

Prophets
GUCI Kallah Bet 2012
Education

Contents

Introduction	3
Opening Days	7
Day 0: What is Prophecy?	7
Day 1: Why Do We Tell Stories of Prophecy?	8
Day 2: Study Introduction – If I’m not for myself, who will be for me, but if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?	10
Unit I: Im ein ani li, mi li? Personal Values	12
Day 3: Faith (Abraham)	12
Day 4: Being Proud of Who You Are (Deborah)	14
Day 5: Not Giving in to Peer Pressure (Elijah)	16
Day 6: Holding Yourself to a Higher Standard: Community Stringency (Amos)	18
Day 7: Taking Responsibility (Ezekiel)	20
Day 8: Chosenness in Judaism (Isaiah)	22
Unit II: Ech she’ani l’atzmi mah ani? Community Values	24
Day 9: Protecting Others (Moses)	24
Day 10: Gratitude (Joshua)	26
Day 11: Mercy (Hosea)	28
Day 12: G’milut Chasadim (Micah)	30
Day 13: Family Values (Eli)	32
Day 14: Leadership (Moses)	34
Unit III: Ve’im lo achshav, eymatai? Social Justice and Making the World Better	36
Day 15: Standing Up for what is Right (Moses)	36
Day 16: Defending those Who Cannot Defend Themselves (Nathan)	38
Day 17: Standing Up for the Poor (Amos)	40
Day 18: The Value of Life (Jeremiah)	42
Day 19: Feeding the Hungry (Isaiah)	44
Day 20: Peace (Isaiah)	46
Day 21: How Can We Continue the Prophets’ Work?	48
Day 22: Culmination – Review of Prophetic Messages	49

Introduction

Shalom everyone- I hope you're all ready for another rousing session of GUCI education! In this packet you will find, ideally, essentially all of the information which you'll need to construct your education packets. The theme for Kallah Bet 2012 is Prophets, and it stands to be a very fun, successful topic.

To give just a sliver of information, enough that you'll be able to follow the rest of this packet, when we discuss prophecy we will mean messages from God that specific human beings receive. For example, then, people like Abraham, Moses, and Joshua would all qualify as prophets: Their narratives are of human beings who receive messages from the divine. In the Jewish tradition, one may even be considered a prophet if he **or she** (That's right, there are female prophets in the Jewish tradition!) receives communication from God indirectly, such as in a dream. The messages which these prophets transmit, both pertaining to what might be considered their personal opinions and to what they are communicating from God, will be our foci over the session. As such, virtually every day of shiur/limud has one core prophetic text (the first text on each page, with the heading in bold) which should be highlighted in that lesson. The value of the day should be achieved *through* the teaching of the story, not the other way around. Storytelling, that is telling the story of the prophets' times, should be a main focus: This should very directly facilitate the teaching of values.

As you should be able to see in the table of contents, there are three main units to our study this session- they follow Hillel's famous tripartite question (which we often sing here at GUCI): *im ein ani li mi li* (If I am not for myself, who will be for me), *ech she'ani l'atzmi mah ani* (but if I am only for myself, what am I), and *ve'im lo achshav eymatay* (and if not now, when)? The way which this is structured is that the first two of these three topics are primarily conceptual in nature- they are the groundwork for the practical axiology which will be covered in the third unit.

"Im ein ani li, mi li," the first unit, will focus mostly on personal values- values which one may possess and learn for his or herself. While these may relate to communities, they need not be bound to community models. "Ech she'ani l'atzmi mah ani," the second unit, is focused much more explicitly on community values which one may practice and use with others. The final unit, "ve'im lo achshav, eymatai," is a unit which will deal with more practical issues: it is meant to touch on topics closer to social justice-based issues than the earlier ideologically oriented topics.

With these three units put together, we should be able to accomplish two things: First, this should help us functionally organize the seemingly haphazard structure and content of the prophetic writings. Second, we should have a structure which will allow our staff to work with texts that might otherwise seem to be prohibitively convoluted.

The prophets' writing is all about learning how we can be better and more moral people. It is for this reason that our summer study of the prophets should be able to quite appropriately accomplish the prophets' own goals.

As usual, feel free to ask me any questions you need to help put this together. This should be a great topic for Kallah Bet!

B'hatzlachah, good luck!

--Ari Ballaban

Usage of this packet

Unit heads, what you have in front of you is a relatively large packet. Please, though, don't freak out! This packet is meant to HELP YOU, not hurt you. I've striven in it to make all of my rationales as clear as possible (and should they be unclear, ask me- I will do everything in my power to assist you.) **This packet should be a resource to you: No need to recreate the wheel in making your packets, I put this packet together for you to use in your own packets. Copy and paste as you wish!**

That being said, here are your goals in creating your packets:

1. Choose from among the "days" in this packet enough days to have 1 shiur/limud for each of your educational days.
 - a. Choose your days wisely- I have extra days in here to allow you room for choice. That is where your educational art comes in: What do *you* want your campers to learn most?
2. Calibrate the topics in this packet to your age group. While all topics are suitable for all of the units, how you pitch a given topic to a particular age varies. You are the expert in your age group this summer: How do you feel your campers will react best to your topics?
 - a. (I recommend that you never underestimate your campers' potential: Rare is the child who never wants to be challenged!)
3. Ensure that what you are putting together in your packet is helpful to your staff- after all, your packets are for them! Please make certain that you have **at least 2 sample program ideas per day**. Additionally, ensure that your packet is visually manageable: **Use different fonts/styles for headings vs. for body text**. Additionally, **start each day of your ed. packet on a new page**. Get the general idea? You want your packet to be user-friendly!

Last details: Here's what you've got in front of you now. On each day's page, you have 5 things:

1. A title
2. A brief summary of the day's purpose and main ideas
3. A goal
4. "Thoughts to consider" – a section of guiding thoughts for your day
5. "Texts" – texts which I think add insight to the topic. Feel free to use these when you like them. Feel equally free to toss them out when you don't! The only one which you must in some way utilize is the prophetic source text (with the bold title).

Your picking of topics is not fully without restraint. In order to hold this theme together, please incorporate:

- a)** Days 1, 2, and 21
- b)** At least 3 days from each unit.

Other than that, your creativity is the only limit to your work: Let's make shiur/limud a pleasure for the summer. GUCI has one of the best educational programs in the URJ camping system, and your hard work ensures that success!

Opening Days

Day 0: What is Prophecy?

This will be all camp shiur #1. In this lesson, we will strive to answer the following questions:

- What is a prophet?
- Who are some of the prophets in the Jewish tradition?
- What are a prophet's responsibilities?

It is important that campers begin to understand the Jewish concept of prophecy at the beginning of this session. Because the remainder of the session's shiurim and limudim will necessitate discussions on topics on prophecy, there is a need to define this term/concept. That is the sole purpose of this all camp shiur.

The goal of the program is:

1. To teach campers the basic concept of prophecy.

Day 1: Why Do We Tell Stories of Prophecy?

This will be the first day of shiur/limud in each individual unit. This day is inherently full, at the least because everyone will need to be introduced to their unit vehicles, and because *sichah* groups should be explained.

More than this, though, this will be a full day because you will be using this day to lay the groundwork for the rest of the session. From the all camp shiur, everyone should understand *what* prophets and prophecy are. This day, though, must expand this and encourage the campers to ask the *why* of prophets and prophecy. Having this day run well is indispensable to having the rest of the session successful.

Goals:

1. To introduce unit vehicle, establish *sichah* groups.
2. To have campers understand the importance of continued study of the prophets.

