

MY BODY AND ME: JEWISH PERSPECTIVES ON SEX, GENDER, AND PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to teach at Fall Convention. The topic for convention is My Body and Me: Jewish Perspectives on Sex, Gender and Physical Appearance. This weekend is an opportunity to these issues with the guidance of Judaism. Throughout the weekend, we will explore the impact of physical appearance; discuss gender stereotypes from the Bible to today; and explore Jewish views of sex and love. A central theme throughout each unit is the concept of *b'tzelem elohim*, that we are made in the image of God and that our actions should reflect this.

Please note that the activities and discussions surrounding Tefillin Barbie, while initially placed in the Physical Appearance section can be used in the Gender Stereotypes section as well.

The discussion of sex, gender, and body image with teenagers can be a treacherous topic to navigate. In particular, please keep the conversation focused on the general topic without becoming involved in the details of any of your or the USYers' sexual exploits. This session, nor any of the other ones, should not turn into a therapy session. If comments made by a USYer are concerning, please see Michelle after the session is over.

Interspersed throughout the teachers guide are teaching suggestions for how to approach the study material. Please try to stay focused on the topics chosen for each session, but you are welcome to modify them or create your own activities. There is more material here than can be covered in the time allotted you. Please pick the sections that will interest the USYers that you are teaching.

Please begin your first session by reciting the *bracha* for studying Torah. When you conclude the last session, it is appropriate to recite *Kaddish D'Rabbanan*. Each of these is included in your packet and the USYer sourcebook.

The USYers will receive source packets that include the sources in the teacher guide. The pages numbers in the USY sourcebook are noted in each section (e.g. USY p. 8).

B'shalom,

Ari

A Blessing for the Study of Torah (USYer p. 2)

Pirkei Avot says, “Make for yourself a set time for the study of Torah.” As part of our conventions, we set aside time to study Torah together. Torah study is considered to be a *mitzvah* and as such, it is appropriate to recite a blessing prior to a study session.

Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the universe
whose *mitzvot* add holiness to our life and who gave us
the *mitzvah* to study words of Torah.

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך
העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו
וצננו לעסק בדברי תורה.

1

Physical Appearance

Objectives

- The USYers will explore the concept of “B’tzelem Elohim,” being made in the image of God, and the concept of modesty.

A Fable: “Animal School” by George Reavis (USYer p. 2)

Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of a “new world” so they organized a school. They had adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming and flying. To make it easier to administer the curriculum, all the animals took all the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming. In fact, better than his instructor. But he made only passing grades in flying and was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming in order to practice running. This was kept up until his webbed feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school so nobody worried about that, except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running but had a nervous breakdown because of so much makeup work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of the treetop down. He also developed a “charlie horse” from overexertion and then got a C in climbing and D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class, he beat all the others to the top of the tree but insisted on using his own way to get there.

At the end of the year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceeding well and also run, climb and fly a little had the highest average and was valedictorian.

The prairie dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their children to a badger and later joined the groundhogs and gophers to start a successful private school.

1. What made the animals fail at the tasks they were given?

2. How were their weaknesses affecting their strengths?
3. What did the school not recognize in each individual animal?

Text Study: In the Image of God (USYer p.2)

Look at each of the following texts with the USYers and then discuss the questions below.

Genesis 1:26-27

26. And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth." 27. And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

כֹּז וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִצְחָק מִדּוּעַ בָּאתֶם
 אֵלַי וְאַתֶּם שְׂנֵאתֶם אֹתִי וְתִשְׁלַחְנִי
 מֵאַתְכֶם: כֹּחַ וַיֹּאמְרוּ רָאוּ רָאִינוּ
 כִּי־הִיא יְהוָה | עַמּוּךְ וְנֹאמַר תְּהִי נָא
 אֱלֹה בְּיַעַרְתֵּנוּ בְּיַעַרְתֵּנוּ וּבִינְךָ וּבִינְךָ
 בְּרִית עַמּוּךְ:

Genesis 9:6

6. Whoever sheds the blood of man, By man shall his blood be shed; For in His image Did God make man.

וּשְׁפַךְ דַּם הָאָדָם בְּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפָּךְ
 כִּי בְצַלֵּם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם:

1. In what way do you believe that human beings are like God?
2. Do we have special obligations having been created in the image of God?

Leviticus Rabbah 34:3

This applies to Hillel the Elder who once, when he concluded his studies with his disciples, walked along with them. His disciples asked him, "Master where are you bound?" He answered them: "To perform a mitzvah." "What," they asked, "Is this mitzvah?" He said to them: "To wash in the bathhouse." Said they, "Is this a mitzvah?" "Yes," he replied; "If the statues of kings, which are erected in theaters and circuses are scoured and washed by the man who is appointed to look after them, and who thereby obtains his maintenance through them – no, even more! He is exalted in the company of the great kingdom – how much more I who have been created in the image likeness; as it is written, in the image of God made God humans."

1. According to Hillel, why can bating be considered a religious duty?
2. Do you agree with this reasoning?
3. Are there other things that the concept of being created in the image of God should remind you to do? What are they?

Pirkei Avot 3:18

Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God. He is exceedingly beloved for it was made known to him that he was created in the image, as it is written, "In the image of God He made man." (Genesis 9:6)

1. Do you agree that being created in the image of God is an expression of God's love?
2. Why according to the Pirkei Avot passage, must it be that people are "exceedingly beloved"?
3. How do we apply it today in how we see other people?
4. When you see someone different, do you see them in God's image?
5. If something is not "perfect," is that still in God's image?
6. Does God create imperfect people?
7. When we say that we are created in God's image, should this be interpreted literally? Or does it also refer to moral or symbolic aspects?

Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 14a

Rabbi Hama son of Rabbi Hanina further said: What means the text: You shall walk after the Lord your God? Is it, then, possible for a human being to walk after the *Shechinah*; for has it not been said: For the Lord thy God is a devouring fire? But [the meaning is] to walk after the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He. As He clothes the naked, for it is written: And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin, and clothed them, so do you also clothe the naked. The Holy One, blessed be He, visited the sick, for it is written: And the Lord appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, so do you also visit the sick. The Holy One, blessed be He, comforted mourners, for it is written: And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son, so do you also comfort mourners. The Holy one, blessed be He, buried the dead, for it is written: And He buried him in the valley, so do you also bury the dead.

1. What does the text say?
2. What does it mean:
 - a. Clothe the naked?
 - b. Visit the sick?
 - c. Comfort the mourners?
 - d. Bury the dead?
3. What are other attributes, besides the one mentioned, that make us in God's image?

Exercise: Darling, You Look Marvelous

1. How much time do we spend shopping for clothes?
2. Why does it take us so much time to choose what to wear?
3. Why does it matter so much?
4. Ask your USYers to add up the cost of one of their favorite outfits. Or ask them how much their entire wardrobe is worth? It can be embarrassing to pick on individuals but rough figures can be suggested. The answers can be very revealing.
5. Ask a few USYers what are the three things that matter the most when they are choosing what clothes to buy. How many of these are practical and functional, and how many are to do with fashion and image?
6. Ask the USYers to think of a piece of clothing that they have in their closets and dressers. Then, ask them what they want that piece of attire to say about them. For example, a USYer might wear a “designer jeans” to be fashionable; a team shirt, in order to everyone to know what I represent. Are there certain times you want to convey a different impression?
7. Do you dress differently for school? Synagogue? Parties? Concerts? Why or why not?

Exercise: Cover Girl! (USYer p.3)

This exercise is designed to highlight how the media portrays our bodies. Show the selections from the various magazines. Have the USYers comment on things like air brushing and Photoshopping of images to get closer to the “ideal.”

1. How does the media distort men and women’s bodies?
2. Do men or women’s bodies in magazines look foreign to us? Why or why not?
3. How do images of men or women in the media affect the way we view our own bodies?
4. What does it mean to “look Jewish”? Describe or draw a typical “Jewish woman or man.”
5. What forces in the Jewish community influence the ways we view and feel about our bodies?
6. The Jewish community is paradoxical in a sense, emphasizing food and eating but also stressing the importance of getting married - being beautiful to meet a mate. How do these mixed messages influence us?
7. What do we do to change ourselves physically?
8. Have the USYers read the excerpt written by Weidman-Schneider. Do you agree with Weidman-Schneider? Does your experience bear out her comments?

Susan Weidman-Schneider, Jewish and Female, Simon & Schuster. 1984.

What does it mean to grow up in a culture in which the prevailing standard of what’s beautiful is not the way you look? It’s true that the Hollywood ideal youth and smooth-skinned blond haired beauty sets an unrealistic standard for all women, and that all of us grow up in some ways loathing aspects of ourselves: our faces, our bodies, our walk, our smells...Jewish women may be more preoccupied with what is means to be “beautiful”, since “Jewish” beauty is

thought to differ from the ideal. In an odd kind of dissociation, being part of a minority culture may cause us to come to see our “natural” traits as exotic...

Just as plumpness (being zaftig) is sometimes associated with Jewish women (negatively or positively), some people believe that anorexia nervosa - the disease in which young women starve themselves to near death for the dubious pleasure of being thin - is a “Jewish women’s disease”. The force feeding of many Jewish infants and children (“eat this spoonful for uncle and this spoonful for grandma”) makes eating an activity that involves not only the child herself but the whole family or community. For many women it’s hard in adult life to disconnect eating habits and attitudes from their family ties. There is a particular double bind here - a confusing message transmitted from many mothers to their daughters (and sometimes from grandmother to granddaughter). It’s the “eat, eat” injunction followed by “diet, diet.”

Text study: Modesty (USYer p.4)

Psalms 55:14

The daughter of the king is all dignified within; her clothing is of embroidered gold.

Numbers Rabbah 1:3

AND THE LORD SPOKE UNTO MOSES IN THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI IN THE TENT OF MEETING. Before the Tent of Meeting was set up, He spoke with him from the bush, as it is said, "And God called unto him out of the midst of the bush" (Ex. 3:4). Then, And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying (Ex. 12:1). He also spoke to him in Midian, as it is said, "And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian." (Ex.4:19). At Sinai also He spoke to him, as it is said, And the Lord spoke unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying (Lev. 25:1). As soon, however, as the Tent of Meeting was set up, God thought to Himself, ' Modesty is a beautiful thing, as it is said, "And walk modestly with your God." (Micah 6:8), and so He then spoke to him in the Tent of Meeting.

David (in his Psalm) likewise said, "The daughter of the king is all dignified within; her clothing is of embroidered gold." (Ps.45:14). The king's daughter, The king alludes to Moses, as is inferred from the following passages. It is said, And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord (Isaiah 19:4); this applies to the plagues that came upon Egypt. And a strong king shall rule over them (ib.) applies to Moses who was King of the Torah which is designated strength` as it is said, "The Lord will give strength unto his people" (Ps. 29:11). Therefore, "The daughter of the king is all dignified within; her clothing is of embroidered gold." Ps.45:14). "... her clothing is of embroidered gold alludes to Aaron; as it is said, And you shall make embroidered work of gold (Ex. 28:13).

From here it has been inferred that a woman who conducts herself with becoming modesty deserves, though she be a lay Israelitess, to be married to a priest and to rear up High Priests; since it is said, The Holy One blessed be He, said, "her clothing is of embroidered gold." In like

manner it befits My dignity that I should speak in private, as is implied in the text, And when Moses went into the Tent of Meeting (Num.7:8-9).

- This Midrash makes the jump from Moses to a "woman's conduct". What has happened to our concept of modesty?

Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 20:11

It is related that Simeon the son of Kimhith went out to talk with an Arabian king, and a jet of saliva from the latter's mouth was spurted on to Simeon's garments and defiled him. His brother Judah entered and ministered in the office of the High Priesthood in his stead. On that day their mother beheld two of her sons officiating as High Priests. It was said: Kimhith had seven sons, and all of them served in the office of the High Priesthood. The Sages sent to her the following enquiry: 'What good deeds have you to your credit? The beams of my house, she said to them, 'I have never beheld the hair of my head nor the seam of my undergarment. They remarked: All flours (kimhaya) are but ordinary flour, but the flour of Kimhith is fine flour, and they applied to her the text, "The daughter of the king is all dignified within; her clothing is of embroidered gold." a similar version appears in the Jerusalem Talmud Yoma 5a (Psalms 45:14).

1. Is modesty in dress an end in of itself, or is it a means to achieve another quality?
2. What is meant by modesty in dress?
3. If our bodies are considered to be made in the image of God, does that change because you are wearing different clothing? Does that mean women not wearing pants? Not appearing public with your shoulders uncovered?

Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 49b

The School of R. Anan taught: It is written, "O prince's daughter! your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of an artist." (Song of Songs 7:2) Why are the words of the Torah compared to the thigh? To teach you that just as the thigh is hidden, so should the words of the Torah be hidden.

And this is why Rabbi Eleazar said, What is the implication of the text, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk modestly with your God?"

To do justice means [to act in accordance with] justice; to love mercy refers to acts of loving kindness; and to walk modestly with your God refers to attending to funerals and dowering a bride for her wedding. Now, we can deduce: If in matters which are normally performed publicly the Torah enjoins to walk modestly' how much more so in matters that are normally done privately?

1. What kind of modesty is being espoused in this story? What activities are they talking about?

Discussion: I'm a Barbie Girl! (*USYer p. 7*)

Begin by showing the students the picture of *Tefillin Barbie* (see the next page) and gather initial responses to begin the discussion.

1. What is she wearing, and why might the creator (Jen Taylor Friedman) have chosen a Barbie doll to model her *tefillin*?
2. Jen Taylor Friedman is one of the first *soferot* (female ritual scribes – this means that she writes everything from *tefillin* scrolls to whole Torahs). How might this have influenced Jen to create this doll and put her out on the Internet for the world to see? What is she trying to say?
3. Would you have chosen a different doll/model?



Discussion: Playing with Barbie (and Ken, too) (USYer p.5)

Barbie is a toy that has lasted for several generations and has an iconic status in American culture. Its creator was Ruth Handler, a Jewish businesswoman. Below are excerpts from Handler's *New York Times* obituary which discusses her motivation for creating the doll along with criticisms and a summary of some of the changes which Barbie has been through.

Ruth Handler, Whose Barbie Gave Dolls Curves, Dies at 85¹ By Sarah Kershaw

...In 1959 when she invented Barbie, a busty figure with platinum-blond hair and piercing blue eyes, Mrs. Handler created the country's first mass marketed adult-looking doll for girls -- and an image that would later be attacked by feminists as a symbol of objectification and repression. Critics said the doll gave girls misguided goals, whether for their careers or for their own physical development.

Mrs. Handler, though, seemed unmoved, her husband said. "It really didn't bother her," he said. "She thought they were wrong."

"Every little girl needed a doll through which to project herself into her dream of her future," Mrs. Handler said in a 1977 interview with *The New York Times*. "If she was going to do role playing of what she would be like when she was 16 or 17, it was a little stupid to play with a doll that had a flat chest. So I gave it beautiful breasts."

Barbie was conceived as a teenage fashion model, and her first outfits were named for her various activities, according to M. G. Lord, author of "Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll." Early outfits included "Friday Night Date" and "Sorority Meeting."

And Barbie kept pace with the times. During Camelot, she sported a Jacqueline Kennedy hairdo. During the civil rights movement, Mattel created Barbie's first black friend, "Colored Francie."

But not until the 1970's, as the criticism from feminists materialized, did her career choices -- and her outfits -- begin to change to include a doctor, astronaut and veterinarian, among others. A chief objection of feminists, including the National Organization for Women, was that Barbie's figure created unrealistic expectations for young girls that could lead to low self-esteem. People often joked that Barbie's measurements were not humanly possible. But in fact it was determined that if the 11 1/2-inch doll were 5-foot-6, her measurements would be 39-21-33. One academic expert calculated that a woman's chances of having Barbie's figure were less than 1 in 100,000.

In her 1994 autobiography, "Dream Doll: The Ruth Handler Story," Mrs. Handler wrote: "My whole philosophy of Barbie was that through the doll, the little girl could be anything she wanted to be. Barbie always represented the fact that a woman has choices." ...

¹ Excerpts from *New York Times* obituary of Ruth Handler, April 29, 2002. (Entire article can be viewed at: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C04E5DB1F3EF93AA15757C0A9649C8B63>)

In her 1994 autobiography, “Dream Doll: The Ruth Handler Story,” Mrs. Handler wrote: “My whole philosophy of Barbie was that through the doll, the little girl could be anything she wanted to be. Barbie always represented the fact that a woman has choices.” ...

- Why did Ruth Handler create Barbie? What was she hoping to accomplish?
- Why has Barbie become so political? What are people on both sides of the issue concerned with?
- What do you think of the changes that Barbie has undergone over the past few decades? Are they meaningful?
- Do you agree with Ruth Handler’s assessment that “Barbie always represented the fact that a woman has choices?”
- What do you think about the critique of Barbie that suggests that her unrealistic body measurements can cause low self-esteem in girls?
- What else in our culture might contribute to poor body image and low self esteem in girls?

2

Gender Stereotypes

Objective

- The USYers will discuss general stereotypes for men and women and then explore the traditional roles of men and women in Judaism and how that effects our perception of our “Jewish selves.”

Brainstorm: Men and Women

Ask the USYers the following questions.

1. What does it mean to act like a man? What words or expectations come to mind?
2. What does it mean to be ladylike? What words or expectations do you think of?

Discussion: Learning Gender Roles

1. Where do we learn these gender roles?
2. What people teach us these stereotypes? Entertainment? Sports? Media? (*When the students respond "TV" or "movies," ask for specific examples to list.*)
3. Where do women/men learn these messages?
4. What other people influence our learning of gender roles?
5. Where else in society do we find these messages? (*Ask for specific examples if general comments are made like "TV" or "magazines."*)
6. What names or put-downs are boys called when they don't fit the box?

7. What names are women called if they step out of the stereotype box? (*Allow students to be blunt with their slang in this educational context.*)
8. How do these labels and names reinforce the stereotypes we listed earlier?
9. How does it feel when we are called these names?
10. What do you think the person who is using these put-downs is feeling?

Discussion: Gender and Judaism

Ask the USYers if they can think of Jewish rituals that you connect with a particular gender. Then ask them if they have ever seen someone of the other gender perform that ritual. Examples could include candle lighting, *mikvah*, saying *Kiddush*, *kippot*, *tallit*, *tefillin* etc.

Text Study: Gender Roles (*USYer p. 8*)

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 118b

Rabbi Yosi: I never spoke of my wife as “my wife,” or of my ox as “my ox,” but always referred to my wife as “my house” and to my ox as “my field.”

1. What does this imply?
2. Is this a positive or a negative statement?

Genesis Rabbah 45

Our Rabbis taught that women are said to have four traits: they are gluttonous, eavesdropping, slothful and envious. Rabbi Judah son of Rabbi Nehemiah said: They are also querulous and talkative. Rabbi Levi said: They are also pilferers and gadabouts.

Numbers Rabbah 10

Women are incapable of giving legal decisions, and so one is not to rely on what they say.

1. Looking at these two quotes, is this how we view women today?
2. Why did this view find its way into the *Midrash*?

The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-aggadah 108:19

Rabbi Berekhiah had four sayings: Woe unto the living who need help from the dead; woe unto the strong who need help from the weak; woe unto the seeing who need help from the blind; woe unto the generation that has to be led by a woman."

1. What does this imply about these events?

Babylonia Talmud, Ketubot 59b

Rabbi Hiyya taught: A wife should be taken mainly for her beauty; a wife should be taken mainly for the sake of brining children [into the world].

1. What aspects of life during this time period led to this view?
2. Does this imply that you marry a beautiful woman or that all women are beautiful?
3. Is this same view shared today?

Babylonian Talmud, Bava Metzia 87a

[When Abraham asked Sarah to make cakes, he first said], “of flour” (Genesis 18:6), [then added], “of choice flour”. From Abraham’s instructions to his wife, Rabbi Isaac said, one may infer that a woman is more apt to be stingy with her guests.

1. Does this imply that women are practical? If yes, in what way?
2. Is this a positive way for the text to view women?
3. Would we view women this way today?
4. Is this negative towards men?

Babylonian Talmud, Megilot 14b

Women are merciful.

1. Is this positive or negative? Both?

Babylonian Talmud, Megillot 39b

A wife is like one’s own person.

1. Does this imply that a man is incomplete without a woman?
2. Is this a positive statement?

Text Study: Women and Men of Valor (USYer p.8)

Eshet Chayil, Proverbs 31:10-31

10. What a rare find is a capable wife! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies. 11. Her husband puts his confidence in her, And lacks no good thing. 12. She is good to him, never bad, All the days of her life. 13. She looks for wool and flax, And sets her hand to them with a will. 14. She is like a merchant fleet, Bringing her food from afar. 15. She rises while it is still night, And supplies provisions for her household, The daily fare of her maids. 16. She sets her mind on an estate and acquires it; She plants a vineyard by her own labors. 17. She girds herself with strength, And performs her tasks with vigor. 18. She sees that her

י אֲשֶׁת חַיִּיל מִי יִמְצָא וְרֹחֵק מִפְּנִינִים
 מְכָרָהּ יֵא בָּטַח בָּהּ לֵב בְּעֵלָהּ וְשָׁלַל
 לֹא יַחְסֹר יֵב גִּמְלָתָהּ טוֹב וְלֹא־רָע
 כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיהָ יִג דְּרָשָׁה צְמֹר וּפְשִׁתִּים
 וְתַעֲשֶׂ בַחֲפָץ כַּפֵּיהָ יָד הָיְתָה כְּאֲנִיּוֹת
 סוֹחֵר מִמְּרָחֵק תָּבִיא לַחֲמָה
 טו וְתִקֶּם | בְּעוֹד לַיְלָה וְתִתֵּן טָרֶף
 לְבֵיתָהּ וְחֹק לְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ טו זָמְמָה שֹׁדֵה
 וְתִקְחָהּ מִפְּרֵי כַּפֵּיהָ נָטַע [נִטְעָה]
 כָּרֶם יִז חֲגָרָהּ בְּעוֹז מְתַנְּיָה וְתִאֲמַץ
 זְרוּעֹתֶיהָ יַח טַעְמָה כִּי־טוֹב סַחֲרָהּ
 לֹא־יִכְבֶּה בְּלִיל [בְּלִילָה] נְרָה יֵט יָדֶיהָ

business thrives; Her lamp never goes out at night. 19. She sets her hand to the distaff; Her fingers work the spindle. 20. She gives generously to the poor; Her hands are stretched out to the needy. 21. She is not worried for her household because of snow, For her whole household is dressed in crimson. 22. She makes covers for herself; Her clothing is linen and purple. 23. Her husband is prominent in the gates, As he sits among the elders of the land. 24. She makes cloth and sells it, And offers a girdle to the merchant. 25. She is clothed with strength and splendor; She looks to the future cheerfully. 26. Her mouth is full of wisdom, Her tongue with kindly teaching. 27. She oversees the activities of her household And never eats the bread of idleness. 28. Her children declare her happy; Her husband praises her, 29. Many women have done well, "But you surpass them all." 30. Grace is deceptive, Beauty is illusory; It is for her fear of the Lord That a woman is to be praised. 31. Extol her for the fruit of her hand, And let her works praise her in the gates.

שְׁלַחַהּ בְּכִישׁוֹר וְכִפְיָהּ תִּמְכּוּ פְּלֶדֶת;
 כַּכְּפָה פָּרְשָׁה לַעֲנִי וְיָדֶיהָ שְׁלַחַהּ
 לְאַבְיוֹן: כֹּא לֹא-תִירָא לְבֵיתָהּ מִשְׁלֵג
 כִּי כָל-בֵּיתָהּ לְבֶשׂ שָׁנִים: כִּב מֵרַב־יָדַיִם
 עָשְׂתָה-לָּהּ שֵׁשׁ וְאַרְגָּמָן לְבוּשָׁה;
 כִּג נֹודַע בְּשַׁעְרִים בַּעֲלָהּ בְּשִׁבְתָּו
 עִם-זִקְנֵי-אַרְצָ: כִּד סָדִין עָשְׂתָה
 וְתִמְכֹּר וְחָגוֹר נָתַתָּה לְכַנְעָנִי;
 כִּה עוֹזֶז־הָדָר לְבוּשָׁה וְתִשְׁחַק לְיוֹם
 אַחֲרוֹן: כִּו פִּיהָ פְּתַחַהּ בְּחִכְמָה
 וְתוֹרַת-חָסֵד עַל-לְשׁוֹנָהּ: כִּז צוֹפִיָּה
 הֵיילָכוֹת [הֵלִיכוֹת] בֵּיתָהּ וְלֶחֶם עֲצָלוֹת
 לֹא תֹאכַל: כִּח קָמוּ בְנֵיהָ וַיֵּאֱשְׁרוּהָ
 בַּעֲלָהּ וַיְהַלְלָהּ: כִּט רַבּוֹת בָּנוֹת עָשׂוּ
 חַיִּל וְאַתָּה עֲלִית עַל-כָּלֵנָהּ: ל שֶׁקֶר הַחוֹ
 וְהַבֵּל הֵלִפִּי אִשָּׁה יִרְאֵת-יְהוָה הִיא
 תִּתְהַלֵּל: לֹא תִנוּ-לָהּ מִפְּרֵי יָדֶיהָ
 וַיְהַלְלוּהָ בְּשַׁעְרִים מֵעַשְׂיָהּ:

1. Upon first reading the excerpted verses from Proverbs 31:10-31, what do you learn about a woman of *chayil*?
2. Which of these characteristics, if any, strike you as particularly surprising, unrealistic, or compelling?
3. The phrase *eshet chayil* is often translated as either "a woman of valor" or "a capable wife." Let's examine *chayil*'s different meanings. This word takes on several meanings in Jewish texts. *Chayil* can connote bravery (Ps. 76:6); capability (Prov. 12:4); triumph (Ps. 118:15); a rampart (Ps. 84:8); or wealth (Prov. 13:22). How does this word's flexibility affect your understanding of what *eshet chayil* means? Which meaning do you like the best?
4. *Eshet Chayil* is traditionally recited at on *Erev Shabbat*, Friday night, before we say *Kiddush*. What are your impressions of this text? Is this the image of "a woman of valor"? Do you know someone who resembles the woman praised here?
5. For women, is this an ideal that you are comfortable being compared to? What assumptions does it make about a woman's role in a Jewish family? Do all Jewish women meet this stereotype?
6. Could we insert "he" instead of "she" and use this text for men?

7. In a house where the labor is more jointly shared between husband and wife, should *Eshet Chayil* be said on Friday night before Kiddush?
8. When you are married, would like to have *Eshet Chayil* read to you/would you read it to your wife?

Discussion: Characteristics of Role Models (USYer p.9)

Below is a list of figures from the Bible and a brief description of them. Have the USYers read through the list.

Sarah: Married Abraham and was known for bringing food to her guests.

Esther: A Jewish girl who won a beauty contests and marries the king of Persia. She uses her position to save the Jews from a plan of exterminations conceived by Haman.

Miriam: Watched over her brother Moses when his mother put him in the Nile. She influenced the princess who found him to let her mother nurse Moses. Miriam led the women in dance after the splitting of the Sea of Reeds.

Ruth: First convert to Judaism. She returned to Israel with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and married a Jewish man. Ancestor of King David.

Abraham: Goes against society by believing in one God.

Moses: Led the Jewish people out of Egypt and away from slavery to freedom.

Solomon: Known for his great wisdom as a king. Wrote Song of Songs (*Shir HaShirim*), Proverbs (*Mishlei*), and Ecclesiastes (*Kohelet*).

Joseph: Became second-in-command only to Pharaoh and his dreams and leadership help Egypt get through a famine.

After reading this, have the USYers summarize the characteristics for each gender. Prompt them using the grid below:

Male	Female
Strong	Beautiful
Leader	Caretaker
Wise	Seductive

1. Which of these characteristics are still true?
2. Which characteristics would you change? What would you add?

Now have the USYers read the following descriptions:

Deborah: Was known for being a female Judge. She, along with Barak, led the Jewish people in a war against Sisera and the Canaanites.

1. How is her role attached to the role of the male?
2. Does this attachment to a male lessen her contribution to Jewish history?
3. How do her characteristics defy the traditional gender role models?

Hannah: Began the idea of personal prayer because women were not able to bring sacrifices, which was the accepted method of prayer.

1. What does this show about the women of the time? Do you know why she wanted to pray?
2. How do her characteristics defy the traditional gender role models?

Activity: What's My (Jewish) Role?

Assign "strongly agree;" "agree;" "disagree;" "strongly disagree" to each of the four corners of the room. Read the list of statements about gender and Jewish ritual (see below). Ask the USYers to stand in the corner that matches what they believe for each statement. After the USYers divide into the four corners, ask each corner for one or two ideas of why they believe what they do.

- Both men and women should wear a *tallit* at services.
- Only women should light candles for Shabbat.
- Men should, but women should not wear *tallit*, *kippah* or *tefillin*.
- Both men and women should wear *tallit*, *kippah* and *tefillin* if they choose to.
- Women should participate as equals in leading services and counting in a *minyan*.
- *Tefillin* look weird on women.
- *Tefillin* look weird on *both* men and women.
- Only men should do *hagbah* (lifting of the Torah to put it away.)
- There should be some differences in the roles of men and women at synagogue.
- Men and women should both wear *tallitot* or *kippot*, but they should look different.

Discussion: Second Looks at Tefillin Barbie (USYer p. 10)

If you have not already had the USYers look at the picture of Tefillin Barbie, please do so now.

Divide the USYers into 3-5 groups. Give each one a different blog posting (the 3 Jewschool comments can either be given to one group or split up, depending on how many groups you have). Ask each group to discuss the point of view represented by their blogger. Then, bring the groups back together and have each group present its viewpoint as if they are that blogger. Allow some time afterward for open discussion of what they think of some of the issues that were brought up by these postings.

Blog postings on Tefillin Barbie

From Jewschool (3 comments to original October 17, 2006 post “Egal Minyan Ken Sold Separately”)

--rm, October 20, 2006 at 5:15 am

It just doesn't look right. Even with the *tallis* and the *tefillin*. As my mother would say: “She's too pretty to be Jewish!” So for a more authentically Jewish appearance, put some braces on her teeth, get her a pair of red Sally Jessy Raphael-type glasses and a 1950's style Hasidic skirt down to her ankles with matching long-sleeved jacket and pillbox hat. Shave off the long, blonde *shiksa* hair and top it all off with a dark brown *sheitel*, and voila! You're in business!

--Soferet, October 20, 2006 at 3:43 pm

I'm going to have to agree with Cole, Jabotinsky & RM. I welcome any opportunity for discussion about women in non-trad roles. Although this took a great deal of time & skill to make, I find it offensive. My concern is Jen's deliberate choice of Barbie iconography, given the associations. Most women of our generation (the over-30s) find Barbie to denote “trivial”. Barbie is a cultural shorthand for plastic, superficial, brainless, and demeaning. It's the ultimate non-feminist icon. This image says to me that basically feminist Jx women are bimbos just “playing” real Jews & that feminist Jx women who CHALLENGE tradition for the love of torah, are really playthings. Either the women or the traditions. So since I'm sure that Jen's intention here was NOT to trivialize feminist women in Judaism, perhaps it could have been better thought out.

--Becca, October 24, 2006 at 2:01 am

This over-30 woman doesn't find Barbie to universally denote “trivial,” and is anything but offended by the playful—even, to me, empowering—image of Davening Barbie (as my husband & I call her: she's got a *tallis* as well as *tefillin*, so she's more than just *Tefillin* Barbie by me! Weekday *Shacharit Davening* Barbie, in fact, as zt and RM have pointed out...). Not all feminists are anti-Barbie, nor is Barbie or her history necessarily anti-feminist. Barbie was created by a Jewish businesswoman, Ruth Handler, who named Barbie and Ken after her daughter and son; after undergoing a mastectomy for breast cancer, Handler developed a better type of breast prosthesis (along with post-mastectomy swimwear) as the “Nearly Me” line. (See her [entry](#) on the PBS “They Made America” site, where she's honored among the Innovators.) Barbie need not be a bimbo, and the woman who created her certainly wasn't one. I'd definitely allow (even

encourage!) any daughter (or son) of mine to play with *Davening* Barbie as well as the proposed Egal Minyan Ken.

From Strollerderby: Barbie as Cultural Catalyst (posted March 1, 2007)

(<http://www.babble.com/CS/blogs/strollerderby/archive/2007/03/01/barbie-ascultural-catalyst.aspx>)

Jenna Weissman Joselit's essay at the Jewish Daily Forward about facing off with her niece in the Barbie aisle of the toy store strikes a nerve with me. Barbie is always such a touchy subject for feminists – she has her supporters and detractors, and we are all certain we are correct in our opinions about her. Something hard to argue about, though, is Barbie's mutability. In the hands of a little girl she is a blank slate, capable of representing nearly any aspect of femininity and yes, of feminism. And in the hands of an adult she can be even more so – witness Joselit's example, *Tefillin* Barbie – a modified Mattel doll bearing the trappings of a modern Orthodox Jewish woman. This is what has kept Barbie at the top of the toy charts for fifty years: the fact that no matter how much artificial personality her manufacturers and marketing team try to inject her with, she is nothing until she's in the hands of a human being. Once she's out of the box, she is, for better or for worse, whatever you want her to be. There are probably worse symbolic messages to send to little girls than that. (See Joselit's article at <http://www.forward.com/articles/between-us-girls/>)

From Hatam Soferet, blog of Jen Taylor Friedman, creator of Tefillin Barbie and a Soferet – ritual scribe. (<http://hatam-soferet.livejournal.com/271009.html>)

Sometimes people say to Orthodox types, on my behalf: What do you MEAN a woman can't be a scribe? The Talmud says women, slaves, heretics and so on can't be scribes? How can you say a woman is like a slave or a heretic? That's DISGUSTING!

