Learning that Leads to Love

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LeSHA: Lemida Sh'Goreret Ahava
Learning that Leads to Love

> The Jewish people contributed a *half shekel* to teach that every single person is a part of nation (body) and needs the partnership of their fellow. As our great sage, Rabbi Yosef Karo wrote in his book "Or Hatzadikim": **'A person should not be so proud that they think they are whole even when they are alone'. For this reason the *half shekel* is required to teach that every person needs their fellow.**
>
> Haham Yaakov Fitousi, Algeria 19th century

When a Jewish Day School educator seeks inspiration from the tradition to inform their practice they are able to find numerous texts and frameworks in the areas of *Hevruta* study and the role of the teacher. However, texts which describe "group work scenarios" or the role of the "classroom community" are seldom found in the Torah, Rabbinic literature. Similarly, in the classic textbooks and curriculum in the field of Jewish education, there are few materials that discuss the purpose of learning that happens in group settings.

Aligned with trends in secular educational philosophy, the mode of teaching in Jewish Day Schools is often centered around the classroom learning community (a student-led approach where all students are contributing to the classroom community in a decentralized mode) or small groups which most often range from three to five students. In the world of education, group work has been praised for its ability to foster collaborative skills, build emotional intelligence and simulate real world situations where students often have to negotiate a number of priorities and interests.

Challenged by the M2 Pedagogies Fellowship[1], I worked to construct a pedagogy for group work that was inherently Jewish. I was trying to avoid a common strategy that Jewish educators take where they align themselves with a contemporary trend in secular education and use a verse or value from the Jewish tradition to support the trend. Rather, I spent time deeply contemplating the purpose of learning and the purpose of a learning community. My pedagogy, "LeSHA" (Learning that leads to love) is largely inspired by a specific read of revelation on Mount Sinai that is embedded with a worldview of *Ahavat Israel* that is pervasive in the writings of North African and Middle Eastern Rabbis.

Learning that leads to love is a pedagogy that utilizes educational experiences to cultivate love between students in a Jewish classroom. A teaching approach that is rooted in *LeSHA* believes that loving relationships between learners is a primary vehicle for deepening the acquisition of Torah. Similarly, this teaching approach believes that the act of acquisition of Torah was **designed primarily** to cultivate loving relationships between all members of Am Yisrael regardless of their backgrounds, practices or beliefs. The purpose of this pedagogy is to see the classroom and Torah learning as a laboratory for *Ahavat Israel* **outside** of the classroom. This pedagogy seeks to decrease strife, hatred and apathy and to increase love, empathy and knowledge of the other within Am Yisrael. This work is timely as educators are seeking tools, language and frameworks to cultivate deeper understandings between diverse groups of Jewish individuals. The Jewish educational world is filled with wonderful tools that have been adopted from the secular world of diversity, equity and inclusion, **however, there is a approach within the Jewish tradition that sees the fulfillment of the mitzvah of *Ahavat Israel* as specifically focused on cultivating love between radically different types of Jews through the study of Torah.**

Young students encounter the notion of "love" in a variety of disconnected contexts. Parental and familial love is, hopefully, expressed verbally, physically and materially on a regular basis in healthy households. Children are socialized to develop love towards objects they are fond of including stuffed animals and toys, physical settings or experiences.[2] As students get older and are potentially exposed to developmentally appropriate storytelling they may encounter other romantic notions of love (Disney films or other traditional children's stories). Children's stories and films are replete with storylines that focus on friendships that develop between different individuals but it is unclear whether that friendship can be characterized as love or whether it has elements of loving others within the context of belonging to the same nation/people.

In a Jewish elementary school, students will often encounter three concepts of love in the Jewish tradition. The first is the notion of loving G-d which students often encounter as they learn to recite and understand the *Shemah*. Students will also likely encounter the notion of loving their fellow as themselves "*VeAhavta LeReacha Kamocha"* and they may evaluate the importance of treating others as they would like to be treated. Lastly, students may encounter interpersonal love in the stories of the Tanakh as they read about the love that Avraham had for Isaac or that Jacob had for Rachel.

Teaching students how to love *Am Yisrael* is not a natural next step from these foundational encounters with love. As noted in the introduction to the curricular guide on the concept of *Ahavat Israel* (ed. Bernshteyn, Eitan and Shalit) designed for national religious schools in Israel:

> “People, especially youngsters are accustomed to treating love like a spontaneous feeling. A feeling that fills the heart, suddenly and can vanish as it appeared. Such an approach means that you either love or don’t love. Subsequently, one treats the Mitzvah of *Ahavat Israel* exclusively as applicable towards the people closest to them, (who they likely already love), or as a feeling extended to all of the Jewish people in general, as a far off concept which exists regardless of the people you encounter in the street or on the bus. The common denominator in these two approaches is the lack of a struggle with the difficulty of loving. With the labor and the struggle that is required to achieve love. You love (or you don’t love) and that is all….
>
> If we dive deep in the study of love, we understand that all serious love is connected to hard work. Even close friends have breakdowns and difficulties. Spontaneous love makes room for a more mature love which is sustained by thoughtfulness and effort.
>
> The Mitzvah of *Ahavat Israel* is first of all a Mitzvah. We have to work hard in order to fulfill it. The Holy One Blessed Be He commanded us to love, to seriously love, other Jews from all different walks of life. This love can only be produced through hard work. This is love. Love that is acquired from a thread that comes from the depths of our hearts, and overtime becomes an inseparable part of our humanity.[3]

B: *Am Israel* as a singular unit

My pedagogy is built on a particular tradition that identifies *Ahavat Israel* as the promotion of a worldview of unity. Pervasive in the writings of North African Rabbis in the 19th and 20th century and the founders of the Hasidic movement, is an approach to *Ahavat Israel* that emphasizes the importance of loving those who are different from you (see appendix for a full list of sources). At a foundational level, it appears that North African Rabbis believed in a relationship between *Matan Torah*, *Achdut* (unity) and *Ahavat Ha-acher* (loving the “other”). One of the most quoted psukim referenced by North African Rabbi’s who write about *Ahavat Israel* is the description of Bnei Israel before they received the Torah:

