

MULTIDISCIPLINARY CLASSROOM IDEAS, DESIGNED TO INSPIRE

Innovative, flexible lesson suggestions adaptable to a wide range of classroom settings and students: suitable for day schools and congregational schools and for middle school through university and adult school students



TARGUM SHLISHI

A PROJECT OF TARGUM SHLISHI
A RAQUEL AND ARYEH RUBIN FOUNDATION

TEACHER'S GUIDE



JEWISH SAGES OF TODAY

Profiles of Extraordinary People



TARGUM SHLISHI



TEACHER'S GUIDE

JEWISH SAGES OF TODAY

Profiles of Extraordinary People

Jewish Sages of Today BOOK EDITORARYEH RUBIN

TEACHER'S GUIDE PROJECT TEAM

DEVELOPERRABBI ALAN ZELENETZ, M.PHIL

PROJECT DIRECTOR.....JUDITH DACH, PH.D.

PROJECT MANAGING EDITORANDREA GOLLIN

PROJECT CONSULTANTJOANNE PAPIR

GRAPHIC DESIGNER.....JENNIFER MINNICH, M2 DESIGN

The *Teacher's Guide* for *Jewish Sages of Today: Profiles of Extraordinary People* is a companion to the book.

Jewish Sages of Today was conceived and edited by Aryeh Rubin and published

in 2009 by Devora Publishing and Targum Shlishi.

Art, design, photography credits: cover art and background art courtesy Tobi Kahn; cover design inspired by *Jewish Sages of Today* front cover design by Peter Roman; Yosef Abramowitz photo courtesy Ruti Rubenstein, Mira Brichto photo courtesy Laura Griffin, Aaron Lansky photo © Patricia Williams, Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi photo © Liz Lynch, Alice Shalvi photo © Joan Roth, Avivah Zornberg photo courtesy Debbi Cooper, Efraim Zuroff photo © Dina Mendrea.

www.targumshlishi.org

The book's website is: www.jewishsagesoftoday.com



TARGUM SHLISHI

A PROJECT OF TARGUM SHLISHI
A RAQUEL AND ARYEH RUBIN FOUNDATION



WELCOME	ii
Letter to Educators from Aryeh Rubin, editor of <i>Jewish Sages of Today</i>	
OVERVIEW	iii
Includes introduction to the Teacher's Guide, bio of lesson developer Alan Zelenetz, and more	
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE	vi
Includes guidance for getting started, "Anatomy of a Lesson," and ideas for questions and activities for the book as a whole	
THE LESSONS	
PREFACE	1
YOSEF ABRAMOWITZ	6
RACHEL AZARIA	10
MICHAEL BERENBAUM	14
MIRA BRICHTO	18
RUTH CALDERON	22
DEBBIE FRIEDMAN	26
BLU GREENBERG AND IRVING (YITZ) GREENBERG	30
JUDITH HAUPTMAN	34
LAWRENCE HOFFMAN	38
AARON LANSKY	42
DANIEL LIBESKIND	46
SHOLOM LIPSKAR	50
JENNIFER LASZLO MIZRAHI	54
HANKUS NETSKY	58
ROBERT POLLACK	62
DENNIS PRAGER	66
NESSA RAPOPORT AND TOBI KAHN	70
GARY ROSENBLATT	74
SUSAN WEIDMAN SCHNEIDER	78
ALICE SHALVI	82
MICHAEL STEINHARDT	86
ADIN STEINSALTZ	90
JOSEPH TELUSHKIN	95
AVIVAH ZORNBERG	99
EFRAIM ZUROFF	103



DEAR EDUCATORS,

I have always believed that teaching our children is the most noble of professions. It has been my greatest hope, during the years of working on *Jewish Sages of Today: Profiles of Extraordinary People*, that the book be used productively in an educational setting. I hope that it nurtures a spark, a *nitzutz*, in the students who read it and also in you, the teachers. My wish, above all, is that this book will make a positive difference in the lives of our children. I am pleased to offer you this *Teacher's Guide* and the profiles of the individual sages—both as resources that are freely available online for educational purposes. I am confident that you will find these materials of interest and of use. I believe that the examples of the individuals profiled in the book have much to teach all of us.

We live in a world, in a time, where there exists a widespread and often misguided celebrity worship in the dominant culture. We and our children have “heroes” and so-called role models who are, primarily, the people we see on television. But being a celebrity does not equate with being a hero, with being a righteous person, with living an admirable life. We are starving for real heroes. The sages in this book, and others like them, are true heroes. They are people who have a purpose, a mission in life, who are working to improve the world. Those profiled in the book are an incredibly varied group, but they have some commonalities: all of them have made a positive difference in the world, and all of them show us, through their actions, that one person can make the world a much better place.

I hope you enjoy your time with the book and this companion *Teacher's Guide* and that you and your students are inspired by this material. We are honored that the esteemed Alan Zelenetz agreed to author the lessons because he is a creative force in his own right. He has come up with an innovative and lively series of lessons, full of thoughtful and provoking questions and suggestions for classroom activities. I invite your feedback and comments as you utilize this guide. Please feel free to contact us at: info@jewishsagesoftoday.com.

With my best wishes for you and your students as you explore the lives of these sages,

ARYEH RUBIN

editor, *Jewish Sages Of Today: Profiles Of Extraordinary People*
founder and director, Targum Shlishi



Jewish Sages of Today is not a traditional textbook. And this companion *Teacher's Guide* is not a traditional curriculum. *Jewish Sages of Today* is a collection of profiles of incredible people who are doing amazing things—it is inspirational, it is uplifting, and it is truly motivational to read about the accomplishments of these remarkable individuals.

The *Teacher's Guide* is designed to help you access *Jewish Sages of Today: Profiles of Extraordinary People* in the form of individual classroom units and to suggest multiple avenues for sharing the profiles with your students. Here you'll find a wealth of creative ideas and information organized to support your teaching and allow you to pick and choose your approach.

For educational purposes only, all of the profiles are available for (free) download from the *Jewish Sages of Today* website, www.jewishsagesoftoday.com. In addition, the book is available through Amazon.com or by ordering it from your local bookstore.

We say “the profiles” rather than “the chapters” because these are not typical chapters. They don't need to be read in order—in this way the book is closer to an anthology. The profiles are arranged in that most basic of ways, alphabetically. You choose what you'd like to cover and how—mix and match for the benefit of your students. Perhaps you'll decide to have students read and discuss only one profile, or three, or seven. Perhaps you'll ask that students read the entire book, but you'll only teach to a few of the profiles. There are many possibilities.

WHO IS THE TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR?

- > **Teachers in multiple settings:** Day schools, congregational schools, universities, adult school settings; it is for students in middle school through university, including homeschooled students. The lessons are adaptable to a multitude of school settings and ages.
- > **Teachers of varied subjects:** It is multidisciplinary, and can be used in a range of subjects such as history, social studies, current events, religious studies, Judaic studies, literature, and journalism. Many topics are discussed in the book, as the sages hail from a wide range of professions. Included in the book are rabbis, scholars, musicians, an architect, an artist, writers, a scientist, several activists, the last Nazi hunter, and more—the book has a wide reach and broad applications.
- > **A wide-ranging student body:** Both the book, *Jewish Sages of Today*, and this companion *Teacher's Guide* are intended to appeal to a wide-ranging general audience. The *Teacher's Guide* assumes little to no prior Jewish education, instruction, or achievement, and it is appropriate for both Jewish and non-Jewish students.



ABOUT THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

Think of this *Teacher's Guide* not as a map, but as a supply closet of sorts, from which you can choose what works for your classroom: it is designed to be adaptable to your educational approach and your students' needs. The heart of the *Teacher's Guide* is the provocative pre- and post-reading questions and activities devised to foster creative, original thought. Great effort has been made to include a wide range of engaging items for each profile and to gather a wealth of materials, allowing you to browse the lessons and choose what is best for your students.

- > **Study skills focus on:** Critical thinking, seeing the big picture, thinking outside the box, understanding others' motivations, encouraging self-development and action, historic analysis of current events, making connections, and improving understanding of history and geography. A variety of educational strategies are used in the activities, from encouraging lively discussion to crafting individual and group projects, from engaging in data analysis to producing creative writing or graphic design, from conducting online research to composing songs to developing prayer sessions to role-playing as philanthropists.
- > **Time commitment:** The *Teacher's Guide* is designed to be flexible and personalized to each teacher's requirements. Each lesson is adaptable to the teacher's individual needs and can be taught in one class session or over the course of multiple classes. Teachers may choose to use these lessons as the basis of classroom discussion, or as a resource for independent work by students.

ABOUT THE SAGES

The subjects of these profiles are linked by a common humanity and a common theme; each burns with a passion to achieve, has amassed the wisdom to accomplish her or his personal and professional goals, and is inspired to share with others a vision of extraordinary purpose towards a better world. All this within the unique context of a Jewish spiritual, cultural, and historical heritage.

ABOUT YOU

We hope the ideas in this *Teacher's Guide* inspire you as a teacher with fresh course materials and ideas to incorporate into your ever-evolving curriculum. We also hope that your involvement with *Jewish Sages of Today* proves to be personally rewarding.

Whether you yourself are Jew or Gentile, pious or pragmatic, spiritual or skeptical, denominational or post-, these Jewish sages should speak to you and, through you, to your students, not only in terms of Judaism's distinct tones, but in those universal terms of talent, intellect, integrity, and magnanimity that both their lives and their work display.



ABOUT ALAN ZELENETZ, DEVELOPER OF THE *TEACHER'S GUIDE*

Rabbi Alan Zelenetz, M.Phil., has been a yeshiva day school and yeshiva high school principal for twenty-five years, during which time he also served as director of curriculum development for Teachers College Innovations at Teachers College, Columbia University, and as associate director of the university's Center for Social Imagination, the Arts and Education. As academic and creative director of the Millennium School Project, he designed in blueprint a model twenty-first century bicultural high school. He has also chaired and served as senior member of the Administrative Leadership Group of the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education. As a writer for Marvel Comics he co-created *The Alien Legion* and worked on *Conan the Barbarian* and *The Mighty Thor*.

THE MATERIALS AND TEACHER PREP

The questions and activities are user-friendly—they are ready to go and require little more than a thorough reading on the teacher's part before implementation. Staff development is not a pre-requisite of implementing this program. The profiles and activities may be used across the curriculum; they are enrichment materials and, other than allotment of time, require no changes to the content areas of your curriculum. While the materials might be put to use in a purely online or Distance Learning setting, they are intended for a live classroom.

The overall goal of these materials is to ask probing questions and sharpen students' critical intelligence by encouraging students to think deeply and creatively about the nature and importance of wisdom, initiative, leadership, originality, creativity, and action in the contemporary world Jewish community as modeled by these "sages." Students are guided in ways of interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating ideas and events from a particularly Jewish perspective. They are not expected to arrive at definitive answers to questions raised, nor are they pressed to perform activities in some uniform fashion.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the *Teacher's Guide*, the following related resources are available:

- > ***Jewish Sages of Today* book:** available through Amazon.com or order through your bookstore.
- > ***Jewish Sages of Today* profiles:** for educational purposes, available for free download from the website, www.jewishsagesoftoday.com.
- > ***Jewish Sages of Today* website:** the website (where this *Teacher's Guide* is located) is a dynamic companion to the book and includes a wealth of supplemental materials related to the book and to each sage. Of particular note are the webpages for each individual sage, which include audio excerpts from the interviews conducted for the book, examples of each person's work made accessible through the website (from book chapters to songs to streaming video of the sages in action), reviews of the book, and testimonials describing how the book has impacted readers. The website URL is: www.jewishsagesoftoday.com.



USE IT CREATIVELY

Certain of the profiles may lead to subject-specific lessons (history, Bible study, literature, science, art, music, et al.), while almost all lend themselves to interdisciplinary approaches across curriculum in both Jewish and general studies. The book can also be the focus of a school-wide intellectual endeavor, similar to the One Book, One Community reading campaign, and as such promises to add excitement and innovation to the school semester. For example, one profile might be studied in a history class and another in Talmud, one in music and another in biology, with students asked to consider how it feels to use similar materials across disciplines and what that says about the nature of learning.

USE IT BROADLY

Sources and resources referenced in the *Teacher's Guide* range across a broad cultural continuum. The pedagogic goal is not only to minimize distinctions between “highbrow, lowbrow, and nobrow” reference points but to actively encourage students to relate to the lessons.

ANATOMY OF A LESSON

The lessons are each based on the profiles of the sages with the exception of the lesson on the preface, and all are organized in the same manner, with the following features:

- > **Sage Stats:** A quick and impressionistic guide to the sage, designed to spur educators' and students' interest in the profile.
- > **Before They Read the Profile, Have Students**
 - Think About It:** A selection of questions, which could be the basis for classroom discussion or a written assignment; intended to encourage student thinking about themes and subject material.
 - Gear Up:** A list of concepts, people, and words that students should be familiar with; could be assigned to students to look up, or reviewed in a brief in-class discussion.
- > **After They Read the Profile, Have Students**
 - Think About It:** Provocative questions for classroom discussion or written assignment.
 - Don't Just Sit There:** Suggested activities involving research.
- > **Ride the Surf with Learning Links:** Want more? Links to online information related to the sage or the subject matter for teachers and/or students.
- > **Glossary:** Definitions are provided for key words. There are several options as to how to integrate these vocabulary words (depending on grade level). For example, you might incorporate the definitions into a class discussion; the definitions can be printed and handed out to students before they read the profile; or the words alone can be the basis for a vocabulary assignment requiring students to look up the definitions.



THE BIG PICTURE

In teaching about the accomplishments of the individuals profiled in *Jewish Sages of Today*, in discussing their achievements and their commitment to making the world a better place, you are guiding your students to inspiration through the examples provided here. You are helping them make connections between the selves they are, the “sages” they meet, and the selves they can become. In so doing, you are making an essential difference in their lives and, by consequence, in the greater Jewish and world communities.

QUESTIONS/ACTIVITIES FOR THE BOOK AS A WHOLE

As you teach about these personalities and discuss their examples, there will be opportunities to consider key questions and even make assignments related to the themes and spirit of the book as a whole, in addition to those contained in the individual lessons.

KEY QUESTIONS

- > Who are our Jewish sages today?
- > Who were our Jewish sages in the ancient as well as recent past?
- > What uniquely Jewish aspects about the idea of heroism are you discovering?

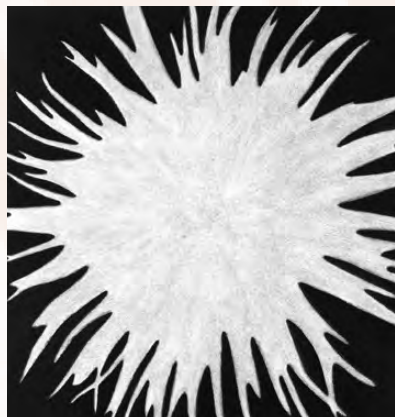
ACTIVITIES

- > Have each student choose a local hero, research and interview that person, and write a profile.
- > Have students choose one of the sages in the book to learn more about by exploring the work that person has produced—for example, reading their books, listening to their music, etc. The website www.jewishsagesoftoday.com can help by providing additional resources.

THE LESSONS



TARGUM SHLISHI



PREFACE

PREFACING THE PREFACE:: Aryeh Rubin's Preface is intellectually rigorous and thought provoking. This overview and suggested questions and activities will help you guide your students through it.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PREFACE

- > In his intellectually challenging Preface—challenging in two senses of the word, intellectually demanding and calling upon us to open our minds and hearts as we read—Aryeh Rubin raises a loaded question about who Jews of today choose to admire as contemporary heroes, beyond the obvious, and often questionable, choices of mass opinion and celebrity culture.
- > Before offering a thought-provoking series of candidates, in the form of the profiles to follow, however, he throws us a curve ball by suggesting that today's "Jewish community" is so splintered that, as a consequence, perhaps there can be no agreed upon heroes.
- > He sees this splintering in the form of two extremes—the parochial and the universalist—at odds in their visions of Judaism, with many more "our own particular brands of Judaism" fighting for territory in between.
- > He argues that indeed there are heroic individuals among us, if only we would look for them and take to heart their message of holiness and *tikkun olam*, perfecting the world we inhabit through creativity, intellect, and generosity of spirit.
- > There is an implicit warning that, failing to recognize and embrace these model modern Jewish citizens, we run the risks of the "stiff-necked" Israelites of Jewish antiquity, whose spirits were deaf to the passionate moral outcries and blind to the guideposts of wisdom of the great prophets and sages of the past.
- > Finally, Aryeh Rubin asks us to read the lives of these exemplary individuals as blueprints, that we might model our own lives on their inspiration and, ideally, come to discover Jewish, and universal, unity through the common and fundamentally Jewish purpose of sanctifying ourselves and our world.



PREFACE

Before they read the preface, have students

:: **think about it**

- > Aryeh Rubin mentions on page xiv that “More than one individual asked if the title of the book could be changed [they objected to the word ‘sages’], and Avivah Zornberg, in particular, generously agreed to be included in the collection but only with the caveat that we acknowledge her strenuous objection to being labeled a ‘sage.’ ” Why do you think someone might have a problem with the book’s title? Why do you think the editor chose the title?
- > Because the Preface and subsequent profiles depend on an elastic and perhaps subjective definition of the word “sage,” it would be valuable to have students offer their own definitions of the words “hero” and “sage” before they read the book’s suggested meanings. This will immediately invest students personally in the book’s thesis. Afterwards, their definitions can be contrasted and compared with those of the book’s editor and authors.



