



# ISRAEL ON OUR MINDS, OUR MINDS ON ISRAEL

## Teacher's Guide Sample

### Part One: Israel and Judaism

*This program is dedicated anonymously in memory of Ernest G. and Heidi Kahn.*

#### SLIDE 1 - Course Description

#### SLIDE 2 - Course Name

##### **INTRODUCTION:**

In this class we will show that Judaism that has been practiced throughout the centuries was created in the land of Israel. We will also argue that the land of Israel is central to the mission of Judaism and the Jewish people. Israel is a vital component of the everyday observance and fulfillment of Jewish law, thought and practice and also is essential to the idea of Jewish nationhood and peoplehood.

#### SLIDE 3 - Outline for teachers

- Judaism began with G-d's promise to the patriarchs to give them Israel
- Judaism was created in Israel
- Israel is central to Judaism's mission
- Israel is central to Judaism's observance
- Israel is central to Jewish peoplehood

G-d gave the Jewish people the land and made the land of Israel a central part of the covenant with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Leah and Rachel. Therefore, Israel is an integral part of our identity as a nation, and an essential part of our mission in the world.

#### Sources:

##### **Judaism was Created and Formed in Israel**

**The first words of G-d recorded in the Bible to the ancestor of the Jewish people, Abraham, are the words that command him to go to Israel.**

#### SLIDE 4 – Quote from Genesis

**Q:** Many religions exist independent of any attachment to a particular land. Is Judaism different?

**A:** The first words of G-d recorded in the Bible to the ancestor of the Jewish people, Abraham, are the words that command him to go to Israel.

#### Sources:

**Genesis 12:1-9** – The first words of G-d, to the first ancestor of the Jewish people, Abraham.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבְּיַת אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ: וְאַעֲשֶׂה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאַבְרָכְךָ וְאַגְדַּלְהָ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה: וְאַבְרָכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אַךְ וְנִבְרָכְוּ בָּךְ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחַת הָאָדָמָה: וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו ה' וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בְּרַחֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן: וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת־שָׂרִי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בְּרֵאֲחִיו וְאֶת־כָּל־רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן וַיָּצֵאוּ לְלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: וַיַּעֲבֵר אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֵם עַד אֲלוֹן מוֹרָה וְהַכְנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ: וַיֵּרָא ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְזָרְעֶךָ אֲתָן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיָּבֹן שֵׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַה' הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו: וַיַּעֲתֶק מִשָּׁם הַהָרָה מִקְדָּם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אֶהְלֶה בֵּית־אֵל מִיָּם וְהָעִי מִקְדָּם וַיִּבְרָשֶׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַה' וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם ה': וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם הַלּוֹךְ וְנִסּוּעַ הַגְּנָבָה: {פ}

“Go for yourself, from your land, from your relatives and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you and curse him who curses you; and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the L-rd had spoken to him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go to the land of Canaan; and to the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, to the terebinth of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the L-rd appeared to Abram, and said, to your seed will I give this land; and there he built an altar to the L-rd, who appeared to him. And he moved from there to a mountain in the east of Beth-El, and pitched his tent, having Beth-El on the west, and Hai on the east; and there he built an altar to the L-rd, and called upon the name of the L-rd. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the Negev.”

**G-d promised Abraham that although his descendants would go into exile and be enslaved, ultimately, He would free them, bring them to Israel, and make Israel the eternal homeland of Abraham’s descendants, the Jewish people.**

**Genesis 15:18**

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּרַת ה' אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּרִית לֵאמֹר לְזָרְעֶךָ נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת מִנְהַר מִצְרַיִם עַד־הַנְּהַר הַגָּדֹל נְהַר־פָּרָת:

In the same day the L-rd made a covenant with Abram, saying, to your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates;

**SLIDE 5 – Picture of Hebron**

**One of the oldest ever recorded purchases of land was the purchase of a burial site by Abraham for his wife Sarah. The Torah’s account is replete with details that reflect the realities of acquisition and property transfer of that time.**