Texts:

- Abraham Joshua Heschel, “The Reasons for My Involvement in the Peace Movement” from Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996).
 - The more deeply immersed I became in the thinking of the prophets, the more powerfully it became clear to me what the lives of the prophets sought to convey: that morally speaking there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings. It also became clear to me that in regard to cruelties committed in the name of a free society, some are guilty, all are responsible.
- Brickner and Verspan, Searching the Prophets for Values, pp. 10-11.
 - “We know a great deal about them [the prophets]. Much that they said and wrote has survived. Their teachings are called *Nevuah*, or prophecy. What they said, did, and wrote made a lot of sense, even though most of the people who lived during the prophets’ lifetimes did not like them and ignored their teachings. The prophets were the greatest teachers of values the Jewish people ever had. Most of them lived lonely and tragic lives, rejected by their own people and respected only after their deaths when what they said came to be seen as lasting truths.

The standards they demanded of the people were and are the really important values of life, more important than fame, money, and success. That is why men and women of all religions, not only Judaism, still probe the prophets today for deeper meanings. If you want to know about values on which to build your life, you have to study the prophets of Israel.”

- Ibid, p. 16.

- The Hebrew prophets were the first in recorded history to discover the reality and the power of this moral law. Because they discerned and articulated this moral truth, the prophets have been immortalized and their words have spoken to all succeeding generations. History and human experience have shown that the beliefs they stood for are really important values that can keep us alive and fully human.

Thoughts to consider:

- What makes the study of prophets' stories important?
- What did the prophets feel was their purpose?
 - What does this tell us about how they viewed themselves?
 - Do we agree with their perspective?
 - What does this teach us about ourselves?
- Do we still have prophecy today?
 - If so, what is it/what defines it?
 - If not, do we have parallels?
 - How do we follow the prophets' examples today?

Day 2: Study Introduction – If I’m not for myself, who will be for me, but if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?

On this day of shiur/limud, the campers will consider Hillel’s famous saying. This saying is what will guide our study over the course of the summer, and one might argue that an appropriate understanding of each question could answer any ethical quandary. Day 2 will be an opportunity for the campers to see the depth of each of these questions in order to allow them to understand the lessons which they will be tackling over the summer.

Goal:

1. To introduce campers to the three foci of the summer’s study: 1) If I’m not for myself, who will be for me? 2) If I am only for myself, what am I? 3) And if not now, when?

Texts:

- Mishna Pirkei Avot 1:14
 - He [Hillel] used to say: If I am not for Myself, Who is for me? But if I am for my own self [only], What am I? And if not now, when?
- Rabbi Pliskin's Gateway to Happiness, p.136, <http://www.aish.com/sp/dl/46119042.html>
 - Do not make yourself overly dependent on others. If you won't take care of your own needs, how can you expect that others will?

On the other hand, be aware of your limitations. To a certain degree we are all dependent on others. Even the most rich and wise person needs others.

Either extreme is bound to cause problems. Hillel advises us to take the middle path. Try to do for yourself what you can; but do not be too proud to ask others for help when necessary.
 - Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”
 - Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. **Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.** We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." **We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."**

Thoughts to Consider:

- Do you agree with all three sections of this teaching?
 - Do any of them have more difficult implications than another?
 - Is there one which you find most important/moving?
- How does one balance self-interest with other-interest?

Unit I: Im ein ani li, mi li? Personal Values

Day 3: Faith (Abraham)

Judaism places faith in high regard. In traditional Judaism, faith would have been *at least* expected in relation to God. In the modern day, many may feel that faith is still important. Abraham sets an example in Genesis of how one might have faith in God- an omnipotent entity which Abraham does not entirely understand or know. Even though many of our campers might not have faith in God the way which Abraham did, our campers might be able to learn something about the faith they have for other things in their world. What of faith in parents or teachers? Even more so, what about faith in counselors and other role models? Questions such as this should come up on this day.

Goals:

1. To consider the model of faith which Abraham provides.
2. To consider what role faith may play in one's life.

Texts:

- **Genesis 22:1-3**
 - And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him: 'Abraham'; and he said: 'Here am I.' And He said: 'Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, even Isaac, and get yourself into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of.' And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he cleaved the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.
- Maimonides' 13 principles of faith (first four principles):
 - 1: I believe with perfect faith that God is the Creator and Ruler of all things. God alone has made, does make, and will make all things.
 - 2: I believe with perfect faith that God is One. There is no unity that is in any way like God's. God alone is our God. God was, God is, and God will be.
 - 3: I believe with perfect faith that God does not have a body. Physical concepts do not apply to God. There is nothing whatsoever that resembles God at all.
 - 4: I believe with perfect faith that God is first and last.
- Babette Freed, http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2012-02-29/opinion/fl-jjps-freed-0229-20120229_1_hospital-faith-favorite-nurse
 - Why is faith, religion so important when you are struggling? You solidly hold onto, securely to your faith. You attend services at a synagogue; Christians attend

church, anything to keep you from stumbling. In temple, as the Torah passes at Friday evening services, you gently touch it. Your prayer book is held closely to you, your fingers pat your mezuzah, you pray and you discuss with your rabbi.

Our family is walking the path through a rough road. Searching for the banister, the strength to find answers. I am blessed with friendships and faith. I reach for the handrails to keep us from crumbling. But how very many do not understand, do not comprehend that our religion gives back to us, mentally, emotionally and physically, in times when we need that oak banister to hold, to keep us secure.

Thoughts to Consider:

- What can one learn from Abraham's example of faith?
 - Is Abraham merely faithful for following god's instructions (no matter what they might be), or is he faithful because he trusts that God will not lead him into a situation which will cause him harm?
- Do you feel that you have faith similar to Abraham's? Equal to it? Less than it?
- What other things might one have faith in other than God?

The 13 principles which Maimonides created were ones which he believed every Jew should profess. Do you agree with the principles provided above? Do you think it's essential that a Jew believe these?

Day 4: Being Proud of Who You Are (Deborah)

The story of Deborah (a prophetess) and Yael's defeat of Sisera, one of Israel's enemy's generals, is a classic text used in Judaism to show women's potential strength and pride. There are discussions within rabbinic literature which highlight the "strangeness" of this situation- a male commander is commanded by a female prophetess; a common woman defeats the great general of a foreign army. Among other things, this story teaches us how one should be proud of whom he or she is. Just like Deborah does not allow gender to prevent her from functioning as a strong prophetess, so too should we teach our campers that they should not allow any piece of who they are to prevent them from being their bests.

Goal:

1. To teach campers to be proud of whom they are by using Deborah's story as a model.

Texts:

- **Judges 4:4-9, 17-22**

- **Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time...**And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him: **'Has not the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded, saying: "Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto you to the brook Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into your hand."** And Barak said unto her: "If you wilt go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go." **And she said: "I will surely go with you; notwithstanding the journey that you are taking shall not be for your honor; for the LORD will give Sisera over into the hand of a woman."** And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him: 'Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not.' And he turned in unto her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. And he said unto her: 'Give me, I pray you, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.' And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. And he said unto her: 'Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man shall come and inquire of you, and say: Is there any man here? That you shall say: No.' **Then Jael Heber's wife took a tent-pin, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the pin into his temples, and it pierced through into the ground; for he was in a deep sleep; so he swooned and died.** And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him: 'Come, and I will show thee the man

whom thou seekest.' And he came unto her; and, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the tent-pin was in his temples.

- Rabbi Ozer Alport, <http://www.virtualjerusalem.com/judaism.php?Itemid=6930>
 - In one particularly gruesome incident, a number of merciless Nazi officers beat the Klausenberger Rebbe to the brink of death. After enduring seemingly endless blows, the officers asked the bleeding and only semi-conscious Rebbe if after all of this suffering he still believed that the Jews are God's chosen people. He responded unequivocally in the affirmative.

