

Optional Sources for Further Enrichment:



**Wexner Heritage Alumni
October - January 2024/2025**

[“Jewish Pluralism, Four Ways” interactive video](#) (30 min) Following along in your own source sheets (provided below, beginning on p.3) for a guided text study of 4 core classical Jewish sources about navigating difference. The video indicates moments to pause, so you can take a moment to respond to the guiding questions. You can do it individually or meet online with a chevruta partner or in a small group from our class!

Additional Podcasts, videos, articles and chapters to explore for further reading on navigating diverging views in productive and healthy ways:

[Tehila Friedman’s Inaugural speech as MK](#) (11 min.)

Tehila Friedman, lawyer and past Member of Knesset in the Blue and White party, grabbed the attention of both social and mainstream media in Israel and around the Jewish world with her impassioned first speech at newly elected MK on August 11, 2020. Without naming the pluralism of her vision, Friedman expressed the importance of finding wholeness in the combination of differences that make up Israeli society, and how she didn’t desire everyone to be like her. Instead, she explained, the goal is not to be right or to win, but to imagine an Israel that finds a place for all. Her speech went viral at that time, her message resonating throughout Israel and the Diaspora.

Want Proven Advice for Bridgebuilding? Be Humble and Curious (podcast, 44 min.)
Author and journalist Mónica Guzmán joins Eboo Patel to discuss strategies for bridging sociopolitical divides through cultivating curiosity and humility in Interfaith America podcast, (April 9, 2024, S2 Ep9)

Constructive Controversy as a Means of Teaching Citizens How to Engage in Political Discourse. Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2014) Policy Futures in Education, 12(3), 417-430. (Sections highlighted in purple on the PDF indicate core concepts most relevant for our course.) This article arrives at the same conclusion as the classical Jewish sources you will study for this session; namely, that groups can be most productive by *disagreeing constructively*, and not by seeking harmonious agreement among all.

“Claiming My Seat at the Table with You: How Adult Jewish Learners Navigate Boundaries of Difference” by Yaffa Epstein and Tali Zelkowitz, Ch. 8 in *Portraits of Adult Jewish Learning: Making Meaning at Many Tables*, ed. Diane Tickton Schuster. Wipf & Stock, 2022. This chapter is an account of what was learned from the first time this course was taught to Wexner Heritage Members. (attached as pdf)

What Happened to Pluralism? By Yehuda Kurtzer, Ph.D. (WGF 15), in *Sources*, Spring 2001.

Jewish Pluralism: Four Ways*

An Interactive Guided Text Study Video

The source sheets below teach these 4 classical Jewish texts:

- A. Machloket L'shem Shamayim, Mishna Avot 5:17
- B. Elu V'Elu Divrei Elohim Chayim, Babylonian Talmud, Eruvin 13b
- C. Shivim Panim L'Torah, Numbers Rabbah 13:16
- D. Ribui Hashalom, Rav Kook, Olat Re'iya 1, p.330

This set of texts concludes with one contemporary text about "Pluralism in Jewish Life and Leadership Today" by Larry Moses, and past President of The Wexner Foundation.

Use the source sheets below to accompany [the video](#). You may wish to print them out to have next to you as you watch.

***Gratitude/teaching b'shem amra ("in her name"):**

The interpretations in this video are based on unique and probing teachings of past WHP Director, Rabba Yaffa Epstein, who co-created the first version of this unit in Pluralism with us in 2020. We are deeply grateful to Yaffa for sharing her insights and meaning making with us.

Text A: Machloket L'Shem Shamayim Disagreement for the Sake of Heaven

Questions to Consider as you read the text:

- What might this text say about the role of constructive disagreement within Judaism?
- Do you agree that it is positive for an argument to endure? Might there be exceptions?

My thoughts/reactions:

Background to the Text:

This source is the first place where we encounter a “*machloket l'shem shamayim*” (an argument for the sake of Heaven). Here we meet two different kinds of disagreements:

The first is those between two great Jewish thinkers – Hillel and Shammai who lived around 50 BCE and who each founded epic schools of Jewish thought.