PREFACE

After they read the preface (and before they read the first profile), have students

:: think about it

- > Ask each student to write a “Five Best Films of the Year So Far” list. Ask them to share their lists and allow the inevitable debate to go on. Then use their experience as a frame of reference for this next discussion: Regarding the process of selection of the personalities to be profiled, the editor predicts that, “This book will no doubt arouse controversy as to the choice of who was included and who was excluded.” How do you feel about this? Do you detect any personal leanings in the introduction? How might subjectivity play a role in any selection of personalities designed to meet a set of objective high standards?
- > Review the list of sages in the book (if you don’t have the book, access the list from the *Teacher’s Guide’s* Table of Contents or from the website). How many names do you recognize? Who seems to be left out? Are there any glaring omissions in your estimation? Based on the editor’s assertion that “This book could easily have been twice, thrice, even ten times as long” who might you add? Are there any names that you might want to take off? If anyone volunteers for the latter, it should lead to a particularly interesting discussion.
- > How might fame advance the doing of heroic deeds? What dangers might fame present to a hero? Do a little research and dig up some facts about recent celebrity do-gooders. Do you think they are heroes? Are they sages?
- > Aryeh Rubin writes of “affecting one’s entire being and personality Jewishly.” Make a list of values you feel are specifically Jewish values. To what texts, personalities, ideas, and events would you turn to find the source of uniquely Jewish values? Why? How have you become aware of these sources? Are there values that today are considered universal that you feel had their origin in Judaism?
- > On page xi Aryeh Rubin speaks of achieving holiness. How would you define holiness? How would you define it Jewishly? Can you think of other cultures that might define holiness differently? Do you think there are universal concepts of holiness that would apply across centuries and cultures?



PREFACE

:: ride the surf with learning links

In its discussion about traditional Jewish values in a modern world, the Preface relies on important ideas of two great twentieth century Jewish thinkers, Hillel Zeitlin and R. Hayim Soloveitchik. Refer back to the discussion on pages x and xi of the Preface and follow the online links below to learn more.

- > For a short bio of Hillel Zeitlin (1871–1942) and a sample of his writing, [go here](#). For a selection of his writing in Yiddish, [go here](#).
- > R. Hayim Soloveitchik, 1994 article “Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of American Orthodoxy” (originally published in *Tradition*) is available [here](#).



PREFACE

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: *gestalt* (German, noun): an organized whole that is perceived as more than the sum of its parts
- :: *universalist* (noun): 1a: a theological doctrine that all human beings will eventually be saved
1b: the principles and practices of a liberal Christian denomination founded in the eighteenth century originally to uphold belief in universal salvation and now united with Unitarianism
2: something that is universal in scope
- :: *mimetic* (adjective): 1: relating to, characteristic of, or exhibiting mimicry 2a: of or relating to an imitation; imitative 2b: using imitative means of representation
- :: *Mishneh Brura* (Hebrew, noun): a work of *halakha* (Jewish law) by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (1838–1933), better known as the Chofetz Chaim. It is a commentary on *Orach Chayim*, the first section of the *Shulchan Aruch* (laws of prayer, synagogue, Shabbat, and holidays), summarizing the opinions of the *Acharonim* (post-medieval rabbinic authorities) on that work
- :: *enclavist* (noun or adjective): preferring a way of life which permits relations only with like-minded people and as little interference as possible from outsiders (used in group-grid cultural theory)
- :: *haredi* (noun): any of several sects of Orthodox Judaism that reject modern secular culture and many of whom do not recognize the spiritual authority of the modern state of Israel
- :: *post-denominational* (adjective): the rejection of more traditional movements of Judaism in favor of a more harmonious and unified Jewish people
- :: *neshama* (Hebrew, noun): Hebrew word meaning soul
- :: *shtiebel* (Yiddish, noun): “little house” or “little room”; a place used for communal Jewish prayer. In contrast to a formal synagogue, a *shtiebel* is far smaller and approached more casually



SAGE STATS :: Yosef Abramowitz is an activist, educator, journalist, and innovator with an optimistic, expansive, often non-traditional take on the importance of being and doing Jewish...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What groups or clubs do you belong to?
- > In what types of activities are you involved?
- > In what ways do these groups and activities help define your personal identity?
- > What values do your groups and activities reflect, and why are these values important to you?
- > Are there any causes you might consider getting involved in because they seem to express your personal values?
- > Have students make a plan of action for researching and getting involved in one or more activities that are important to them.

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources. *The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.*

concepts

- activism
- grassroots organization

people

- Elie Wiesel

words

- xenophobia
- apartheid
- polity

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Yosef Abramowitz says that activism is not a vocation for him, instead it's about being true to his values. What are some of the values expressed in the many causes to which Abramowitz has devoted himself?
- > Are activists born or made? Use Yosef Abramowitz, and research one other activist of your choice. Use these two activists as examples to defend your point of view.
- > Yosef Abramowitz argues that in order to make Judaism relevant it has to be shaken up by asking, "What's the purpose of the Jewish people in the twenty-first century and moving forward?" What responses would you offer to his question?
- > A well-known proverb tells us that "charity begins at home." Yet at the same time we are encouraged to take a global view of helping others and practicing *tikkun olam*, helping to perfect our world.
- > What are some serious social issues that we face here in the United States? How about in Medinat Yisrael, the State of Israel?

:: don't just sit there

- > Spend at least thirty minutes absorbing the day's news either by watching a world news broadcast on television, listening to news on the radio, or reading the day's major stories in print or online. What stories seem designed to raise your social conscience? Compare your sources—do all the news outlets seem to give priority and importance to the same social causes?
- > The Jewish prophets of the Tanach have, for thousands of years, been considered outstanding spokespeople for issues of universal social justice. Isaiah and Amos are two great examples. You can check them out in the Bible and research them online to explore the important values they highlight in their ever-contemporary messages.
- > Yosef Abramowitz says that Judaism belongs to the Jewish people and suggests an "open-source model" in which everyone has input into how Jewish values and practices should be made meaningful and relevant. Let's say your class is asked to add five more commandments to the original Ten Commandments that Moses delivered. Go around the classroom and take suggestions, argue and debate, and finalize in writing commandments eleven through fifteen.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > As a young man, Yosef Abramowitz was very influenced in his activism by the Young Judaea youth movement. The movement, which celebrated the hundredth anniversary of its founding in 2009, still shares its goals of promoting Jewish identity and Zionist commitment with Jewish students across the United States. Learn more about Young Judaea [here](#).
- > Get a taste of Yosef Abramowitz as an aggressive, social-minded journalist. His controversial 1996 articles in Boston's *Jewish Advocate*, investigating alleged fraud at the Jewish National Fund, are available in abbreviated form [here](#). (Full texts are also available at the same site, but for a fee.)
- > Spring into social activism and go global with a Jewish twist by visiting Yosef Abramowitz's brainchild (endorsed by the Israeli Knesset), the Jewish Social Action Month website [here](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **catalyst** (noun): a substance that enables a chemical reaction to proceed at a usually faster rate or under different conditions (as at a lower temperature) than otherwise possible; an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action
- :: **gadfly** (noun): any of various flies (as a horsefly, botfly, or warble fly) that bite or annoy livestock; a person who stimulates or annoys especially by persistent criticism
- :: **polity** (noun): political organization; a specific form of political organization; a politically organized unit
- :: **schmorrer** (Yiddish, noun): beggar; one who wheedles others into supplying his wants
- :: **tikkun** (Hebrew, noun): an act that repairs a previous failure. The act shows that the transgressor understands the error and has worked to change himself into a person for whom such a failure is no longer possible, short for Hebrew phrase *tikkun olam* (repairing the world)



SAGE STATS :: Rachel Azaria is a young Orthodox social activist born in 1977 who founded her own political party and was elected to Jerusalem's city council in November 2008, at age thirty-one. Before that, she helped open new avenues for Israeli women who found themselves chained to bad marriages and at a dead end in their quest for a religious divorce...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > A democracy is government by leaders elected by the people, while a theocracy is government by religious leaders not subject to a popular vote. Which of these words do you think best describes the government of Israel today and why? What impact might these different types of government have on marriage and divorce in both Israel and the United States?
- > Engagement in politics is one way to combat perceived social injustices in the world around you. If you were to found a political party of your own to take up an important cause, what cause might it be? What appropriate name might you give to your party?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- social awareness
- human rights

people

- the prophet Jeremiah

words

- civil marriage/civil divorce
- feminist

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Rachel Azaria says, “Seeing injustice drives me crazy...gets me going.” Can you name one social cause that you, or a member of your family, are active in as a means of taking the side of justice? How about a cause that you would like to be active in, and why? What sorts of things might you do to become more active in a cause?
- > According to Jewish law, a “recalcitrant husband,” one who refuses his wife a Jewish divorce, unduly controls the wife’s present and future. As the divorce cannot be given without his taking the initiative, and as there is minimal stigma for him to create relationships with other women, he usually holds the stronger hand and uses it to his own advantage. However, a woman who is not granted a divorce and then has relationships with other men is considered an adulteress. What reasons might you suggest for this development of what many people might feel is a double standard?
- > *Mavoi Satum* means “Dead End” in English. What is the metaphorical power of this organization’s name?
- > The issue of *mesoravot get*, argues Rachel Azaria, “touches the deepest sense of what religion is all about.” What would you say “religion is all about”?
- > Do you agree or disagree with the idea that, as this profile suggests, you can criticize the religious authorities and still believe in Judaism and Jewish values?
- > When they think of Jerusalem, many people think of the Arab/Israeli conflict, but, as this profile conveys, Rachel Azaria founded a political party to address issues in Jerusalem that might be described as an Israeli/Israeli conflict. Explain.

:: don't just sit there

- > Write a letter to a member of the Israeli Knesset stating your point of view about the situation of women whose husbands refuse to give them a religious bill of divorce.
- > Design an advertising poster for *Mavoi Satum* to raise public awareness in the American Jewish community of the issue of *mesoravot get* in Israel.
- > Do some basic research in the library and online into how issues of divorce are handled today in the legal system of the United States and in Israel, then create a chart highlighting comparisons and contrasts between the two countries.
- > Research the role that religious authorities play in controlling how workday activities are conducted in the city of Jerusalem on the Jewish Sabbath and holidays.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Since its founding in 1996, *Mavoi Satum* has become an indispensable resource for Israeli women trapped in abusive marital relationships. You can explore the organization and get a glimpse of its importance and effectiveness [here](#).
- > As a newly-elected councilwoman in Jerusalem, Rachel Azaria is still at the forefront of equal rights for Israeli women. To read about one counter demonstration she led against a group demanding segregated buses for purpose of separating the sexes in Jerusalem, go [here](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: *bet din* (Hebrew, noun): the Hebrew term applied to a Jewish religious or civil court of law. The *bet din*, literally translated as “house of judgment,” originated during the period of the Second Temple, and was known as the Sanhedrin
- :: *chillul Hashem* (Hebrew, noun): literally means “Desecration [of] the [God’s] Name,” the term is used in Judaism particularly for any act or behavior that casts shame or brings disrepute to belief in God, any aspect of the Torah’s teachings, or Jewish law
- :: *epitomize* (verb): to serve as the typical or ideal example of
- :: *get* (Hebrew, noun): a *get* is a writ of divorce. According to Jewish tradition, the *get* is given by the man to the woman, not in reverse. In addition, Judaism does not recognize no-fault divorce. The man has to have a reason and a will to give a *get*
- :: *mesoravot get* (Hebrew, noun, pl): a *mesorevet get* (singular) is a woman whose husband refuses to divorce her by giving her a *get* according to Jewish law
- :: *mishpat tzedek* (Hebrew, noun) 1: literally means “righteous justice or charity and justice”
2: a code of ethics and a guide to living a healthy life. The basis for *mishpat tzedek* is found in Genesis (18:19) and first connected with the Patriarch Abraham
- :: *purgatory* (noun) 1: an intermediate state after death for expiatory purification; *specifically* : a place or state of punishment wherein according to Roman Catholic doctrine the souls of those who die in God’s grace may make satisfaction for past sins and so become fit for heaven
2: a place or state of temporary suffering or misery
- :: *tenacity* (noun): the quality or property of being tenacious; tenacious (adjective) 1a: not easily pulled apart: cohesive <a *tenacious* metal> b: tending to adhere or cling especially to another substance <*tenacious* burs> 2a: persistent in maintaining, adhering to, or seeking something valued or desired <a *tenacious* advocate of civil rights> <*tenacious* negotiators> b: retentive <a *tenacious* memory>



SAGE STATS :: “The product of [Holocaust] survivors” is how Michael Berenbaum describes himself. As such, he urgently teaches, writes, consults, works on films, and, most visibly, helps create museums dedicated to Holocaust education through which history delivers a warning against genocide: “Not this time. Not on my watch.”

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What is the difference between “holocaust” and “the Holocaust”?
- > What is the purpose of a museum?
- > What might be some unique purposes to a museum dedicated to the subject of the Holocaust?
- > How might the emotional and intellectual challenges of working with the Holocaust as subject matter affect the way a museum chooses to present itself to its visitors?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

people, places, and events

- Elie Wiesel
- Treblinka, Chelno, Belzec, Auschwitz
—concentration camps/death camps
- The Eichmann trial

words

- Yiddish
- refugees

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Do you agree or disagree with Michael Berenbaum's early-career opinion that non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust should receive attention in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum? Why or why not?
- > Michael Berenbaum says, "A museum building is a combination of story and space. A good museum should be like a symphony with themes." Explain in your own words what his figurative language, comparing a museum to a symphony, suggests to you.
- > "The Holocaust" (capitalized, as opposed to "a holocaust") is a term that has specific historical meaning in relationship to World War II in Europe. What is the time period and key series of events that the term refers to?
- > The Holocaust is a clearly documented historical fact. Yet, we find ourselves faced with individuals and organizations in today's world that aggressively DENY that the Holocaust ever occurred. Research Holocaust denial and then answer the question: How, with all of the historical proof that exists, can people deny the Holocaust?
- > When Michael Berenbaum explains that he tries to convey a positive message about the state of today's world to kids, he says that "we want to tell them—it's a little false—you can make it better." Why do you think he says: "it's a little false?" Do you agree with this? Do you think you *can* make it better? How would/do you try? If you personally were to dedicate the next month to actively making the world better, what would you do?
- > Michael Berenbaum states: "It is not enough to educate people. Education must be joined with values." Give at least two examples of how something you learned in school was joined with values. Can you think of more ways to incorporate values into what you study in school?

:: don't just sit there

- > Look at the large numbers of Jewish victims of the Holocaust as Michael Berenbaum enumerates them on pages 21 and 22. Compare these figures to the number of Civil War dead in the United States and the number of soldiers killed in the First World War. Imagine and describe different ways you might graphically display or in other ways help to visualize the enormous toll in human lives involved in the German destruction of European Jewry.
- > Using an historical atlas, research the changing face of World War II Europe as a result of German military aggression from 1939 through 1945, a period when Jewish history and world history collide with tragic force. Why does Michael Berenbaum believe that maps are essential to historical understanding?
- > After the Holocaust, many people said: “Never again,” and yet Rwanda is only one example of the many genocides that have occurred since the Holocaust. Look up some facts about the genocide in Rwanda. What are similarities and differences between the genocide in Rwanda and the Holocaust? What might we do to prevent future genocide?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > After doing the first exercise in DON'T JUST SIT THERE, you might find it interesting to visit this site, which describes a related project that was made into the documentary film *Paper Clips*, in which a group of students set out to try to understand the enormity of the loss of six million Jews in the Holocaust. For a synopsis of the film, go [here](#).
- > To explore the website of the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., which Michael Berenbaum helped develop and where he worked for many years, go [here](#).
- > For all his important work in the history of the Holocaust, Michael Berenbaum would also like to be known for his key role as executive editor of the second edition of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. You can read about this project [here](#) and [here](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **bequeathed** (verb) 1: leave (a personal estate or one's body) to a person or other beneficiary by a will 2: pass (something) on or leave (something) to someone else
- :: **empathy** (noun) 1: the intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another 2: the imaginative ascribing to an object, as a natural object or work of art, feelings or attitudes present in oneself
- :: **lyrical** (adjective) 1a: expressing deep personal emotion or observations b: highly enthusiastic; rhapsodic 2: lyric
- :: **nihilism** (noun) 1a: a viewpoint that traditional values and beliefs are unfounded and that existence is senseless and useless 1b: a doctrine that denies any objective ground of truth and especially of moral truths 2a: a doctrine or belief that conditions in the social organization are so bad as to make destruction desirable for its own sake independent of any constructive program or possibility
- :: **perpetrator** (noun): to bring about or carry out (as a crime or deception): commit 2: to produce, perform, or execute (something likened to a crime)
- :: **prosaic** (adjective) 1a: characteristic of prose as distinguished from poetry: factual b: dull, unimaginative 2: everyday, ordinary
- :: **theology** (noun): the study of religious faith, practice, and experience; *especially* the study of God and of God's relation to the world
- :: **think tank** (noun): an institute, corporation, or group organized for interdisciplinary research
- :: **watershed event** (noun): an event marking a unique or important historical change of course or one on which important developments depend



SAGE STATS :: Mira Brichto, born in 1927, is a former literature professor, a full-time grandmother and an indefatigable humanitarian on a treasure hunt, not for pirate gold but for Jewish scrolls, books, and documents about to be lost to the ravages of war and time...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > When we think of victims of war, we are most likely to imagine the human casualties, both military and civilian. How would you, then, interpret the idea that, “Libraries were victims of the war, too”?
- > How do you think the new age of digital technologies can be used to help preserve the written culture of the past?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- humanitarian work
- interfaith ceremonies

people & events

- the prophet Jeremiah
- Babi Yar massacre

words

- *R’fa-aye-nu*
- *hachnasat sefer Torah*
- archives
- bibliographia

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Mira Brichto grew up in an educated and loving family, “raised to think for herself and question everything.” But it’s interesting that when she did exercise independent thought, she reached a point where “all hell broke loose” in terms of how her family members responded to her thoughts and questions. Consider the examples detailing her independence of thought and action and then discuss how and why members of her family may have reacted in the ways they did.
- > “A long time ago,” says Mira Brichto, “I became aware of the stiffness with which clergy of different religions present themselves to each other.” What does she mean by this? Do you agree with her viewpoint? Why or why not?