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> Having journeyed from Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and encaamped in the wilderness. Israel encamped there in front of the mountain,

Numerous commentaries as early as the *Mekhilta* and including *Rashi*, noted the shift from the plural use of encamped (*Vayahanu*) in the wilderness to the singular use of the verb encamped (*Vayihan*) there in front of the mountain. As Haham David Kadosh (Marakkech, Morocco 20th century), writes:

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> Our sages explicated the verse “Having journeyed from Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the wilderness. Israel encamped there in front of the mountain”. As *Rashi* explained in the name of the *Mekhilta*, “As one person with one heart, but with the rest of the encampments they had fights and arguments”. **Unity is an essential condition for receiving the Torah.**

Haham David Kadosh is not the only Rabbi who draws a connection between this pasuk and the value of *Ahavat Israel*. Hakham Shlomo Uzan (19th century, Tunis) elaborated on this verse and established the connection between love, Torah and the interdependence of the Jewish people:

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> “The Torah of Hashem is perfect, restoring the soul”. Soul is written in the singular form to hint that Bnei Israel only merited the Torah due to the unity that existed between them. As our sages of blessed memory explicated on the verse “And they encamped there in front of the mountain”..... Since the Torah contains 613 commandments and there are some commandments that not every individual can fulfill, for example the laws associated with Kohanim, or levirate marriage...as such through unity all of Israel can become one. One person fulfills their commandments and another person fulfills their own different commandments and this is the only way the entire Torah is fulfilled.

Haham Uzan articulates an idea that is particularly useful for the pedagogy in this paper. We need to cultivate a mindset that we need each other in order to make the Torah complete. We need to feel a sense of unity with those who are different from us because individuals who are different have the ability to fulfill mitzvot that not every individual can fulfill.

Although not from North Africa, Haham Hayim Kesar (20th century, Yemen) specifically links this pasuk to the study of Torah.

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> In the Midrash it says: When they left Egypt, they fought all along the way, but when they arrived at Sinai, they became one people, as it is written "and Israel encamped (*vayihan)* there" and it was not written "they encamped (*vayahanu)*. **The Holy One Blessed Be He said "all of the Torah is peace, and who shall I give it to? To the nation that loves peace and fulfills "all it's (Torah) paths are peace. This comes to teach us that Torah is acquired only by a group of people who learn together and love one another.**

Rabbinic writings throughout the modern era from across the globe acknowledge the importance of regarding the Jewish people as a singular body or a singular unit that is only complete if an affective shift occurs in the minds and hearts of Jewish individuals. For example, Shneur Zalman of Liady (The Alter Rebbe) the founder of Chabad writes the following about the value of *Ahavat Israel.*

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> Therefore our Sages state: "Be humble of spirit before every man,"because every person possesses a quality and an attribute that his colleague does not possess. Each one needs the other. Thus every individual possesses a unique distinction and positive quality that, [in its own particular way,] surpasses [the qualities possessed by] his fellow, [causing] his fellow to need him [for his own fulfillment]. For example, a person possesses a body that is comprised of a head, feet, [and other organs]. The feet are on the lowest level — the bottom [of the body's hierarchy, as it were] — and the head is the highest and most lofty. Nevertheless, the feet possess an advantage and a higher quality, for *they* are required for mobility. Moreover, it is [the feet] that support the trunk and the head. Also, when the head feels heavy, it is healed by drawing blood from the feet and [in this way, the head] receives vitality. Thus the head lacks fulfillment unless [it joins] with the feet. Similarly, the entire Jewish people are like one body. Thus, even one who thinks that he is comparable to a head in relation to his fellow [must realize] that he cannot attain fulfillment without his colleague and must find something lacking within his soul to which his colleague can contribute perfection. This will cause him to submit to that colleague and humble himself before him, [creating a state of unity among the people] so that a beginning or an end cannot be found [among them]. As a result of this bittul (self-nullification), the Jewish people will come together as one, enabling the oneness of G?d, [which stems] from the realm of holiness, to rest [among them].

Another wonderful example of this worldview is expressed by Haham Yaakov Gedisha from the Island of Djerba in Tunisia in his commentary on *Masechet Meila.*

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> If a Jew sees themselves as one piece of the whole (of the Jewish people), and possesses the quality of achdut, and sees her/himself as incomplete without their fellow Jew, this person is like a pomegranate filled with mitzvot. As it says "filled with mitzvot like a pomegranate." Even if a person is empty because she/he has not performed
> any mitzvot, so long as the person sees him/herself as a part of the Jewish people as a whole, then it appears to me that they should be considered filled with the mitzvot of their fellow Jew.

In summary, there is a well established worldview, theology and belief that sees *Kinyan Torah* as intricately related to the value of *Ahavat Israel.* In the North African tradition, this belief was specifically extended to a proactive approach by Rabbis to ensure that seemingly more pious members of the community would see their fate as being intertwined with non observant members of their community (see appendix for more sources). The fact that this idea is so pervasive in writings, reflects a reality that divisiveness existed within the communities and that it was a priority for rabbis and other leaders in the community to ensure that unity existed and a sense of interdependence existed. As we move into the next section, adapting this worldview to an educational context implies that heterogeneity is necessary in Jewish learning environments as different personalities, observance levels, abilities, skills and beliefs help us acquire a more complete Torah.