The second, is that of Korach and his congregation – A Levite who challenged Moses's authority and came to a tragic end (see excerpt from Numbers 16, below).

Mishna Tractate Avot 5:17

(3rd C., Land of Israel)

Every “*machloket l'shem shamayim*” (argument for the sake of Heaven) will continue to exist; but one that is not in the name of Heaven will not continue to exist.

What is considered an argument that is for the sake of Heaven?

Such as the disagreement between Hillel and Shammai;

What is considered an argument that is not for the sake of Heaven?

Such as was the disagreement of Korah and his entire congregation.

משנה אבות ה:יז

כָּל מַחְלֻקֶת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם, סוּפָה לְהִתְקַיֵּם. וְשֶׁאִינָהּ לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם, אֵין סוּפָה לְהִתְקַיֵּם.

אִיזוֹ הִיא מַחְלֻקֶת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם, זֶה מַחְלֻקֶת הַלֵּל וְשַׁמַּאי. וְשֶׁאִינָהּ לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם, זֶה מַחְלֻקֶת קֹרַח וְכָל עֲדָתוֹ:

(Biblical context for Mishna Avot 5:17: Numbers Chapter 16: 1-19)

(JPS 1980 Translation)

1 Now Korach, son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi, betook himself, along with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth — descendants of Reuben — **2 to rise up against Moses, together with two hundred and fifty Israelites, chieftains of the community, chosen in the assembly, men of repute.** 3 They combined against Moses and Aaron and said to them, **"You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and**

במדבר פרק טו

א וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח, בֶּן-יִצְחָר בֶּן-קְהָת בֶּן-לֵוִי; וְדָתָן וְאַבִּירָם בְּנֵי אֶלְיָאב, וְאוֹן בֶּן-פֶּלֶת--בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן. ב וַיִּקְמוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה, וְאַנְשֵׁים מִבְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲמִשִּׁים וַיִּמָּאֲתוּ, וַיִּשְׁאֲאִי עֲדָה קְרָאִי מוֹעֵד, אֲנָשֵׁי-שָׁם. ג וַיִּקְהֻלוּ עַל-מֹשֶׁה וְעַל-

the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation?"

4 When Moses heard this, he fell on his face. 5 Then he spoke to Korach and all his company, saying, "Come morning, the Lord will make known who is His and who is holy, and will grant him access to Himself; He will grant access to the one He has chosen. 6 Do this: You, Korach and all your band, take fire pans, 7 and tomorrow put fire in them and lay incense on them before the Lord. Then the man whom the Lord chooses, he shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!"

8 Moses said further to Korach, ***"Hear me, sons of Levi. 9 Is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has set you apart from the community of Israel and given you access to Him, to perform the duties of the Lord's Tabernacle and to minister to the community and serve them? 10 Now that He has advanced you and all your fellow Levites with you, do you seek the priesthood too? 11 Truly, it is against the Lord that you and all your company have banded together. For who is Aaron that you should rail against him?"***

12 Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab; but they said, ***"We will not come! 13 Is it not enough that you brought us from a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, that you would also lord it over us? 14 Even if you had brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and given us possession of fields and vineyards, should you gouge out those men's eyes? We will not come!"*** 15 Moses was much aggrieved and he said to the Lord, "Pay no regard to their oblation. I have not taken the ass of any one of them, nor have I wronged any one of them."

19 Korach gathered the whole community against them at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. Then the Presence of the Lord appeared to the whole community.