:: don’t just sit there

- > Review the profile of Mira Brichto and, as you do so, list all the examples you can find of her reaching from within the Jewish community to others outside that community. What benefits do you see from this approach? Can you think of ways to productively utilize this approach for an organization or cause that you are involved with? Create a plan for how you would implement this approach.
- > Mira Brichto’s father was an Orthodox rabbi, her husband a Reform rabbi. Do some basic research (library and/or online) into these two denominations of Judaism. In what ways are they different from each other? Can you identify any particular aspects of Mira Brichto’s actions and ideas that reflect an Orthodox influence or a Reform influence?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > The nature of the important work done by the *R'fa-aye-nu* Society, founded by Mira Brichto in 1993, is recognized around the world, both inside and outside the Jewish community, as evidenced by the following story in the Ukrainian press, [here](#).
- > The nature of Mira Brichto's work defines her public persona, as [this *New York Times* article suggests](#). However, her published poetry and prayers for children offer insight into the private, spiritual person as well; for information about and excerpts from her books, go [here](#).
- > A web search of "Mira Brichto" offers, among many other items, the following article from the [National Catholic Reporter](#). What does this article reveal to us about Mira Brichto's life and achievements?

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **constrained** (transitive verb) 1: to compel by physical, moral, or circumstantial force; oblige 2: to keep within close bounds; confine 3: to inhibit or restrain; hold back
- :: **intelligentsia** (noun): intellectuals who form an artistic, social, or political vanguard or elite
- :: **liberalism** (noun) 1: the belief in the importance of individual liberty and equal rights 2a: the quality or state of being liberal 2b: a political philosophy based on belief in progress, the essential goodness of the human race, and the autonomy of the individual and standing for the protection of political and civil liberties
- :: **monastic** (adjective) 1: of or relating to monasteries or to monks or nuns 2: resembling (as in seclusion or ascetic simplicity) life in a monastery
- :: **paramount** (adjective) 1: Of chief concern or importance 2: supreme in rank, power, or authority
- :: **reparations** (noun) 1: the act of making amends, offering expiation, or giving satisfaction for a wrong or injury b: something done or given as amends or satisfaction 2: the payment of damages: specifically: compensation in money or materials payable by a defeated nation for damages to or expenditures sustained by another nation as a result of hostilities with the defeated nation
- :: **tenacity** (noun) 1: the quality or property of being tenacious; tenacious (adjective) 1a: not easily pulled apart: cohesive b: tending to adhere or cling especially to another substance 2a: persistent in maintaining, adhering to, or seeking something valued or desired b: retentive



SAGE STATS:: “How about a slice of Talmud to go with that espresso?” might be the motto of scholar Ruth Calderon, a non-affiliated native of Tel Aviv, who argues that there should be more to being a secular Israeli Jew than only being a soldier-pioneer distanced from his or her Diaspora Jewish roots...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What comes to mind when you hear the name of the city “Jerusalem”? What ideas? What images? Now, compare and contrast these with what comes to mind when you hear the name of the city “Tel Aviv.”
- > What reasons might you imagine for a person who is not religious to nonetheless study religious texts? In particular, why would a secular Israeli Jew be interested in reading the Torah?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- ultra-Orthodox
- conservatism versus liberalism
- secularism
- *chavruta* study
- *beit midrash*
- *midrash*
- egalitarian
- pluralistic

people

- Ahad Ha'am
- Y.H. Brenner
- Sigmund Freud
- Jean-Paul Sartre

words

- legacy
- curriculum
- Aramaic

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Alma Home for Hebrew Culture, directed by Ruth Calderon since 1996, attracts many members of Israel's cultural elite, which Calderon feels is essential, since "Artists are agents of change..." What does she mean by this?
- > Ruth Calderon mentions how, from a very early age, she felt that the ideas with which she was being raised were not enough, that somehow there had to be more. Think about how this might apply to you in your own life—what areas might you be interested in exploring that are simply not part of your daily routines at home or school? After making a list of those areas, choose one and make a plan to explore it in the next month.
- > Ruth Calderon's celebrated *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, a night of intensive Torah learning, takes place at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. What is the message being sent by this combination of place and activity?
- > At Alma, Ruth Calderon explains, "teachers do not stand and lecture...they are members of the study group." What do you think is the reason for this?
- > Recently, several organizations have sprung up in Israel that emphasize the pluralistic and humanistic aspects of Judaism. Check out two of these: [Truma, The Institute for Training Secular Humanistic Rabbis & Jewish Leadership](#) and [Bina, The Secular Yeshiva](#). How do you think these organizations compare with Ruth Calderon's work at Alma?

:: don't just sit there

- > Imagine you're a counselor in a summer camp and your bunk consists of a combination of affiliated and secular Jewish teens. Design a "meet and greet" activity that you think would lead to mutual understanding on both sides.
- > According to the profile, "Calderon spends the bulk of each day immersed in the world of first- through fifth-century rabbis." Don't necessarily spend a whole day, but take a little time to research some of the characters in the Talmud. Choose two of the ancient Sages you discover. When and where did these rabbis live? What were their lives' goals? What led them to be considered Sages? Do you think if they were alive today we would consider them to be our heroes?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Ruth Calderon's profile begins with an extended reference to the 2007 Israeli hit song "*Hineh Ani Ba*" ("Here I Come") by the popular and funky Israeli band, *Hadag Nahash*. Read the original Hebrew lyrics to the song [here](#) and find a helpful English transliteration and translation [here](#).
- > The profile tells us that we're "unlikely to bump into Ruth Calderon in a traditional synagogue." You can see and hear a snippet of Calderon discussing her search for a spiritual home on this [YouTube clip](#).
- > To read an illuminating essay by Ruth Calderon on the subject of non-*halakhic* Torah study, go [here](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **anachronistic** (noun) 1: an error in chronology; *especially*: a chronological misplacing of persons, events, objects, or customs in regard to each other 2: a person or a thing that is chronologically out of place; *especially*: one from a former age that is incongruous in the present 3: the state or condition of being chronologically out of place
- :: **dynamism** (noun) 1: any of various theories or philosophical systems that explain the universe in terms of force or energy 2: a process or mechanism responsible for the development or motion of a system 3: continuous change, activity, or progress; vigor
- :: **hedonist** (noun) 1: a person whose life is devoted to the pursuit of pleasure and self-gratification
- :: **luftmensch** (Yiddish, noun): an impractical contemplative person having no definite business or income
- :: **meturgeman** (Hebrew, noun) 1: translator 2: person who stood beside the reader of the Torah in the ancient synagogue and recited the *Targum* (Aramaic translation of the Bible) verse by verse for the Pentateuch, and three verses at a time for the Prophets
- :: **revelry** (noun): noisy partying or merrymaking
- :: **Spartan** (noun) 1: a native or inhabitant of ancient Sparta 2: a person of great courage and self-discipline
- :: **sugyot** (Hebrew, noun): the analysis of the *Amoraim* is generally focused on clarifying the positions, words and views of the *Tannaim*. These debates and exchanges form the “building-blocks” of the Gemara; the name for a passage of Gemara is a *sugya* (plural *sugyot*). A *sugya* will typically comprise a detailed proof-based elaboration of the Mishna. In the Talmud, a *sugya* is presented as a series of responsive hypotheses and questions, with the Talmudic text as a record of each step in the process of reasoning and derivation
- :: **Tikkun Leil Shavuot** (Hebrew, noun): Shavuot is considered to be the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. *Tikkun Leil Shavuot* is the custom of staying up the entire night (*leil*) of Shavuot studying with the community in order to relive the experience of standing at Sinai
- :: **yeshiva bocher** (Yiddish, noun): a young man, enrolled as a full-time student in a school of Judaic studies, at any level corresponding roughly to high school through college



SAGE STATS :: The Jewish soul is filled with yearning and praise for the Lord. And the Jewish heart is full of song. Singer-songwriter Debbie Friedman, who passed away in 2011, was a musical emissary who, beginning in the mid-1970s, transformed the spirit of prayer and Jewish experience through the beauty of her words and melodies...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Speaking of music, how does “melody transcend intellect”? Describe some of your own most intense personal musical experiences.
- > Music is often intrinsic to prayer in the synagogue. How much of a role does music play in the synagogue you attend? Are there particular prayers to which you respond because of the melodies involved? How does the music add to your experience?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- Shechina
- tefilla/davening

people

- Irving Berlin

words

- cantata

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Debbie Friedman describes an early synagogue experience: “The choir sang, the rabbi spoke, and I was really passive.” Describe your own earliest synagogue experiences and compare them both with Friedman’s and with your own synagogue-going experiences today.
- > According to the profile, Debbie Friedman, born in 1952, was the first *female* composer to contribute significantly to popular Jewish liturgy. Given that Jewish liturgy is thousands of years old, why do you think it took so long for a woman to achieve this status?
- > In the Bible, after the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea Miriam took her drum and led the women with music and dance (Exodus 15:20-21). What do you think this added to the experience? Why do you think it is so important as to be included in the Bible?

:: don’t just sit there

- > Choose a popular song and compose your own lyrics to the melody in order to create a Jewish prayer. Or choose a traditional prayer in Hebrew or English and compose your own melody for it.
- > “*Hava Nashira*” is an annual song-leading workshop founded by Debbie Friedman. Its name in Hebrew means, “We’ll sing together.” As a class, explore the music of Debbie Friedman and then “adopt” a prayer of your own to sing together on daily or special occasions.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > The following YouTube videos feature Debbie Friedman [performing live](#); [a brief biographical and musical tribute to her](#); and a Friedman [prayer for healing](#).
- > The *Hava Nashira* website is a rich online resource offering lyrics, songsheets, and valuable related links for anyone interested in Jewish song; to access it, [go here](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **conduit** (noun) 1: a natural or artificial channel through which something is conveyed
2: a pipe, tube, or tile for protecting electric wires or cables 3: a means of transmitting or distributing
- :: **euphonius** (adjective): pleasing to the ear
- :: **itinerary** (noun) 1: the route of a journey or tour, or the proposed outline of one
2a: a travel diary b: a traveler's guidebook
- :: **shacharit** (Hebrew, noun) 1: from the Hebrew *shachar* or *shahar* "morning light"
2: daily morning prayer service during which the *talit katan* (a garment with tzitzit) is worn
3: the first of three periods of daily prayer; the other periods are *minhah* and *maarib*
- :: **shechina** (Hebrew, noun): 1: the manifestation of the divine presence in this world
2: God's feminine manifestation 3: the radiance in which God's immanent presence in the midst of his people, esp. in the Temple, is visibly manifested
- :: **ubiquitous** (adjective) 1: existing or being everywhere at the same time
2: constantly encountered

BLU GREENBERG IRVING (YITZ) GREENBERG



SAGE STATS :: Blu and Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, who share both a loving marriage and a “marriage of true minds,” bring intelligence, integrity, and intellectual courage to their unique understanding of how modern Orthodoxy can maintain its traditional distinctiveness while still integrating into the world of our time...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Try to reflect objectively on your own personal religious feelings and practices. Are there things that you do but nonetheless question why? Things that you might not understand or agree with? Things you might want to respectfully challenge or change within your own religious community?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- intrafaith dialogue
- interfaith dialogue
- feminism
- *halacha*
- *daf Yomi*
- gender blind

people

- Nechama Leibowitz
- Betty Friedan

words

- radicalize
- status quo

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Yitz Greenberg speaks of the post-Holocaust, post-State of Israel period of time as “transformative...for the Jews.” Explain in your own words how you think these two historical events have, in fact, impacted younger generations of Jews who were born after the events took place.
- > Describe a personal experience you may have had with intrafaith discourse or interdenominational dialogue. With whom and in what context did it occur? Did it impact you? In what way? If you’ve never had this type of discussion, how might you explain that? Write about the experience; if you have not engaged in this type of discussion, imagine and write about such a dialogue between you and someone with different views, whether intrafaith or interdenominational.
- > Blu Greenberg has chosen to try to reconcile feminism and Orthodoxy, rather than to turn to Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Reform Judaism, all of which have already adopted changes of their own. She argues that Orthodoxy permits a “distinctive but equal” approach to Judaism. Still, why do you think she feels that “some rituals...seem more male than female (like wearing *tallit* and *tefillin*), and others more female than male (like candle lighting).” Do you agree with her perspective here? Why do you think that, unlike the above examples, she makes an exception for learning Torah, calling it “gender blind”?
- > Imagine that at the Shabbat evening table, you repeat Blu Greenberg’s statement that encounters with other religions have enriched her life and Yitz Greenberg’s statement expressing appreciation of Christianity “as a faith with independent value and dignity.” How do you think members of your family would react to those sentiments? Imagine that you repeat the remarks the next morning in a *devar Torah* in synagogue. How do you think they would be received by your rabbi and congregation, and why?

:: don't just sit there

- > In response to what they considered areas in need of improvement and change in the Jewish community, the Greenbergs between them have founded numerous organizations including, but not limited to, the Jewish Studies Department at City College, CLAL, JOFA, and the Federation Task Force. If you were responsible for founding a new Jewish organization today to meet what you consider an urgent need, what kind of organization would it be? Decide on a meaningful name for it and, in one brief paragraph, define its mission.
- > Have you ever studied religions other than Judaism? Perhaps an ancient religion if not a modern one? Choose one religion (not Judaism), and research its essential texts and basic principles. Make a chart comparing and contrasting this religion with your knowledge of Judaism.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > As they continue in their activism and creativity, here are just a few of the organizations that already represent a significant legacy of Blu and Yitz Greenberg:

[The Dialogue Project](#)

[JOFA](#)

[CLAL](#)

[Jewish Life Network](#)

- > In addition to their work through important communal organizations, both Blu and Yitz have articulated and shared their thoughts and ideas with a worldwide community as accomplished authors. Some of their published works include:

[*On Women and Judaism: A View from Tradition*](#), Blu Greenberg

[*How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*](#), Blu Greenberg

[*The Tears of the Oppressed*](#), Blu Greenberg, co-author

[*For the Sake of Heaven and Earth*](#), Yitz Greenberg

[*The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*](#), Yitz Greenberg

[*Living in the Image of God*](#), Yitz Greenberg

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **consummate** (adjective) 1a: complete in every detail 1b: perfect, of the highest degree
2: extremely skilled and accomplished
- :: **gilyonot** (Hebrew, noun): weekly Torah study sheets that included questions and commentary for guided self-taught study, originated in 1942 by Nechama Leibowitz (1905–1997), a noted Israeli Bible scholar and commentator
- :: **modus operandi** (Latin, noun) 1a: a particular way of doing something 1b: a method of procedure
- :: **mussar yeshiva** (Hebrew, noun): from the book of Proverbs, meaning instruction, discipline, or conduct. The Mussar movement (also Mussar) was a Jewish ethical, educational, and cultural movement that developed in nineteenth century Eastern Europe, particularly among Orthodox Lithuanian Jews. The term was used by the Mussar movement to refer to efforts to further ethical and spiritual discipline. The Mussar movement made significant contributions to Jewish ethics
- :: **primordial** (adjective) 1: being or happening first in sequence of time 2: original; primary or fundamental 3: (in biology) belonging to or characteristic of the earliest stage of development of an organism or a part 4: (noun) a basic principle
- :: **radicalization** (verb) 1: to undergo fundamental change, or introduce a sweeping change in something 2: to make or become “extreme”
- :: **sanguine** (adjective) 1: optimistic or positive, especially in an apparently bad or difficult situation
2: reddish; ruddy: a sanguine complexion 3: (in old physiology) having blood as the predominating humor and consequently being ruddy-faced; blood 4: (heraldry): a reddish-purple tincture
5: (archaic) bloody or bloodthirsty 6: (noun) a red iron-oxide crayon used in making drawings
- :: **schochet** (Yiddish, noun) 1a: ritual slaughterer 1b: a religious Jew who is duly licensed and trained to kill animals with respect and compassion
- :: **spartanly** (adjective) 1: rigorously self-disciplined or self-restrained 2: simple, frugal, or austere
3: marked by brevity of speech 4: courageous in the face of pain, danger, or adversity
5: (noun): a citizen of Sparta; one of Spartan character
- :: **tikkun olam** (Hebrew, noun): literally means “repairing the world.” In Judaism, the concept of *tikkun olam* originated in the early rabbinic period. The concept was given new meanings in the Kabbalah of the medieval period, and further connotations in modern Judaism; has come to denote social action and the pursuit of social justice



SAGE STATS :: Popular professor, author, advocate, counselor, and rabbi, Judith Hauptman is a self-described Talmud-study addict who adds a contemporary woman's voice to the traditional male chorus of ancient Babylonian sages...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Very often we possess a vague or general knowledge about something, but when pressed for specific facts we find ourselves uncertain about them. Although the Talmud has always been a staple of Jewish learning, how much do you really know about what the Talmud is? Do you know when it was compiled, by whom, and where? Why? And what purpose does it serve today?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- *halacha and aggadah*
- *Oneg Shabbat*

people & places

- Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS)
- Camp Ramah
- Francine Klagsbrun

words

- *Mishnah*
- *Tosefta*
- patriarchal
- egalitarian

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Judith Hauptman has spent a considerable academic career studying how the ancient male sages, whose opinions are recorded in the Talmud, viewed the nature and role of women. Why should she, and, by extension, we who read her profile, care about how women lived their lives 1,800 years ago and what the rabbis then thought about women's roles?
- > One Jewish leader, Francine Klagsbrun, commends Judith Hauptman for “putting her emphasis on Talmud and texts and not some vague ‘spirituality.’ ” Klagsbrun observes that, “true spirituality comes from study and a willingness to engage our texts.” What does she mean by this?
- > Until about forty years ago, only men could act as rabbis in the American Jewish community. Today, you can use the profile of Judith Hauptman—and you can also consider the profiles of some of the other rabbis in the book, including Yitz Greenberg, Lawrence Hoffman, Sholom Lipskar, Adin Steinsaltz, and Joseph Telushkin—as examples to describe the different facets of a rabbi's role and responsibilities. Do just that, reflecting particularly on the intellectual and emotional aspects of the profession.

