky: What's the power of "solidarity" as Shaffir calls it -- of "identity" and "peoplehood" as Sharansky calls it? How do you balance identity and freedom – universalism and particularism as Sharansky describes? How do we bring pride back to the word "Zionist" – is it on Israel or on us.

VI. If you have time and want to go more political, read Ellen Willis, "I am an anti-anti-Zionist" (and every facilitator should read it before the session) – see

- a. how unfairly Israel has been treated, for all its faults*
- b. what a threat the attack against Israel is to Willis's progressive identity*
- c. how for all her love as a "rootless cosmopolitan" of Freud, Marx, and Spinoza, for all her denials that she isn't a Zionist, she endorses Zionism, accepting Jewish peoplehood, Israel's existence – and the Law of Return.*

VI. Go back to the opening – how do you integrate the emotional ties to Israel many of us have with these conceptual building blocks? Did the conversation help – explain your Zi-anxiety – or overcome it?

VII. End if you so choose – by writing your one-line elevator pitch to explain to a friend: "Zionism is" ... or even "Zionism means to me..."

Gil Troy - Introduction to 'The Zionist Ideas' (2018):

Building toward Israel's establishment in 1948, the Zionist movement had to convince the world—and the skeptical Jewish supermajority—of three Zionist assumptions: First, the European Enlightenment's attempts to reduce Judaism just to a religion failed. The Jewish people always needed more than a synagogue as communal space. In modern times, Jews' unique national-religious fusion earned them collective rights to statehood, somewhere. Second, the Land of Israel, the ancestral Jewish homeland, was the logical, legitimate, and viable place to relaunch that Jewish national project. And third, restoring Jewish sovereignty there was a pressing priority, to save the long-oppressed Jews—and let them rejuvenate, spawning a strong, proud, idealistic New Jew.

In short then, Zionism assumes that (a) the Jews are a people; (b) as a people the Jews have collective rights to their homeland Eretz Yisrael; and (c) like other peoples, they had the right to establish a state in at least part of that homeland in 1948 – and now, their mission is to perfect it.

So, after realizing this primal Zionist idea in 1948, Zionism evolved. The Jewish national liberation movement now sought to defend and perfect the state—understanding, as the Israeli author A. B. Yehoshua writes, that

"A Zionist is a person who accepts the principle that the State of Israel doesn't belong solely to its citizens, but to the entire Jewish people."

As Israel's builders steadied the state, this second-stage Zionism revolved around the question, What kind of nation should Israel be? In today's third stage, with Israel safe, prosperous, thriving, yet still assailed, Zionism's torchbearers are trying to clarify for the world three politically unpopular assumptions: First, the Jews' status as what the philosopher Michael Walzer calls "an anomalous people," with its unique religious and national overlap, does not diminish Jews' collective rights to their homeland or the standard benefits enjoyed by every nation-state, particularly security and legitimacy. Second, the Palestinians' contesting land claims – whatever one thinks of them, from left to right -- do not negate the Jewish title to Israel. Third, Israel has a dual mission: to save Jewish bodies and redeem the Jewish soul. As Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion said, "Israel cannot just be a refuge. . . . it has to be much, much more."

Amos Oz (The Meaning of Homeland, 1967)

I cannot use such words as "the promised land" or "the promised borders," because I do not believe in the one who made the promise. Happy are those who do: their Zionism is simple and self-evident. Mine is hard and complicated. I also have no use for the hypocrites who quickly resort to the promise and the promiser, whenever their Zionism runs into an obstacle and into the inner contradiction. I am a Zionist in all that concerns the redemption of the Jews, but not when it comes to the redemption of the Holy Land. . . .

Leonard Fein (Days of Awe, 1982)

There are two kinds of Jews in the world. There is the kind of Jew who detests war and violence, who believes that fighting is not "the Jewish way," who willingly accepts that Jews have their own and higher standards of behavior. . . . And there is the kind of Jew who thinks we have been passive long enough, who is convinced that it is time for us to strike back at our enemies, to reject once and for all the role of victim, who willingly accepts that Jews cannot afford to depend on favors, that we must be tough and strong.