As we zoom in on how this worldview applies to formal learning environments one of the earliest statements that hints at a more inclusive and heterogenous learning environment can be found in Avot D'Rabbi Natan. It appears that during the period of the *Zugot* there existed two answers to the question of "who belonged" in the academy. According to Beit Shamai, the only learners who belonged were wise students and the children of wealthy parents. According to Beit Hillel, everyone was welcome in the academy. To support this belief, Beit Hillel argues that many criminals and violators of Torah precepts became great Torah scholars.

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Perhaps one of the more interesting examples supporting heterogeneous learning environments comes from 20th century Morocco. In a Responsa from the turn of the century, Haham Shlomo Ibn Danan in Fez shares a question he received from a parent of a school aged student.

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One student came home to his father around lunch time, and the father asked his son, "My son, what did you learn today". His son answered "Since the morning until now, we barely learned anything except for a little bit of Gemara since there was a new student in class and we had to go slowly until he understood it, due to him, our learning was delayed. When the father heard this he quickly angered and refused to send his son back to the same teacher. Thus the parents and teachers sought my guidance to understand whether the parent owed the teacher a salary for his work, whether he should be fined or whether he was exempt from paying…..The parent also added, "Since this teacher got to this place and delayed and took away learning from the group for the sake of the individual, I do not believe that he will be swift and careful to give my son the education he deserves...and we pay a great deal for our children's education.

As a Head of School in the 21st century I can say that this conversation could just as easily take place today in any part of the Jewish world. The father is justifiably upset that his son spent an entire day "not learning anything new". He is frustrated that due to there being a new child in the class, his son did not learn any new content. And what can we say about this educator? What values did he hold? He decided that for the sake of a new student he would not teach anything new until the new student understood what was happening. Was he trying to teach the rest of the class a lesson?

Haham Ibn Danan's response is fascinating. In his extensive ruling he argues that the educator did nothing wrong. His multi pronged response includes a rationale that the students who already knew the Gemara could also learn from hearing the content being taught again. He also argues that their hearts will expand as they encounter a teacher slowing down to bring a new student up to speed. But perhaps

most fascinating is Ibn Danan's quotation of a Midrash on how the Oral Law was taught to Moshe, Aharon and his sons and the elders.

Eruvin 54b

> **The Sages taught** the following *baraita*: **What was the order of teaching** the Oral Law? How was the Oral Law first taught? **Moses learned** directly **from the mouth of the Almighty. Aaron entered** and sat before him, **and Moses taught him his lesson** as he had learned it from God. **Aaron moved** aside **and sat to the left of Moses.** Aaron's **sons entered, and Moses taught them their lesson** while Aaron listened. Aaron's **sons moved** aside; **Elazar sat to the right of Moses and Itamar** sat **to the left of Aaron. Rabbi Yehuda** disagreed with the first *tanna* with regard to the seating arrangements and **said: Actually, Aaron would return to** sit to **the right of Moses. The elders entered and Moses taught them their lesson. The elders moved** aside, and **the entire nation entered and Moses taught them their lesson. Therefore, Aaron had** heard the lesson **four times, his sons** heard it **three** times, **the elders** heard it **twice, and the entire nation** heard it **once.**
> **Moses** then **departed** to his tent, **and Aaron taught** the others **his lesson** as he had learned it from Moses. **Aaron** then **departed** and **his sons taught** the others **their lesson. His sons** then **departed** and **the elders taught** the rest of the people **their lesson. Hence everyone,** Aaron, his sons, the elders and all the people, heard the lesson taught by God **four times.**

The concept of love or *Ahavat Israel* does not appear, but this Baraita does add an important layer to our worldview. According to our tradition, the first Jews to hear the Oral Torah learned it four times. Surely, Aharon could have been a disengaged learner as he heard the same lesson the third or fourth time. This Baraita however is trying to convey something valuable about learning in heterogeneous learning environments. We grow in our understanding of Torah as we encounter others who learn in different ways. We develop empathy for different learners. We grow to love Torah and all of Israel as we serve as witnesses to their learning of Torah.

A pedagogy of *Ahavat Israel* has a number of practices associated with it.

- **A pedagogy of *Ahavat Israel* means that all students are welcome in a Jewish studies classroom regardless of their socio-economic status, learning needs, ethnic or religious background**
- **A pedagogy of *Ahavat Israel* tries to expand students' knowledge and experience of different Jewish customs, rituals from across the globe. Understood in this practice is that Jews need to expand their horizons of what is Jewish to appreciate all Jews. Additionally, the more expansive students' knowledge is of different Jewish practices, the deeper their appreciation of Torah will be.[4]**
- **A pedagogy of *Ahavat Israel* shifts a conversation from discipline in the classroom to a conversation of empathy and understanding. Teachers are encouraged to model *Rahamim* towards their students. Teachers are trained to see the complete world and context of a student. Instead of seeing a student as bothersome in the classroom, [5]they are concerned with what needs are not being addressed.[6]**
- **A pedagogy of *Ahavat Israel* utilizes heterogeneous groupings of students (group work) to shift the goals of classwork from an individualistic content driven approach to a**

collaborative and reflective mode that has a primary goal of deepening loving relationships between different classmates.

What might group work look like within the model of *LeSHA? How can we* model what *Ahavat Israel* looks like in a specific classroom situation? Returning briefly to the Responsa from Haham Ibn Danan, it describes a parent frustrated by their students reporting that they did not learn due to the teacher "slowing down the lesson for the slower student".

An abundance of scholarship supports the notion that tracking is not an effective long term strategy in elementary schools. Further, it seems that more damage is caused, especially for learners tracked in the non-advanced classes. Extensive educational research has been conducted into group work in general. Johnson and Johnson (1997) articulated a three pronged structure for group learning experiences: competitive, individualized and cooperative. "A learning experience specifies the type of interdependence existing among students- the way in which students will relate to each other and the teacher.". Often, in my experience as an educator, educational leader and administrator, there is often not a great deal of thought put into the outcomes of group work other than the fact that it is an alternative to individualized work. Teachers often assign a group a singular task meaning that the entire group needs to produce one final product reflecting their learning.

