

### "A New Dawn" Israel: A Light Unto the Nations?

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**SUMMARY:** In this session we will review and study texts from the Morning service (Shacharit) to reflect on whether our prayers for "A new Light shining out of Zion- Israel" is happening. This will invite an open and honest discussion on how Israel can and must be a Light to ourselves and the Nations.

**GOALS:**

- Gain new understandings of some of the iconic phrases of our morning services.
- Reflect on the role of Prayer. Can we make a difference?
- Consider how Israel is providing a new dawn; new opportunities, new chapters in Jewish history, and new opportunities to demonstrate and bring forth new lights.

**AUDIENCE:** All ages

**TIMING:** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

- Sources for study on last page of document
- Closing song: [Hatikvah](#)

**SET-UP:** Large circle indoors (or outdoors for even more radical amazement)

## SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – *Opening thoughts*
- 00:05-00:25 – *Text study with prompts*
- 00:25-00:40 – *Group Discussion*
- 00:40-00:45 – *Summation*

## SESSION OUTLINE

### **00:00-00:05 – Opening thoughts**

Open by asking the prompt “what gets me up in the morning as opposed to what keeps me up at night?” In essence we are asking the same thing. What drives us? Then focus on the “habits” of our heart, how do we begin our day. Bring examples of gratitude, the traditional *Modeh Ani*, giving thanks immediately upon waking up.

### **00:05-00:25 – Text study with prompts**

Study texts either in small groups, or as one large group, depending on the size of group. Invite the participants to read the texts slowly out loud and ask for their immediate thoughts and associations.

### **00:25-00:40 – Group Discussion**

Further discussion around the texts relating to contemporary Israel, what is difficult? Which text speaks to me? Which do I disagree with?  
Invite the participants to create their own prayer of vision for Israel.

### **00:40-00:45 – Summation**

Summation takeaways, questions  
Play *Hatikvah* by Omer Adam and Noa Kirel

## BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

Some of the texts are powerful. Feel free to use them in a way that could prompt focused conversation and reflection on specific issues. Less may be more, but have questions and prompts to guide the process. Trust your participants, meaning you do not necessarily have to drive this exercise, have them study the texts in pairs and bring their insights to the larger group.

אור חדש על-ציון תאיר ונזקה כלנו מהרה לאורו: ברוך אתה יהוה יוצר המאורות  
 Shine a new light upon Zion and may we all soon be privileged to [enjoy] its brightness. Blessed are  
 You, Adonoy, Former of the luminaries.

צור ישראל קומה בעזרת ישראל ופדה כנאמך יהודה וישראל, גאלנו יהנה צבאות שמו קדוש ישראל: ברוך אתה  
 :יהנה גאל ישראל  
 Rock of Israel, arise to the aid of Israel, and liberate Judah and Israel as You promised. Our  
 Redeemer— 'Adonoy of hosts' is His Name, the Holy One of Israel Blessed are You, Adonoy, Who  
 redeemed Israel.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE "ROCK OF ISRAEL,"

... מתוך בטחון בצור ישראל

"At Basel I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today, I would be greeted by universal  
 laughter. In five years perhaps, and certainly in fifty years, everyone will recognize it."  
 (Theodor Herzl, 3 September 1897)

"The Land of Israel is our unforgettable historic home. Its very name would attract our people with a  
 great and potent force". (Herzl, The Jewish State)

Dare to dream... and when you dream, dream big. Henrietta Szold

One needs something to believe in, something for which one can have whole-hearted enthusiasm.  
 One needs to feel that one's life has meaning, that one is needed in this world.  
 Hannah Szenes

... And watching all this unfold, I have begun to wonder, for the first time in my life, whether the price of  
 a state that favors Jews over Palestinians is too high. After all, it is human beings—all human beings—  
 and not states that are created b'tselem Elohim, in the image of God.  
 It is time for liberal Zionists to abandon the goal of Jewish–Palestinian separation and embrace the  
 goal of Jewish–Palestinian equality.

This doesn't require abandoning Zionism. It requires reviving an understanding of it that has largely  
 been forgotten. It requires distinguishing between form and essence. The essence of Zionism is not a  
 Jewish state in the land of Israel; it is a Jewish home in the land of Israel, a thriving Jewish society that  
 both offers Jews refuge and enriches the entire Jewish world. It's time to explore other ways to  
 achieve that goal—from confederation to a democratic binational state—that don't require subjugating  
 another people. It's time to envision a Jewish home that is a Palestinian home, too.  
 Peter Beinart Yavne: A Jewish Case for Equality in Israel-Palestine July 7, 2020

...But Israel was created not to be perfect, but to restore the Jewish people to its ancestral homeland,  
 and thus to allow the Jewish people and its culture to thrive and flourish as it can nowhere else on  
 earth. Looked at that way, Israel is not only miraculous, it is an extraordinary success. We Israelis can  
 see our terrible mistakes and still take pride in what we've accomplished; many of us are horrified by  
 what it still not right here, but we have no interest in Beinart's suggestion that we therefore commit  
 national suicide.

Daniel Gordis End the Jewish State? Let's try some honesty, first. Response to Beinart Times of  
 Israel - July 8 2020

"I recently came across this anonymous message on Facebook: "The rebirth of Israel didn't occur  
 because of the Holocaust. The Holocaust occurred because there was no Israel."  
 — Yossi Klein Halevi, Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor

...I am convinced that studying the great works of Hebrew and Jewish culture are crucial to construct a new Hebrew culture for Israel. It is impossible to stride toward the future without knowing where we came from and who we are, without knowing, intimately and in every particular, the sublime as well as the outrageous and the ridiculous. The Torah is not the property of one movement or another. It is a gift that every one of us received, and we have all been granted the opportunity to meditate upon it as we create the realities of our lives. Nobody took the Talmud and rabbinic literature from us. We gave it away, with our own hands, when it seemed that another task was more important and urgent: building a state, raising an army, developing agriculture and industry, etc. The time has come to reappropriate what is ours, to delight in the cultural riches that wait for us, for our eyes, our imaginations, our creativity...

Ruth Calderon's maiden speech to the Knesset