Amazed at the Rebbe's seemingly naive and misplaced faith, they pressed him for an explanation. He replied, "As long as I am not the cruel oppressor of innocent victims, and as long as I am the one down here on the ground maintaining my unwavering faith in my principles and traditions, I am still able to raise my head proudly and know that God chose our people."
- The Duties of the Heart, by Rabbi Bachye, tr. by Edwin Collins, [1909]
 - There are two kinds of pride. Pride in the bodily powers and in corporeal and material things; and pride in spiritual and mental qualities, such as wisdom, and in good works. All pride of the former kind banishes humility... The admirable kind of pride is that, when the wise man prides himself on his wisdom, and the just man on his works, he should acknowledge, in these things, the great beneficence of the Creator, and should rejoice on account of these gifts. Such pride in these gifts will then induce him to increase them and make good use of them, and to be meek with all around him; and to rejoice with his fellows, and be eager for their glory, and to cover over their folly, and to speak in praise of them, to love them, and to rejoice over them, and to be careful of their honour. Then, also, his own good deeds will appear so small in his eyes, that he will be continually striving to increase them. He will be humble because of his sense of inability to attain to the realisation of his ideal in respect to them, and he will be full of gratitude to God for giving him these precious qualities. Such pride is helpful, and not harmful, to humility. (pg. 39)

Thoughts to Consider:

- How does Deborah's example, as a woman leader of Israel, teach us that one should be proud of whom he or she is?
- How can one show that he or she is proud of his or herself in day-to-day life?
- Might a Jew ever have the need to demonstrate pride in his or her identity?
 - If not, why not?
 - If so, what are some ways which this might be done?
- Can pride ever reach a point of excess?

Day 5: Not Giving in to Peer Pressure (Elijah)

In the story below, Elijah is the only prophet of Adonai left- all of the other Israelite prophets have turned to foreign gods. Elijah, sensing that the Israelites have left their true God and that it will lead to their ultimate demise, stands up to the Israelite prophets who are serving other gods.

Every person has his or her own set of principles. It's important that we teach our campers that it is important to defend what you believe and fight against peer pressure- this story of Elijah can help us to do so.

Goal:

1. To learn the importance of resisting peer pressure by studying the story of Elijah.

Texts:

- **1 Kings 18:19-39**
 - [Elijah speaking,] 'Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah four hundred, that eat at Jezebel's table.' And Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said: 'How long will you halt between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him; but if Baal [a Canaanite god], follow him.' And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people: 'I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under. And you shall call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God that answers with fire, let that One be God.' And all the people answered and said: 'It is well spoken.' And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal: 'Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under.' And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying: 'O Baal, answer us.' But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they danced in halting wise about the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said: 'Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleeps, and must be awaked.' And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with swords and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it was so, when midday was past, that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening offering; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. And Elijah said unto all the people: 'Come near unto me'; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was thrown down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according

to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying: 'Israel shall be your name.' And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said: 'Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood.' And he said: 'Do it the second time'; and they did it the second time. And he said: 'Do it the third time'; and they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening offering, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said: 'O LORD, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You, LORD, are God, for You did turn their heart backward.' Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said: Adonai is the Lord; Adonai is the Lord!

- Catalyst for Change, an interview with Rabbi Rick Jacobs , <http://reformjudaismmag.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=3022>
 - One experience in particular crystallized for me what it meant to be a leader. When I was a high school junior serving as commissioner of activities, I curated a series of student assemblies and wanted to broaden our offerings to include a lecture on transcendental meditation, which the Beatles had popularized, as well as political events addressing Earth Day and the Vietnam War. To proceed, I had to argue my case before the five members of the school board, three of whom belonged to the John Birch Society. Even though I knew my chances for success were remote, I went before the board, spoke as convincingly as I could—and got permission to do the series! **The message I took away—that leadership means standing up for what you believe in, allowing you to achieve more than you can imagine—has informed me ever since.**

Thoughts to Consider:

- Do you think what Elijah did was right?
- Were you in Elijah's place, would you have done the same thing?
- Are there any principles you have which you would not allow to be compromised?
 - Which ones?
 - Why are those ones most important to you?
- What are some real-life situations in which one might need to resist peer pressure?
 - Are there any good strategies for doing this?

Day 6: Holding Yourself to a Higher Standard: Community Stringency (Amos)

Amos, the prophet, spends much of his prophetic efforts giving rebuke to the Israelites. The message which he communicates from God is that if the Israelites don't start following God's instruction as their ancestors promised they would, then they will face destruction. Part of the rebuke which they receive explains to them that the reason why God is singling them out for critique is because God also singled them out to be chosen [though this is a fascinating topic, it is not one for this day- there is a later day to discuss chosenness]. The concept here (which is admittedly a contentious one) is that the Israelites (and thus modern Jews) should automatically be held to a higher level of moral stringency than a non-Jew intrinsically would be. One might ask: By being Jews, do we choose to add an extra tier of moral obligation to our ethical load?

Goal:

1. To consider whether Jews ought to hold themselves to a higher-than-universal moral standard by studying Amos' rebuke to the Israelites.

Texts:

- **Amos 3:2**
 - You alone [the people of Israel] have I [God] singled out
Of all the families of the earth—
That is why I will call you to account
For all your iniquities
- Norman Linzer, "Should Jewish Professionals Be Held to a Higher Standard?" pp. 166-167.
 - Why should Jews be held to a higher standard? Why can't they be judged like everyone else? And if they should, which Jews should be held to a higher standard--the ultra-Orthodox because they dress differently and possess Torah knowledge, or every Jew because we are all bound by the moral and ethical strictures of the Torah?"

"I have always believed that the true test of a pious Jew is not the performance of the ritual laws but rather the comportment in interpersonal relationships. It is easier to observe kashruth and Sabbath than to be honest in business and avoid lashon hara--slandering other people. Piety is tested in behavior toward others."
- Leviticus 19:1-2
 - And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them: You shall be holy; for I the LORD your God am holy.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Does being Jewish make one more ethically obligated to act appropriately?

- What do you make of Norman Linzer's take on the issue? How does one's Jewishness relate to his or her ethical obligations?
 - If one has greater ethical obligation because he or she is Jewish, is there more obligation possessed depending on how much one understands Torah?
- In Leviticus, God tells us that we should be holy because God is holy- what does this mean in terms of Jews having a greater ethical responsibility?

Day 7: Taking Responsibility (Ezekiel)

Ezekiel the prophet lived in the time after the Babylonians destroyed the first temple. Among other things, his prophecies discuss the expulsion of Jews post-Babylonian conquest and the Jews' potential to come back to the land of Israel if they go back to God. Like many at the time, Ezekiel believed that the Babylonian conquest was God's way of reproofing the Israelites for their poor behavior and faithlessness. Unlike some of the other prophets' visions, though, Ezekiel's prophecy conveys a Divine message of possible mercies, should Israel return to Adonai. The passage from Ezekiel below conveys such a message. In it, Ezekiel communicates God's message that if the Israelites can 'get themselves a new heart and spirit, that they may save themselves.' As the passage continues to explain, all God wishes is that the Israelites will take responsibility for their shortcomings, then God will happily save them.

Goal:

1. To encourage campers to consider what it means to take responsibility for oneself by studying Ezekiel 18:31-32.

Texts:

- **Ezekiel 18:31-32**
 - Cast away all the transgressions by which you have offended, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, that you may not die, O House of Israel. For it is not My desire that anyone shall die – declares the Lord God. Repent, therefore, and live!
- Mark Jacobs, Caring for the Cycle of Life
 - Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah means becoming a son (bar) or daughter (bat) of "the commandment" (mitzvah). Traditionally understood as a time of taking on Jewish responsibilities, Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a time to ask yourself: What responsibilities do I have? To whom am I responsible—myself, my family, my community, other creatures, the land, the Creator of all? Your Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a time to reflect on your place in the world around you.
- Yitzchak Berkovits, "Taking Responsibility,"
http://www.aish.com/h/hh/gar/fulfillment/Taking_Responsibility.html
 - The Torah quotes God as saying "I've put before you today life and good, death and evil; choose life." Amazingly, God tells us that the choice of life is up to us!
God is King but the choice is ours?! It's paradoxical but there's a beautiful resolution: Generally speaking, submission means helplessness and relinquishing control. Here we're really submitting to a sense of responsibility for ourselves. "It's all up to me..."
The constant theme of the "Viduy" confession is: "I didn't live up to my responsibility and I didn't do what I could for myself." We regret being infantile and

neglecting responsibility. Rosh Hashana is the day the Jew celebrates maturity and being responsible for doing what he knows is true and good, rather than doing what he feels like at the moment.