אָהֲרֹן, וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם רַב-לָכֶם--כִּי כָל-
הָעֵדָה כָּלֶם קְדוֹשִׁים, וּבְתוֹכְכֶם יְהוָה;
וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ, עַל-קֹהֶל יְהוָה. ד'
וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה, וַיִּפֹּל עַל-פָּנָיו. ה' וַיְדַבֵּר
אֶל-קֹרַח וְאֶל-כָּל-עֲדָתוֹ, לֵאמֹר, בִּקֹּר
וַיֵּדַע יְהוָה אֶת-אִשְׁרֵי-לוֹ וְאֶת-הַקְּדוֹשׁ,
וְהַקָּרִיב אֵלָיו; וְאֵת אִשְׁרֵי יִבְחַר-בּוֹ,
יִקְרִיב אֵלָיו. ו זֹאת, עֲשׂוּ: קַחוּ-לָכֶם
מִחִתּוֹת, קֹרַח וְכָל-עֲדָתוֹ. ז וְתִנּוּ בָהֶן
אֵשׁ וְשִׁימוּ עָלֵיהֶן קִטְרֶת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה,
מִמָּחַר, וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה,
הוּא הַקְּדוֹשׁ; רַב-לָכֶם, בְּנֵי לֵוִי. ח
וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה, אֶל-קֹרַח: שְׁמַעוּ-נָא, בְּנֵי
לֵוִי. ט הֲמַעַט מִכֶּסֶם, כִּי-הִבְדִּיל אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְכֶם מֵעַדְתִּי שִׂרְאֵל, לְהַקְרִיב
אֶתְכֶם, אֵלָיו--לְעֹבֵד, אֶת-עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁכַּן
יְהוָה, וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי הָעֵדָה, לְשִׁרְתָם. י
וַיִּקְרַב, אֲתָדָה, וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲחִידָה בְּנֵי-לֵוִי,
אֲתָדָה; וּבִקְשׁוֹתֶם, גַּם-כִּהְנָה. יא לָכֵן,
אֲתָדָה וְכָל-עֲדָתָדָה--הַנִּעַדִים, עַל-יְהוָה;
וְאֲהֲרֹן מִה-הוּא, כִּי תִלוּנוּ (תִּלְיִנוּ) עָלָיו.
יב וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה, לְקַרְא לְדָתָן וְלָאֲבִירָם
בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב; וַיֹּאמְרוּ, לֹא נַעֲלָה. יג
הֲמַעַט, כִּי הָעֲלִיתָנוּ מִמִּצְרָיִם זִבְתִּי חֶלֶב
וּדְבִשׁ, לְהַמְיִיתָנוּ, בַּמִּדְבָּר: כִּי-תִשְׁתַּחֲרַר
עָלֵינוּ, גַּם-הַשְׁתַּחֲרַר. יד אַף לֹא אֶל-אַרְצָה
זִבְתִּי חֶלֶב וּדְבִשׁ, הִבִּיאָתָנוּ, וְתִתֶּן-לָנוּ,
נַחֲלֹת שָׂדֵה וְכָרִים; הַעֲיִנִי הָאֲנָשִׁים
הָהֵם, תִּנָּקֶר--לֹא נַעֲלָה. טו וַיַּחֲרֹ
לְמֹשֶׁה, מְאֹד, וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-יְהוָה, אֵל-
תִּפְּן אֶל-מִנְחָתָם; לֹא חֲמוֹר אֶחָד מֵהֶם,
נִשְׁאַתִּי, וְלֹא הִרְעֵתִי, אֶת-אֶחָד מֵהֶם
יֵט וַיִּקְהַל עָלֵיהֶם קֹרַח אֶת-כָּל-הָעֵדָה,
אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד; וַיִּרָא כְבוֹד-יְהוָה,
אֶל-כָּל-הָעֵדָה.

Current Connections

How do you see Rabbi Melissa Weintraub connecting this text in her work today, in this excerpt below from her article, [Crafting Generative Space](#) (Times of Israel, February 11, 2014)?

(Rabbi Weintraub, WGF/DS Class 14, is the co-founding Executive Director of *Resetting the Table*, an organization dedicated to building dialogue and deliberation across political divides.)

“...Building Machloket L’shem Shamayim means strengthening our communal capacity to probe disagreements productively. **Machloket L’shem Shamayim is about much more than “agreeing to disagree” or seeking out common ground. It’s about creating institutional infrastructure for speaking openly about charged topics, naming and exploring our differences honestly, and doing so without attacking, dismissing or caricaturing each other.** It’s about teaching our stakeholders and constituents to passionately pursue a thorough understanding of those who disagree with them in order to expand and clarify their own thinking and release learning, creativity, and fresh ideas.”