:: don't just sit there

- > Judith Hauptman believes that the “Talmud is the text that most defines you as a Jew.” Make a list of at least five Jewish texts that you feel have most influenced you Jewishly. Is the Talmud among them? Can you make a similar list of five non-Jewish texts that you might consider to have helped you define yourself in Jewish ways as well?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > The Talmud is a huge text, but it is most often studied line by line, page by page. And, although we most associate learning Talmud with a Jewish education, it is a subject of study in many universities as well. [This link](#), on the website of the University of Calgary in Canada, explains how to navigate a typical page of Talmud.
- > Because the Talmud is so huge, some people have compared it to the Internet, claiming “that everything can be found in either of them if you know how and where to look.” An interesting article from the *New York Times* discusses the Talmud and modern technologies, [read it here](#).
- > As a scholar, Judith Hauptman has published books about Talmudic subjects. Here are links to some of her past works:

[*Development of the Talmudic Sugya*](#)

[*Rereading the Rabbis: A Woman's Voice*](#)

And [here](#), in this 2008 interview, you can read about what she's up to now:

[“From the Academy: Judith Hauptman”](#)

- > In addition to her scholarly research and teaching, Judith Hauptman finds it very important to make time to be active in the larger Jewish community, as the following articles show. After reading the articles, discuss how her affiliations reflect her core values. Read her [bio](#) and this article from the [*Jewish Forward*](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **discursive** (adjective) 1a: moving from topic to topic without order, or proceeding coherently from topic to topic 1b: rambling marked by analytical reasoning 2: of or relating to discourse
- :: **dowry** (noun) 1: the money, goods, or estate that a woman brings to her husband in marriage 2: a gift of money or property by a man to, or for, his bride 3: a natural talent
- :: **lithograph** (verb) 1: to produce, copy, or portray by lithography 2: (noun) the process of printing from a plane surface (as a smooth stone or metal plate) on which the image to be printed is ink-receptive and the blank area ink-repellent 3: the process of producing patterns on semiconductor crystals for use as integrated circuits
- :: **monotype** (noun) 1: an impression on paper of a design, painted usually with the finger or a brush on a surface (as glass) 2: (biology) a taxonomic group with a single member (a single species or genus)
- :: **non-denominational** (adjective): not restricted to, or associated with, a religious denomination
- :: **prolific** (adjective) 1: producing young or fruit, or many offspring; fruitful 2: (archaic): causing abundant growth, generation, or reproduction 3: marked by abundant inventiveness or productivity



SAGE STATS :: For Lawrence Hoffman, a rabbi, the synagogue is not a place to be—it's a place to become; a vital spiritual center where all that is vibrant in daily Jewish life must come alive for congregants through meaningful rituals and accessible liturgies...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Consider the following two groups of words: a) liturgy, ritual, synagogue b) love, rock concert, sailing. Explain why you respond differently to each group.

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts	people	words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform Judaism • anthropology • <i>tikkun olam</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job, in the Bible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>havdalah</i> candle • <i>shehecheyanu</i> • <i>chavurah</i> • <i>smichah</i>

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > In the profile, one of Lawrence Hoffman's former students describes him as teaching "not the *what* but the *why* of liturgy." What might she mean by this?
- > Lawrence Hoffman argues passionately that it is up to the synagogue to help people to help the world. In what ways does your synagogue do this?
- > Lawrence Hoffman has a daughter who suffers from severe epilepsy. How has this personal difficulty in the life of his family affected Hoffman's understanding of the nature of God?

:: don't just sit there

- > Lawrence Hoffman is a Reform rabbi. Conduct some research into what distinguishes Reform from other branches of Judaism in order to answer the question: "Just what is Reform Judaism looking to reform?"
- > Lawrence Hoffman speaks of the importance of the physical space of a synagogue for "coalescing spirituality." Draw, design, or describe what you would consider an ideal prayer space. Is it indoors or out? How would you furnish and decorate it? How might you introduce music, art, and drama into this space?
- > Lawrence Hoffman is known affectionately for creating on-the-spot prayers and rituals. He has written a book, *Israel: A Spiritual Travel Guide*, explaining what makes particular historical sites meaningful and suggesting prayers to be said at them. Try your hand at creating a prayer to be recited at a famous American site such as the Statue of Liberty, the Grand Canyon, Gettysburg, or Independence Hall.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > You can make a web visit to two of the key institutions with which Lawrence Hoffman has been involved as a prominent member of the Reform movement—the [Union for Reform Judaism](#), headquartered in New York City (click on the “What is Reform?” link for a clear and simple summary of what the Reform movement is all about) and [Hebrew Union College](#), which has multiple campuses around the world.
- > Lawrence Hoffman co-founded Synagogue 2000 in 1994, in order to help re-imagine the synagogue for today’s world. Keeping up with the times, the institution has been renamed Synagogue 3000; its goals remain the same. Read about it [here](#).
- > Having written or edited more than twenty-five books certainly entitles Lawrence Hoffman to the classification of prolific author. You can still browse some of Hoffman’s titles at [Amazon.com](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **accolade** (noun) 1: a ceremonial embrace 2: a ceremony or salute conferring honors
3a: a mark of acknowledgment 3b: an expression of praise
- :: **conflagration** (noun): an extensive fire that destroys a great deal of land or property
- :: **heresy** (noun) 1: opinion or doctrine at variance with the orthodox or accepted doctrine, especially Christian, of a religious system 2: opinion profoundly at odds with what is generally accepted
- :: **incubator** (noun) 1: an enclosed apparatus providing a controlled environment for the care and protection of premature or unusually small babies 2: an apparatus used to hatch eggs or grow microorganisms under controlled conditions 3: an organization or place that aids the development of new business ventures especially by providing low-cost commercial space, management assistance, or shared services
- :: **old-guard** (noun) 1: a conservative, often reactionary element of a class, society, or political group 2: a group of established prestige and influence
- :: **scintillating** (adjective) 1: brilliantly lively, stimulating 2: witty sparkling or twinkling
- :: **transcendent** (adjective) 1: exceeding usual limits, surpassing, extending or going beyond the limits of ordinary experience 2: (in Kantian philosophy) being beyond the limits of all possible experience and knowledge 3: transcending the universe or material existence



SAGE STATS :: Over the last thirty years Aaron Lansky has rescued a million and a half (and still counting) Yiddish books, and with each volume he revives the living heart of a vanished Jewish culture and preserves the soul of a civilization that the Nazis sought to extinguish...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Can you list as many as ten Yiddish words or expressions you're familiar with? How did you learn them? How many of these, if any, are regularly used in everyday English? How do you feel when you speak or hear a Yiddish word or expression?
- > Are you aware that Yiddish is considered by some to be a dying language? When you consider the current state of Yiddish, what is your reaction, both intellectually and emotionally? What impact would it have if Yiddish disappeared from Jewish culture? What ways can you think of to help keep Yiddish alive?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- Diaspora
- intellectuals
- duality and dialectical relationships

people & places

- Sholem Aleichem
- Isaac L. Peretz
- Mendele Mocher Seforim
- Isaac Bashevis Singer
- Ellis Island
- Max Weinreich

words

- Yiddish
- *shtetl*
- incongruities
- *schlemiel*

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > “Don’t you know that Yiddish is dead?” was a common response Aaron Lansky received when he first sought funds and assistance to help him rescue Yiddish books and publications from attics, basements, and dumpsters. It would have been very easy for him to give up, so why didn’t he?
- > Aaron Lansky has been called the “Indiana Jones of Yiddish.” Explain.
- > Aaron Lansky says that Jews venerated books as a “portable homeland.” What does he mean by this?
- > In 1939, Yiddish was the first language of seventy-five percent of the world’s Jews. How is this incredible statistic possible? Today, by rough estimate, the number is estimated at seven percent of the world’s Jews (less than a million speakers of Yiddish out of a world Jewish population of about thirteen million). Discuss why so many fewer Jews, percentage-wise, speak Yiddish today.

:: don’t just sit there

- > The pursuit and preservation of all things Yiddish by Aaron Lansky and his more than two hundred *zamlers* (volunteers) have all the earmarks of a grassroots campaign. This [website](#) describes how to start a grassroots movement. Following its outline of eleven steps, design steps for a campaign using the rescue of Yiddish culture as your theme.
- > Imagine finding a perfectly good hardbound copy of the *Complete Works of William Shakespeare* in a trashcan on a street corner and you’ll get a sense of Lansky’s zeal to save books, in particular to preserve the extraordinary wealth of Yiddish literature. In the library, bookstore, online or at home, find, read, and bring to class, for group discussion, a translation of a short story by one of the following great Yiddish writers mentioned in the profile: Sholem Aleichem, Isaac L. Peretz, Mendele Mocher Seforim, or Isaac Bashevis Singer.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Visit the [National Yiddish Book Center \(NYBC\)](#) online to experience what is today a flourishing, fast-growing American Jewish cultural institution. Then click on over to the webpage of one of NYBC's projects, the [Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library](#), which has helped make Yiddish the first world literature to be digitized.
- > Here's a link to Aaron Lansky's wonderful memoir about his adventures in the great Yiddish book rescue, [Outwitting History](#). And here's a [brief piece](#) he wrote several years earlier touching concisely on the same subject.
- > Ironically, *The Shlemiel as Modern Hero* by Ruth Wisse, the book Lansky credits with determining his destiny as a crusader for all things Yiddish, is no longer in print. However, you can learn about the book on [Amazon.com](#) and a review of its contents can be found [here](#).
- > A *bissel Yiddish* (a little bit of Yiddish): For a quick and fun experience in the joys of Yiddish, try your hand at reading a simple Yiddish poem (translation included) [here](#), or listen to some Yiddish songs at Florida Atlantic University's [Judaica Sound Archives](#). And check out how Yiddish literature influenced America's popular medium, the movies, in these excerpts on YouTube from the film versions of [Fiddler on the Roof](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **antithetical** (adjective): being in direct and unequivocal opposition; diametrically opposed
- :: **bashert** (Yiddish, noun): “destiny” or “fate,” a person’s soulmate, considered as predestined or ideal. It can also be used to express the seeming fate or destiny of an auspicious or important event, friendship, or happening
- :: **bespectacled** (adjective): wearing eyeglasses
- :: **bicher** (Yiddish, noun): books
- :: **farbrengen** (Yiddish, noun) 1: “joyous gathering” 2: a *Hasidic* gathering, it may consist of explanations of general Torah subjects, with an emphasis on *Hasidic* philosophy, stories, and melodies, with refreshments being served. It is regarded as a time of great holiness
- :: **haymish** (Yiddish, adjective): informal, friendly
- :: **hefkeyres** (Yiddish, noun): chaos, mess, neglect
- :: **perseverance** (noun) 1: steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., esp. in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement 2: (theology) continuance in a state of grace to the end, leading to eternal salvation
- :: **schlepping** (Yiddish, verb) 1: “to drag” or “haul” 2: to carry clumsily or with difficulty to move slowly or laboriously
- :: **schnapps** (noun): a spirit of high alcoholic content distilled from fruits, such as pears, apples, peaches, or cherries
- :: **zamlar** (Yiddish, noun) 1: compiler 2: collector 3: a person who gathers scattered things in order to form a collection. Usually, *zamlers* make their collections pursuing a mission, passionately committed to their purpose. Therefore, to be a *zamlar*, according to Yiddish traditions, is considered an honor



SAGE STATS :: Architect Daniel Libeskind, born in Poland in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, has created monumental buildings—including the Jewish Museum Berlin—that symbolize an independent mind and an indomitable human spirit...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > You will read in the upcoming profile that “Architecture is a trade, and an art form.” What are some of the differences between a trade and an art form? Exactly what does an architect do and why is it different from what, say, a sculptor or a musician does?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts	places	words
• eternal optimist	• Lodz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ghetto • death camps • immigrant • slurry wall

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > “I would say what I *do* is Jewish...it’s a Jewish approach to reality” says Daniel Libeskind. How, in fact, can things you do in non-religious settings be informed by being Jewish?
- > When Daniel Libeskind moved to Berlin, some members of his family were horrified and swore they would never set foot in the city where the Holocaust had been conceived. Even today, sixty years after World War II, there are those Jews who won’t purchase German products or listen to German music. Do you agree with this sentiment? Disagree? In either writing or a class discussion, argue your viewpoint and then come up with a convincing counter-argument.
- > “A great building—like great literature or poetry or music—can tell the story of the human soul.” Use examples of well-known architecture to support Daniel Libeskind’s statement. Then choose one architectural example that is more personal, such as your home, school, local megaplex, or synagogue, to make the same point.