Making God King doesn't mean surrender in the form of leaving everything up to Him. It's realizing that God wants what's best for you. This is obvious if you understand what God is saying: "Use your brains. Wake up, grow up, and realize where you are going and what you are doing. Be responsible for your life."

The foremost responsibility is to work out what is right by studying, thinking and understanding. Figure out what you are living for and what your goals are and how you will achieve them, and understand the consequences of stupidity and impulsiveness. This is not surrendering to an outside force or a humble submission. It's uplifting and it feels great!

Thoughts to Consider:

- What does it mean to take responsibility for oneself in life?
 - What does it mean regarding striving to do the right thing?
 - When one has erred, how does one recover in taking responsibility?
- How does the example in Ezekiel show that taking responsibility for one's shortcoming can be beneficial?
- Are there any situations in which one ought not to take responsibility for his or herself?
- What are some situations in which it might be difficult but appropriate to take responsibility for personal shortcomings?
- What are the responsibilities which we each have in life?
- Does a bar/bat mitzvah become more responsible than one who is a minor in Jewish law?
- Do you feel that it is uplifting, like Yitzchak Berkovits argues, to recognize your own personal obligations and responsibilities?

Day 8: Chosenness in Judaism (Isaiah)

A concept which was relatively standard to Judaism throughout the ages, but one which contemporary Reform Judaism tends to shun, is the chosenness of Judaism. To say that Judaism is a religion particularly chosen by God may be a challenging assertion, and it seems that it is one which makes interfaith dialogue and understanding more difficult. Nevertheless, the question of whether *am yisrael* was chosen by God is relatively clear-cut in the Bible, and this is evidenced by the passage below from Isaiah. Utilizing the passage from Isaiah, this day should be used to discuss the idea of Judaism being chosen by God and any implications which that might have.

Goal:

1. To discuss the idea of chosenness by studying the passage in Isaiah from 41:8 thru 10.

Texts:

- **Isaiah 41:8-10**
 - But you, Israel, My servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
Seed of Abraham My friend –
You whom I drew from the ends of the earth
And called from its far corners,
To whom I said: You are My servant;
I chose you, I have not rejected you –
Fear not, for I am with you,
Be not frightened, for I am your God;
I strengthen you and I help you,
I uphold you with My victorious right hand.
- Traditional Aleinu (most reform Jews say everything but the bold line)
 - *Aleinu l'shabeiach la'adon hakol, latet g'dulah l'yotzeir breishit. Shelo asanu k'goyey ha'artzot, v'lo samanu k'mishpachot ha'adamah. Shelo sam chelkeinu kahem, v'goraleinu k'chol hamonam. Shehem mishtachavim la'hevel varik, umitpal'lim el el lo yoshia. Va'anachnu korim, umishtachavim, umodim lifnei melech malchei hamlachim, hakadosh baruch hu.*

It is our obligation to praise the Lord of everything, to give greatness to the one who causes creation. That God didn't create us like the non-Jews of the lands, and didn't place us with the other families of the earth. That God didn't make our lot like theirs and our destiny like all their multitudes. For they bow to vanity and emptiness, and pray to a non-redeeming God. And we bend at the knee, bow, and give praise before the Ruler of all Rulers, the Holy One, blessed be God.
- Mordecai Kaplan, "The Future of the American Jew," p. 211.

- The idea of Israel as the Chosen People must, therefore, be understood as belonging to a thought world we no longer inhabit... the very notion that a people can for all time be the elect of God implies an epic or dramatic conception of history, a history predetermined in form and aim. Nowadays for any people to call itself “chosen” is to be guilty of self-infatuation.
- Gunther Plaut, “The Case for the Chosen People,” p. 120.
 - I look at the world and I look at the Jew. Despite all its political diversity and the persistence of force and struggle, I see a world drifting toward ever increasing conformity of spirit, habit, thought and behavior. I see the Jew desperately maintaining his identity, often without apparent purpose, often instinctively. Often he is ignorant of his past and ignorant even of the possibilities of meaning that his present might hold for him. Often he merely exists, yet here too he may be serving a purpose beyond himself. For in the sea of conformity he may be the rock of difference. Perhaps it is the destiny of the Jew today to maintain the possibility of minority and diversity.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Do you think of Jews as having been chosen by God?
 - If so, does this mean that those of other faiths were not chosen by God?
 - What do these statements say about interfaith dialogue and pluralism?
- Would saying that Jews are chosen make Jews superior to those of other religions?
- Could considering oneself chosen by God simply another way of showing pride for who he or she is?
- Looking at the translation of the Aleinu, how do you feel this fits in with your conception of chosenness?
- How do you feel about Mordecai Kaplan’s characterization of chosenness as a form of self-infatuation?

Unit II: Ech she'ani l'atzmi mah ani? Community Values

Day 9: Protecting Others (Moses)

One of the positive examples which Moses sets in the Torah is of protecting others. Moses is confronted multiple times with situations in which he personally works to ensure that the Israelites are kept safe. One such example takes place in the passage below, where God is considering destroying the Israelites and making a great nation out of Moses. Moses, speaking to God about this plan, convinces God to spare the Israelites. Moses' example gives a great picture of the Jewish value of protecting others. On this day, we particularly want to focus on the conceptual obligation to defend others, regardless of the others' circumstances. Later on in the session, there is a day when more practical issues of defending the weak or defenseless will be appropriate to discuss- you want to save such discussions for that day.

Goal:

1. To recognize the Jewish imperative to protect others by considering Moses' example.

Texts:

- **Exodus 32:7-14**

- And the LORD spoke unto Moses: 'Go, get yourself down; for your people, that you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have dealt corruptly; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said: This is your god, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.' And the LORD said unto Moses: 'I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of you a great nation.' And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said: 'LORD, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people, that You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, saying: For evil did God bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You did swear by Your own self, and said unto them: I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.' And the LORD repented of the evil which God said God would do unto God's people.

- Abe Rosenthal, “Thirty-Eight Witnesses: The Kitty Genovese Case” (California, Univ. of California Press, 1964), pp. XXVII-XXIX.
 - In the middle of a cold night, thirty-eight people refused the risk of being stabbed or getting involved by answering a cry for help of a person they could not see. Is that a greater mystery, a greater offense, than that by light of day thousands on a single street withhold help to suffering people, when it would cost them virtually nothing and put them in no peril, even though they see their faces and sores? Are the people who turned away that one night in Queens, each in a separate decision, any more immoral or indecent or cowardly because there happened to be thirty-eight, than if there were just one of them? Does God judge by the individual or by head count? And what if we hear the scream but cannot see the screamer? Of all questions about silent witnesses, to me this is the most important. Suppose the screamer is not downstairs but around the corner. Surely somebody else is closer, so we don't have to run out, do we? What is the accepted distance for hearing but not moving—two flights down, five, one block, two blocks, three? Suppose you know people are screaming under persecution—not discrimination but persecution, as in imprisonment, torture, genocide, forced starvation—for their race or their religion. You have seen the pictures of African children with their bellies distended: our own government, even this government, defines this as a genocide. You know they scream, but they are not within sight and you cannot reach out and touch them, nor are you allowed to visit them. But the screams are piercing. How far away do you have to be to forgive yourself for not doing whatever is in your power to do: stop doing business with the torturer, or just speak up for them, write a letter, join a human rights group, go to shul and pray for the rescue of the persecuted and the damnation of the persecutors, give money, do something. Three stories up, a thousand miles, ten thousand miles, from here to Queens, or from here to Sudan and Chad for victims of genocide anywhere? How far is silence from a place of safety acceptable without detesting yourself as we detest the thirty-eight? Tell me, is there any question more important than this?