For more on group work see Appendix Sources 1, 2 and 7.

What if we reimagined "group work" within the pedagogy of *LeSHA? What if the goal of classwork was not to facilitate the highest possible level of learning for each student but rather to facilitate love between students in a Jewish community? What if our goal was to cross the line of comprehension as one group? Or, stand under the mountain together?*

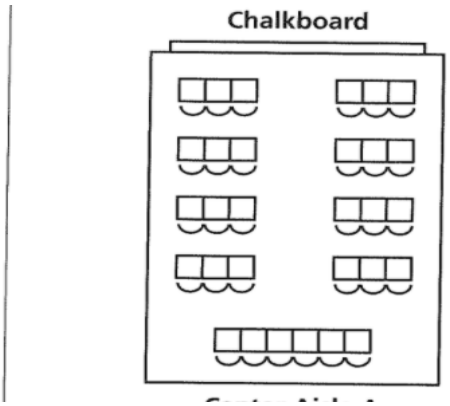
This pedagogy argues that teachers and educators need to be thoughtful about the arrangement of heterogeneous learning groups in order to cultivate loving relationships between Jewish learners. Teachers should act as architects of groups where every single student has a purpose and where the vision of the Rabbi's (cited in section 2), can come to fruition in helping students understand that their work is incomplete without their group members. Below is a multipronged guide to conducting group work that cultivates *Ahavat Israel.*

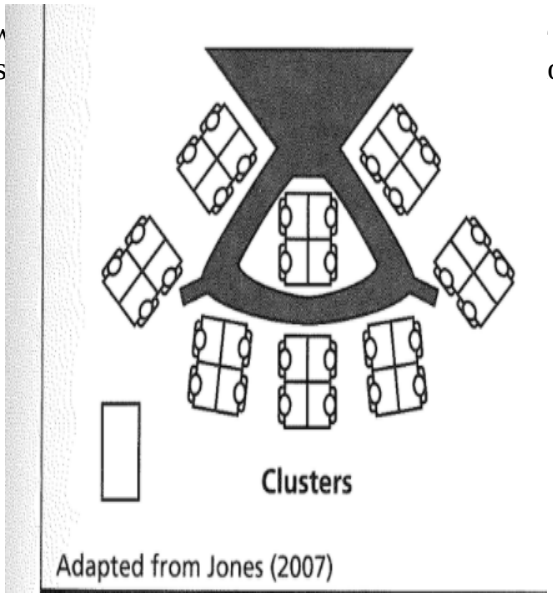
- **Discover students strengths and gifts:** To purposefully cultivate *Ahavat Israel*, teachers need to understand every student's gifts and strengths. Therefore, an active experimental stage where students try on different tasks that are carefully observed by the teacher in the first weeks and months of school is necessary. Teachers need to understand which students help lead, disrupt, innovate, create, abstract or question. Teachers need to know the skill sets and talents of each

student. Are there exceptional writers, artists, builders, designers, singers or athletes in the class? Teachers need to take inventory of strengths and traits before creating highly intentional group work.

- **Curate groups based on strengths:** Students need to be placed in diverse groups that create feelings of interdependence and mutual needs.
- **Pair diverse groupings with group outcomes that play to the strengths of each student:** Teachers should create projects where students need to rely on each other's strengths to succeed. For example, what if students worked in groupings where every single student needed to create four models of Revelation at Sinai represented through four mediums (art, literature, model design and interpretation) and each student in a group was charged with leading the other members in the dimension that they felt strongest in.
- **Groups should be long term relationships:** Groupings of students should be long term in order for love to be developed between students. As such, teachers should be prepared that the relationships between group members may have ups and downs and might need guidance and support from the educators in the room.
- **Put a premium on reflection:** Teachers need to prioritize reflection in order to cultivate love among students. Teachers can model reflecting to students by showing that they value the contributions of each student. Students can successfully demonstrate love by reflecting on long term group members and their contributions to their own learning. Reflection can create a culture where everyone is valued.
- **Utilize students as peer teachers:** When students are encouraged to teach other students in the classroom, they deepen their understanding of the content. Students learn to love by feeling responsible for their peers. Undoubtedly this approach needs the support of parents and the emotional resilience of students.

I have attempted to reclaim what group w authentic spirit of the Jewish tradition. When I observe clas ow students are arranged.

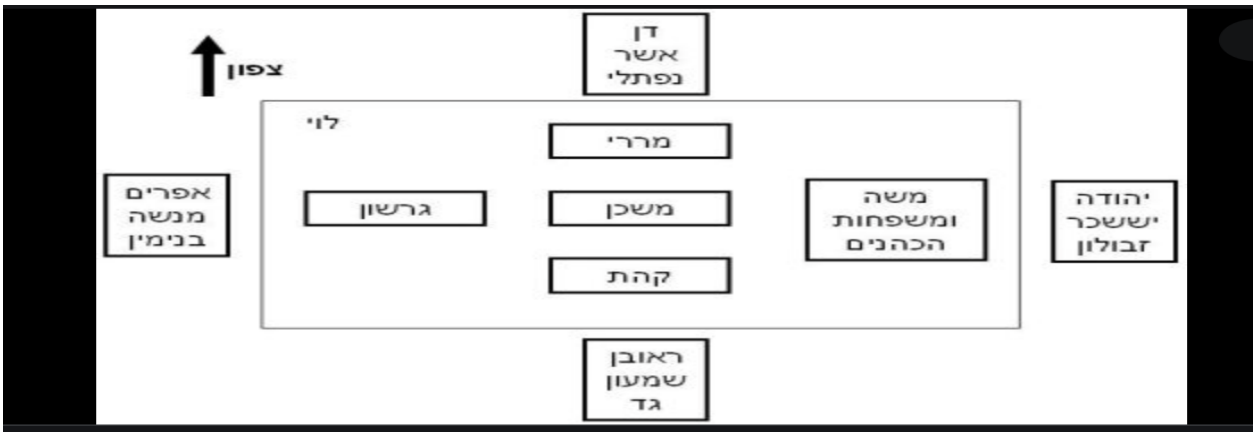




These two images are sourced from a popular teaching manual, “The Skillful Teacher”. Each of the images reflects a different worldview, however the commonality between both of these arrangements is the place of the teacher. In my observations, I realized that classes are set up so that the default arrangement is the teacher delivering content to the class. Whether students are in clusters or rows, teachers are able to break students out into groups where they turn their attention away from the front of the classroom towards their peers. However, what remains the same is that the students need to

return to this arrangement at the beginning and end of class for a set induction or closing reflection.