:: don’t just sit there

- > This profile explores the symbolism Libeskind incorporated in creating the Jewish Museum Berlin. Suppose you were an architect who won a commission to design the Museum of (BLANK). Fill in the blank with a subject of interest to you. Next, think about some architectural shapes and spaces that might convey symbolic meanings related to the subject matter of the museum you’re designing. Describe, draw, or digitally present your ideas.
- > In 2001, Daniel Libeskind’s daughter, Rachel, was the first *bat mitzvah* in Berlin’s Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue since 1933. Write one paragraph that might have appeared within the *d’var Torah* that she might have delivered, addressing the uniqueness of the occasion or imagine you an editorial writer for a newspaper, and write an opinion piece focusing on the significance of the event.
- > Using the profile as your guide, chart on a world map all the places Daniel Libeskind has lived, beginning with his birthplace. Do you think this global background has affected his thinking as an architect and philosopher of art? If so, how?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Visit [Studio Daniel Libeskind](#). Be sure to click on “Projects,” then play around with “Visual Browser” and “Show All” to get a spectacular visual overview of Libeskind’s visions and the international scope of his work.
- > This link will take you to the [German language website](#) for the Jewish Museum Berlin designed by Daniel Libeskind. Whether or not you understand German, it is nonetheless meaningful to stop for a moment at this German language webpage and reflect on what it represents in light of the Holocaust. The English version can be reached by clicking on the top right of the German homepage, or you can link directly [here](#).
- > Here is a [link](#) to a brief review of Libeskind’s 2004 book, *Breaking Ground*. For a lengthy video of a lecture with the same title delivered at the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology in 2008, in which Libeskind speaks about his background, inspirations, experiences, and the history of the museum, go [here](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **baroque** (adjective) 1: relating to, or having the characteristics of a style of artistic expression prevalent in the seventeenth century, which is marked by use of complex forms, bold ornamentation, and the juxtaposition of contrasting elements often conveying a sense of drama, movement, and tension 2: characterized by grotesqueness, extravagance, complexity, or flamboyance 3: irregularly shaped 4: use of gems
- :: **ebullient** (adjective) 1a: overflowing with fervor, enthusiasm, or excitement 1b: high-spirited 2: bubbling up, as in a boiling liquid
- :: **indefatigably** (adverb): tirelessly, inexhaustibly
- :: **itinerant** (adjective) 1: traveling from place to place 2: (noun) one who travels from place to place
- :: **myriad** (noun) 1: a countless number of persons or things 2: (in classical history) a unit of ten thousand 3: (adjective) countless or great in number
- :: **perpetrator** (noun): one who commits an offense or crime
- :: **tortuous** (adjective) 1: full of twists, turns, or bends 2: not direct or straightforward, as in procedure or speech 3: intricate, deceitfully indirect, or morally crooked, as in proceedings, methods, or policy
- :: **vicissitudes** (noun) 1: a change of circumstances or fortune, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant, and usually beyond one's control 2: life's ups and downs
- :: **visceral** (adjective) 1: referring to the viscera, the internal organs of the body, specifically those within the chest (as the heart or lungs) or abdomen (as the liver, pancreas, or intestines) 2: in a figurative sense, something "visceral" is felt "deep down." It is about having a "gut feeling"



SAGE STATS :: Sholom Lipskar, rabbi of the Shul of Bal Harbour, believes a spiritual leader must also be a spiritual emissary, reaching far beyond the walls of the synagogue into people's homes, hearts, army barracks, and even their prison cells...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > "All you have to do to be a Jew is to be born Jewish," says Sholom Lipskar. Do you agree or disagree?
- > What do you imagine when you hear the words *Chasid* or *Chasidism*?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources. *The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.*

concepts	people & places	words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aibishter</i> • <i>chabad</i> • <i>Chasid</i> • <i>Hashem</i> • <i>Yiddishkeit</i> • outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lubavitcher Rebbe • Menachem Mendel Schneerson • Crown Heights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>shliach/shluchim/shlichus</i> • pluralistic • eclectic • marginalized

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > According to one of his congregants, Sholom Lipskar is known to ask the pointed question, “How’s your soul?” How would you answer this question?
- > Sholom Lipskar says, “Each one of us is an emissary of God [created] to fulfill a unique purpose of creation. We each have a fundamental, monumental mission that is incredible and that touches on the core of our being, and that gives us the single most important reason for existence, and which gives us passion for existence.” Do you feel as if you have a mission? If so, do you know what it is? If you don’t know, that’s perfectly alright! How might you go about thinking about, exploring, and discovering your mission?
- > Sholom Lipskar is a *chasid*, a follower of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and has spent his life as an emissary spreading the teachings and values of his Rebbe. Think of your own most cherished values in life, the ideas and attitudes you would most want to share with others. How did you acquire them? Of whom might *you* be said to be a *chasid*? (Of course, there may be more than one person.) How would you go about sharing these values?

:: don't just sit there

- > Here is a description of Sholom Lipskar's brainchild, Project 33154, from his synagogue's website:

Project 33154 is a community wide program to create a neighbor to neighbor Jewish experience. The initial case study started Chanuka 2002 where 10 young Yeshiva boys visited every home in Bay Harbour to identify which ones were Jewish and give them the necessary items (Menorah, Candles, Guides etc.) for the Holiday of Chanuka. Over 250 Jewish Homes were identified together with a color coded map of Members, Non-Members and Unaffiliated Jews.

Based on your knowledge of where you live, without researching it, try to answer the question, How Jewish is your immediate neighborhood? How many synagogues does it support? Would you feel comfortable paying "religious" home visits as described above to people you don't know? Why or why not?

- > Sholom Lipskar has made a priority of outreach to three classes of Jews who were long overlooked in Jewish communal life—the elderly, the assimilated, and those in prison. Brainstorm with your classmates and design your own school-based project to reach out into the community beyond your classroom in a helpful and meaningful way.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Visit the website for [Sholom Lipskar's shul](#) and see for yourself what all the excitement is about.
- > The Aleph Institute, founded by Sholom Lipskar, reaches out to American Jewish prisoners, but the Institute does much more as well. Learn about it [here](#).
- > There are currently more than four thousand Jews incarcerated among the prison population, convicted of all types of crimes. Producer/director Rhonda Moskowitz has reported on some of them in her documentary film, [Return \(Teshuva\)](#).
- > The execution of a Death Row Jewish murderer in the United States is an extremely rare occurrence. [This article](#) about Martin Grossman, executed in Florida on February 16, 2010, mentions that the director of Sholom Lipskar's Aleph Institute, Rabbi Menachem Katz, was Grossman's long-time spiritual advisor.

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: *ba'al teshuvah* (Hebrew, noun): literally means, “master of return,” i.e., one who has repented or “returned” to God; sometimes abbreviated to BT, is a term referring to a Jewish person who turns to embrace Orthodox Judaism
- :: *cheder* (Hebrew, noun): literally, “room”; a traditional elementary school teaching the basics of Judaism and the Hebrew language
- :: *Cholov Yisrael* (Hebrew, adjective): all dairy products, including cheese and non-fat dry milk powder, which have been produced under the supervision of a Jew; milk or dairy products are referred to as *Chalav Yisrael* (Israel Milk), if they were produced under constant rabbinical supervision from milking through packaging
- :: *emissary* (noun) 1: one designated as the agent of another 2: a representative sent on a special mission, usually a diplomatic one
- :: *fabrengen* (Yiddish, noun): “joyous gathering,” a Chasidic gathering where stories are shared
- :: *kollel* (Hebrew, noun): a “gathering” or “collection” [of scholars] is an institute for full-time, advanced study of the Talmud and rabbinic literature. Like a *yeshiva*, a *kollel* features *shiurim* (lectures) and learning *sedarim* (learning sessions); unlike a *yeshiva*, the student body of a *kollel* is all married men. *Kollels* generally pay a regular monthly stipend to their members. In the last twenty years a small number of Orthodox Jewish *kollels* have been opened for women. In the Orthodox Jewish community a *kollel* is effectively an institute for advanced Talmudic study. In the non-Orthodox Jewish community a *kollel* or adult-ed center has courses available on Talmud, Midrash, learning Hebrew, Jewish ethics, and related topics; less emphasis is given to Talmud
- :: *ohel* (Hebrew, noun) 1: “tent,” in which a family lived 1a: covered dwelling, place, home, and tabernacle
- :: *palpable* (adjective) 1: competent to be felt by touch 2: tangible 3: easily perceptible, noticeable, manifest
- :: *yechidus* (Hebrew, noun): a private meeting with a rabbi or spiritual leader



SAGE STATS :: Having achieved much success as a media-savvy political consultant, Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi felt a greater calling. She now channels a personal passion for Israel into leading the organization she founded to advocate journalistic accuracy and educate the press and the public about the real Jewish state...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Israel Apartheid Week has become an annual event on campuses and in cities across the globe. The initiative's aim is to educate people about Israeli racist practices against the Palestinian people. If you visit the group's [website](#) without prior knowledge of the current Israeli/Palestinian situation as the Israeli people and government understand and experience it, then you might find what seems to be compelling and convincing evidence. Check out the website with a discerning eye and identify several "facts" that require checking out for their possible bias and bending of truth.

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts	people, places, etc.	words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nonprofit organization • focus group • philanthropist • Fortune 500 companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K Street • Vaclav Havel • Boris Yeltsin • <i>Anschluss</i> • Brown Shirts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proactive • strategic • cutting-edge • stereotypes

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > “Propaganda is a powerful tool”—Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi describes how even her Jewish father, when he was five years old and living in Vienna, wanted to join Hitler’s Brown Shirts, because the Nazis made it seem “so socially acceptable and so cool and so hip.” What exactly is propaganda? What are its goals? Are the United States and Israel victims of propaganda today? Do these democratic nations ever utilize propaganda themselves?
- > The Israel Project takes neither money nor direction from the government of Israel. Isn’t this strange given the organization’s name and mission as an educational organization that gets facts about Israel and the Middle East to press, public officials, and the public? Or, on second thought, is it?
- > At one point, this profile suggests that Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi has little time to think about fashion accessories because of the amount of time she spends on her serious and significant Jewish endeavors. Then, a little later on, the profile adds that she also finds little time in her busy schedule for religious observance. How does this affect your understanding of the title of the book you are studying, *Jewish Sages of Today*? Compare Mizrahi’s profile in this respect with the profile of Sholom Lipskar immediately preceding it.

:: don’t just sit there

- > You’ve been put in charge of a pro-Israel campaign for a college in your community. Create what you consider an effective poster, brochure, or video spot for launching the campaign across campus.
- > For good or for bad, the Middle East is always in the headlines. Follow a week’s worth of reporting about Israel in all sorts of news media: print, television, and the Internet. What observations can you make about how Israel is portrayed in the news stories you followed—good, bad, or ugly?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Learn more about The Israel Project from its [website](#).
- > What might you do to raise Israel awareness yourself? Some ideas: you can blog, write a letter to the editor, or contact an elected official. For additional guidance, go to The Israel Project's [website](#), click on the "Take Action" button and check out the menu options.
- > Here's a link to a fascinating and instructive special exhibition about propaganda, organized by the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#).
- > Many propaganda posters of the last century have gone on to be collected for their artistic, if not necessarily for their political, value. Here's a visually and intellectually provocative site. As soon as you get to the homepage, click on "JUMP right to the gallery" on the upper right hand side for an intriguing [tour](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **doggedness** (adjective): marked by stubborn determination
- :: **frou-frou** (noun) 1: fussy or showy dress or ornamentation 2: the rustling sound of fabric, as of silk
- :: **mobilize** (transitive verb) 1: to put into movement or circulation 2: to release (something stored in the organism) for bodily use 3: to assemble and make ready for war duty 4: to marshal (as resources) for action
- :: **menial** (adjective) 1: not requiring much skill, denotes absence of prestige 2: lowly and sometimes degrading 3: pertaining to, or, related to domestic tasks
- :: **succinct** (adjective) 1: briefly and clearly expressed 2a: in few words 2b: concise; terse; characterized by conciseness or verbal brevity
- :: **thorny** (adjective) 1: full of thorns, spiny 2: full of difficulties or controversy
- :: **über media-savvy** (adjective): a person who possesses an unusually clear understanding of how the media works, and is able to use and manipulate the media to the own advantage of what s/he promotes



SAGE STATS :: Hankus Netsky lives, breathes, teaches, arranges, composes, and performs music. As an ethnomusicologist, he's a thoughtful and articulate human encyclopedia of Old World Ashkenazi culture. And when he's jamming on piano, sax, accordion or clarinet, he's a jazzy and joyous promoter of Jewish klezmer music to enthralled audiences all over the New World...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What are the types of music you like to listen to? Who and what are or have been some of the influences on your musical interests? Are you a fan of any particular kind of world music?
- > Does Jewish music have a place in the repertoire of music you like to listen to? On what occasions might you expect to hear Jewish music? Can you describe what characteristics make music Jewish?
- > Can you name five composers or songwriters who are Jewish, even though their music may not be?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- klezmer music
- world music
- gospel music
- Ashkenazi culture
- cantorial chanting
- Chasidic niggunim
- Celtic folk music

people

- Bertolt Brecht
- Abraham Z. Idelsohn
- Cab Calloway
- Theodore Bikel
- Itzhak Perlman

words

- pedagogue
- revisionism
- renaissance
- scratchy old '78s

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > When Hankus Netsky's mother and grandmother told him not to call his cornet-playing maternal Uncle Sam, the first thing Hankus did was call Uncle Sam, who taught him much about Eastern European Jewish music. What is it about uncles (often maternal uncles in particular) that is so unique that we've even got an adjective, "avuncular," to describe it? Who is your favorite uncle and why?
- > Hankus Netsky refers to *Jewish Music*, a book published in 1927 by Abraham Z. Idelsohn, as one example of an intellectual and emotional battle against Yiddish, and in favor of Hebrew, that raged in the decades before the state of Israel, when Jews were resettling what was known as Palestine. Do you find this information surprising? How would you explain this clash? Why is it so ironic?
- > Hankus Netsky, whose lifework is Jewish music, takes a strong stand on religious practice when he declares that "[religious] denominations have really killed Judaism." Do you agree or disagree with him?

:: don't just sit there

- > Using an outline map of the world, highlight the countries where Eastern European Jews lived and where Yiddish culture thrived prior to World War II. Can you find statistics for the size of the Jewish population in individual countries?
- > Yiddish is not the only language other than Hebrew that has been spoken by global Jewish communities. What can you find out about other kinds of Jewish languages that exist or existed all over the globe? What other languages have been mixed in with Hebrew to create these unique Jewish languages?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Tap your feet to the infectious rhythms and hum along to the joyous melodies of the Klezmer Conservatory Band, originally formed by Hankus Netsky in 1980. [Go here](#) for a musical sampling. You can also watch the Klezmer Conservatory Band in action 24/7 on [YouTube](#).
- > In addition to performing Jewish music around the world, Netsky has been instrumental in helping Florida Atlantic University and Dartmouth University establish Internet sound archives to preserve Jewish music recordings so that people can enjoy historic Jewish melodies. Access the [FAU archive here](#) and the [Dartmouth archive here](#).
- > The Discovery Project, housed at the National Yiddish Book Center, was developed by Netsky as another step in his campaign to assemble “cultural memoirs” by preserving and bringing to life the cultural history of the immigrant and post-immigrant Jewish experience. [Go here](#) to learn more about it.

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: *ba'al tefillah* (Hebrew, noun): the reader of the prayers on special occasions; (lit. "master of the prayer"). The person who conducts public worship in the synagogue. Until the era of the *ge'onim* (sixth century CE onward), any Jew possessing the necessary qualifications could be invited to lead the congregation in prayer; thereafter, a musically trained "reader" or professional cantor often took over the functions of the *ba'al tefillah*. The term *ba'al tefillah* has become virtually interchangeable with *Sheli'ah Tzibbur* ("messenger of the community"), and is used to denote anyone asked to recite the prayer service on an unpaid, *ad hoc* basis
- :: *chutzpah* (Hebrew, noun): supreme self-confidence; nerve, gall, and audacity, for good or for bad
- :: *flautist* (noun): a musician who plays the flute
- :: *hyperbole* (noun) 1: obvious and intentional exaggeration 2: an extravagant statement or figure of speech, not intended to be taken literally
- :: *kibbitzing* (Yiddish, verb) 1: to look on and offer unwanted, usually meddlesome advice to others 2: to tease
- :: *meshugge* (Yiddish, adjective): senseless, crazy
- :: *modulate into another key* (verb): the process that pieces of music go through to change the tonal centre from one key note to another; a musician may modulate a tone (a periodic waveform) from a musical instrument by varying its volume, timing and pitch
- :: *riffs* (noun) 1: a constantly repeated musical phrase, used as background for a soloist or as the basic theme of a final chorus 2: a term that originated in jazz music
- :: *the whole schmear* (Yiddish, noun) 1: some matter or activity with all its related features



SAGE STATS :: Both a professor of biology at Columbia University and an adjunct professor of religion, Robert Pollack, who first embraced observant Orthodoxy in his fifties, argues that, while science supports the idea that people have free will, religion supports the concept of people putting their free will to proper use...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What are the different connotations of the words “science” and “art”? What would you say are the goals and purposes of the natural sciences?
- > What are the different connotations of the words “science” and “religion”? What would you say are the goals and purposes of religion?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts	people, places, events	words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communist/Communism • atheist/atheism • interdisciplinary • Marxism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sputnik • Soviet Union • Hillel Center • Dietrich Bonhoeffer • Charles Darwin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adamant • nexus

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > The profile suggests that experimenting with being religious and studying nature at the same time is “Not quite what you would expect from your typical biology professor...” Indeed, why does it strike so many people as surprising for a professional scientist to be religious?
- > At Columbia, Robert Pollack championed the teaching of biology and science to all undergraduates as part of the core curriculum. His colleagues countered that teaching science to, say, an art history or English major would be a waste of time. Take a side in the argument and defend your point of view.
- > In 1982, Robert Pollack became the very first Jewish dean in an Ivy League school in the United States. Why do you think it took so long for a Jew to achieve such a position? Do you think there are some highly ranked positions outside of a university setting that Jews have achieved more readily? Can you think of any settings today in which Jews might still have a difficult time gaining entrance?
- > For many years, Robert Pollack was plagued by the feeling that to be an observant Jew would somehow be to disobey, and even dishonor, his parents, who were atheists. How do you feel about his predicament? How, if at all, might you compare it to the situation today when many students return from a year or two of study in Israel and often adopt a more religious lifestyle than their parents practice?