Thoughts to Consider:

- How does Moses, in the story above, demonstrate that protecting others is important?
 - What does Moses’ example tell us about the need to protect everyone, even the guilty?
- How does one balance one’s own priorities with the need to protect others?
- Why might a person feel compelled to protect others?
 - While this *might* seem obvious, there are a number of prominent philosophers (such as Ayn Randt) who suggest that one has not moral obligation to protect others.
- What can one learn from the case of Kitty Genovese (in the second text above)?
- Are there any special situations in which one is especially obligated to help others?
- Does one have more of an obligation to help those closer to him?

Day 10: Gratitude (Joshua)

Joshua, who led the Israelites after Moses, served as a prophet during the time that the Israelites conquered the Promised Land. During one of the battles between the Israelites and Jericho, the Israelites sent spies out to learn about the land. The spies were almost captured, however one woman in the town, Rahab, saved the Israelite spies. In return, the Israelites spared the lives of Rahab and her family when they later invaded the city. This story can serve as a nice model for thankfulness and graciousness, given that the Israelites showed their thanks to Rahab by protecting her family.

Goal:

1. To discuss the importance of gratitude in the Jewish tradition by studying the story of Rahab and Joshua.

Texts:

- **Joshua 2:3-14, 6:17**
 - o And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying: 'Bring forth the men that are come to thee [the Israelites who were spying out Jericho], that are entered into thy house; for they are come to search out all the land.' And the woman took the two men, and hid them; and she said: 'Yea, the men came unto me, but I knew not whence they were; and it came to pass about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out; whither the men went I know not; pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.' But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had spread out upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to the Jordan unto the fords; and as soon as they that pursued after them were gone out, the gate was shut...And the men said unto her: 'Our life for yours, if you tell not this our business; and it shall be, when the LORD gives us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee...'
 - [Joshua, when the Israelites were about to overtake Jericho, speaking to the Israelites] "Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.
- Rabbi Susan Grossman, <http://blog.beliefnet.com/virtualtalmud/2006/11/thanksgiving-is-very-jewish-holiday.html>
 - o Thanksgiving, as in giving thanks, is a very Jewish thing to do. According to tradition, Jews are to give thanks 100 times each day. We are to give thanks before we eat, for having food, and after we eat, for having been able to have food. Each morning the traditional liturgy includes thank-yous for such simple acts as standing up and having the strength to get through the day...The initial Thanksgiving feast was probably based upon our fall thanksgiving festival of Sukkot.
- Dr. Alan Morinis, <http://www.aish.com/sp/pg/48906987.html>

- o If we can be grateful to rivers, shoes, cars, and benches, which help us involuntarily, how much more so to human beings who have free will and who help us consciously out of the goodness of their hearts? Or to the mysterious source out of which our lives have come? When Leah, wife of the patriarch Jacob, had her fourth child, she named him "Yehudah," which means, "I am grateful," to reflect her gratitude to God for the gift of another son. The name Yehudah is the source of the Hebrew name of the Jewish people (Yehudim), revealing the very direct tie between Judaism and gratitude.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Was it right for the Israelites to show thanks to Rahab the way they did?
- What does it mean to truly give thanks to someone?
 - o Is it just the repayment of some sort of debt?
 - o Do you only do it because you expect it in return?
- Relating to Rabbi Grossman's piece: Could you think of 100 things to give thanks for every day?
 - o Maybe look into the morning blessings/*nisim she'bechol yom* – these are in the Mishkan T'filah and are a set of blessings that Jews traditionally say every morning.
- How can we work to be more conscious of giving thanks to others?

Day 11: Mercy (Hosea)

During the time at which Hosea prophesied (~8th Century BCE), the Israelites were facing military defeats and spiritual uncertainty. Hosea delivered rebuke to the Israelites on God's account, including the passage below. One of the main features which characterize the writings of Hosea is that Hosea describes the mercy and love which God has for the Israelites despite their transgressions. The quality of mercy, which is considered a quality of the Divine, is a quality which is also very important to human relations. On this day, we want to teach our campers about the importance of mercy.

Goal:

1. To consider the importance of having Mercy by studying Hosea's message of God's mercy toward Israel.

Texts:

- **Hosea 11:8-9**
 - How can I give you up, O Ephraim?
How surrender you, O Israel?
How can I make you like Admah,
Render you like Zeboiim?
I have had a change of heart,
All my tenderness is stirred.
I will not act on My wrath,
Will not turn to destroy Ephraim.
For I am God, not man,
The Holy One in your midst:
I will not come in fury.
- David Sears,
<http://www.bodhicitta.net/Compassion%20for%20Humanity%20in%20the%20Jewish%20Tradition.htm>
 - The highest level of charity—helping a person establish herself or himself—is the foremost ideal of our modern social agenda as we address the complex issues of poverty and welfare and seek the best ways to help people break the chains of poverty. The words of Maimonides exemplify the compassion of Judaism and also vividly show how Jewish sages have sought to point the way for Jews to help make our world a better place in which all people might live with dignity and self-respect...
This Jewish heritage has been a very important factor in influencing and encouraging individual Jews to speak out on behalf of freedom, compassion, love, peace and justice for all. Therefore, committed Jews seek Jewish continuity, not just for themselves, but for all humankind.
- Richard H. Schwartz, <http://www.all-creatures.org/articles/jv-imitation.html>

- God is referred to in the synagogue services as Ha-rachaman (the compassionate one) and as Av harachamim (Father of compassion). Since Judaism teaches that human beings, uniquely created in God's image (Genesis 1:27), are to imitate God's positive attributes, we should also be compassionate. The Talmud states that Jews are to be rachmanim b'nei rachmanim (compassionate children of compassionate ancestors) and that one who is not compassionate cannot truly be of the seed of Abraham, our father (Bezah 32b). It also states that Heaven grants compassion to those who are compassionate to others, and withholds it from those who are not (Shabbat 151b).

In the Baruch Sheh'amar prayer, recited daily in the morning (Shacharit) services, it states that, "Blessed is the One (God) Who has compassion on the earth; blessed is the One Who has compassion on the creatures [animals and people]". Hence, in imitating God, we should also exhibit concern and compassion toward the earth's environment and all of God's creatures.

Thoughts to Consider:

- What do you make of the last 3 lines of Hosea, where God says that God is above certain acts of rage? Is there a lesson humanity can take from this too?
- In what ways does God show mercy to the world?
 - Are there any which humanity can consider models?
- How does one appropriately show mercy to others?
 - What are some normal situations during which this might be relevant?

Day 12: G'milut Chasadim (Micah)

Micah, an Israelite prophet who was a contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah, gave rebuke to the Israelites, but also spoke about ways which the Israelites could return to God. Among other things, Micah spoke about how the Israelites could come back to God by fulfilling good works, not just by participating in ritual sacrifice system. The idea that acts of loving kindness (*g'milut chasadim*) are paramount to Jewish life is quite relevant to the lives of our campers. This day can be a day to look at the example from Micah and consider the topic of *g'milut chasadim* as a whole.

Goal:

1. To discuss the importance of acts of loving kindness in Judaism (particularly in contrast to ritual law/sacrifice) by studying passage in Micah 6:7-8.

Texts:

- **Micah 6:7-8**
 - Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.
- Psalm 50:8-14
 - It is not because of your sacrifices that I will reprove you, nor for your burnt-offerings which are continually before Me.
I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he-goats out of your folds.
For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.
All fowls of the mountains belong to me; and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.
Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?
Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High.
- Hosea 6:6
 - For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.
- <http://www.jewfaq.org/brother.htm>
 - Pirkei Avot, a book of the Mishnah, teaches that the universe depends on three things: on Torah (law), on avodah (service to G-d), and on *g'milut chasadim* (usually translated as "acts of lovingkindness") (Avot 1:2), perhaps drawing from Psalm 89:3, "the universe is built on kindness" (more commonly translated as "forever is mercy built"). In fact, this quote has become a popular song in synagogues: Al Shlosa D'varim (On Three Things). The Mishnah also describes *g'milut chasadim* as one of the few mitzvot (commandments) for which there is no minimum amount sufficient to satisfy your obligation. (Pe'ah 1:1; reiterated in Talmud Chagigah 7a). That verse also describes

g'milut chasadim as one of the few things that one derive benefit from in this world and yet still be rewarded for in the world to come. The Talmud says that g'milut chasadim is greater than tzedakah (charity), because unlike tzedakah, g'milut chasadim can be done for both poor and rich, both the living and the dead, and can be done with money or with acts. (Talmud Sukkah 49b).