And the trouble is, most of us are both kinds of Jew. . .

There are two kinds of Zionists in the world: most of us are both. We want to be normal, we want to be special: we want to be a light unto the nations, we want to be a nation like all the others. . . . I vastly prefer a people that chooses to risk a collective nervous breakdown, as we do, by endorsing both visions, both versions. . .

Letty Cottin Pogrebin (Deborah, Golda and Me, 1991)

Zionism is to Jews what feminism is to women. Zionism began as a national liberation movement and has become an ongoing struggle for Jewish solidarity, pride, and unity. Similarly, feminism, which began as a gender-liberation movement, has become an ongoing struggle for women's solidarity, pride, and unity. . . . Both movements are fueled by the fires of self-determination. . . . If feminists can understand why history entitles lesbians to separatism, or minorities and women to

affirmative action, we can understand why history entitles Jews to “preferential” safe space. To me, Zionism is simply an affirmative action plan on a national scale. Just as legal remedies are justified in reparation for racism and sexism, the Law of Return to Israel is justified, if not by Jewish religious and ethnic claims, then by the intransigence of worldwide antisemitism. . . . Andrea Dworkin put it brilliantly: “In the world I’m working for, nation states will not exist. But in the world I live in, I want there to be an Israel.”

Gil Troy (2001,2008) Why I am a Zionist

A century ago, Zionism revived pride in the label “Jew”; today, Jews must revive pride in the label “Zionist.” . . .

Zionists must not allow their enemies to define and slander the movement. No nationalism is pure, no movement is perfect, no state ideal. . . . Zionism remains legitimate, inspiring, and relevant . . . offering an identity anchor in a world of dizzying choices—and a roadmap toward national renewal.

I am a Zionist because I am a Jew—and without recognizing Judaism’s national component, I cannot explain its unique character. Judaism is a world religion bound to one homeland, shaping a people whose holy days revolve around the Israeli agricultural calendar, ritualize theological concepts, and relive historic events. Only in Israel can a Jew fully live in Jewish space and by Jewish time.

I am a Zionist because I share the past, present, and future of my people, the Jewish people. Our nerve endings are uniquely intertwined. When one of us suffers, we share the pain; when many of us advance communal ideals together, we—and the world—benefit.

Stav Shaffir (2015)

Occupy Zionism!: Real Zionism means dividing the budget equally among all the citizens. Real Zionism is taking care of the weak. Real Zionism is solidarity, not only in battle but in everyday life, day to day in everyday life. To watch out for each other. That is Israeliness. That is Zionism.

Natan Sharansky (2018)

The Zionist idea gave me—and millions of others—a meaningful identity. In June 1967, when I was nineteen, the call from Jerusalem—“The Temple Mount Is in Our Hands”—penetrated the Iron Curtain. Democratic Israel’s surprising victory in the Six Day War, defeating Arab dictatorships threatening to destroy it, inspired many of us all over the world to become active participants in Jewish history. This notion that the Jews are a people with collective rights to

establish a Jewish state in our ancient homeland, the Land of Israel, connected us to something more important than simple physical survival. Forging a mystical link with our people, we discovered identity, or as we call it, “peoplehood.” Suddenly we Soviet Jews, Jews of silence, robbed of our heritage by the Soviet regime, realized there is a country that called us its children....

The rediscovery of my identity, my community, my people, gave me the strength to fight for my rights, for the rights of other Jews, and for the rights of others, allying me with dissidents fighting communist tyranny. I discovered that this synthesis of the universal, the democratic, with the particularist, the nationalist, is central to the Zionist idea.