What would the native orientation to structuring a Jewish learning community be? I don't know how the Israelites encamped against the mountain, but the best description of an encampment can be found in Parashat Bamidbar.



In reflecting on the arrangement of the tribes in the wilderness there is a marked difference between the classroom arrangements native to our classrooms today. The first thing that jumps out to me in reflecting on the arrangement of the tribes is equality. The tribes are each equidistant from the center of learning and practice (the Mishkan). The Leviim act as intermediaries between the tribes and the Mishkan. Most teachers don't have four teachers to mediate between learners and the center of content, but nonetheless, the space that exists between the Mishkan and the tribes is equal.

The structure of the classroom brings us to an important feature of LeSHA in how group work is implemented. For the purposes of grounding the difference in a real life example, I want to compare the way a group work project might learn in a traditional classroom environment and a LeSHA environment. For the traditional classroom environment, I have purposefully chosen a cooperative group work project which is the most progressive and aligned with the values with LeSHA.

Non LeSHA cooperative group work	LeSHA group work
1. Teacher provides students with classroom assignments. The local city government is looking for a company to design a new campaign to reduce the use of plastic. Instructions are distributed or projected, but the teacher goes over the instructions verbally and leaves room for questions. Groups are formed by the teacher with thoughtfulness about different strengths and capacities among students. The teacher gets frustrated when a few students ask too many questions that the teacher feels could have been answered easily if the students paid attention or took the time to read the instructions.	1. Teacher provides students with classroom assignments. The local city government is looking for a company to design a new campaign to reduce the use of plastic. Teacher distributes instructions but does not read them out loud. Groups are formed intentionally around differences in students gender, socioeconomic background, learning style. These groups will work together throughout the semester on a variety of projects. Students read instructions in their groups and time is made to clarify the questions but the teacher does not intervene. The goal is for students to reach an understanding among themselves and only go to the teacher for clarifications once they have exhausted one another as a resource. Although some students get impatient with this process, others develop pride in their ability to help their peers.
2. Students start working by dividing up tasks based on their perceived strengths. One student wants to come up with ideas, another wants to design a website, another wants to write the script for an advertisement and another wants to draw. They sit across from each other and work collaboratively sharing ideas and exchanging tips with one another. The teacher walks around the classroom answering questions and encouraging students to stay on track.	2. Students begin the project by reflecting on their group formation and themselves. They share what they are nervous about and the aspects of the project they feel excited about. Students share previous group work experiences that felt empowering or challenging for them. They talk about what worked in the past. If this is the second or third group work project in the year, they reflect on their last time working with these same students. What worked well and what was challenging. They ritualize the moment with an intention that could involve drawing on a rock and putting it in a cup or turning over a leaf and putting it in a box. Some sort of non verbal ritual has been completed before students start working. The result is that students are not only reflecting on the task at hand, but on the relationships that exist between themselves as a group.

Reflection is able to happen in the *LeSHA* model because students' relationships are recognized as the most important outcome of the project. If students are unable to work together and experience respect, love and unity, the project will not be a success.

Appendix

Source 1

The Skillful Teacher: Area 9 Grouping pg 294

Now let's look at the data from elementary studies. Tracking in elementary schools doesn't seem to affect the achievement of either the high or low performing students much. Slavin (1993) argues that the reason for this low effect is elementary tracking probably does not reduce real heterogeneity very much. Thus the elementary tracks are still quite heterogeneous. Many authors, such as Jeanne Oakes (1985,1995), speculate though, that damage to self-esteem and motivation that befalls elementary children labeled as low track is deep and permanent and shows up later in secondary school performance. Therefore, tracking children in elementary schools seems all loss and no gain. The one exception is that certain studies show that gifted students may be advantaged by homogeneous grouping in the elementary school. Many of their needs, however, can be met by differentiated instruction in the regular classroom by teachers who have extensive repertoires.

Source 2

Learning Together and Learning Alone *Johnson and Johnson* 2nd edition pg 7

When students are working together to find what factors make a difference in how long a candle burns in a quart jar, they are in a cooperative goal structure. A cooperative goal structure exists when students perceive that they can obtain their goal if and only if the other students with whom they are linked can obtain their goal. Since the goal of all the students is to make a list of factors that influence the time the candle burns, the goal of all the students has been reached when the students generate a list. A cooperative goal structure requires the coordination of behavior necessary to achieve their mutual goal. If one student achieves the goal all students with whom the student is linked achieve the goal. When students are working to see who can build the best list of factors influencing the time a candle will burn in a quart jar, they are in a competitive goal structure. A competitive goal structure exists when students perceive that they can obtain their goal if and only if the other students with whom they are linked fail to obtain their goal. If one student turns in a better list than anyone else, all other students have failed to achieve their goal. Competitive interaction is the striving to achieve one's goal in a way that blocks all others from achieving the goal. Finally, if all students are working independently to master an operation in mathematics, they are in an individualistic goal structure. An individualistic goal structure exists when the achievement of the goal by one student is unrelated to the achievement of the goal by the other students; whether or not a student achieves her goal has no bearing upon whether or not the other students achieve their goals. If one student masters the mathematics principle, it has no bearing upon whether other students successfully master the mathematics principle. Usually there is no student interaction in an individualist situation since each student seeks the best for themself regardless of whether or not other students achieve their goals.