Text B: Elu V’Elu (Divrei Elohim Chayim) These *and* These are the Words of the Living God

Questions to Consider as you read the text:

What do you think was at stake for the Bat Kol, that the Divine Voice felt the need to intervene from the heavens at that moment to decree that both schools of thought were the words of the living God? How important do you believe it is that we strive to live with contradicting viewpoints?

My thoughts/reactions:

Background to the Text:

In this 6th century text from the Babylonian Talmud, we encounter an example of the Houses of Hillel and the Houses of Shammai (whom we met in Text A) disagreeing with one another – and there is a Divine intervention. The text teaches us that there can be contradicting positions, but we learn that “both can be the words of the living God.”

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Eruvin 13b

R. Aba stated in the name of Shmuel: For three years there was a *makhloket* between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel, the former asserting, “The Halacha (Jewish Law) is in agreement with our views,” and the latter contending, “The Halacha is in agreement with our views.” Then a heavenly voice announced, **“Both these and these are the words of the living God, but the Halacha is in agreement with the rulings of Beit Hillel.”** Since, however,

תלמוד בבלי, מסכת ערוּבין יג:

אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָא אָמַר
שְׁמוּאֵל: שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים נִחְלְקוּ
בֵּית שַׁמַּי וּבֵית הִלֵּל, הִלְלוּ
אֶחָדָם: הִלְכָּה כְּמוֹתֵינוּ,
וְהִלְלוּ אֶחָדָם: הִלְכָּה

both are the words of the living God, what was it that entitled Beit Hillel to have the Halacha fixed in agreement with their rulings? Because they were kind and modest, and they taught their own rulings as well as those of Beit Shammai. Even more, they mentioned the rulings of Beit Shammai before their own.

כְּמוֹתֵינוּ. יֵצֵא בֵּית הַלֵּל
וְאָמְרָה: אֱלֹהֵינוּ דְּבָרֵי
אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים הֵם, וְהַלְכָה
כְּבֵית הַלֵּל. וְכִי מֵאַחֵר שֶׁאֵלֹהֵינוּ
דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים,
מִפְּנֵי מָה זָכוּ בֵּית הַלֵּל
לְקַבֹּעַ הַלְכָה כְּמוֹתֵנוּ? מִפְּנֵי
שֶׁנִּחְיָה וְעֹלָמֵינוּ הֵיוּ, וְשׁוֹנֵין
דְּבָרֵיהֶן וְדְבָרֵי בֵּית שְׁמַאי,
וְלֹא עוֹד אֶלָּא שֶׁמִּקְדִּימִין
דְּבָרֵי בֵּית שְׁמַאי לְדְבָרֵיהֶן.
כְּאוֹתָהּ שֶׁשָּׂנִינוּ:

Current Connections

How do you see Dr. Erica Brown connecting to her work today this excerpt from her article, “Alive in Paradox,” in which she leans into the idea of paradoxes, over prejudices:

(Dr. Brown, a longtime faculty member of the Wexner Heritage Program, is the Vice Provost and Inaugural Director of Sacks-Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership at Yeshiva University)

“We all wrestle with the kinds of contradictions implied by the Jewish sensibility *elu v’elu* — sometimes both rather than one or the other can be valid positions and even achieve holiness. Some of us, however, use a lot of psychic energy trying to eliminate these distinctions, which rarely works. Sometimes, it’s best to lean into the discomfort of a paradox, taking time to reflect on what makes us uncomfortable with uncertainty, with the rough edges of contradiction. Can we learn to live with the fact that not everything can be made whole and contradiction-free — to live with the inner noise of a self that is inherently inconsistent? Yes. And when we do, we just might find that living with paradoxes makes us more compassionate, more interesting human beings. Rousseau wrote that he would ‘rather be a man of paradoxes than a man of prejudices.’ Prejudices make us overly certain. Paradoxes help us stay humble and attuned to the changes within.”