Ellen Willis: Is There Still a Jewish Question? I’m an Anti-Anti-Zionist (2003)

I’m not a Zionist—rather I’m a quintessential Diaspora Jew, a child of Freud, Marx, and Spinoza. I hold with rootless cosmopolitanism: from my perspective the nation-state is a profoundly problematic institution, a nation-state defined by ethnic or other particularist criteria all the more so. And yet I count myself an anti-anti-Zionist. This is partly because the logic of anti-Zionism in the present political context entails an unprecedented demand for an existing state—one, moreover, with popular legitimacy and a democratically elected government—not simply to change its policies but to disappear. It’s partly because I can’t figure out what large numbers of displaced Jews could have or should have done after 1945, other than parlay their relationship with Palestine and the (ambivalent) support of the West for a Jewish homeland into a place to be. (Go “home” to Germany or Poland? Knock, en masse, on the doors of unreceptive European countries and a reluctant United States?) And finally it’s because I believe that anti-Jewish genocide cannot be laid to rest as a discrete historical episode, but remains a possibility implicit in the deep structure of Christian and Islamic cultures, East and West.

This last point is particularly difficult to argue on the left, where the conventional wisdom is that raising the issue of antisemitism in relation to Israel and Palestine is nothing but a way of stifling criticism of Israel and demonizing the critics. In the context of left politics, the dynamic is actually reversed: accusations of blind loyalty to Israel, intolerance of debate, and exaggeration of Jewish vulnerability at the expense of the real, Palestinian victims are routinely used to stifle discussion of how antisemitism influences the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the world’s reaction to it or the public conversation about it. Yet that discussion is crucial, for there is no way to disentangle the politics surrounding Israel from the politics of the Jewish condition. . . .

I reject the idea that Israel is a colonial state that should not exist. I reject the villainization of Israel as the sole or main source of the mess in the Middle East. And I contend that Israel needs to maintain its “right of return” for Jews around the world.

My inconsistency, if that’s what it is, comes from struggling to make sense of a situation that has multiple and at times contradictory dimensions. Israel is the product of a nationalist movement, but it owes its existence to a world-historical catastrophe. The bloody standoff between Israelis

and Palestinians is on its face a clash of two nationalisms run amok, yet it can't be understood apart from the larger political forces of the post-1945 world—anti-colonialism, oil politik, the Cold War, the American and neoliberal triumph, democracy versus authoritarianism, secularism versus fundamentalism.

Indeed, the mainstream of contemporary political anti-Zionism does not oppose nationalism as such, but rather defines the conflict as bad imperialist nationalism versus the good liberationist kind. Or to put it another way, anti-Zionism is a conspicuous feature of that brand of left politics that reduces all global conflict to Western imperialism versus Third World anti-imperialism, ignoring a considerably more complicated reality. But . . . at present, an end to nationalism in Israel/Palestine is not on either side's agenda. The question is what course of action, all things considered, will help in some way to further the possibilities for democracy and human rights as opposed to making things worse.

I support a two-state solution that in effect ratifies the concept of the original 1947 partition—bracketing fundamental questions about Jewish and Palestinian nationalism—out of the non-utopian yet no less urgent hope that it would end the lunacy of mutual destruction and allow some space for a new Middle Eastern order to develop. . . .

Leftists tend to single out Israel as The Problem that must be solved. That tropism is most pronounced among those for whom the project of a Jewish state is inherently imperialist, or an offense to universalist humanism, or both. . . . I've received countless impassioned e-mails emphasizing how imperative it is to show there are Jews who disagree with the Jewish establishment, who oppose [Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon. There is no comparable urgency to show that Jews on the left as well as the right condemn suicide bombing as a war crime. . . . At most I hear, "Suicide bombing is a terrible thing, but . . ." But: if Israel would just shape up and do the right thing, there would be peace. Would that it were so. . . .

Left animus toward Israel is not a simple, self-evident product of the facts. What is the nerve that Israel hits?

Underlining this question are the hyperbolic comparisons that animate the anti-Israel brief, beginning with the now standard South Africa comparison—the accusation that Israel is a "settler state" and an "apartheid state"—which has inspired the calls for divestment and for a boycott against Israeli academics. The South African regime, of course, was one whose essence was a proudly white racist ideology, a draconian system of legal segregation, and the denial of all political rights to the huge majority of people. To see Israel through this grid is to ignore a great many things: that Israel was settled primarily by refugees from genocide in Europe and oppression in Arab countries; that while Palestinian Israelis suffer from discrimination they are nevertheless citizens who vote, organize political parties, and participate in the government; that the occupation, while egregious, came about as a result not of aggressive settlement but of defensive war; that it continues because of rejectionism on both sides. . . .