Source 3

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Source 4

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Source 5

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שאלה חברה שהסכימו ונתקשרו ביניהם בקנין גמור ושלם להוציא את ביניהם תשב"ר מאת המלמד שהם אצלו ולהרשיבם אצל מלמד אחר שיביאו מעיר אחרת. והרשו את ראובן אחד מבני החברה שיביא מלמד מעיר אחרת. ונתחייבו לו בקנס שכל החוזר בו יתן לו קנס כו"כ. כמשוח"ב פי' תו"מ וכן היה שהביא ראובן מלמד מעיר אחרת. והרשיבו ביניהם אצלו כתנאם. והנה הילדים האלה אינם במדרגה אחת שיש מהם שהורגלו בתורה שבכתב אצל המלמד הראשון עד גדר שבכל העניינים אינם צריכים שום עיכוב, ובהעברה בעלמא בלשון ערבי סגי ליהו. ובתורה שבע"פ גם כן לומדים בהבנה ובסברא ואם מעט. ויש מדריגה אחרת פחותה מזו כ"כ דבתורה שבע"פ לא ניסו כלל לא בגירסא ולא בפי' המילות. וגם בתורה שבכתב צריכים טורח בלשון ערבי ובפסוק הטעמים וכ"ש בלשון ערבי שהתחילו מקרוב ויש עוד מדריגות אחרות למטה זו מזו. ובקיץ שעבר סמוך לביאת המלמד הבא הושיב את בן ראובן המורשה שהוא מבני המדרגה הב' אצל בני המדריגה הראשונה ללמוד בתנ"ך משלי איוב וכו'. והם לא יעברו עד שיהא הפסוק שגור בפיו בענין שלא יהא רבו צריך לחזור עמו עוד הפעם. באופן שבני המדריגה הא' הם מוכרחים שיתעכבו ויתבטלו מלימודם בעבור זה הבא אצלם מחדש. שוב בחג הסוכות שנשלם ששה חדשים זמן הקצבה שקצבו עם המלמד. חזרו וחידשו קצבה אחרת ואין פרצה פה. ואחר החג שבאו הילדים ללמוד אצל רבם. הושיב בן ראובן אצל בני המדריגה הראשונה גם בלימוד תורה שבע"פ. וכאשר בא א' מבני המדריגה ההיא אצל אביו בסעודת הצהרים. שאל האיש את בנו בני במה למדתם היום. השיבו מאז הבקר ועד עתה לא למדנו כ"א מעט גמרא חק לישראל שאנו רגילים בה מקודם, וגם אותה לא השלמנו בפרטותי' כו' לרגל הילד הבא אצלנו מחדש שהוכרחנו להתנהל לאטו עד אשר למד אותה בגירסה וחזר ושנאו בפי' ומצדו בא העיכוב לנו. כשמוע שמעון אביו את דברי בנו היטב חרה לו וגמר אומר שלא להושיב את בנו אצל מלמד זה ובכן הגישו עצמותיהם ראובן ושמעון. לדעת אם חייב שמעון לשלם חלקו בשכירות המלמד או יתן קנס, או דילמא פטור מכל וכל. וזהו סדר טענותיהם ראובן טוען שכבר היה בזה מימות הקיץ, וראו כולם ושתקו ולא מיחו, זה הוכחה שסברו וקבלו. ואם יאמר שמעון שהוא לא ראה ולא ידע מזה יקבל עליו בחרם חמור שכן הוא שלא ידע מזה כלל. השיבו שמעון קושטא קאי שלא ידעתי. ואת"ל שידעתי ושתקתי אינו דומה ההפסד והנזק המגיע מהעכבה שהיו מתעכבים עבורו בתורה שבכתב להנזק המגיע עתה בהתערבו עמהם בתורה שבע"פ שצריך הרבה שובה ונחת בפרט להילדים רכים אשר בגיל בני דכולי האי ואולי יקלוטו מעט הבנה וסברה במיצוי תוכן הענין שיהיה, לא כן עתה כאשר בנך עמהם שעדיין צריך לימוד בגירסא ופירוש המלות וכו' והם צריכים להקשיב ולהאזין אליו שפה ולשון אחר והנהגה אחרת בקל ישתבשו ופסידא דלא הדר הוא. עוד טען ראובן אם אינו בדין שיהיה בני עמהם, יושיב אותו המלמד בחבורה בפ"ע ויתן לכל א' וא' ולכל חבורה וחבורה חלקו במנין השעות לפי ערך מתן דמי שכירותו. וגם ע"ז השיב שמעון כיון שהגיע המלמד למדריגה זו דשבקיה להימנותיה ועיכב והפסיד את הרבים בשביל היחיד לאהבתו אותו ולא חשש לעצמו בינו לבין קונו לעשות מלאכת ה' באמת ובתמים ולא ניכר שוע, כדבעי למיעבד לכל המלמדים ללכת בדרכי ישר איני מאמינו עד שיהא זריז ונזהר לתת לבני חלק ערכו, ובכגון זה לא הרשינו אותם ולא נתקשרנו עמך להביא לנו מלמד ללמוד עם בנך ואנו נותנים שכר הרבה. ועל כיוצא בזה אמרו חזקה לא שדי אינש זוזי בכדי. ע"ז יורו המורים הדין עם מי. ויבא שכמ"ה. נאם הח"פ תאזא יע"א שני ימים למרחשון תרנ"ז לפ"ק. ע"ה אברהם בן סוסאן ס"ט.

