



## **Lesson Plan for Preparatory Programs**

### **Introduction**

Dear Educator,

Here is a lesson plan in the matter of A Fast to Remember – a fast during the Israeli Holocaust Day.

This lesson plan is made up of some texts and a discussion, which all together may be more complexed, and you can choose how to present it in class – big/small groups, and you may choose to discuss each text separately or all together. It depends on the group level, the time frame and you.

This lesson plan is varied and modular – you should read everything first and then decide what will work for you and your class in the best way. The theoretical part has 3 main ideas: memory, fast and the Holocaust Day. Each of those terms is sensitive and raising questions, and the connection between them creates a complex triangle.

First, we will investigate each term by itself and try to understand it better, the purposes and origins. Next, we will examine the way to connect between them all as the A Fast to Remember Project suggests us. The discussion will raise up the tension between Judaism and Israeliness, the individual and the public, law and custom, renewal and tradition etc. You can choose to work on all the main ideas (memory, fast and the Holocaust Day) or to take only one or two of them and then to move forward to the discussion about the project – A Fast to Remember.



## A Lesson Plan according to the source page (Assaf Perry)

### The objectives:

- Creating a safe space to form an individual approach and stance about the memory of the Holocaust.
- Understanding that the different ways of public memorialization can be changed.
- Discussion on the different ways of public memorialization in Israel and the function of the people who mold them.

**Activity Duration:** 90 min.

**Accessories:** Source pages as the number of the participants; memory customs; fast; Holocaust memory; new holiday.

### Course of lesson:

#### 1. Opening (10 min.):

Today we will talk and learn about different ways, which the Judaism and the Israeli Public keep the memory of life-altering events in our people's history. Especially, we will discuss about the Holocaust memory and the changes that might happen in the way us, as a public and individuals, remember the Holocaust.

The questions you should ask:

- Which life-altering events in the Jewish history are getting a special memory? (Likely to answer: the destruction of the Temple, Exodus, Gedalia Ben Ahikam's murderer, Yitzhak Rabin' Murderer etc.).
- How long has it been since the event?
- In what ways do we remember this event?
- Which of these ways do you prefer the most? Why?
- In your opinion, what are the differences between the memory of the event in the first generations after the event and the way we do remember it today? (for example: What are the



differences between the first generation after the Temple was destroyed and the way we remember it today?)

- What is changing through the years and generations in the memory of life-altering events?

## 2. Source page: Memory (25 min.):

We will divide the class into small groups, 4-5 participants in each group.

We should be present and ready for questions during the group work. This is a good time to wander around and listen to the general themes coming out from the discussions.

We will hand out the source page to the participants and guide them:

- At first, read it by yourself.
- Mark two sentences in the texts: one you are mostly agreeing with and the other you are mostly disagreeing with.
- Share those choices with your group members.
- Discuss the guiding questions in the source page:
  - What different explanations the texts suggest us to the commandment to remember?
  - What are the criteria of choosing an event we will want to remember personally?
  - What are the criteria of choosing an event we will want to remember nationally?
  - Which connections exist between the personal memory and the national one – from the texts and general knowledge?

## 3. Source page: Fast (25 min.):

Right before we continue, we will collect some of the main ideas from the last activity.

Now, we will hand out the next source page, and guide the participants:

The first page dealt with the memory of life-altering events and now we'll focus on the fast custom. Read the next sources and discuss the following questions:

- Why did the fasting days had been fixed on the calendar?
- What makes the fasting activity special, compared with other memory activities such as reading a scroll, prayer, breaking a glass etc.?
- Share your group in your fasting experiences:
  - Do you fast? Why?
  - Which one of the texts do you like the most? Why?



- What do you feel while fasting?
- If you do not fast – what do you feel about others who fast?

#### 4. Holocaust Memory Customs (15 min.):

Join all the participant together. Collect some ideas about the fasting custom.

If the class is not usual to reading in the sources – you can ask them about that experience too.