Even more fantastic is the Nazi comparison, often expressed in metaphors (Israeli soldiers as SS men, and so on). I imagine that most perpetrators of this equation, if pressed, would concede that Israel is not a totalitarian dictatorship with a program of world domination, nor has it engaged in the systematic murder of millions of people on the grounds that they are a subhuman race. But why do these tropes have such appeal? . . .

It's impossible not to notice how the runaway inflation of Israel's villainy aligns with ingrained cultural fantasies about the iniquity and power of Jews; or how the traditional pariah status of Jews has been replicated by a Jewish pariah state. . . .

The anti-Jewish temperature is rising, and has been for some time, in Arab and Islamic countries and in the Islamist European diaspora. I am speaking now not of the intemperate tone of left anti-Zionist rhetoric but of overt Jew hatred. . . . Many on the left view this wave of antisemitism as just another expression, however unfortunately couched, of justified rage at Israel—whether at the occupation and the escalating destruction of the West Bank or at the state's existence per se. In either case, the conflation of "Zionists" and "Jews" is regarded as a misunderstanding of the politically uneducated. . . .

If there should be a mass outbreak of anti-Jewish violence it will no doubt focus on Israel, but it will not, in the end, be caused by Israel, and the hatred will not disappear if Israel does. Nor will it disappear with an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. Still . . . an internationally brokered peace agreement is the first line of defense. And that agreement must allow Israel to retain its character as a haven for Jews, not as a validation of nationalism but as a gesture of international recognition that the need for such a haven has not yet been surpassed. It's not inconsistent to hope that this will not always be true.

C) Salon Three: Zionist One-Liners

Zionist One-Liner Exercises:

Instructions For The Group Leader.

1. Have this series of 25 Zionist "one-liners" printed and then cut out into strips or on separate pieces of paper.

2. Have everyone pick one, randomly.
3. Go around the room. Ask each person to read the best line or phrase (not necessarily the whole thing) and then say one of three things, either:
 - a. “No, I disagree with this, because...” (and encourage the first person who disagrees, the vitality of the Zionist conversation depends on us being comfortable disagreeing when we do)...
 - b. “Interesting, this explains one aspect of Zionist history or ideology, namely....”
 - c. “Yes! I really agree with this line and it speaks to me because....”

Emphasize that the point of this conversation is to be open to A) – disagreeing and debating, respectfully B) Learning about the meaning of Zionism C) Exploring the ways in which Identity Zionism can be a way of taking Zionism personally, helping individuals find meaning and a framework.

Additional Exercise:

The Leader can ask each group member to read out their line, and then ask them to place the author of the line into one of the ‘Six Schools of Zionist Thought’:

- **Political Zionism:** Jews need a physical homeland to protect them from the dangers of Anti-Semitism. (Theodor Herzl)
- **Cultural Zionism:** Jews need to establish a homeland for themselves in order to protect and advance Jewish culture, language and ideals (Ahad Ha’am).
- **Labor Zionism:** Focuses heavily on redeeming and working the land of Israel, viewing socialism as a key Zionist ideal. (A.D. Gordon).
- **Revisionist Zionism:** A proudly nationalist Zionism, that views Jewish military strength and national independence as the highest ideal. (Ze’ev Jabotinsky).
- **Religious Zionism:** Returning and building up the land of Israel is part of the Divine plan and a precursor to the Messianic era. (Rabbi A.Y. Kook).
- **Diaspora Zionism:** Supporting Israel politically, emotionally and financially from the Jewish communities throughout the world. (Louis Brandeis).

The Texts:

Leon Pinsker (1821-1891) - Early Zionist Pioneer, founder of Hibbat Zion:

The Jews are ghosts, ethereal, disconnected.... This pathological Judeophobia will haunt Europe until the Jews have a national home like all other nations.

Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) - Founder of the modern Zionist movement:

We are a people – one people... We shall live at last as free people on our own soil, and in our own homes peacefully die.. The world will be liberated by our freedom, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness.

Rachel Bluwstein (1890-1931) - Early Hebrew Poet:

I have not sung you, my country, not brought glory to your name with the great deeds of a hero or the spoils a battle yields. But on the shores of the Jordan my hands have planted a tree, and my feet have made a pathway through your fields.

Ahad Ha'am (1856-1927) - Early Zionist thinker and leader.

Judaism is fundamentally national, and all the efforts of the 'Reformers' to separate the Jewish religion from its national element have no result except to ruin both the nationalism and the religion.... From this center, the spirit of Judaism will radiate to the great circumference to inspire them with new life and to preserve the over-all unity of our people.

Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880-1940) - Founder of Beitar, leader of the Revisionists.

The phenomenon called Zionism may include all kinds of dreams—a 'model community,' Hebrew culture, perhaps even a second edition of the Bible—but all this longing for wonderful toys of velvet and silver is nothing in comparison with that tangible momentum of irresistible distress and need by which we are propelled and borne.

Rabbi Abraham Yitzhak Kook (1865-1935) - First Chief Rabbi of Jewish Settlement.

The State of Israel, "is ideal in its foundation . . . the foundation of God's throne in the world." *Eretz Yisra'el* is part of the very essence of our nationhood; it is bound organically to its very life and inner being.

Henrietta Szold (1860-1945) - American activist, founder of Hadassah movement.

The Jewish national home will be "... a blessing for all future times redounding to the benefit not only of those who will make use of their sanctuary rights in Palestine, but also those who like ourselves remaining in a happy, prosperous country, will be free to draw spiritual nourishment from a center dominated wholly by Jewish traditions and the Jewish ideals of universal peace and universal brotherhood."

David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) - First Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

Israel cannot just be a refuge. . . . it has to be much, much more.... The new Jew builds *Am Segula, an enlightened people*... There are also Jews in the lands of prosperity who are deeply apprehensive about the growing assimilation and the fragmentation of the Jewish soul in the Diaspora, who are increasingly aware that only in Israel can a Jew live a full life, both as a Jew and as a human being. . . .

Amos Oz (b.1939) - Israeli novelist and public intellectual.

I cannot use such words as “the promised land” or “the promised borders,” because I do not believe in the one who made the promise. Happy are those who do: their Zionism is simple and self-evident. Mine is hard and complicated. . . . I am a Zionist in all that concerns the redemption of the Jews, but not when it comes to the redemption of the Holy Land. . . .

Menachem Begin (1912-1992) - Leader of Irgun, sixth Prime Minister of Israel

The fighting Jew . . . whom the world considered dead and buried never to rise again, has arisen.

Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972) - American rabbi and philosopher.

The State of Israel is a spiritual revolution, not a one-time event, but an ongoing revolution.

Letty Cottin Pogrebin (b. 1939) - American author and social activist.

I am a feminist Zionist.

Zionism is to Jews what feminism is to women. Zionism began as a national liberation movement and has become an ongoing struggle for Jewish solidarity, pride, and unity. Similarly, feminism, which began as a gender-liberation movement, has become an ongoing struggle for women’s solidarity, pride, and unity. Zionism is simply an affirmative action plan on a national scale.

Eugene Borowitz (1924–2016) - American thinker, leader of Reform Jewry.

There has been a tremendous positive, constructive, worthwhile impact of the State of Israel on Jews of my persuasion and on myself. That specific impact . . . has been a general sense of positive Jewish self-acceptance and . . . to help the synagogue point to a place where being a Jew is not only real, but visible... In my own case, what has strengthened and deepened has been a very personal existential sense of the particularity of what it is to be a Jew, the specificity of being a Jew as a member of an ethnic community.

Yael “Yuli” Tamir (b. 1954) - Israeli academic and former politician.