תשובה הא ודאי דמקרי דרדקי דפשע בהו בינוקי דבלא התראה מסלקינן ליה שכ"כ מרן ז"ל בחו"מ סי' ש"ו ס"ח וז"ל הנוטע אילנות לבני המדינה שהפסיד [ויש אומרים דה"ה ליחיד] וכן טבח של בני העיר שנבל הבהמות והמקיז דם שחבל והסופר שטעה בשטרות ומלמד תינוקות שפשע בתינוקות ולא למד [אפי' רק יום או יומים] או למד בטעות וכל כיוצא באלו והאומנים שאי אפשר שיחזרו ההפסד שהפסידו מסלקין אותם בלא התראה שהם כמותרים ועומדים עד שישתדלו במלאכתם הואיל והעמידו אותם הצבור עליהם ע"כ. והמה דברי הרמב"ם ז"ל בפ' עשירי מהל' שכירות. וכתב הה"מ וז"ל ומלמד תינוקות כו' רש"י ז"ל פי' דמשום דשבשתא דעל על הויא לה פסידא דלא הדרא. ובהלכות, דפשע בינוקי פי' שמתבטל מלמדו. ושני הפירושים כדברי רבינו, ופירשו לדעת רש"י ז"ל כגון שהמלמד עצמו טועה בדבר ואינו יודע בכוון ובזה הוא דמסלקינן ליה. אבל אם היה יודע הוא הדבר ואינו משגיח על א' מהתינוקות אם אומר הדבר בטעות לא מסלקינן ליה ע"כ. ונראה דלזה כיון ידידינו הרב השואל הי"ו במ"ש בדברי טענת שמעון בקל ישתבשו ופסידא דלא הדרא הוא. דכוונתו לרמוז להאי דינא.

ואולם לדידי לא שמיע לי. משום דמצינו פלוגתא דרבוותא בזה לגבי יחיד. וגם מרן ומור"ם ז"ל ג"כ פליגי בזה. ומבואר טעמייהו בטור וז"ל להרמב"ם נתן טעם בדבר הואיל והעמידו אותם צבור עליהם וכ' ג"כ שתל של כל בני המדינה, ונראה שאין חילוק בין לשל יחיד לשל רבים מההוא עובדא דרונייא שתלה דרבינא הוא וסלקיה בלא התראה ע"כ ובב"י כ' וז"ל ומ"ש רבינו ונראה שאין חילוק בין יחיד לשל רבים מההיא עובדא דרונייא שתלה דרבינא הוא, בהשגות ג"כ כתיב וכן

Source 7
Supporting Cooperative Dialogue in Heterogeneous Classrooms
Van. Dijk 2011

The results of this study could imply that teachers who wish to implement heterogeneous cooperative assignments in their elementary classroom should (a) offer support that addresses children's individual responsibilities for sharing knowledge and (b) make children aware of their individual roles in the group's process and group members' mutual interdependence on one another. Within this context, the jigsaw method could serve as an initial frame. However, the effects of the jigsaw method could be strengthened when it is properly supported. More specifically, this means that the cooperative assignment could profit from a script-like structure that distinguishes different steps that stress different activities such as knowledge sharing, discussion of the shared knowledge, and application of this knowledge. At the same time, these activities should make sure that group members are aware of their specific and indispensable role in the cooperative process. The notion that fruitful heterogeneous cooperation is not merely attained by putting together people with relevant knowledge (van den Bossche et al., 2006) applies not only to the elementary school context but also to team learning. Knowledge creation in teams and organizations also benefits from information sharing between actors in a group; herewith, the division of information over actors is especially considered relevant (e.g., Carlile, 2004; Lin, 2010; Mitchell & Nicholas, 2006). Differences in knowledge require more effort from group members to successfully complete a group process (Carlile, 2004). According to the hidden profile paradigm, information that is uniquely divided over group members is not always shared, as group members tend to focus on discussing common information instead of the uniquely divided information (Lu et al., 2012). Furthermore, sharing personal knowledge such as insights and ideas sometimes leads to resistance (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). Similar to cooperation in the school context, social interdependence is considered a relevant phenomenon that influences sharing of knowledge in teams (Courtright, Thurgood, Stewart, & Pierotti, 2015). However, social interdependence is known to vary across teams but can be fostered to lead to higher quality team functioning and knowledge generation (Lu et al., 2012). The outcomes of the current study might provide insight in how to structure cooperation in teams and organizations; the jigsaw method could serve as an initial outline for structuring the cooperative process, and, if necessary, support could be offered that further scripts the cooperative process by focusing on social interdependence.

Source 8

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Source 9

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Source 10

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Source 11

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Source 12

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Source 13

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Source 14
Rabbi Marc Angel- Facing Our Faces- Angel for Shabbat Parashat Terumah

In his book, “Creativity, The Magic Synthesis” (Basic Books, 1976), the late psychiatrist Dr. Silvano Arieti discussed the process of creating a work of art. The artist perceives something directly and then attempts to interpret it through imagery. Various processes are at work. “Preceding thoughts and feelings about an object affect the way he perceives it directly. In other words, past experiences of the object—everything he knows and feels about it—influence the way he sees that object” (p. 194).

This is true not only of artists, but of everyone. How we perceive reality is shaped by our memories, sensitivities, experiences and our general attitudes. Different people can see the identical thing…but have entirely different reactions. An optimist and a pessimist experience the half- filled glass of water based on their own internal worldviews.

This week’s Torah portion describes the components for building the Mishkan, the sanctuary that accompanied the Israelites during their wanderings in the wilderness. Among the features was a table upon which the “lehem hapanim”—showbreads--were to be placed. Vayikra 24:5-9 notes that there were to be 12 loaves arranged in two rows, and that these loaves were to be replaced each week on the Sabbath.