Now, we'll hand out the source page: Holocaust Memory. We will ask from the participants to read the law about it and then we'll discuss:

- How the law 'designers' wanted to keep the memory of the Holocaust in the Israelites mind?
- Why do you think the state of Israel fixed a special day, dedicated to the Holocaust memory?
- What are the law's main goals?
- What are the law's disadvantages?
- In which levels does it work (public, individual, community) and in which levels it does not work?
- What are the differences between the 'Holocaust Law' and the customs of Ninth of AV? Where the differences come from?
- What a Holocaust memorial responsibility belongs to the individual? The society? The religious institutions? The state?

#### 5. A Fast to Remember (15 min.):

We will read the phrase about the project – you can ask one of the participants to read it out loud.

After reading we will guide a discussion:

- It is written in the text: "A project who wants to connect between Judaism and Israeliness, preserving the memory in the public and individual spaces, and creating to new but old custom". Do you think such a connection is possible?
- What is your personal stance with this essay?
- In one hand, the Judaism is very cautious about making changes ("New is forbidden from the Torah"), but in the other hand, it encourages us to actively relate to a life-altering events (Purim, Hanukkah, Israel's Independent day, Jerusalem Liberation Day, The Fast of Gedalia, The



Fast of Esther etc.). Judaism even validates customs from the people ("The Custom of Israel is the law").

- Do you think we should add a Holocaust Fasting Day to our calendar? Why?
- Can you think about other ways to make sure the memory of the Holocaust will be significant to the future generations?
- What are the law's limitations? Can it meet the upcoming challenges, in the future generations?
- What would you ask for changing the law?
- What is the right way to promote the project A Fast to Remember – in the responsibility of the individuals and civilian organizations? The Rabbinates? The state institutions? Explain your answers.

6. In conclusion (10 min.):

We will hand out the song "New Holiday" to the participants and we'll ask them to read it and discuss:

- Share with everybody the sentence you liked the most.
- What did the writer want to tell us?
- Which text, you have read during this lesson, relates to this song? In what way?
- What can you do TODAY, in order to take an active part in molding the Holocaust memory?  
What can you do in a year? In 10 years? In 40 years?



## Source – pages

### 1. Memory:

#### 1.1.

Sabbath Zachor

“Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land, he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget.”

(Deuteronomy Chapter 25, Verses 17-19)

#### 1.2.

"Rabbi Ishmael said: From the day that the Temple was destroyed, it would be appropriate that we not eat meat or drink wine (since these were used in the Temple service).

But a court does not decree (restrictions) on the community which they cannot uphold.

He would say that since they (the Romans) decree upon us that we do not learn Torah,

we should decree upon the community that they do not marry women (since they do not know marriage and family laws), and not have children - and as a result, the seed of Abraham will cease.

Rather, leave Israel alone (to continue to do as they now do, marrying and having families);

it is better that (if they transgress), they do so inadvertently and not intentionally."

(Tosefta Sotah, Chapter 15, Verse 5)



1.3.

### **A Green Salad – Sherry Ansky**

Yom Kippur was a holiday that I really loved. The whole neighborhood was in white clothes and running shoes. They would go up in a procession to the hill of Hebrew University. There in a building shaped like a white dome was our synagogue. The adults would pray and we, the kids, would fool around – climbing on the dome, trying to fast, showing each other our dried-out tongues, and playing hide-and-seek.

Below the synagogue was a stone bench, hidden in the bushes, which looked out onto our neighborhood. There I would hide and make requests to God. Even when I grew up and stopped playing hide-and-seek, I continued to sit on the bench and make requests.

On Yom Kippur 1973, at that spot, I asked God to find me a boyfriend. At that very moment, my big brother Reuven found me and asked who I am whispering to. I told him but I did not tell him my special wish because then it would not be granted.

Later, I asked him what he would most like to eat at that moment. He did not want to tell me. He was even a little angry. But after I begged him, he said: “A green salad, with lots of garlic, lemon juice, parsley, and a small red pepper.”

After he left, I came down from the hill by way of the fields so that I would not be seen, and I prepared that salad. I did not find parsley in the fridge, so I cut some from the neighbor’s garden – adding insult to injury.