Text C: Shivim Panim L’Torah **70 Faces to the Torah**

Questions to Consider as you read the text:

- What does it mean to you that the Torah has 70 faces?
- What does this suggest for how we practice pluralism?

My thoughts/reactions:

Background to the Text:

The context of this relatively late Midrash (12th C) possibly from France, is a discussion about the offerings of the heads of the tribes who brought various sacrifices at the Inauguration of the *mishkan* (tabernacle), as described in the book of Numbers. This midrash picks up on the passage that describes each prince offering a silver *mizrak*, or basin. The silver basin is compared to the Torah, as is the wine.

Midrash Numbers Rabbah 13:16

"One silver basin" was brought as a symbol of the Torah which has been likened to wine, as it says "And drink of the wine which I have mingled" (Mishlei 9:5).

Now because it is customary to drink wine in a basin, you may gather from the text, "that drink wine in bowls" (Amos 6:6) -- he on that account, brought a basin.

"Of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary" (Bamidbar 7:19). Why? **As the numerical value of *yayin* (wine) is seventy, so there are seventy faces of the Torah.**

במדבר רבה יג:טז
מִזְרָק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף (במדבר ז, יט), כְּנֶגֶד הַתּוֹרָה
הַמְשֻׁלָּה בַיַּיִן, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
(משלי ט, ה): וּשְׁתוּ בַיַּיִן
מִסֻּכָּתִי.
וּלְפִי שֶׁדָּרָךְ הַיַּיִן לְשִׁתּוֹת
בְּמִזְרָק, כְּמָה דְּתִימָא
(עמוס ו, ו): הַשִּׁתִּים
בְּמִזְרָקֵי יַיִן, לְכֹף הַבֵּיא
מִזְרָק, (במדבר ז, יט):
שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל
הַקֹּדֶשׁ, לְמָה, כָּשֵׁם שֶׁיַּיִן
חֲשִׁבּוֹנוֹ שִׁבְעִים, כִּדְּיֵשׁ
שִׁבְעִים פָּנִים בְּתוֹרָה.

Current Connections

In the excerpt below, how is Dr. Ziva T. Reimer applying this text to her work in what she calls "cognitive pluralism?"

(source: [Teaching the Seventy Faces of Torah](#) or [see here](#)), HaYidion: The Prizmah Journal Summer 2012, pp. 30-31. (Dr. Reimer, WGF/DS Class 25, is the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Assistant Professor in Jewish Education at Brandeis University.)

"...When a student is confronted with two readings, she responds with anxiety. She feels destabilized by not knowing which reading is right. The student then rushes into firmly supporting one of the readings. My strategy is to develop the students' comfort with a liminal space. My goal is to teach the students how to be able to consider each reading before prematurely concluding that one reading is better than another. This pedagogical approach promotes the development of what I call *cognitive pluralism*.

I strongly believe that the development of cognitive pluralism lies at the heart of Jewish learning. The classic rabbinic expression of this is *shiv'im panim laTorah*, or Seventy Faces to the Torah.

Our job as *talmidei Torah* (students of Torah – y.e.) is to uncover those seventy faces. When Ben Bag Bag says in Pirkei Avot 5:22, "*Hafoch ba vhafoch ba dekula ba*," "Turn it over and over, for all is within it," he's reflecting on the inherently multivocal nature of Torah. We know this and experience this regularly in our Torah study...

As we see, our tradition demands multiple readings. Yet how can we uncover all seventy faces if we can only tolerate a single reading at a time? The true richness of Torah study is the ability to appreciate the unique insight of each of the seventy faces. Through teaching my students the skill of cognitive pluralism, we grant them access to the full depth of Torah study...

In a Jewish and global world that has become increasingly divided and polarized, a good Tanakh education focused around cultivating the skill of cognitive pluralism serves as a strong defense against intolerance. Textual ambiguities in Tanakh can and should serve to develop the skill of hearing and considering other opinions—a skill that lies at the heart of Jewish learning and Jewish living."