**Genesis 23**

וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מְאֹה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעֵים שָׁנִים שָׁנָה וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה: וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקָרְיַת אַרְבַּע הוּא חֶבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם לִסְפֹּד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבַכְתָּהּ: וַיִּקַּם אַבְרָהָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי מֵתוֹ וַיִּדְבֹּר אֶל־בְּנֵי־חֵת לֵאמֹר: גְּרוֹתוֹשֵׁב אֲנִכִּי עִמָּכֶם תָּנוּ לִי אַחֲזִית־קֶבֶר עִמָּכֶם וְאֶקְבְּרָה מֵתִי מִלְּפָנָי: וַיַּעֲנוּ בְנֵי־חֵת אֶת־אַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר לוֹ: שְׁמַעֲנוּ אֲדֹנָי נְשִׂיא אֱלֹקִים אַתָּה בְּתוֹכֵנוּ בְּמִבְחָר קִבְרֵינוּ קֶבֶר אֶת־מֵתֶךָ אִישׁ מִמֵּנוּ אֶת־קֶבְרוֹ לֹא־יִכְלֶה מִמֶּךָ מִקְבֵּר מֵתֶךָ: וַיִּקַּם אַבְרָהָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְעַם־הָאָרֶץ לְבְנֵי־חֵת: וַיִּדְבֹּר אִתָּם לֵאמֹר אִישׁ אֶת־נַפְשְׁכֶם לְקֶבֶר אֶת־מֵתִי מִלְּפָנָי שְׁמַעֲנוּ וּפְגַעוּלִי בְּעַפְרוֹן בְּרֵעִי: וַיִּתְּרֵלִי אֶת־מַעְרַת הַמַּכְפֵּלָה אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּקִצְיָה שְׂדֵהוּ בְּכֶסֶף מְלֵא יִתְּנֶנָּה לִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם לְאַחֲזִית־קֶבֶר: וַעֲפְרוֹן יָשָׁב בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי־חֵת וַיַּעַן עֲפְרוֹן הַחֵתִי אֶת־אַבְרָהָם בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי־חֵת לְכֹל בְּאֵי שַׁעֲרֵי־עִירוֹ לֵאמֹר: לֹא־אֲדֹנָי שְׁמַעֲנִי הַשְׂדֵה נָתַתִּי לָךְ וְהַמַּעְרָה אֲשֶׁר־בָּךְ לָךְ נָתַתִּיךָ לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי־עַמִּי נָתַתִּיךָ לָךְ קֶבֶר מֵתֶךָ: וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אַבְרָהָם לִפְנֵי עַם הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּדְבֹּר אֶל־עַפְרוֹן בְּאָזְנֵי עַם־הָאָרֶץ לֵאמֹר אֲךָ אִם־אַתָּה לוֹ שְׁמַעֲנִי נָתַתִּי כֶּסֶף הַשְׂדֵה קַח מִמֶּנִּי וְאֶקְבְּרָה אֶת־מֵתִי שָׁמָּה: וַיַּעַן עַפְרוֹן אֶת־אַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר לוֹ: אֲדֹנָי שְׁמַעֲנִי אֶרֶץ אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שְׁקֶל־כֶּסֶף בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ מֵהַיּוֹם וְאֶת־מֵתֶךָ קֶבֶר: וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָהָם אֶל־עַפְרוֹן וַיִּשְׁקַל אַבְרָהָם לְעַפְרוֹן אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי־חֵת אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שְׁקֶל כֶּסֶף עֹבֵר לְסַחַר: וַיִּקַּם שְׂדֵה עֲפְרוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּמַכְפֵּלָה אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי מַמְרָא הַשְׂדֵה וְהַמַּעְרָה אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ וְכָל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּשְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־גְּבוּלוֹ סָבִיב: לְאַבְרָהָם לְמַקְנָה לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי־חֵת בְּכָל בְּאֵי שַׁעֲרֵי־עִירוֹ: וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן קִבֶּר אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ הַמַּכְפֵּלָה עַל־פְּנֵי מַמְרָא הוּא חֶבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: וַיִּקַּם הַשְׂדֵה וְהַמַּעְרָה אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְאַחֲזִית־קֶבֶר מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־חֵת: {ס}