While I was eating, the telephone rang. I froze with fear. I was sure that it is God on the line and that he is going to tell that I will be punished. So, I did not answer. I quickly hid the peelings and cleaned up. I cleaned the plates and put them away. But then the telephone rang again. Someone wanted to talk to my big brother. I told him that he is in synagogue and he said to run there immediately and tell him to urgently call his unit and that I should write down the telephone number. I told him that I cannot write because it is Yom Kippur. And then he almost shouted at me: “Do not make me crazy, Yom Kippur is cancelled. Get a pen and write this down.”

With the note in my hand, I ran to the synagogue. “Yom Kippur is cancelled,” I shouted at everyone. I told my brother to run home and call his unit. He looked at me straight in the eye and said: “You ate a salad.” That was the last thing he said to me. He never returned home.



1.4.

"Jews have six senses: Touch, taste, sight, smell, hearing ... memory. While Gentiles experience and process the world through the traditional senses and use memory only as a second-order means of interpreting events, for Jews memory is no less primary than the prick of a pin, or its silver glimmer, or the taste of the blood it pulls from the finger. The Jew is pricked by a pin and remembers other pins. It is only by tracing the pinprick back to other pinpricks – when his mother tried to fix his sleeve while his arm was still in it, when his grandfather's fingers fell asleep from stroking his great-grandfather's damp forehead, when Abraham tested the knife point to be sure Isaac would feel no pain – that the Jew is able to know why it hurts.

When a Jew encounters a pin, he asks: What does it remember like?"

(Jonathan Safran Foer, quote)

- A. Why do we ask for preserving a memory?
- B. What events kept in our collective memory? What events faded away? What caused them to fade away?
- C. What are the criteria of choosing an event we would like to remember individually/nationally?





## 2. Fast

“And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; there shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God”.

(Leviticus Chapter 23, Verses 26-28)

“It is a positive commandment, ordained by the Prophets, to fast on those days on which tragic events occurred to our forefathers. The purpose of the fast is to stir our hearts to reflect on the ways of repentance, and to serve as a reminder of our own evil deeds, and the deeds of our forefathers, which were as reprehensible as ours, and caused all these troubles for them as well as for us. By remembering these events we will improve our ways, as it has been said, "They will then confess their sins and the sins of their fathers" (Leviticus 26:4). Therefore, it is everyone's duty to take it to heart on those days to examine his past actions and to repent; for fasting is not the main thing, as it was said about the people of Nineveh, "And God saw their deeds" (Jonah 3:10), and our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have said, "It does not say, 'He saw their sackcloth and their fast,' but 'God saw their deeds, that they had turned away from their evil ways.'" Fasting is only a preparation for repentance. Therefore, those who while fasting, spend the time taking walks, and doing trivial things, take hold of the least important aspect of the fast, while ignoring the essence [of the fast.]”

(Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Chapter 121, A)

“There are days that all the people of Israel observe as fasts on account of the tragic events which occurred on them, the purpose being to appeal to the hearts and to lay open the paths of repentance. This serves as a reminder of our evil doings, and the deeds of our fathers which were like ours now, resulting in the afflictions endured by them and by us. By remembering these things, we are likely to repent and do right, as it is written: "They shall confess their sins and the sins of their fathers..." (Leviticus 26:40)". (Mishna Torah, Fasts Chapter 5, 1)

An apocryphal story is told of Napoleon Bonaparte entering a darkened synagogue and observing weeping Jews, sitting on low stools. Asking what misfortune had occurred to cause such behavior, he was informed that it was the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av.

On hearing that story, Napoleon exclaimed: “A people that cries these past 2,000 years for their land and temple will surely be rewarded.”

(Napoleon and the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Av month)



- A. Why do we fast?
- B. What reasons do we have to the fast days?
- C. What goals do we want to achieve by fasting?

### 3. The Holocaust Day

#### **Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day Law 5719-1959**

1.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Nisan Shall be Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day, devoted, year by year, to the commemoration of the disaster which the Nazis and their collaborators brought upon the Jewish people and of the acts of heroism and revolt performed in those days.

If the 27<sup>th</sup> Nisan falls upon Friday, Remembrance Day shall be observed on the 26<sup>th</sup> Nisan of that year.