Text D: Ribui Hashalom The Wholeness of Multiple Truths

Questions to Consider as you read the text:

- In this text, there is a claim that students of Torah increase peace in this world. Do you agree that Peace-as-Wholeness/*shlemut* should be a value?
- When could peace and pluralism be in tension?

My thoughts/reactions:

Background to the Text:

This text is from a commentary on the Siddur (Jewish prayerbook) by Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, who was the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine while it was still under the rule of the British Mandate. In it, he offers an interpretation of a passage from the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Brachot 64a (also included below). The Brachot text is drawing a connection between students of Torah being students of God, and also builders of the world, playing with the words for “children” (*banim*) and “builders” (*bonim*).

Using this text from the Babylonian Talmud Brachot 64a...

R. Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Hanina: Students of Torah increase peace in the world, as it says: *All your children shall be disciples of God, and great shall be the peace of your children* [*banayikh*]. (Isaiah 54:13)
Do not read the text as *banayikh* [your children] but rather read it as *bonayikh* [your builders].

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות סד.

אמר רבי אלעזר אומר
רבי חנינא: תלמידי
חכמים מרבים שלום
בעולם, שנאמר: "וְכָל
בְּנֵיךָ לַמּוֹדֵי ה' וְרַב
שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךָ". אַל
תִּקְרֵי "בְּנֵיךָ" אֶלָּא
"בּוֹנֵיךָ".

...Rav Kook makes this radical claim in Olat Re'iya 1, p. 330:

R. Elazar said: The disciples of the wise increase peace in the world, as it says: *All your children shall be disciples of God, and great shall be the peace of your children* [*banayikh*]. (Isaiah 54:13)
Read not *banayikh* [your children] but *bonayikh* [your builders].
Some err and think that world peace can only be built through total consensus in views and traits. When they see the disciples of the wise delving into wisdom and Torah knowledge, and **through this activity producing a plethora of**

רב קוק עולת ראיה א', עמ' ש"ל

אמר ר' אלעזר תלמידי חכמים מרבים שלום בעולם, שנאמר "וכל בניך לימודי ה' ורב שלום בניך", אל תקרי בניך אלא בוניך. יש טועים שחושבים, שהשלום העולמי לא ייבנה כי אם על ידי צביון אחד בדעות ותכונות, ואם כן כשרואים תלמידי חכמים חוקרים בחכמה ודעת תורה, ועל ידי המחקר מתרבים הצדדים והשיטות,

opinions and schools of thought, they believe that this causes conflict and the opposite of peace.

But the truth is that real peace, on the contrary, can only come to the world through precisely the multiplicity of peace, and this is when all sides and opinions come to light, and are proven to each have their own place.

In fact, even matters that seem superfluous and contradictory will be validated when the true wisdom is revealed in all its facets; for only through the marshalling of all the parts and details, all the seemingly divergent viewpoints, all the disparate fields of study, will the light of truth and justice come forth, the knowledge of God, the Divine wisdom and love, the light of the true Torah. Thus, it is that the disciples of the wise increase peace, inasmuch as they expand, explain, generate new wisdom, in a multitude of facets containing numerous categories – in this they increase peace.

חושבים שבהם הם גורמים למחלוקת והפך השלום.

ובאמת אינו כן, כי השלום האמתי אי אפשר שיבוא לעולם כי-אם דוקא על ידי הערך של רבוי השלום. הרבוי של השלום הוא, שיתראו כל הצדדים וכל השיטות, ויתבררו איך כולם יש להם מקום, כל אחד לפי ערכו, מקומו וענינו. ואדרבא גם הענינים הנראים כמיותרים או כסותרים, יראו כשמתגלה אמתת החכמה לכל צדדיה, שרק על ידי קיבוץ כל החלקים וכל הפרטים, וכל הדעות הנראות שונות, וכל המקצעות החלוקים, דוקא על ידם יראה אור האמת והצדק, ודעת ד' יראתו ואהבתו, ואור תורת אמת. על-כן תלמידי חכמים מרבים שלום, כי במה שהם מרחיבים ומבארים ומילדים דברי חכמה חדשים, בפנים מפנים שונים, שיש בהם רבוי וחילוק ענינים, בזה הם מרבים שלום.