# ISRAEL ON OUR MINDS, OUR MINDS ON ISRAEL

## Student's Guide Sample

### Part One: Israel and Judaism

- ❖ Judaism was created in Israel
- ❖ Israel is vital to Judaism's mission
- ❖ Israel is central to Judaism's observance
- ❖ Israel is central to Jewish peoplehood
- ❖ Judaism was created and formed in Israel

*This program is dedicated anonymously in memory of Ernest G. and Heidi Kahn.*

**Q:** Many religions exist independent of any attachment to a particular land. Is Judaism different?

**A:** The first words of G-d recorded in the Bible to the ancestor of the Jewish people, Abraham, are the words that command him to go to Israel.

#### **Genesis 12:1-9**

“Go for yourself, from your land, from your relatives and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing... And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go to the land of Canaan; and to the land of Canaan they came...”

**Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, in Hebron, in one of the earliest recorded purchases of land.**

#### **Genesis 23**

“Sarah died in Kiryat-Arba; which is Hebron in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the Hittites, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead ...; and Abraham weighed Ephron the silver, which he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, current money among the merchants. And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders around, were made over to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of his city.”

**Q:** Are religious practices and laws linked to the land of Israel?

**A:** Many of the commandments of the Torah are directly related to a Jewish presence in Israel, and all are more deeply significant when performed in Israel.

#### **Sefer HaChinuch, Author’s Letter of Introduction**

[There are a total of 613 commandments, mitzvot, in the Torah] However, the commandments that every Jew is commanded without circumstances creating a cause for it, are, two hundred and seventy. And the mnemonic is “I am sleeping, but my heart is awake” (er, the numerical equivalent of its letters being two hundred and seventy). [More than 50% of Biblical commandments require a Jewish presence in the land of Israel.]

## **Song of Songs 5:2**

I was asleep, but my heart was awake.

## **Nachmanides, Commentary on Leviticus 18:25**

For the main [fulfillment] of the commandments is [to be kept] when dwelling in the Land of G-d. Therefore, the Rabbis have said in the Sifre: "And ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. And ye shall observe to do all the statutes etc." Dwelling in the Land of Israel is of equal importance to all the commandments of the Torah.

**Q: What are the unique qualities of Israel?**

**A: Israel has unique spiritual qualities that make the ideal land for prophecy and Torah.**

**Israel is the land of Divine Providence.**

## **Deuteronomy 11:10-11**

..... the land, which you are going over to possess, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinks water from the rain of the skies; A land which the L-rd your G-d cares for; the eyes of the L-rd your G-d are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

**Israel is the land of prophecy, inspiration, and Torah**

## **Genesis 2:10-12**

And a river went out from Eden to water the garden; and from there it was divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon; that is the one which flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; **And the gold of that land is good...**

## **Midrash Genesis Rabbah 16:5**

"And the gold of that land is good" - this teaches us that there is no Torah like the Torah of the land of Israel, and there is no wisdom like the wisdom of the land of Israel.

## **Talmud, Bava Batra 158b**

Rav Zeira said, "The air of the land of Israel bestows wisdom"

## **Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, Kuzari 2:16**

Whoever prophesied did so either in the Holy Land, or concerning it, e.g. Abraham in order to reach it, Ezekiel and Daniel on account of it... These are, without doubt, the places worthy of being called the gates of heaven.

## **Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings and Wars 5:10**

Great sages would kiss the borders of the Land of Israel, kiss its stones, and roll in its dust. Similarly, Psalms 102:15 declares: "Behold, your servants hold her stones dear and cherish her dust."

**Q: Wasn't Judaism created in Babylon and Europe?**