(Passed by the Knesset on the 29<sup>th</sup> Adar Bet, 5719 (April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1955) and published in Sefer HA-Chukkim No. 280 on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, 5719 (April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1959), p.112; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatzza'ot Chok No. 384 of 5719, p. 242).

2.

Remembrance Day shall be marked throughout the state by a two-minute silence, during which all work and all road traffic be suspended; there shall be memorial gatherings, popular rallies, and commemorative functions in Army camps and educational institutes; flags on public buildings shall be flown at half-mast; wireless programs shall express the special characters of the day, and places of entertainment shall present only features consonant with its spirit.

3.

The Minister empowered in that behalf by the Government shall, in consultation with the Yad Va-Shem Remembrance Authority, issue instructions for the observance of the Remembrance Day in accordance with this Law.



- A. Why did the government fix a special date for the Holocaust Day?
- B. How the law 'designers' wanted to keep the memory of the Holocaust in the Israelites mind?
- C. What are the law's main goals?
- D. What are the differences between the 'Holocaust Law' and the customs of Ninth of AV? Where the differences come from?
- E. Do we have a personal responsibility to remember the Holocaust?

#### 4. A Fast to Remember

"The last holocaust survivor passed away".

That would be the headline all over the newspapers one day, in the next decade.

There will not be any people of testimony, the journeys to Poland will dwindle and our connection, as Jews, to the Holocaust our families been through, will dissipate.

To remember and never forget, we have decided to simply fast during the Holocaust day. A fast is the Jewish way to remember.

The fast, if it will spread out and become a broad costume, will ensure we will still remember, even after the last survivor will passed away. We will remember it in our minds, hearts and even in our stomachs.

We call the public to fast during the Holocaust Day – everyone as s/he can: even with water or for couple of hours (from sunrise till sunset). Together we will find another way to remember and NEVER forget.

(The project initiators, 2018).

- A. It is written in the text: "A project who wants to connect between Judaism and Israeliness, preserving the memory in the public and individual spaces, and creating to new but old custom". Do you think such a connection is possible?
- B. In one hand, the Judaism is very cautious about making changes ("New is forbidden from the Torah"), but in the other hand, it encourages us to actively relate to a life-altering events (Purim, Hanukkah, Israel's Independent day, Jerusalem Liberation Day, The Fast of Gedalia, The Fast of Esther etc.). Judaism even validates customs from the people ("The Custom of Israel is the law").
- C. Do you think we should add a Holocaust Fasting Day to our calendar? Why?



D. Can you think about other ways to make sure the memory of the Holocaust will be significant to the future generations?

### **Wladyslaw Szlengel / A New Holiday**

Jews must have holidays,  
Jews must remember  
what Passover and what Purim mean;  
that hamantash is because of Haman,  
matzo because of Egypt,  
colorful flags because of Torah;  
lulav and sukkah and Hanukkah candles  
remind of a deed, a miracle, a period.  
This horrible war, that rends the Jews asunder,  
to lumps, to tatters, to quarters, will pass.  
Jews will survive.  
One morning they will somehow resurface  
and transmit greetings from Death.

Jews must have holidays,  
Jews must remember  
that miracle saved them again.  
New holiday, similar to Sukkot,  
though no booths, but cellars and garrets.  
On Deliverance Day all will descend  
to creep-holes, dark hiding places.

There, they will feast on prayers,  
their hearts will fill with joy and with faith.  
Spade, pickaxe, and sledgehammer  
will become symbols of cult.  
They will fast, as in shelters,  
the old one will weep and the young listen  
how it was when an Action...  
how it was when a blockade...  
The old one will recount



how they lived in their hovels  
without air and for months...  
In pitch dark they waited and waited  
for the first breeze of wind,  
for freedom, for sun...

The old ones will assent and applaud.  
The young ones will scoff, saying  
that the old grandpa embroiders.  
...let him tell what he wants, but  
it must be enlarged as the story  
of the Red Sea and Moses.  
They will leave their hideouts at dusk  
to where all is peace and calm,  
to the world prettier, better, and new.  
In the safety of light, for the holiday dinner  
they will serve swastikas with honey.

**צום נזכור**  
צמים ביום השואה



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