:: don't just sit there

- > Imagine you're a high school teacher who has been assigned to develop a course on science and religion. Based on your familiarity with this profile, start by conducting an online search for the name “Robert Pollack” and then the title of Pollack's book, *The Faith of Biology and the Biology of Faith*. Now browse a few entries, follow a few links, and compile a preliminary list of at least five reliable resources you think might be potentially interesting to use in class. Include a brief summary of each resource.
- > Take a nature walk around a neighborhood park and bring along a paper or digital notepad to record your observations. As you stroll, try to think like a scientist and then like an artist. How do your observations reflect these two different types of thought?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Robert Pollack founded and has directed Columbia University's [Center for the Study of Science and Religion \(CSSR\)](#) since 1999. The center offers a rich and stimulating variety of spiritual and intellectual programs, publications, and events.
- > During his long and distinguished career as a biologist, Robert Pollack spent time as a research scientist at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel. Go [here](#) to visit the Institute's homepage. If you click on "Academics" and then "Faculty of Biology," you can read about the type of academic work conducted at the Institute in Pollack's field.
- > Compare the programs at Weizmann Institute with those at another world-famous science center, the [Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York State](#), where Robert Pollack conducted scientific research as well.
- > If you're interested in the training it takes to become a professional biologist, the graduate studies program at Cold Spring Harbor offers one unique perspective, which you can read about [here](#).
- > Robert Pollack comes from the world of science to the world of religion. An interesting personality, not profiled in the book, is Natan Slifkin, a rabbi and a prolific author and educator, who comes from the world of religion to the world of science, and not without controversy. Here are three links where you can read about Natan Slifkin: in ["Why Evolution is Kosher," Steven I. Weiss interviews Natan Slifkin](#); at [Zoo Torah](#), Slifkin's website, which uses Torah as an aid for wildlife education, and uses wildlife as an aid for Torah education; and check out his book, [*The Challenge of Creation: Judaism's Encounter with Science, Cosmology, and Evolution*](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **anomaly** (noun) 1: deviation from the common rule 2: irregularity 3: something anomalous 4: something different, abnormal, peculiar, or not easily classified 5: the angular distance of a planet from its perihelion as seen from the sun
- :: **crucible** (noun) 1: a severe test 2: a place or situation in which concentrated forces interact to cause or influence change or development 3: a vessel of a very refractory material (as porcelain) used for melting and calcining a substance that requires a high degree of heat
- :: **juxtaposition** (noun): the fact of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect
- :: **phonetically** (adverb); phonetic (adjective) 1: relating to speech sounds, their production, or their transcription in written symbols 1a: having a direct correspondence between symbols and sounds 1b: agreeing with pronunciation 1c: concerning or involving the discrimination of non-distinctive elements of a language
- :: **prerequisite** (adjective): required or necessary as a prior condition; (noun): a specific qualification, required prior to making any commitment
- :: **subversive** (noun) 1: undermining the power and authority of an established system or institution 2: activities that oppose supremacy



SAGE STATS :: Dennis Prager is an eloquent speaker and a master of media—radio, video, Internet, and print—who approaches all things in life, and especially his Judaism, from a rational point of view. “Why?” is his fundamental challenge, and he finds the answers—including those about his most pressing concern of how to promote goodness in this world—in the laws of the Torah...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > At this moment in your life, how would you complete the following diary entry:
“I want to devote my life to _____”?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts	people	words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secularism • moral relativism • theologies • refuseniks • non-denominational • <i>Kiddush Hashem</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen S. Wise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tenet

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Dennis Prager identifies himself Jewishly only as non-Orthodox. To use a Prager question, “Why?” What do you think he is aiming at with this self-definition? What, if anything, might we gather of his attitude towards other denominations of Judaism?
- > In what ways might the Torah be regarded as an instruction manual for *life*, as Dennis Prager contends, separate from its obvious role as an instruction manual for the Jewish religion *per se*?
- > What reasons does Dennis Prager advance for his argument that each of us has a moral obligation to be happy? Do you find this a personally appealing philosophy? Do you think it is a practical one?
- > Although Dennis Prager keeps Shabbat in his own rational way—driving to synagogue, wishing “Shabbat Shalom” on the telephone, but not reading newspapers or turning on the television—some might argue that he is simply picking and choosing, suggesting a less rational and possibly even subjective side to his decision making. What’s your opinion? Why?

:: don’t just sit there

- > Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin co-authored the well-known book *Eight Questions People Ask about Judaism*, later updated to *Nine Questions*. Of course, there are thousands of questions we can ask. Nonetheless, without referring to the book, write down a few key questions that you think a serious, intelligent person—Jewish or not—might, indeed, ask about Judaism. You can then compare your questions with those the two authors chose, by linking to the book’s “Look Inside!” feature at Amazon.com and then clicking on the “Table of Contents,” [here](#).
- > Dennis Prager’s talk radio broadcasts are popular across the nation. In this age of the Internet and new technologies, why do you think that his talk radio broadcasts remain popular?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Dennis Prager's success as a commentator and thinker is widespread across a range of media from radio to videos, from books in print to podcasts online. Go to his [website](#) to view the long list of podcasts, books, and other materials he has produced.
- > Dennis Prager is an articulate lecturer and a formidable debater. [Here](#) he is speaking at University of California Berkeley in 2008 on the occasion of Israel's sixtieth birthday and [here](#) he appears in a 2009 debate with Alan Dershowitz (law professor at Harvard University) at the 92nd Street Y on the topic "The Left, the Right and Judaism in America."

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **catalyst** (noun) 1a: (chemistry) a substance that enables a chemical reaction to proceed at a usually faster rate or under different conditions (as at a lower temperature) than otherwise possible 1b: an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action
- :: **charismatic** (noun) 1: a special personal quality or power of an individual making him capable of influencing or inspiring large numbers of people 2: a inherent quality that inspires great enthusiasm, and even devotion 3: (in a Christian context) a divinely bestowed power or talent
- :: **clandestinely** (adverb): an act kept or done in secret, often in order to conceal an illicit or improper purpose
- :: **inconsolable** (adjective): impossible or difficult to console; despondent, sad beyond comforting
- :: **penchant** (noun): definite liking, a strong inclination
- :: **periphery** (noun) 1: the perimeter of a circle or other closed curve; the external boundary or surface of a body 2: the outward bounds of something as distinguished from its internal regions or center
- :: **trump** (noun) 1: (games) a suit in card games that outranks all other suits for the duration of a hand 2: a key resource to be used at an opportune moment 3: (transitive verb) (games) to take (a card or trick) with a trump to get the better of an adversary, or competitor, by using a crucial, often hidden resource

NESSA RAPOPORT TOBI KAHN



SAGE STATS :: Everyone's welcome at a special place on Manhattan's Upper West Side. It's the home of husband and wife, visual artist Tobi Kahn and writer Nessa Rapoport. Here friends and family share Shabbat warmth and generous cheer, and from here this successful creative duo disseminate images and words sparked by their Jewish experiences, personal, universal, present and past, to the world at large...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Do you consider yourself a Jewish American or an American Jew? What difference might the two phrases suggest? Is there a similar difference between being a Jewish artist (or writer) and an artist (or writer) who is Jewish?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts	people, places, etc.	words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abstract painting • hachnasat orchim • <i>Torah misinai</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dickensian (Charles Dickens) • Guggenheim Museum • Chaim Grade • Elie Wiesel • Abraham Joshua Heschel • the <i>Levush</i> • the <i>Shach</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salon • Obie-award • meditative

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Tobi Kahn says that “Art transforms the way we think.” Support this statement with two personal examples, one of artwork (such as a painting or sculpture) and one of a piece of writing (such as a story, novel, or poem), which transformed the way you think.
- > Tobi Kahn speaks of “Taking people on a journey visually...a positive journey, one of contemplation and healing.” Does all art have to be positive? Are there forms of art that take us on dark journeys? Forms of art that hurt rather than heal? Can you give specific examples?
- > The dual profile of Tobi Kahn and Nessa Rapoport contemplates a visual-verbal divide suggesting that some people think in pictures, others in words. Based on this somewhat broad generalization, would you consider yourself a visual or verbal type of person? What sort of criteria are you using to come to this conclusion?

:: don't just sit there

- > Critics have named Tobi Kahn the heir to the Romantic tradition of American landscape painting. Identify that tradition and gather some visual examples of Romantic American landscape paintings.
- > Nessa Rapoport's writing is very much inspired by her own Jewish life experiences and that of her ancestors and the common Jewish past. Compose a paragraph, short poem, or song lyric that is artistic in form and Jewish in content. After you've finished, consider whether the audience for your piece would have to be Jewish to understand and enjoy it.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > To get an idea of the scope of Tobi Kahn's artworks, there is no better place to start than his [website](#), where you can explore scores of paintings, sculptures, installations, and objects, many of which are mentioned in this profile.
- > In October 2002, Kahn was featured as Artist of the Month on the [website](#) of *Image*, a literary and arts quarterly.
- > [Google Images](#) is also a great way to view the infinite variety of Kahn's creative output.
- > This [link](#) is to an interesting analysis of one work of Kahn's in particular, a monumental outdoor sculpture that stands almost fourteen feet tall on the grounds of the New Harmony Inn in Indiana.
- > As a bridge to the literary work of Nessa Rapoport, she co-wrote the book *[Objects of the Spirit: Ritual and the Art of Tobi Kahn](#)* on the subject of her husband's work.
- > As a solo author, Nessa Rapoport has written [fiction](#), [non-fiction](#), and [poetry](#). Some of her poetry appears [here](#). She has also co-edited two literary anthologies of contemporary Jewish fiction, *[Writing Our Way Home: Contemporary Stories by American Jewish Writers](#)* and *[The Schocken Book of Contemporary Jewish Fiction](#)*.
- > At a symposium on "Jewish Expression in Art and Design" held in 2007 in Jerusalem, Nessa Rapoport offered these [beautiful words](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **gregariousness** (noun): the extroverted personality of one who enjoys the social company of others
- :: **huppah** (Hebrew, noun): a canopy under which the bride and groom stand during a Jewish wedding ceremony
- :: **ilui** (Hebrew/Yiddish, noun): “above,” “elevation,” “going up,” or “best,” meaning a young *Torah* and *Talmudic* prodigy or genius
- :: **Ladino** (Hebrew/Yiddish, noun): otherwise known as Judeo-Spanish, it is the spoken and written Hispanic language of Jews of Hispanic origin. Ladino did not become a specifically Jewish language until after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492; it was merely the language of their province. It is also known as Judezmo, Dzhudezmo, or Spaniolit
- :: **macrocosm and microcosm**: an ancient Greek schema of seeing the same patterns reproduced in all levels of the cosmos, from the largest scale (macrocosm) all the way down to the smallest scale (microcosm); macrocosm (noun) 1: the entire world 2: a system reflecting on a large scale one of its component systems or parts; microcosm (noun) 1: a little world 2a: a world in miniature; anything that is regarded as a world in miniature 2b: human beings, humanity, society, or the like, viewed as an epitome or miniature of the world or universe
- :: **oscillate** (verb) 1: to swing backward and forward like a pendulum to vary between opposing beliefs, feelings, or theories 2: to vary above and below a mean value
- :: **provincial** (noun) 1: one living in or coming from a province 2: a person of local or restricted interests or outlook 3: a person lacking urban polish or refinement
- :: **pushkas** (Russian, noun): an arrangement between two or more of the players to share part of the pot's win, or more precisely, the container into which the shared chips are played
- :: **scintillating** (adjective) 1: sparkling or shining brightly 2: brilliantly and excitingly, clever or skillful
- :: **shalom bat** (Hebrew, noun): celebration to welcome a new daughter
- :: **shidduch** (Hebrew, noun) 1a: a Jewish marriage, in former times, usually arranged by a professional matchmaker 1b: a system of matchmaking in which Jewish singles are introduced to one another in Orthodox Jewish communities for the purpose of marriage



SAGE STATS :: Despite an outwardly gentle demeanor, Gary Rosenblatt is no mere mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper—he’s the committed and courageous editor and publisher of America’s largest, and arguably most influential, Jewish weekly. He believes that Jewish journalism is a unique force for doing good both on a community level as well as around the nation and the international Jewish world...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Who needs an editor anyway? Why can’t a group of reporters just put out a newspaper by themselves? What does an editor do? Compare a newspaper editor to an orchestra conductor or a football coach.

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- *chesed*
- *lashon hara*
- witch hunts

words

- Pulitzer Prize
- freelance work
- vocation
- protégé
- *modus operandi*
- vilified

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Imagine that you're the editor of a local newspaper dedicated to serving the community. One of your most reliable investigative reporters has uncovered a criminal fraud scandal. When you read his notes, you find the name of a friend of your family who is apparently a key figure involved in the scandal. What would you do—run the story, or kill it? Why? What are the conflicting personal and ethical issues that contribute to your decision?
- > At the beginning of his career, Gary Rosenblatt wrote for *TV Guide*; today he writes for *The Jewish Week*. How do the two publications differ in terms of their audiences, content, and goals? Why would Rosenblatt suggest that he found his work at *TV Guide* less appealing when, after all, *TV Guide* has a circulation in the millions compared to the *Jewish Week*'s 90,000?
- > As a Pulitzer Prize finalist, Gary Rosenblatt could certainly have sought a position at a world-renowned institution like the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, but he chose a career in Jewish journalism instead. What factors might have weighed in his decision?

:: don't just sit there

- > There's a lot of talk about the death of print journalism in today's new cyber-age. Make a list of ideas you would recommend to Gary Rosenblatt to help *The Jewish Week* expand beyond its print edition by using twenty-first century Internet and multimedia technologies. You might want to brainstorm with your classmates for this. (Be aware that, as a thoughtful, savvy publisher, he's certainly already acted on similar ideas of his own.)
- > Pretending that your classroom is the home of a local city newspaper, hold a "Monday morning" staff meeting in class, as Gary Rosenblatt describes in the profile. Bat around story ideas and talk about finding fresh angles on "front-burner" topics. Afterwards, conduct a similar mock staff meeting for a local Jewish paper. How do the topics differ? Why?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > *The Jewish Week* has a comprehensive [website](#). And here are the websites of some other Jewish publications that feature in the profile and earlier in Rosenblatt's career: the [Baltimore Jewish Times](#) and the [Detroit Jewish News](#). What can you learn about the different styles and approaches of these publications by exploring and comparing their websites? How would you rate them as websites themselves in terms of interest, user friendliness, and design?
- > Gary Rosenblatt speaks (not writes in this case) for himself on this [video clip](#) at the Jewish web video archive, JInsider, which operates in conjunction with *The Jewish Week*.
- > Gary Rosenblatt is particularly interested in fostering opportunities for young Jewish journalists. He helped found the [Gralla Fellows Program](#) at Brandeis University and has invited young writers to participate in *The Jewish Week* itself through its [Write On For Israel program](#), and its supplement, "[Fresh Ink for Teens](#)."
- > "Stolen Innocence" (2000), Gary Rosenblatt's groundbreaking article on abuse uncovered in the Jewish community, is not archived on *The Jewish Week's* website, but the original article appears to be reprinted [here](#) and is also available on Rosenblatt's webpage on the *Jewish Sages of Today* website.

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: *baale batim* (Yiddish, noun): master of the house
- :: *bolster* (noun) 1: to support or prop up with, or as if with, a long narrow pillow or cushion; to buoy up or hearten 2: a heavy chisel used for cutting bricks
- :: *bubby* (Yiddish, noun): grandmother
- :: *dissolution* (noun) 1: decomposition into fragments or parts 2: indulgence in sensual pleasures, debauchery 3: termination or extinction by disintegration or dispersion 4: annulment or termination of a formal or legal bond, tie, or contract 5: formal dismissal of an assembly or legislature 6: reduction to a liquid form
- :: *incrementally* (adjective) 1: the process of increasing in number, size, quantity, or extent something added or gained 2: a slight, often barely perceptible augmentation 3: one of a series of regular additions or contributions 4: (in mathematics) a small positive or negative change in the value of a variable
- :: *initiation* (noun) 1: formal admission or acceptance into an organization or club; adult status in one's community or society 2: the ceremonies or rites of admission 3: the act of initiating
- :: *initiatives* (noun) 1: an introductory step 2: energy or aptitude displayed in initiation of action 3: the right to initiate legislative action 4: a procedure enabling a specified number of voters by petition to propose a law and secure its submission to the electorate or to the legislature for approval
- :: *nuance* (noun) 1: a subtle or slight degree of difference, as in meaning, feeling, or tone 2: a gradation expression or appreciation of subtle shades of meaning, feeling, or tone; nuanced (adjective): having nuances possessed of multiple layers of detail, pattern, or meaning
- :: *Shacharis* (Hebrew, noun) the traditional Jewish service of morning prayers. It is the longest daily service, including many more prayers than the other services of the day (*Mincha* and *Maariv*)
- :: *scrutinized* (verb): to examine or observe with great care, inspect critically
- :: *vested* (adjective) 1: fully and unconditionally guaranteed of a legal right, benefit, or privilege 2: dressed or clothed in ecclesiastical vestments
- :: *zaidy* (Yiddish, noun): grandfather



SAGE STATS :: Thirty years at the helm of a groundbreaking, smart, provocative, and ever-relevant Jewish feminist quarterly should give Susan Weidman Schneider some bragging rights, but she hasn't got the time. What with securing her magazine's sure footing in the new media of the new millennium and working to encourage further achievements in Jewish women's independence, she promises to be an active feminist force far into the future...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What is the Jewish American Princess stereotype? How do such stereotypes develop? Is there an equivalent Jewish male stereotype?
- > Imagine that you are the editor of a magazine for Jewish women. What would you want that magazine to be like? What might you name the magazine? What sort of articles would you include? Create a list of five article topics you would assign journalists to write for your magazine.