The term “lehem hapanim” is not easy to translate. While the usual translation is “showbreads,” it also has been translated as bread of the Presence, or more literally as bread of the faces.

The Hassidic Rebbe Avraham Mordechai of Gur offered a unique insight into the “lehem hapanim.” Each person who looked at the bread could see an image of his or her own face! A pious, kind and faithful person would see the bread as being fresh and warm. A cynical, mean and skeptical person would see the bread as being stale and cold. The “lehem hapanim” reflected the face—and the inner being—of the observer.

The bread was the same bread: but the experience of the bread varied according to the personality of the person who observed it. The lesson: one must strive to develop a positive worldview so as to be able to experience life in a positive way.

This idea is also reflected in a teaching of the Kotsker Rebbe on Shemoth 15:23: “And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they [i.e. the waters] were bitter.” The plain meaning of the text is that the Israelites couldn’t drink the water because it was too bitter. The Kotsker Rebbe, though, interpreted the verse as follows: “And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they—the Israelites—were bitter.” Because they were in such a foul and bitter mood, everything seemed wrong, even the water tasted bitter. Reality was experienced through the prism of a negative worldview.

Judeo-Spanish-speaking Jews would refer to some people as “mal de contentar,” malcontents who never seemed satisfied with life. Others were “cara de Tisha b’Av,” people with sour, sad outlooks, whose faces always seemed to be in a Tisha b’Av mood. But, fortunately, there were also those with “cara de risas,” smiling, happy faces who added cheer wherever they were. And there were “bonachos,” and “bonachas” whose goodness shone from their faces and whose company was always welcome.

We each have the power to define who we are and how we face life. We each shape our external experiences by our internal attitudes.

Source 15

Student teams can employ cooperative learning techniques such as group brainstorming, which in one study generated double the number of ideas when compared to individual brainstorming (Osborn, 1957)

Certainly, successful cooperative learning experiences in the classroom require as much care in their development and implementation as do traditional individualistic and competitive experiences. Cooperative and collaborative learning experiences require that instructors attend to the formation of the group, the composition of the group, the dynamics of the group, the assessment of student work, and the design of group tasks (Ventimiglia, 1994). Individuals diverse in backgrounds, goals, skill sets, and interests will be required to collaborate with each other in activities directed toward group outcomes. For example, in planning, implementing, and controlling a strategic marketing plan, Shank (2002) noted that effective communication and "interacting well with others within the sports organization" (p. xx) is essential. Principles for fostering success in a cooperative professional studies classroom include distributing student leadership, grouping heterogeneously, encouraging positive independence, facilitating social skills acquisition, and allowing for group autonomy (Parrenas & Parrenas, 1993).

Vedder (1985) also sees effective cooperative learning as a result of an explicit process. According to the theory of cooperative learning he developed from a more general view of teaching and learning, the children's role vis-à-vis each other should be that of teacher and pupil. For cooperative learning to be effective, Vedder reasoned that pupils must control and evaluate their partner's work. Also, help that is given should correspond to a model of a correct problem solving process. After finding that cooperative groups did no better than the control condition on a set of geometry lessons, he performed an in-depth analysis of videotapes to see if students were actually regulating each other's problem solving process. The pupils in the cooperative condition were taught how to regulate one another's solving of geometry problems. The analysis revealed that the students were fixated on finding the right answers which interfered with their attempting to regulate each other's process of problem-solving. They spent little time thinking and talking about problem-solving strategies. They hardly used the resource card that contained useful information on problem-solving strategies.

[1] *Note for the reader: This paper was created as part of the inaugural "Jewish Pedagogies Program" facilitated by M2 (Maase and Machshava) and funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation and the Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah. The objective of this fellowship was to design pedagogies that were both Jewish in content as well as practice. The objective, in the words of Rav Kook, was for the "taste of the fruit to be as the taste of the tree". The fellowship was a response to the reality that Jewish educators often*

[2] In "How Children and Teachers Demonstrate Love, Kindness and Forgiveness? Findings from an Early Childhood Strength-Spotting Intervention", Haslip, Allen-Handy and Donaldson studied the use of the word "love" in 16 classrooms. In reviewing the transcripts and interviews of the classrooms studied they found that the term "love" was often used in situations where a teacher was expressing empathy with a student or when a student was expressing empathy toward a teacher. In almost all situations, love was expressed spontaneously as opposed to kindness and forgiveness which were often the result of careful curricular planning and scheduling. These findings reinforce the belief that is expressed in the quote from the Israeli Ministry of Education's curriculum (below). Included is a quote from the section studying the use of love in early childhood
classrooms:

Our analysis identified a variety of reasons for educators demonstrating loving behavior. The most common reason was to provide affection and comfort to a child in distress (empathy). Three examples follow, from Danica, Teresa and April: (1) "A child was away for 2 weeks and coming back to school was hard for him. He was hugged a lot throughout the day." (2) "Another child needed a hug when his feelings were hurt." (3) "When my student with severe separation anxiety from her parents was so upset that I held her hand and let her sit close to me during morning meeting."

[3] Translated from Hebrew by Adam Eilath. Accessed at https://cms.education.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/AB2E4C30-7589-484B-B93C-D9A6286FA912/131648/AhavatIsrael.PDF

[4] This idea is attributed to Eli Bareket the CEO of the Kol Yisrael Haverim in Israel. In an interview with Eli Bareket as part of research for this fellowship he named this practice “Elijah’s chair”. In his own words “Educators need to ask themselves, ‘which seat can I add to the table? What can I do to expand Jewish student’s knowledge of different Jewish traditions in the world”

[5] Perhaps one exception to this is Mishnah Haggiga 2, which articulates a minimum number of learners required for certain subject (forbidden relations, Ma’aseh Bereshit). This Mishnah leads us to the Gemara of the four who entered Pardes, although, that text does not feel authentic to the enterprise of group work.

[6] See Appendix source 4