Thoughts to Consider:

- What is the message which Micah communicates to the Israelites?
 - What is your take on it? Do you think that Micah is correct that ritual commandments are less important relative to *g'milut chasadim*.
- Look at the two pieces from Psalms and Hosea- How are they similar to the message in Micah? In what ways are they different?
- What are everyday acts of *g'milut chasadim* that we do?
 - What are some opportunities for *g'milut chasadim* which we might often miss, but which would be best if we do?
- If we make certain to always fulfill acts of loving kindness, can we be sure that we're functioning as good people?
 - Is there any way to ensure this?

Day 13: Family Values (Eli)

In the passage below from 1 Samuel, one can see an example of the prophet Eli attempting to raise his children properly. The situation was as follows: Eli's two sons were taking advantage of the tithes (A sort of tax on sacrifices which people would pay. The priests would take a certain amount of the meat which had been sacrificed for themselves. Eli's sons were taking advantage of the system and taking more of the meat than they were supposed to.) they were allowed to collect for ritual slaughters. When Eli learns of this, he confronts his sons, but he is unable to get them back under control.

This story can function as more than one sort of example at once. On one hand, Eli serves as a model of a father attempting to create a positive family environment- he attempts to teach his children the difference between right and wrong. Simultaneously, Eli and his sons are an example of what can go wrong in a family dynamic. Using this story as a jumping-off point, this could be a great day to discuss family values.

Goal:

1. To discuss the importance of creating positive family structures by looking at how Eli attempts to discipline his sons.

Texts:

- **1 Samuel 2:12-25**

- Now the sons of Eli were base men; they knew not the LORD. And the custom of the priests with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his band; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took therewith. So they did unto all the Israelites that came thither in Shiloh. Yea, before the fat was made to smoke, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed: 'Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of you, but raw.' And if the man said unto him: 'Let the fat be made to smoke first of all, and then take as much as your soul desires'; then he would say: 'No, but you shall give it me now; and if not, I will take it by force.' And the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD; for the men dealt contemptuously with the offering of the LORD.

Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how that they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting. And he said unto them: 'Why do you such things? For I hear evil reports concerning you from all this people. No, my sons; for it is no good report which I hear the LORD'S people do spread abroad. If one man sin against another, God shall judge him; but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him?'

- William Berkson, Jewish Family Values Today, p. 10

- Jewish tradition values justice and kindness in all relationships, and gives specific responsibilities to parents and children. The responsibilities of parents include disciplining children so that they know right from wrong, teaching them Jewish tradition, and seeing that they learn a vocation. The specific responsibilities of children include honoring and revering their parents.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Does it look like Eli's attempt to discipline his sons was done properly?
 - If so, why? If not, why not? What could have been done better?
- How do you feel a healthy family structure can be established?
- Are there any features of your family structure which you believe particularly promote a healthy family lifestyle?
- What do you feel are the particular obligations of parents to create a nurturing family?
- What do you feel are the particular obligations of children to create a positive family?

Day 14: Leadership (Moses)

While Moses doesn't come in the Book of Prophets, he is considered one of the most important (if not *the* most important) prophets in the Jewish tradition. One of his greatest legacies is as a leader of the Israelites- while he had certain faults and made mistakes, he is unparalleled as an Israelite leader. In the text below from Deuteronomy 34, one can see that the Torah even goes so far as to say that "there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." Moses provides a good example for the personal value of being a leader.

Goal:

1. To teach campers the importance of being a good leader using the example of Moses.

Texts:

- **Deuteronomy 34:1-12**
 - And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo...And the LORD showed him all the land, even Gilead as far as Dan; and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the hinder sea; and the South, and the Plain, even the valley of Jericho the city of palm-trees, as far as Zoar...So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD...his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated...**And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face; in all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; and in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.**
- Dr. Hal M. Lewis
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ethics/Caring_For_Others/Ethical_Behavior/Leadership.shtml
 - The Hebrew word for leadership is manhigut. It derives from the root found in the word "behavior." For Judaism, effective leadership is not about position; it is about behavior and action. The rabbis were clear: one can lead effectively without holding a title or an office, so long as one behaves appropriately. "Be rather a tail to lions than a head to foxes," they insisted (Avot 4:20). In evaluating those who would be our leaders then, Judaism suggests that we would do well to consider their behaviors, not their resumes or their press statements.
- <http://www.jewfaq.org/moshe.htm>
 - Moses was the greatest prophet, leader and teacher that Judaism has ever known. In fact, one of Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith is the belief that Moses' prophecies are true, and that he was the greatest of the prophets. He is called "Moshe Rabbeinu," that is, Moses, Our Teacher/Rabbi. Interestingly, the numerical value of "Moshe Rabbeinu" is 613: the number of mitzvot that Moses taught the Children of Israel! He is described as the only person who ever knew God face-to-

face (Deut. 34:10) and mouth-to-mouth (Num. 12:8), which means that God spoke to Moses directly, in plain language, not through visions and dreams, as God communicated with other prophets.

Thoughts to Consider:

- How does Moses show his aptitude to lead? (There are *many* examples!)
- What are things which make Moses a good leader?
 - What are things which make him a less than optimal leader?
 - How can we learn from Moses' example of knowing God face-to-face- are there ways which we ourselves can "know God?"
- The Torah says that there never arose another prophet like Moses (look at the text above)- why do you think Moses might have been given this high affirmation?
- How does being a good leader allow one to function better as an individual? (One way, for example, is that being a good leader could allow one to maintain integrity in difficult situations.)

Unit III: *Ve'im lo achshav, eymatai?* Social Justice and Making the World Better

Day 15: Standing Up for what is Right (Moses)

Moses is always a challenging figure to study as a prophet. On one hand, he is arguably the most important character in the Biblical narrative other than God, and he accomplishes a lot as the leader of the Israelites. On the other hand, he makes a lot of mistakes in his life- killing an Egyptian taskmaster, fleeing to Egypt, disobeying God's commands, and smashing the two tablets. For this day of shiur/limud, we'll focus on just one of these challenging stories: the one in which Moses kills an Egyptian taskmaster.

In this story, Moses has been living as an Egyptian, the surrogate son of the daughter of Pharaoh. When he goes out of the palace, he sees an Egyptian taskmaster striking a Hebrew, one of his brethren. In response to this, Moses kills the taskmaster and hides his body in the sand.

On one hand, this is an act which shows a value which we *do* want to teach to our children- Moses isn't afraid of standing up for what he believes is right- he will not suffer injustices, even if they are not being committed directly against him. At the same time, though, Moses commits an unjust act by murdering the Egyptian and hiding the Egyptian's body. This story can be studied on this day to discuss the nuances of standing up for what one believes is right.

Goal:

1. To evaluate the good and bad ways which one can stand up for what is right by analyzing Moses' striking of an Egyptian taskmaster.

Texts:

- **Exodus 2:9-12**
 - And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her: 'Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.' And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 2,10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said: 'Because I drew him out of the water.' 2,11 And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian smiting a

Hebrew, one of his brethren. 2,12 And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

- Rabbi Ken Spiro,
http://www.aish.com/sem/wp/Part_10_Jewish_Family_Responsibility.html
 - When you see a human being in distress, you have an obligation to help him. Judaism mandates positive behavior, which is a unique innovation in law. In other legal systems, it's not a crime to be a bystander, even in America today. In Judaism, however, social consciousness is a legal obligation, as the Torah states: "Do not stand by your neighbor's blood" (Leviticus 19:16).