A home is not an institution, not even a fair and efficient one, but a place to which one is tied emotionally, which reflects one’s history, memories, fears, and hopes. A home cannot have merely universal features; it must always be embedded in the particular.

Stav Shaffir (b. 1985) - Israeli politician and social activist.

Don’t preach to us about Zionism, because real Zionism means dividing the budget equally among all the citizens. Real Zionism is taking care of the weak. Real Zionism is solidarity, not only in battle but in everyday life, day to day to watch out for each other. That is Israeliness. That is Zionism...

Yoram Hazony (b. 1964) - President of the Herzl Institute, Jerusalem.

The Land of Israel is the historic inheritance of only one people, the Jews.

Benjamin Ish-Shalom (b. 1953) - Israeli academic, president of Beit Morasha.

Outside the land and without sovereignty, each person is responsible only for himself and his dependents. Inside the land with sovereign existence, responsibility becomes a national one, and an individual must choose the good of the collective over his own....

Einat Ramon (b. 1959) - Conservative Rabbi, feminist and educator in Jerusalem.

My particularist perspectives: I am a Womanist and a Zionist. Living in the Land of Israel grants Jews the opportunity to indulge their particularism at its best, expressing Jewishness every moment.... We not only celebrate the Sabbath and the holidays on Jewish time and in our Jewish space, but, today, we run Israeli military, agriculture, industry, and economics on Torah time and in the Torah's sacred space. ...

Jonathan Sacks (b. 1948) - Former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom.

The Israel of continuity must become Jewry's classroom, the Diaspora's ongoing seminar in Jewish identity. Once, Israel saved Jews. In the future, it will save Judaism. . . .

The immediate question is less whether Jews are at home in London or Jerusalem than whether they are *at home in their Jewishness*....

The World Zionist Organization

Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people . . . views a Jewish, Zionist, democratic and secure State of Israel to be the expression of the common responsibility of the Jewish people.

A.B. Yehoshua (B. 1936). - Israeli novelist and public intellectual.

A Zionist is a person who accepts the principle that the State of Israel doesn't belong solely to its citizens, but to the entire Jewish people.

Eliezer Ben-Yehudah (1858-1922) - Father of the modern Hebrew language.

The Jews "cannot become a living nation—*am chai*—without returning to their ancestral language—*lashon ha'avot*" and using that language "in everyday discourse, from old to young . . . in all facets of life, at all hours, days and night."

Golda Meir (1898–1978) - Fourth Prime Minister of Israel

Above all, this country is our own. Nobody has to get up in the morning and worry what his neighbors think of him. Being a Jew is no problem here...

Ben-Zion Meir Chai Uziel (1880–1953) - First Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel.

Nationalism is a worldview committed to improving our human life on earth.

Erez Biton (b. 1942) - Israeli poet and writer.

The State of Israel, as an independent Jewish state, is the institution that allows us to create a society based on justice and generosity, on mutual engagement. The State of Israel is the infrastructure for fulfilling our commitment to perfect Israeli society, to repair our community, including each and every one of us, on our own path.

ONE LAST IDEA:

The Page 99 test. People say that if you pick any book at random and open it to its 99th page, you can get a sense of its argument. Depending on the size of your group, have people open to page 99, 199, 299, etc. Encourage them to move a page ahead or behind to get a text. I've tried it - it triggers great conversation!

Part IV - Final Note

Dear Rabbi and/or Educator,

Thank you for taking the time to review our educational ideas and endeavours surrounding *The Zionist Ideas*. This book, and the conversations surrounding them, may prove to be of crucial importance to the development and enrichment of the Zionist Project, and therefore to the wellbeing of the entire Jewish people. It is our greatest wish that we can play our part in furthering the exchange of deep and meaningful ideas across the Jewish world.

We do hope that you will take advantage of the resources available both in the book and on our website, www.zionistideas.com. If you have any queries or suggestions, please do not hesitate to be in touch. If you go to the [Jewish Publication Society](http://www.jps.org) Website www.jps.org you can order more copies of the book - bulk discounts are available.

Many thanks,
Gil Troy
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