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- gender politics
- a nonprofit [enterprise]
- free thinkers

people & places

- Sally Priesand
- Winnipeg, Manitoba

words

- ruffle feathers
- compassionate
- polity
- ineluctable
- *B'nai Brith*

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Compare the profile of Susan Weidman Schneider with that of Gary Rosenblatt. What similar issues do they face in their decision making as responsible editors?
- > Compare your answer to the question about the Jewish American Princess in the “Think About It” section above with the analysis in [this article](#) from the Summer 2005 issue of *Lilith*.
- > Susan Weidman Schneider claims that *Lilith* has helped bring about great change by, among other things, “allowing women to speak their own truths...” In what way is she using the word “truth”? Do women have different truths from men? Do women’s truths reveal men’s lies?
- > Two major Jewish feminist initiatives, Susan Weidman Schneider’s *Lilith* magazine and Blu Greenberg’s [Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance](#), were founded in 1976 and 1997 respectively, almost two decades apart. Both were “conceived by a group of women at a kitchen table.” What can we extrapolate from these two facts?
- > Jewish feminist activism is designed to redress perceived grievances against what many people considered a historically male-centric religion and culture. Do you think there is a danger that activism for a cause could potentially lead to “reverse discrimination” against those who are the object of the activism? What repercussions might this then have?

:: don't just sit there

- > In groups assigned in class, discuss some important social causes, such as poverty, ecology, education, and other issues that people are very concerned about in today's world. Choose one of these causes and plan an inaugural issue of a magazine around it. Come up with a creative name for your magazine, design a cover for your first issue, and develop a list of potential ideas and titles for articles.
- > Anyone who has ever watched Barbara Walters, David Letterman, Oprah Winfrey, or Charlie Rose in action should recognize that interviewing people and probing their personalities is a fine art that requires much preparation. Think of someone you would like to interview, do some research about them (if there is any available) and prepare a list of questions you would like to ask in an up close and personal interview. You might choose someone in your community that you consider to be a remarkable person, and write your own profile of a sage!

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Here is the [link to *Lilith* magazine](#), the little quarterly that changed in big ways how Jewish women were viewed and viewed themselves. On the website, you can read [landmark articles](#) from the magazine's archives and even "[Listen to Lilith](#)" audio selections, including a podcast interview with Susan Weidman Schneider herself.
- > Lilith is the name of a fascinating figure from the Jewish folk tradition who appears in many places, including the Talmud and Midrash. In [this informative brief introduction](#) to Midrash, storyteller Doug Lipman interprets the biblical legend of Adam's other wife, Lilith. [This *Jewish Encyclopedia* entry](#) expands on the background of Lilith. Based on the description of Lilith in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* entry, which aspects of Lilith's character do you think the founders of *Lilith* might not have intended to allude to in the name of their magazine? And yet, [here is a contemporary midrash](#) created to take Lilith's side and transform her from a demon into a brave heroine. But then, Eliezer Segal, professor of religious studies at the University of Calgary, goes and throws a wrench into the whole proceedings by questioning the very sources of the Jewish version of the Lilith story in the first place, [here](#).
- > In this [Library of Congress webcast](#), Susan Weidman Schneider discusses her decades of experience as editor-in-chief of *Lilith*.

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **Anglophilia** (noun): unusual admiration or partiality for England, English ways, or things English
- :: **burgeoning** (verb) 1: to grow or increase rapidly 2: flourish
- :: **compliant** (adjective) 1: obeying, obliging, or yielding, especially, in a submissive way
2: manufactured or produced in accordance with a specified body of rules
- :: **coterie** (noun): an intimate and often exclusive group of persons with a unifying common interest or purpose
- :: **impediment** (noun) 1: a hindrance or obstruction to doing something 2: a defect in a person's speech, such as a lisp or stammer
- :: **Kaddish** (Hebrew, noun): an ancient Jewish prayer sequence regularly recited in the synagogue service, including thanksgiving and praise, and concluding with a prayer for universal peace, a form of this prayer sequence is recited for the dead
- :: **legacy** (noun) 1: a gift of property, especially personal property, as money, by will 2: a bequest, anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor 3: (adjective) denoting software or hardware that has been superseded but is difficult to replace because of its wide use
- :: **loath** (adjective): unwilling, reluctant, disinclined, averse
- :: **neshama** (Hebrew, noun): soul
- :: **paradox** (noun) 1: a statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory or absurd, but in reality expresses a possible truth 2: a self-contradictory and false proposition 3: any person, thing, or situation exhibiting an apparently contradictory nature 4: an opinion or statement contrary to commonly accepted opinion
- :: **viable** (adjective) 1: capable of living, or surviving 2: especially, having attained such form and development as to be normally capable of surviving outside the mother's womb 3: capable of working, functioning, or developing adequately 4: capable of existing and developing as an independent unit 5: having a reasonable chance of succeeding, financially sustainable



SAGE STATS :: For Alice Shalvi, a premier educator and feminist, spiritual inspiration can come at any time and from anywhere, a Shakespeare sonnet or a Mozart sonata, a book of the Hebrew Bible or a breeze in her backyard garden. It is Judaism's task to turn that inspiration into *tikkun olam*, perfection of the world, by learning Jewish texts and taking action for the betterment of all women, and, of course, men as well...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What is gender discrimination? List at least three examples, historical or present day. Should any gender distinction, by its very nature, be considered discrimination? Can you suggest some gender distinctions that you consider legitimate, meaningful, or valuable, and not offensive?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- *aliyah*
- *hochmat hayyim*
- meditating
- *tikkun olam*

people

- Shakespeare
- Mozart

words

- reflective
- creed
- obsolete

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Alice Shalvi, like Blu Greenberg and Susan Weidman Schneider, who are also profiled in *Jewish Sages of Today*, is an affirmed “Jewish feminist.” But beware of applying a cookie-cutter approach to that term—the three women may share a number of similar goals, but they are far from identical in personality, approach, and the religious framework within which they operate. Using the profiles as evidence, highlight the uniqueness of each of these three sages, quoting their own words as part of making your case.
- > This profile reveals that Alice Shalvi is not only an activist, she is clearly a thinker as well, drawn to texts and meditation and able to articulate a clear and consistent philosophy of life. Can you summarize her philosophy in a few sentences?
- > Why do you think Alice Shalvi lost patience teaching about innovation within Modern Orthodox tradition and decided, instead, to adopt the Conservative movement’s approach with regard to women?
- > Alice Shalvi believes that, given the current state of society, separate gender education makes the most sense for young people until the end of high school. Do you agree? Why or why not?

:: don’t just sit there

- > Alice Shalvi suggests that wisdom and inspiration are where you find them, both in Jewish and non-Jewish contexts. Using several reference books such as *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations* in your school library and online, choose five quotes that you find inspirational from the works of the Later Prophets in the Hebrew Bible and five from the works of William Shakespeare.
- > *Ethics of the Fathers* is a moral “self-help” guide that appears as one of the tractates in the Mishnah. It quotes, as was customary at the time, only the leading *male* sages, in brief mishnah paragraphs. You can check out an English translation [here](#). Alice Shalvi believes it is time for an *Ethics of the Mothers* to be compiled and added to Jewish tradition. Try your hand at writing several new *mishnahs* for her proposed collection.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > [Here](#) is an enlightening article about the Pelech Religious Experimental High School for Girls, where Alice Shalvi served fifteen formative years as principal.
- > And [here](#) is another profile of Shalvi that presents her life and achievements in standard chronological order.
- > Alice Shalvi won the Israel Prize, the nation's highest honor, in 2007. [Here](#) is the Hebrew language website for the prize and [here](#) is a brief English description.
- > And finally, yes, even feminists may have husbands! [Here](#) is a charming feature from the *Jewish Daily Forward* on the occasion of Alice and Moshe Shalvi's fifty-seventh wedding anniversary.

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **encapsulate** (verb) 1: enclose (something) in or as if in a capsule, express the essential features of (someone or something) succinctly 2: the conclusion is encapsulated in one sentence 3: enclose (a message or signal) in a set of codes that allow use by or transfer through different computer systems or networks 4: provide an interface for (a piece of software or hardware) to allow or simplify access for the user 5: enclosed by a protective coating or membrane
- :: **gird** (verb) 1: to encircle with a belt or band 2: to fasten or secure (clothing, for example) with a belt or band 3: to surround 4: to equip or endow 5: to prepare (oneself) for action
- :: **inkling** (noun) 1: a slight indication or suggestion 2: hint, clue 3: a slight knowledge or vague notion
- :: **onerous** (adjective) 1: involving an amount of effort and difficulty that is oppressively burdensome 2: involving heavy obligations 3: having legal obligations that outweigh the advantages
- :: **pedagogical** (adjective): relating to, or befitting a teacher or education
- :: **providence** (noun) 1: a looking to, or preparation for, the future 2: provision 3: skill or wisdom in management 4: prudence 5: the care or benevolent guidance of God or nature 5: God, as the guiding power of the universe
- :: **trans-ethnic** (noun): a person that is born to one ethnic background but seemingly belongs to another through their actions



SAGE STATS :: An innovative and results-oriented philanthropist, Michael Steinhardt is generously passionate and passionately outspoken about putting his money to good use, donating millions of dollars to causes ranging from the transformation of Jewish education to the preservation of Jewish identity, from building a better Sabbath service for college campus Jews to recreating an ecologically balanced Congo forest for colorful mandrills at the Bronx Zoo...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Your nonprofit foundation has \$120 million dollars that must be given away by law to at least ten good causes, and the decision is yours. What kind of activities and organizations would be at the top of your list and how would you choose where the money should go?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- philanthropy
- the Jewish establishment

people, places, etc.

- Birthright Israel
- Charles and Edgar Bronfman
- Bensonhurst, Brooklyn
- Diaspora Jew
- Pollyanna

words

- to spearhead
- hedge fund
- a broadside
- jeremiad
- epiphany
- feel-good rhetoric
- viscerally
- presumptuous

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Michael Steinhardt's concern for preserving Jewish identity in the future is focused on the ninety percent of Jews who aren't Orthodox. Why do you suppose he appears to be not equally concerned for the other ten percent?
- > The philanthropic partners to Michael Steinhardt's brainstorm, Birthright Israel, committed \$210 million dollars in its first five years in order to send Jewish young adults on a free, first time trip to Israel and provide them with ten days of innovative programming while there. What's your reaction to the idea? What are the pluses you can imagine? What critique of the endeavor might you make? Do you know people who have participated? If so, what were their reactions to the experience?
- > Michael Steinhardt, an avowed atheist, wants to ensure that, in his own words, "the Torah of the Jewish people" will "flourish again on this earth." What do you make of this apparent paradox? Is there a logic to his thinking? On the other hand, does there have to be? Can you envision a Judaism that doesn't include God behind it? Explain your answer.
- > Michael Steinhardt envisions a Judaism that will be far more appealing and accommodating and welcoming and exciting than the Judaism that exists for the non-Orthodox cohort in North America today. Can we, indeed, create a new Judaism? If so, why not any number of new Judaisms? What are the basic ingredients to ensure a new Judaism remains Jewish? Who decides, especially given the fact that Steinhardt has bluntly declared that Jewish leaders "don't exist anymore"?
- > Michael Steinhardt believes that he has navigated two rivers—the age-old river of Judaism, its people and tradition, and the river of secularized America. If he navigated them successfully why does he expect less of so many younger Jews today?

:: don't just sit there

- > In response to his statistic that, on an average, only two to five percent of non-Orthodox Jewish college students show up at their campus Hillel, Michael Steinhardt suggests we build a better campus Sabbath service. Let's accept for the moment his premise that we need to create a new Sabbath service that will be resonant, exciting, filled with music and dance, and fulfilling in a way that present services are not. Break into class groups and design your own twenty-first century Friday night services that you think would attract unaffiliated (and perhaps uninterested) young American Jews.
- > One need not necessarily be a wealthy philanthropist or wait to become one in order to enjoy the rewards of giving. Can you think of several good habits that students in an elementary school could practice that would help them learn to give? Can you suggest some activities for high school students that would mark their participation as junior philanthropists? Can you think of some philanthropic activities that you would like to do?

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Here are just a few of the Jewish causes that Michael Steinhardt has championed: [Birthright Israel](#), [Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education](#), and [Makor](#).
- > Here are a pair of philanthropic surprises concerning Michael Steinhardt and New York's Bronx Zoo, which you can read about [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **incentive** (noun) 1: what motivates or encourages someone to do something
2: a payment or reward to stimulate greater output or investment 3: (adjective)
serving to induce or motivate
- :: **milieu** (noun) 1: the physical or social setting in which something occurs or develops
2: environment
- :: **puckish** (adjective) 1: mischievous, impish 2: naughtily or annoyingly playful
- :: **ostensibly** (adverb): apparently or purportedly, but perhaps not actually to all
outward appearances
- :: **overtly** (adjective) 1a: open and observable, not hidden, concealed, or secret
1b: done in plain view
- :: **resonant** (adjective) 1: deep and clear, continuing to sound 2: the ability to evoke or
suggest enduring images, memories, or emotions 3: (of a room, a musical instrument,
or a hollow body) reinforcing or prolonging sounds, especially by synchronous vibration
4: (technical) bringing about resonance in a circuit, atom, or other object
- :: **revitalize** (transitive verb): to imbue with new life or vigor
- :: **ruddy** (adjective) 1: having a healthy, reddish color 1a: reddish, rosy
- :: **vintage** (noun) 1: the span of time when something of quality was created 2: the year or
place in which wine, especially wine of high quality, was “made” 3a: the harvesting of
grapes for winemaking 3b: the grapes or wine produced in a particular season



SAGE STATS :: Rabbi, teacher, theologian, kabbalist, philosopher, author, and amateur scientist, Adin Steinsaltz is a renaissance rabbi whose annotated translations of the Talmud, aimed at opening the classic text to contemporary readers, have made him a portable mentor to a wonderful mosaic of secular and religious Jews from Israel to the former Soviet Union, France to the United States...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Of course they take attendance, ask questions, and often assign seats, but what does a good teacher *really* do? How about a great one? What are some of the most important lessons you've learned from teachers?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- Kabbalah
- hesder yeshiva
- daf yomi
- Sanhedrin
- religious atavism

people & places

- Rashi
- Maimonides (*Rambam*)
- Nahlaot, Jerusalem

words

- kibbutz
- shiurim
- luminary
- esoteric
- arcane
- Aramaic
- self-deprecating

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Compare the profiles of Adin Steinsaltz and Robert Pollack, both of whom grew up in non-observant, even somewhat anti-observant, homes. Though we know that both men turned to Orthodox Judaism as adults, do the profiles provide convincing reasons for their “conversions”? What might have been some of the thoughts and feelings that led to their decisions to become observant?
- > “These differences we draw between religious and secular people are not a true picture at all. It’s really more like a mosaic; you have all kinds of combinations,” says Adin Steinsaltz. Provide proof of his point using the profiles of at least one other sage in the book as examples.
- > The profile tells us that Adin Steinsaltz’s father was a secular Jew, a Communist, and one of the few Palestinian Jews to volunteer for the civil war in Spain in the late 1930’s. What does this reveal about his father’s character and concerns? What values do you think his father represents to Steinsaltz that prompt him to declare: “I am far more observant than my father, but my father is far more Jewish than me...”?
- > According to Adin Steinsaltz’s son, the maxim of their household is: “It is better to be a heretic than an ignoramus.” Explain this in your own words.

:: don't just sit there

- > Script an imaginary dialogue between Adin Steinsaltz and Michael Steinhardt about their respective Jewish childhoods and how their adult lives have been impacted by their childhoods.
- > According to Steinsaltz, many students spend most of their time not being able to make heads or tails of a page of Talmud. But with the wonders of modern technology, this ancient text is more accessible than ever. Regardless of whether you're a *baki be'shas* (a Talmud expert) or never read it at all, spend some time online and compile a beginner's list of trustworthy sites introducing the Talmud. Here are two just for starters: the program [Gemara Berura](#) and a resource from the [University of Calgary](#).
- > Intense Talmud study requires full-time daily review. Though you might not relish this intense study, imagine you are a young Talmudic scholar. Explain, in his or her words, the value of such study. You might write a letter or a journal entry in this young scholar's voice, defending his or her ideas.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > To view some of Adin Steinsaltz's many activities and endeavors around the world, explore the [website](#) of his Aleph Society, which was originally founded to oversee his global network of institutions and endeavors such as the Free Jewish University in Moscow, the Institute for Jewish Leadership Training in the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Steinsaltz Center in Jerusalem.
- > *Time* magazine coined the phrase "once-in-a-millennium scholar" for Adin Steinsaltz in [this](#) glowing piece from its religion column back in 1988.
- > You can virtually attend one of Rabbi Steinsaltz's famous *shiurim* (learning lectures), albeit briefly, by clicking on short video excerpts on YouTube. [Here](#) is one, and [here](#) is another.
- > Adin Steinsaltz has many books and over six hundred articles and essays to his credit. [Here](#) are just a few Steinsaltz publications that are available in English.
- > And here is a book not *by* but *about* Rabbi Steinsaltz, by American author and educator Arthur Kurtzweil, [On the Road with Rabbi Steinsaltz: 25 Years of Pre-Dawn Car Trips, Mind-Blowing Encounters, and Inspiring Conversations with a Man of Wisdom](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **bemusement** (noun): a state of puzzlement, confusion or bewilderment
- :: **Gaucher's disease** (noun): a genetic disease in which a fatty substance (lipid) accumulates in cells and certain organs
- :: **haredi** (Hebrew, noun): any of several sects of Orthodox Judaism that reject modern secular culture, and many of whom do not recognize the spiritual authority of the modern state of Israel
- :: **intergenerational** (adjective): relating to, involving, or affecting several generations
- :: **makeshift** (noun): serving as a temporary substitute, sufficient for the time being, a temporary substitute or device
- :: **pikuach nefesh** (Hebrew, noun): "saving of human life" is the principle in Jewish law that the preservation of human life overrides virtually any other religious consideration. When the life of a specific person is in danger, almost any negative commandment of the *Torah* becomes inapplicable
- :: **precocious** (adjective) 1: (of a child) having developed certain abilities or proclivities at an earlier age than usual: (of behavior or ability) indicative of early development 2: (in botany) blossoming before the appearance of leaves

Glossary (*continued*)

:: **rabbinic patriarchate** (noun): also known as the Palestinian Patriarchate, was the governing legal body of Palestinian Jewry from the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, in 70CE, to 425CE, exactly 101 years after the beginning of the Byzantine Period (324CE). It was during this time that Roman Emperor Constantine declared Constantinople the new capital of the Holy Roman Empire, and Christianity the “official imperial religion.”