"I'm a good person, I don't hurt anyone" is not the Jewish understanding of a "good person." Being a good person requires us to take action, not just avoid evil. You're either part of the problem or part of the solution.
- Elie Wiesel
 - "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

Thoughts to Consider:

- Do you believe that Moses' actions were appropriate?
- Is it significant that Moses attacked the taskmaster because he saw *one of his brethren* being struck?
- If Moses had any obligation to stop the taskmaster, would he have had the same obligation had the taskmaster been striking a non-Israelite?
- How does one work to recognize social injustices which society has not yet remedied? (e.g. In times where slavery was commonplace, how might one have worked to recognize slavery's evils?)
- What can we learn from Elie Wiesel's comment about taking sides?
 - What can this teach us about apathy in our own time?

Day 16: Defending those Who Cannot Defend Themselves (Nathan)

Nathan, a prophet at the time of King David, was a prophet who was willing to stand up to authority in order to speak in favor of what he felt was right. In the story below, he gives rebuke to King David after David intentionally has Uriah, the husband of Bath-Sheva, get killed in battle so that David can take Bath-Sheva as a wife. In this story, Nathan very explicitly stands up for the “little guy.” Indeed, as Nathan prophesies, the David’s actions carry great consequences- God punishes David in a variety of ways.

On this day, we want the campers to focus on the more practical situations where one might need to defend those who cannot defend themselves.

Goal:

1. To learn the great importance which Judaism places on defending those who lack the ability to defend themselves.

Texts:

- **2 Samuel 11:27-12:7**
 - But the thing that David had done [stealing Bath-Sheva from her husband to be his own wife] displeased the LORD. And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him: 'There were two men in one city: the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and reared; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.' And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan: 'As the LORD lives, the man that hath done this deserves to die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.' And Nathan said to David: 'Thou art the man.'
- Rabbi David Rosen, “The Rights of the Child – Jewish Perspective”
 - In the midrash - the ancient rabbinic homily on Psalm 62 on the opening verse "let the Lord arise and scatter His enemies and may those who hate Him flee from before Him", we read "(in the book of Psalms we find that) on five occasions (King) David calls on God to 'Arise and scatter His enemies' and yet there is no mention (in Psalms) that God arises (in response). When do we find (mention of) God arising? "Because of the oppression of the poor and the groans of the needy, Now will I arise, saith the Lord" (Psalm 12 v 6)
This midrash brings to mind the comment attributed to Abraham Lincoln when asked on the eve of battle whether God was on their side. "The question is", Lincoln is reported to have replied, "whether we are on God's side".

What the midrash is saying is that even if you are God's anointed himself, even if you are King David, you may not assume that God is on your side. When is God on your side? When you are on His. And what is His side? It is above all the side of the needy and vulnerable. The extent to which society addresses itself to these, is the extent to which it is godly, and the extent to which it fails is the extent to which it is damned.

- Rabbi Lord Sacks, “Judaism: Behar: Minority Rights”
 - *Ger toshav* legislation [traditional Jewish laws which protect non-Jews who live in Jewishly governed places] is thus one of the earliest extant forms of minority rights. According to the Rambam there is an obligation on Jews in Israel to establish courts of law for resident aliens to allow them to settle their own disputes – or disputes they have with Jews – according to the provisions of Noahide law. The Rambam adds: “One should act toward resident aliens with the same respect and loving kindness as one would to a fellow Jew” (Hilkhhot Melachim 10: 12).

Thoughts to Consider:

- What can one learn from Nathan’s example in the above story?
- Are there times in our own lives where we need to protect those who cannot protect themselves?
 - What are some examples of these?
 - What are the types of protection for others we might provide? Need it only be physical? How about legal, ethical, spiritual, pedagogical, etc?
 - What are the sorts of people who might need protection?
- As Jews, we are a minority religious group in America- how might we wish to be protected if need be?
- Are there times in your life when you’ve found yourself protecting those who couldn’t protect themselves?

Day 17: Standing Up for the Poor (Amos)

The prophet Amos came at a time when the two Kingdoms of Israelites were somewhat stable. Amos' message mostly concerned moral failings of the Israelites, such as rich's abuse of the poor. Amos conveys the message from God that if the Israelites do not change their ways, that God will cause their kingdoms to collapse. In this vein, Day 17 will be used to discuss the topic of standing up for the poor and economic inequality.

Goal:

1. To recognize the Jewish obligation to assist the poor by studying Amos' comment in Amos 8:4-6.

Texts:

- **Amos 8:4-6**
 - Listen to this, you who devour the needy, annihilating the poor of the land, saying, "If only the new moon were over, so that we could sell grain; The Sabbath, so that we could offer wheat for sale, using an ephah that is too small, and a shekel that is too big, tilting a dishonest scale, and selling grain refuse as grain! We will buy the poor for silver, the needy for a pair of sandals."
- Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, Tikkun 14.4, "The Mitzvah of Tzedakah," p. 58
 - The twice the verse in Deuteronomy essentially says, "don't harden your heart." Ask yourself: in the Bible, whose heart is hardened? Let's recall that Moses goes into Egypt and says, "Let my people go," and Pharaoh's heart is hardened. Any Jew who can look at a human being in need and not hear God's call to "let my people go," to do something, becomes a Pharaoh. You don't have to be evil to be on the side of evil. You simply have to remain indifferent.
- Albert Vorspan and David Saperstein, Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice (New York: UAHC Press, 1998), P. 94.
 - The practices and theories of Jewish philanthropy that evolved in the second century C.E. anticipated many of the most advanced concepts of modern social work. Every Jewish community had four basic funds. The first was called the kuppah ("box") and served only the local poor. The indigent were given funds to supply their needs for an entire week. The second fund was called tamchui ("bowl") and consisted of a daily distribution of food to both itinerants and residents. The funds' administrators, selected from among the leaders of the community, were expected to be persons of the highest integrity. The kuppah was administered by three trustees who acted as a beit din ("court"). They determined the merit of applications and the amounts to be given. The fund was always operated under the strictest regulations. To avoid suspicion, collections were always made by two or three persons. They were authorized to tax all members of the community, including tzedakah recipients, according to their capacity to pay—testimony to the principle that no individual was free from responsibility for the welfare of all. If necessary,

they seized property until the assessed amount was paid. In most countries, clothing funds, burial funds, and schools to which everybody in the community could go — rich and poor alike — were also found.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Do you believe that one has an obligation to help the poor?
 - If so, is this obligation stronger than the obligation to help others who aren't poor?
- Is the obligation to assist the poor, if one exists, intrinsically stronger for a Jew than a non-Jew?
- How does one assist the poor?
 - Are there better and worse ways to do so?
 - If so, what would the best ways be?

Day 18: The Value of Life (Jeremiah)

The prophet Jeremiah came right around the time that the first temple was destroyed, in 586 BCE. Jeremiah had been preaching that if the Israelites didn't return to God's law that God would cause a foreign power to take over- in Jeremiah's lifetime, this is what happened.

Despite the message which Jeremiah transmitted, he also informed the Israelites that God valued life enough that God would cancel his plans to cause destruction if only the Israelites would cease to act in their wrong ways. The emphasis on preservation of life is one which Judaism still cherishes. Studying the passage below from Jeremiah should provide a solid basis for learning about how important Judaism considers every life.

Goal:

1. To contemplate the degree of import which Judaism places on life by considering Jeremiah's parable to the people of Israel.

Texts:

- **Jeremiah 18:6-8, 11**

- Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 'O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?' says the LORD. 'Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. At one instant I may speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; but if that nation turn from their evil, because of which I have spoken against it, I repent of the evil that I thought to do unto it.'

Now therefore do thou speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: Thus says the LORD: Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you; return you now every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.'

