

## **Additional Questions for Congregational Leadership**

- A. “The language of the Jewish people and the collective hope of the Jewish people were crucial to finding the right balance between being a part of—and apart from—the nations among whom Jews dwelled. Both were essential to the ‘Positive-Historical Judaism’ that Frankel envisioned and have remained so.”
1. Eisen uses the terms “language of the Jewish people” and “collective hope of the Jewish people” to refer to Hebrew and the building of the State of Israel, respectively. How are these two ideas represented in your community?
  2. How does your congregation’s programming further your community’s relationship to Israel and/or individuals’ connections to Israel?
  3. Sketch out a program to foster individuals’ connection to Israel in your community.
- B. “The State offers unparalleled scope for the teaching and practice of Torah in the public sphere, encompassing areas from education and environmental policy to health care, treatment of the poor, justice for minority communities, and issues of war and peace. Conservative Judaism has a vital contribution to make to Israel: a way of studying Judaism and applying its teachings to new conditions that is arguably unique.”
1. How might the “unparalleled scope for the teaching and practice of Torah” in Israel provide a path to engaging younger members of your community?
  2. Knowledge is power. How can your community learn more about the history of the State of Israel and its current realities?

Supplementary Materials for “Peoplehood and Israel”

- C. “Attachment to the Jewish people is misunderstood, and denounced, as tribalism. Some younger Jews seek ‘Judaism without Jews’—heightened spiritual and ethical attainment via prophetic or mystical teachings of Judaism without the age-old responsibility linking Jews to one another in local and global community. Others, here and in Israel, seek ethnic or national Jewishness severed from the age-old search for connection with and service to the Ultimate, the Holy One, the One Who Is Good and Makes Good, God.”
1. Pick one of the issues: peoplehood as tribalism, Judaism without Jews, or Jews without Judaism. With a partner, role-play the ways in which the members of your community can engage with a person who is caught up in one of these problematic characterizations of Judaism.
- D. “The calculus of responsibility begins and ends with this statement of fact and wonder: North American Jews in 2014 are uniquely blessed.”
1. Chancellor Eisen sees the combination of the American Diaspora experience and the existence of the State of Israel as a unique blessing, carrying responsibility. How has your community translated this into action? What is missing?
  2. In what ways do you see your life as an American Jew as blessed in a unique way?
  3. In what ways is your community uniquely blessed? How can you instill the feeling or perception of being uniquely blessed in the rest of the membership?