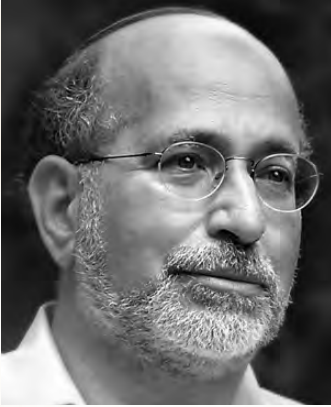
The chief scholars of the great Palestinian academies were in charge of the Patriarchate, and with the Sanhedrin’s dwindling influence, their spiritual and legal authority was generally accepted. The institution was supported by voluntary contributions of Jews throughout the ancient world. Membership “in the house of Hillel,” and a direct ascendant line to King David, conferred upon the Patriarch—then known as the *Nasi* (prince)—almost absolute royal authority. However, the purpose was far more political than religious.

This Palestinian Jewry system continued under Roman rule until Theodosius II (408-450CE). The exact reason for the abrogation is not clear, but it has been historically speculated that Gamaliel VI, the last holder of the office, may have fallen out grace with the imperial authorities. Subsequently, Jews were gradually barred from holding public office.

:: **skepticism** (noun) 1: an attitude of doubt or a disposition to incredulity either in general or toward a particular object 2: the doctrine that true knowledge or knowledge, in a particular area, is uncertain: the method of suspended judgment, systematic doubt, or criticism characteristic of skeptics 3: doubt concerning basic religious principles

:: **shluchim** (Hebrew, noun) 1: a Jewish legal emissary or agent 2: officially denotes the portal of the *Shluchim* Office (the Global *Chabad Lubavitch* Resource Center of the *Lubavitcher* Rebbe, which is involved in Jewish outreach work)

:: **unmediated** (adjective): direct: having no intervening persons, agents, or conditions



SAGE STATS :: Jewish ethical thinker Joseph Telushkin believes that every moral has a story. Wise, kind, patient, and compassionate, both by nature and design, this rabbi and popular author practices what he preaches to the worldwide audience he reaches through his books, lectures, and television scripts. He has even been known to pen an online advice column...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What do we mean when we speak of “the wisdom of the ages”? Why do we still turn to it in the twenty-first century to help us solve life’s daily dilemmas?
- > When you personally have an ethical concern and don’t know how to resolve it, how do you decide what to do?
- > What are examples of ethical concerns that people in our society face? What about our society as a whole—are there examples of societal ethical issues that you can think of?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts	people	words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethicist • <i>lashon hara</i> • <i>refusenik</i> • “<i>Kel nah, refah nah lah</i>” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirk Douglas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • august (adjective) • ramifications

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > According to Joseph Telushkin, “God’s central demand of human beings is to act ethically.” If that’s the case, why does God require so many religious laws and rituals? What do they add to our basic good behavior?
- > You have probably heard many an older person lament that kids these days have no manners and just aren’t kind and considerate anymore. Is there truth to that perception?
- > In our age of endless scandals, who can we look to for ethical compass?
- > “I think I’ve managed to isolate Jewish teachings for the human condition,” says Joseph Telushkin. Do ethical behaviors like *tzedakah* (charity) and avoiding *lashon hara* (malicious gossip) derive from or belong to only one religion? Or are they universal values?

:: don’t just sit there

- > Joseph Telushkin believes that storytelling is a most instructive way to teach good behavior. Make a list of some famous Jewish Bible stories and a second list of some well-known non-Jewish fairy tales, fables, and myths. Next to each item, write a short sentence that answers the question, “What’s the moral of the story?” Then compare the lists of morals—do you see similarities? Differences?
- > In light of Joseph Telushkin’s example, compose a short “Prayer for Strangers” that expresses your ethical attitude towards other human beings. For two wonderful models, read “[The Glory of All](#)” and “[Be Good to All](#)” (translated from the original Hebrew) by Rav Avraham Yitzhak Kook, the famously kind first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel.
- > “We choose our clothes more carefully than we choose our words,” Joseph Telushkin observes. Can you and your class pass Telushkin’s ethical test of going twenty-four hours without uttering an unkind word? Plan a class-wide Kind Words Campaign and keep a twenty-four-hour diary to share your feelings and insights with your fellow students.
- > “Ethics is a special branch of philosophy that deals with _____. Some of the most celebrated moral philosophers include _____.” Can you fill in the blanks off the top of your head? If not, it would be worth your while to find time to familiarize yourself with some of the important names and ideas in the history of ethics.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Joseph Telushkin's *Book of Jewish Values*, which was the subject of a PBS special, is a good introduction to the personal inspirational sources of his ethical philosophy. You can take a look inside the book at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0807418010).
- > Here's a sample of Joseph Telushkin's ethical advice column for the interfaith website BeliefNet.com. Telushkin later collected a number of these BeliefNet columns in his 2003 book, *The Ten Commandments of Character*. You can read his introductory chapter on the book's [Amazon.com webpage](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0807418010) by clicking on "LOOK INSIDE!"
- > Though he and his family make their home in New York City, Joseph Telushkin travels frequently to Los Angeles, where he serves as one of the spiritual leaders of the [Synagogue of the Performing Arts](http://www.synagogueoftheperformingarts.org). Telushkin wrote a "[Touched by an Angel](#)" television episode especially for one of his congregants, the film star Kirk Douglas.
- > In between rabbinic duties, writing books about Judaism, delivering lectures, and providing ethical counseling, Joseph Telushkin found time to co-author [Heaven's Witness](#), an edge-of-your-seat serial killer thriller.

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **a landmark work** (noun): a work by an individual, such as a writer, musician or artist, marking an important stage of development, or a turning point in their career
- :: **galvanizing** (transitive verb) 1: stimulating or shocking with an electric current; to arouse to awareness or action 2: spurring 3: to coat (iron or steel) with rust-resistant zinc
- :: **par excellence** (adjective) 1a: being the best or truest of a kind 1b: quintessential
- :: **privy** (adjective) 1: made a participant in knowledge of something private or secret 2: belonging or proper to a person, such as the British sovereign, in a private rather than official capacity 3: secret, concealed 4: (in law) one of the parties having an interest in the same matter 5: (noun) an outdoor toilet, an outhouse, a regular toilet
- :: **ubiquity** (noun) 1: the state of being everywhere at once (or seeming to be everywhere at once) 2: omnipresent
- :: **voluble** (adjective): characterized by a ready and continuous flow of words, fluent, glib, talkative



SAGE STATS :: Without wavering in her belief in the Torah's divinity, Avivah Zornberg weaves a tapestry of secular works into her interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, illuminating the sacred writings with the light of many nations and interpreting the classic Jewish texts in unique new ways, as Thomas Mann meets Midrash Rabbah and Rashi rubs shoulders with Ralph Waldo Emerson...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > We all like to play amateur psychologist, analyzing the behavior and personalities of people we know or characters we come across in books and films. What are some of the common questions we need to ask in trying to understand another person, be they real or fictional?
- > Do you think it is okay to apply the kinds of questions you propose in your answers above to biblical figures? Are religious figures beyond analysis, interpretation, and critique?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- *midrash*
- psychoanalysis
- *parsha*
- *the Akeidah*
- existential conflict

people & places

- Rousseau
- *Rambam*
- Thomas Mann
- *Malbim*
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
- *Sfat Emet*
- *Rashi*
- Glasgow, Scotland
- Gateshead, England
- Cambridge University
- Tamar Ross

words

- enigmatic
- nuance
- taboo
- resonance
- meta-messages
- synthesize

After they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > Avivah Zornberg began her professional life as a scholar of English literature, not a Torah teacher. In what ways do you think her academic background equipped her for developing a unique approach to explaining the weekly Torah portions?
- > Avivah Zornberg, herself, is an Orthodox Jew, while her work is read by Christians and secular philosophers as well as Jews of all denominations. Based on the profile, why do you think she attracts so eclectic an audience?
- > How does the list of names in the “People & Places” category of “Gear Up” in this lesson reflect the nature of Avivah Zornberg’s teaching practice?
- > “I don’t know if simplifying appeals to me so much...I like complexifying,” says Avivah Zornberg. Certainly, she can’t mean she likes to make things hard to understand? What *does* she mean?
- > Avivah Zornberg’s father was an Orthodox rabbi, Adin Steinsaltz’s father a secular Zionist, yet the profiles of both sages show that they have arrived at very similar Jewish places in their religious and intellectual lives. How would you explain this, given their very different upbringings?

:: don’t just sit there

- > Avivah Zornberg suggests that our spiritual and intellectual lives are filled with things we anguish over as well as things that bring us great joy. Can you identify some areas of deep concern and happiness in your own life?
- > Almost everyone is familiar with the story of the *Akeidah*, Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac in Chapter 22 of Genesis. Read or reread the brief text (extraordinarily brief considering the seriousness of its subject) and, in the manner of Avivah Zornberg, suggest your own take on what is going on, both in the text *and* between the lines. Be sure to bring in some contemporary sources—books, movies, songs—that might be relevant to the discussion.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > As a teacher, Avivah Zornberg has left a mark on many of Jerusalem's finest educational institutions: [The Hebrew University of Jerusalem](#), [Matan](#), [Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies](#), and [Midreshet Lindenbaum](#).
- > Avivah Zornberg shares her thoughtful ideas about different subjects in *Tanach*, the Jewish Bible, in a host of video clips available on [YouTube](#).
- > In this particular [video](#), Avivah Zornberg talks in general about using psychology to interpret the Bible.
- > As the *Washington Post* review excerpted in the profile suggests, Avivah Zornberg's books are considered not only interpretations of sacred Jewish texts but also poetic, literary critical masterworks in their own right. Here is a list of her books on the [Barnes and Noble website](#).

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **constellation** (noun) 1: the configuration of stars 2: any of eighty-eight arbitrary configurations of stars, or an area of the celestial sphere covering one of these configurations 3: an assemblage, collection, or group of usually related persons, qualities, or things
- :: **dayan** (Hebrew, noun) 1a: a judge in a Jewish religious court 1b: a person knowledgeable in Talmudic law whose advice on religious questions is often sought by rabbis
- :: **didactic** (adjective) 1: intended to instruct 2: morally instructive 3: inclined to teach or moralize excessively
- :: **exhilarating** (adjective): causing strong feelings of excitement and happiness, making lively and cheerful
- :: **post-modern** (adjective) 1a: being from an era after a modern one 1b: relevant to, or being, any of various movements in reaction to modernism that are typically characterized by a return to traditional materials and forms (as in architecture), or by ironic self-reference and absurdity (as in literature) 2: relevant to, or being, a theory that involves a radical reappraisal of modern assumptions about culture, identity, history, or language
- :: **progenitor** (noun) 1a: an ancestor in the direct line 1b: forefather 2: a biologically ancestral form 3: precursor 4: originator
- :: ***techiyat hameitim*** (Hebrew, verb): revival of the dead; future resurrection of the righteous. One of the thirteen fundamental principles of Jewish faith from the Torah. The Torah tells us that when the *messiah* comes, the souls will be removed from Heaven to be reunited with their physical bodies.



SAGE STATS :: “Justice, justice shall you pursue,” intones the Book of Deuteronomy, and American born Efraim Zuroff of Jerusalem heeds the call, having investigated more than 2,800 people suspected of perpetration of or collaboration with Nazi crimes against humanity during the Holocaust in Europe. Today he’s extending the battle beyond the few war criminals left living to the too many individuals and countries eager to deny that the Shoah took place at all...

Before they read the profile, have students

:: think about it

- > What is “justice”? What is “a justice”? What is the relationship of the noun “justice” to the adjective “just”? What do we mean when we say that “justice must be served”?

:: gear up

- > The following key concepts, people, and words appear meaningfully in the profile. In guiding students towards a critically intelligent understanding of these terms, you may choose to lead a discussion in which students supply the meanings, you may prefer to provide the information, or perhaps you would like students to refer to classroom reference works or online sources.

The Glossary at the conclusion of this lesson includes additional words with definitions provided.

concepts

- genocide
- the Final Solution
- crimes against humanity
- *Shoah*
- collaborators

people, places, etc.

- Simon Wiesenthal
- Adolf Eichmann
- Office of Special Investigations (OSI)
- Lithuania
- Vilna
- The Six-Day War
- Yad Vashem
- Josef Mengele
- Auschwitz

words

- gregarious
- displaced-persons camp
- transit camp
- complicity
- restitution

After they read the profile, have students

:: **think about it**

- > According to Efraim Zuroff, many good-intentioned people exhibit a “misplaced sympathy syndrome” towards aged Nazi war criminals. What does he mean by that? Do you believe there is ever a time or circumstance in which to grant clemency to the perpetrator of a heinous crime?
- > The profile tells us that Efraim Zuroff has honed several incisive replies to the question often asked of him, alluded to above: “The remaining Nazis are too old to undergo trials, they no longer pose a threat to society, so why not let them live out their last years in peace?” What are some of his answers? What is your opinion?
- > Efraim Zuroff, Michael Berenbaum, and Aaron Lansky, who are profiled elsewhere in the book, have devoted their lives to Jewish events and cultures that existed before they were born. How did they each develop their interests for something that they had never experienced firsthand? What are the similarities and differences in their resultant work and missions?
- > In pursuing graduate degrees in history, Efraim Zuroff realized, “the question that interested me intellectually was: How was the Shoah possible?” What are some of your instinctive thoughts in response to Zuroff’s question? Why does Zuroff reject the idea that the Holocaust is “beyond understanding”?

:: don't just sit there

- > One of the most celebrated trials of a Nazi war criminal was the case of the State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann in the early 1960s. Using online resources, create a virtual historical scrapbook of this landmark event, including newspaper clippings, photographs, and videos contemporaneous with the trial itself.
- > *Time* magazine reported in December, 2009 about what it called “[The Last Nazi War-Crimes Defendant](#).” Compare the charges and circumstances in this case to those in the case of Adolf Eichmann.
- > As the hunt for living Nazis winds down, Efraim Zuroff sees the next great battle as the fight against Holocaust distortion and Holocaust deniers. Unfortunately, the Internet is a tool that is easily manipulated to this end. For more information about Holocaust denial and distortion, along with a list of helpful links, see this [webpage](#) from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

:: ride the surf with learning links

- > Efraim Zuroff has written extensively on the Holocaust. His dissertation, [*The Response of Orthodox Jewry in the United States: The Activities of the Va'ad Hahatzala Rescue Committee, 1939-1945*](#), published by Ktav Books, was one of the first works to paint an objective picture of the successes, ethical dilemmas, and, in some cases, failures of the impossibly difficult task faced by those who wanted to help:
- > His book [*Operation Last Chance: One Man's Quest to Bring Nazi Criminals to Justice*](#) tells the behind-the-scenes story of how Holocaust perpetrators were tracked down, exposed, and brought to justice—the trials and the tribulations, the successes and the failures—of the past three decades.
- > The innovative initiative [Operation Last Chance](#) is the Simon Wiesenthal Center and Zuroff's collaboration with Targum Shlishi, the producer of this book, to bring living Nazi war criminals to justice before time runs out.

Glossary

The definitions below are provided for convenience. These definitions can be printed and distributed to students before they read the profile or you can choose to have students look up the definitions on their own. Additionally, you might find a creative way to include these definitions in other lessons to solidify the words' meanings for students.

- :: **Anglo-Saxon world** (noun): the countries of the world in which the English language and cultural values predominate
- :: **apathetic** (adjective) 1a: having or showing little or no emotion 2a: not interested or concerned 2b: indifferent or unresponsive
- :: **euphoria** (noun): a feeling of well-being or elation
- :: **extradition** (noun): the official process whereby one nation or state surrenders a suspected or convicted criminal to another nation or state
- :: **go for the jugular** (verb): to attack fiercely in order to have no doubt about winning, or to criticize someone very cruelly by talking about what you know will hurt them most;
note: the jugular is a large vein that carries blood to the heart
- :: **interlocutor** (noun): one who takes part in dialogue or conversation
- :: **indefatigable** (adjective) 1: incapable of being tired out 2a: not yielding to fatigue 2b: untiring
- :: **watershed event** (noun): an event marking a unique or important historical change of course, or one on which important developments depend