- Pikuach Nefesh, From the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 74a
 - In Judaism, one may violate essentially any commandment in order to save a life. There are only three exceptions to this rule:
 - Idolatry
 - Incest (including adultery)
 - Murder
 - Even as one who came before Raba [a Talmudic rabbi] and said to him, "The governor of my town has ordered me, "Go and kill so and so; if not, I will slay thee". He answered him, 'Let him rather slay you than that you should commit murder; who knows that your blood is redder? Perhaps his blood is redder.'
- Louis Jacobs, Greater Love Hath No Man... The Jewish Point of View of Self-Sacrifice, pg. 182.

- Raba deals with murder and, as Rashi points out, it is forbidden to commit a crime in order to save a life, if life must be lost in committing the crime. But the sacrifice of one's life for another is no crime, for suicide is only an offense because *a* life is lost, not because *my* life is lost!

Thoughts to Consider:

- What significance might exist in the parable of the potter from Jeremiah?
 - Notice that in this parable, the opposite is within God's power too: God could either cause the Israelites to be utterly destroyed, or God could cause them to become something great.
- Are there any principles which you would absolutely not compromise, enough that you would rather die?
 - What guidance, if any, do you take from this notion in *pikuach nefesh*.
- Note Louis Jacobs' comment about loss of life: "...the sacrifice of one's life for another is no crime, for suicide is only an offense because a life is lost, not because my life is lost!"

Day 19: Feeding the Hungry (Isaiah)

Isaiah's works were ostensibly written around the 8th century BCE, before the time of the Babylonian conquest. The following piece, though, discusses the time when Israel will have been brought back to a renewed kingdom of Israel (~540 BCE). The excerpt below shows Isaiah's belief that hunger should be eliminated when a new kingdom of David's line would be created after a return to Jerusalem. On this day, campers should discuss the issue of hunger and try to consider the problem in as full a way as possible.

Goal:

1. To consider the Jewish value of feeding the hungry by studying Isaiah 55:1-3.

Texts:

- **Isaiah 55:1-3**
 - Every one who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money; come, buy, and eat; come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure loving promises of David.
- Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, from A. Besdin, "Man of Faith in the Modern World: Reflections of the Rav" (New York: Ktav Pub Inc, 1989)
 - "The Modern Jew is entangled in the activities of the Gentile society in numerous ways - economically, politically, culturally, and on some levels, socially. We share in the universal experience. The problems of humanity, war and peace, political stability or anarchy, morality or permissiveness, famine, epidemics, and pollution transcend the boundaries of ethnic groups.
- Sifre on Parashat Re'eh
 - To one for whom bread is suitable, give bread; to the one who needs dough, give dough; to one for whom money is required, give money; to one for whom it is fitting to put the food in that one's mouth, put it in.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Does Isaiah's prophecy have relevance in the modern day?
- What can one do to help alleviate hunger in the world?
 - Does one have an obligation to fight hunger which is close to him or her before working against hunger issues which are far away? (i.e. People often talk about the catastrophic issues of hunger in remote areas around the world. Which should one work on first- local issues of hunger which are less critical, or far-off issues of hunger which are dire?)

- Why is hunger such a major issue in the world (leaving aside the obvious fact that everyone needs to eat)?
 - Could this be related to the universality of hunger-issues?
- Do Jews have a special obligation to help feed the hungry that others don't necessarily possess?

Day 20: Peace (Isaiah)

Isaiah's works were ostensibly written around the 8th century BCE, before the time of the Babylonian conquest. Much of his prophetic writings are concerned with warning the Israelites about what will happen if the Israelites continue along their corrupt path. Isaiah, also, writes about what will eventually happen after the Israelites' problems have passed- this includes prophecies about future states of peace. The excerpt below shows an ideal of peace for which Judaism should constantly strive. On this day of shiur/limud, our campers should be able to better grasp concepts pertaining to peace due to a study of the topic (which incorporates Isaiah's prophecy).

Goal:

1. To consider the importance which Judaism places on peace by studying Isaiah 11:6-9.

Texts:

- **Isaiah 11:6-9**
 - And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lions shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
- Chaim Steinmetz, "Jewish Reflections on War and Peace," <http://www.jlaw.com/Commentary/warandpeace.html>
 - Peace is Judaism's highest aspiration. The Midrash says the entire Torah is based on the value of peace (Gittin 59b; Bamidbar Rabbah 11:7). Another Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 9:9) explains that the obligation to seek peace is of a much higher order than ritual observances. It notes that although many of the Torah's commandments are phrased in conditional terms such as "if you see", "if you meet", "if you come across", which indicate that they are only operative in specific situations, the imperative of peace is much greater, because the Torah demands that one "search for peace and pursue it" (Psalms 34:15).
- Kathy Bloomfield, "Monthly Jewish Value: Making Peace Among People," <http://www.jewishboston.com/803-cjp-families-with-young-children-initiative/blogs/3524-monthly-jewish-value-making-peace-among-people>
 - "Work for peace within your family, then in your street, then within the community." The lesson that peace begins with each individual is the lesson my mother taught my sister and me. With the words "I love you," anger seems to fly out the door. Making Peace Among People/Ahavaat Shalom Bein Adam Lachaveiro is an

important mitzvah that reminds us to forge peaceful relationships, both as individuals and as nations.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Ought peace to be more important to Jews than to the average person?
- Why do you believe that Judaism places such a high premium on peace?
- For what things is it acceptable to give up peace?
 - If war is one of these, is there a difference between various types of war (e.g. defensive, offensive, preemptive, etc.)?
- How is our obligation/desire to create person-to-person peace similar to (or different than) our obligation/desire to create community-to-community peace?
- How do we create peace as individuals?
 - Do we all have an obligation to work to bring peace?

Day 21: How Can We Continue the Prophets' Work?

On this, the penultimate day of shiur/limud, we want to discuss and learn about how we can continue the work of the prophets in our own lives. We'll have spent the whole summer thinking about ways in which the prophets functioned and the messages which they taught, so it is appropriate that we try to bring this topic even closer to home. This day should leave our campers asking, "How can I act like a prophet in my own life?"

Goal:

1. To consider how we can play the role of the prophet in our own lives.

Text:

- Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah, Chapter 7
 - When a prophet is informed of a message in a vision, it is granted to him in metaphoric imagery. Immediately, the interpretation of the imagery is imprinted upon his heart, and he knows its meaning.
- Orit Arfa,
http://www.jewishjournal.com/zoangel/item/how_to_recognize_a_prophet_20120208/
 - I remember learning in my yeshiva high school that the time of Jewish prophecy is dead. God's intimate connection with his people had been severed because of their iniquity and never again can we enjoy the prophets of old — the Samuels, Jeremiahs, Isaiahs et al. I never liked believing Jewish prophecy is dead, especially now, when we need good Jewish prophets more than ever to save history's third Jewish commonwealth from destruction...

According to Jeremiah, all men not only have the ability, but the responsibility, to seek and find truth—in essence, to become prophets—to “stand on the roadways and see, and inquire of the paths of old which is the good, and walk on it, and find rest for your souls” (6:16). It's a universal message, but one which Jews rejected. “And they said, ‘We will not walk on it.’” (6:18)

Thoughts to Consider:

- What are things that you do which mirror the prophets' work?
- What does it take to bring God's message to others?
 - Who are people you feel are already doing this sort of work?
 - Who are your “prophetic role models?”
- Judaism teaches that the age of prophecy has ended- Do you believe this?
- How can we spread the ideals of Judaism to the rest of the world?

Day 22: Culmination – Review of Prophetic Messages

This day is meant to be used as a culmination day. On it, units should strive to summarize what they have learned over the course of the summer. They should especially focus on finding ways to incorporate what they have learned about the prophets and their messages into their daily life. While being able to match the prophets with their values would be excellent, of primary importance is recognizing the various values which came out in the course of studying prophets.

Goal:

1. To sum up what has been learned about Biblical prophecy over the summer.