Current Connections

Why might someone have pointed to this poem, "The Place Where We Are Right"/*Hamakom sh'bo Anu Tzodkim*, by the great Israeli poet, Yehuda Amichai, as a necessary ingredient for Rav Kook's Ribui Hashalom, that he says can help bring peace – *wholeness* – to the world?

(Yehuda Amichai (1924- 2000) was an award-winning Israel poet and author with international acclaim who was nominated several times for the Nobel Prize in Literature, and was described by Robert Alter as "the most widely translated Hebrew poet since King David.")

"The Place Where We Are Right", Yehuda Amichai

From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the Spring.

The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
like a yard.
But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plough.

And a whisper will be heard in the place
Where the ruined
House once stood.

המקום שבו אנו צודקים, יהודה עמיחי

מן המקום שבו אנו צודקים
לא יצמחו לעולם
פרחים באביב.

המקום שבו אנו צודקים
הוא קשה ורמוס
כמו חצר.
אבל ספקות ואהבות
עושים את העולם לתחוח
כמו חפרפרת, כמו חריש.

ולחישה תשמע במקום
שבו היה הבית
אשר נחרב.

**Overall Current Connection:
Pluralism in Jewish Life and Leadership Today?**

Writing in 2011, Senior Philanthropic Advisor and President Emeritus of The Wexner Foundation, Larry Moses, wrote "[Jewish Pluralism Revisited – Rising Above Conflicting Truths](https://www.jpeoplehood.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Peoplehood-Papers-10-final.pdf)," *The Peoplehood Papers*, **2011, Vol. 10, pp. 35-37, by Larry Moses.** (Larry S. Moses is Senior Philanthropic Advisor and President Emeritus of The Wexner Foundation.)

<https://www.jpeoplehood.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Peoplehood-Papers-10-final.pdf>

Questions to Consider as you read the text:

- Writing in 2011, Moses claims that, "The vast majority of Jews still see deep meaning in a collective identity, unifying values, and common interests." Do you agree? How so or not so?
- What are the main challenges of Pluralism that Moses outlines in the excerpt below?
- What do you believe are the main challenges facing pluralism today?
- Can you imagine ways they might be overcome?

"...First, Judaism and the Jewish people have from the outset demonstrated a creative genius for acknowledging and reconciling differences. We were never destined to be a uniform people with one set of beliefs, practices, and priorities. Ours is an interpretative tradition abounding in overlapping arguments and differences. Jews are hard-wired to struggle with those arguments and differences while remaining true to core values and a larger sense of solidarity. Managing our differences and still remaining a people is who we have been for thousands of years.

So, to those who say that pluralism is a kind of necessary evil, a by-product of modernity that is somehow unfortunate but imposing, I would counter that Jewish pluralism makes us stronger, not weaker, and that, in any event, it is part of our essence. Finally, the reality is that some Jews disqualify certain other Jews from the circle of Jewish peoplehood, and some Jews place themselves outside of this circle. **But the vast majority of Jews still see deep meaning in a collective identity, unifying values, and common interests.** The question is, and always has been, how to translate this sense of connectedness into concrete relationships and actions.

The challenge of pluralism in contemporary terms relates to overcoming the fragmentation, competitiveness, and insularity of our movements and organizations, connecting the dots between the diverse segments of Jewish life, and learning how to cross boundaries and create broader relationships. We use ideological and institutional interests as rationales for separating ourselves from others who could otherwise benefit both us and the larger Jewish people. Developing a capacity to “engage” Jews who are different around a sense of the common good is our renewed struggle. We have far to go in Jewish life to transform a culture of competition into a culture of commonality. But we are not new to this challenge, and we are capable of rising to it, as we have over countless centuries.”

My thoughts/reactions: