

FEDERATION'S

# Imagine ISRAEL PODCAST

## Podcast Discussion Guide



### IMAGINE ISRAEL

#### Connect to Israel and Israelis through the lens of social change

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington's Imagine Israel is an initiative designed to engage Washingtonians with Israel and Israelis through a wide variety of programs focused on issues of social justice and civil society.

### PODCAST

Federation's Imagine Israel Podcast directly connects you to a modern, relatable Israel in real-time through stories from innovative Israeli influencers leading social change in the start-up nation.

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

This discussion guide can be used as a reference to spark conversation and explore social issues in Israel and at home through interactive discussion and activities.

#### How to use the discussion guide:

- **Adults:** Podcast Discussion Party with friends (take your book club to the next level)
- **Educators:** Use as curriculum in your classroom
- **Rabbis:** Share with your congregations
- **Education Directors:** Discuss with your teachers
- **Parents:** Start conversations with your children



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[shalomdc.org/imagineraisraelpodcast](http://shalomdc.org/imagineraisraelpodcast)

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## MEET Chaya Gilboa

Israeli religious reform activist

**Hear** her story

**Learn** about her impact

**Discuss** social change

**Imagine Israel Podcast Episode 2:**  
[shalomdc.org/chayagilboapodcast](http://shalomdc.org/chayagilboapodcast)

In episode two, host Robbie Gringras talks with visionary activist Chaya Gilboa, an expert on the issue of Israeli religious reform. Tune in to a compelling conversation as Chaya addresses the conflicts and complexities that come with the current Rabbinical (Jewish governance) jurisdiction over issues of marriage, divorce and *kashrut* (Jewish dietary law); and Chaya's approach to changing the system.

## Robbie Gringras talks with visionary activist Chaya Gilboa:

1. Where would you place Chaya Gilboa on a spectrum from religious to secular?
2. What does it mean to you to be religious?
3. Do you relate to these issues in Israel? Do you see a connection to issues in the US? (e.g. civil vs. religious marriage, LGBT rights, food justice, etc.)
4. How do you think ethical *kashrut* (workers' rights, concerns regarding animal cruelty, the treatment of customers, etc.) should affect the application of *kashrut* in Israel?
5. Picture a pizza as a representative metaphor for society. Each slice represents a different socio-political ideology. The more moderate elements of each group are at the center, and the less moderate elements are at the extremes, or the crust of the pizza. The more moderate elements at the center are much closer to each other than to their more extreme compatriots near the crust.

From what you heard in the podcast, how does the pizza metaphor reflect Israeli society around the issues described by Chaya Gilboa (marriage, divorce and Jewish dietary law)? Does this metaphor resonate with your observation of politics and social issues in America?



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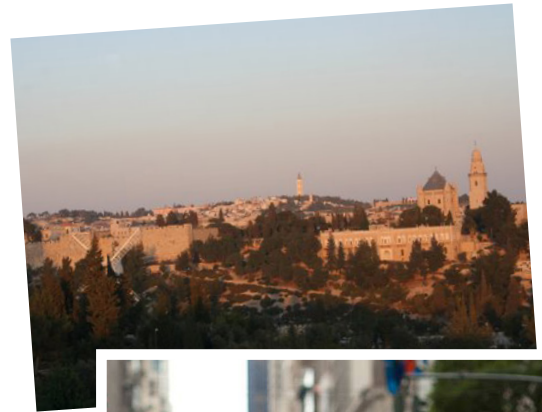
## PODCAST

### General Questions:

1. Read the excerpt from the Israeli Declaration of Independence, below. From what you hear on the news and media, do you think the document is an actual guideline or an aspirational standard?

"THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the in-gathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

2. How does this podcast episode affect your perspective of Israel? How may you explore this topic further?
3. How does the issue addressed in this episode relate to you as a Jew living in DC?
4. How would you share this aspect of Israel with others to engage them in a conversation about Israel?
5. Did you learn anything new about Israel? Did anything surprise you?
6. Based on what you heard in this podcast would you describe Israel as a Jewish, democratic or Zionist state?



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## Should You Wish To Know the Source

*Should you wish to know the Source,  
From which your brothers drew...  
Their strength of soul...  
Their comfort, courage, patience, trust,  
And iron might to bear their hardships  
And suffer without end or measure?*

*And should you wish to see the Fort  
Wherein your fathers' refuge sought.  
And all their sacred treasures hid,  
The refuge that has still preserved  
Your nation's soul intact and pure  
And when despised, and scorned,  
and scoffed,  
Their faith they did not shame?*

*If you, my brother, know not  
Then enter now the House of God,  
The House of study, old and gray,  
Throughout the scorching summer days  
Throughout the gloomy winter nights,  
At morning midday or at eve...  
And there you may still behold,  
A group of Jews from the exile who bore the  
yoke of its burden who forget their toil,  
through a worn out page of the Talmud.*

*And then your heart shall guess the truth,  
That you have touched the sacred ground  
Of a great people's house of life.  
And that your eyes do gaze upon  
The treasure of a nation's soul.*

After reading the poem, according to Bialik who should look at Jewish sources for inspiration?

## Interactive Activities

1. Thinking of the pizza metaphor above, create a set of toppings for your pizza representing items that bond Jews together and place them towards the center of your pie and another set of toppings that seem to feed the fringe tastes of Jews around the world and place them closer to the crust. Share your pizza and comments with the group.
2. Zionism has been primarily defined as the movement of restoring the Jewish people to the land of Israel. Einat Wilf writes, "Zionism was a rebellion against Jewish passivity. To the Jewish people, Zionism carried the message that they need not wait for the Messiah. Rather, they should be their own Messiahs. Zionism, born of the enlightenment, embodied the idea of human agency. Rather than wait for God or Messiah to bring about their salvation, Zionism called upon the Jewish people to be the vehicles of their own redemption... humans were active agents, capable of changing the course of their private and collective futures." In what ways could changemakers like Chaya Gilboa and others featured on our podcasts, be considered good examples of Zionists?
3. There seems to be a war of "ownership" over Jewish texts and rituals. Whose sources are they? Read the Bialik poem *Im yesh et nafshecha ladaat*, Should you wish to Know and answer the question below the poem.



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