To which I say: They're right. My community chooses to say that we should view women as equal to men, and that women should have the same obligations (and hence the same ritual capabilities) as men. Non-egalitarian Orthodoxy does not. In fact, their choosing to maintain traditional gender roles is probably more in line with existing trends in the secular world – certainly in the USA women's and men's roles are still definitely distinct; look at almost all advertising, as well as expectations re careers, childrearing, care of elderly parents, etc. When a community chooses to maintain gender roles in ritual, it is absolutely reasonable for them to maintain that women do not write *sifrei Torah*. Challenging this is asking them to alter something pretty fundamental to their culture and way of life – it is asking them to accept an absolutely foreign premise, rather similar to how you would feel if someone insisted you accept Christianity. They are entitled to their view, just as you and I are entitled to ours. The best thing we can do is build a sustainable, committed Judaism which incorporates egalitarianism into the existing matrix. For that we need mutual respect, self-respect, and self-confidence. We gain authenticity not through others but through ourselves.

Discussion: Final Thoughts on Gender (USYer p.12)

You may choose to read the below introductory paragraph or simply read the text from the *Women's Rights Manifesto* of the National Organization for Women below it. There are several questions below the follow up text to the excerpt.

Although time has advanced, the gender roles of both men and women have remained constant. In Biblical times, women were often viewed as objects and incapable. They were in charge of staying at home with the kids and taking care of the cleaning. In many respects, this stereotype has not changed. Although many women go out in the workforce, women are still seen as the ones who stay home with the kids. They are sometimes viewed as inadequate and are often portrayed in the media as objects. Below is an example of stereotypes that have been placed upon women.

Because woman's work is never done and is underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get fired and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our fault and if we get beaten we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we can't get a "real" man and if we ask our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect childcare we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and "unfeminine" and if we don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy we're made to feel guilty about abortion...

On the same note, men were viewed as assertive and as the breadwinners. They were the ones who brought home all the money and made all of the family decisions. Today, men are still often seen as the breadwinners. Very few men stay at home with the kids rather than working. Many expectations are also put upon men to be assertive and to be strong. These stereotypes are very hurtful because men usually never have the chance to get close with their kids.

1. Is this how women are really viewed today?
2. Why are these stereotypes in place?
3. What gives them validity?
4. Do you agree with these stereotypes?
5. How do you think these stereotypes were formed?

6. How can we change these stereotypes?

3

Sex and Love

Objectives

- The USYers will explore a variety of Jewish texts that explore sex and sexuality.
- A discussion of different types of love based upon several stories from the Bible.

Activity: What are you looking for? (USYer p.13)

Pass out the packets of dots to each USYer in your group. Ask the USYers to mark the worksheets in their materials with the characteristics that they think are most important. Conclude with questions below.

1. Why did you pick the characteristics that you did?
2. Why do you think people place different values on different ideals?

What characteristics are most important?

For Yourself

- Good looks
- Good manners
- Good student
- Artistic
- Athletic
- Sexy
- Sense of humor
- Being Jewish
- Liking myself
- Rich (family)
- Thoughtful
- Sensitive
- Good values
- Decisive
- Good dancer
- Intelligent
- Outgoing

For Someone I'd Date

- Good looks

For a Good Friend

- Good looks
- Good manners
- Good student
- Artistic
- Athletic
- Sexy
- Sense of humor
- Being Jewish
- Liking myself
- Rich (family)
- Thoughtful
- Sensitive
- Good values
- Decisive
- Good dancer
- Intelligent
- Outgoing

For Someone I'd Marry

- Good looks

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| • Good manners | • Good manners |
| • Good student | • Good student |
| • Artistic | • Artistic |
| • Athletic | • Athletic |
| • Sexy | • Sexy |
| • Sense of humor | • Sense of humor |
| • Being Jewish | • Being Jewish |
| • Liking myself | • Liking myself |
| • Rich (family) | • Rich (family) |
| • Thoughtful | • Thoughtful |
| • Sensitive | • Sensitive |
| • Good values | • Good values |
| • Decisive | • Decisive |
| • Good dancer | • Good dancer |
| • Intelligent | • Intelligent |
| • Outgoing | • Outgoing |

Discussion: Does God Belong in the Bedroom? (USYer p. 14)

In an effort to keep the conversation focused on sex and how Judaism approaches it, start the USYers off with the question, “Does God belong in the bedroom?” Use the sources below to help focus the conversation as it progresses.

Genesis 1:27-28

27. And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28. God blessed them and God said to them, “Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.”

כֹּז וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ
 בְּצַלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אוֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה
 בָּרָא אֹתָם: כֹּחַ וַיִּבְרָךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים
 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ
 אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׁוּהָ וּרְדוּ בַדְגַת הַיָּם
 וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־חַיָּה הַרְמִשָּׁתַּי
 עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

1. What are the commandments or *mitzvot* in this text?
2. The *mitzvah* of *p'ru urvu* (be fruitful and multiply) is generally regarded as the first *mitzvah* in all of the Torah. Does its position mean anything?

Exodus 21:10

10. If he marries another, he must not withhold from this one her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights.

אִם־אַחֶרֶת יִקַּח־לוֹ שְׂאֵרָה כְּסוּתָהּ
 וְעֵנָתָה לֹא יִגְרַע:

1. Does this list seem unusual to you? What is the reasoning behind each item that should not be withheld?
2. Interestingly, the Talmud later provides a schedule for how often a man should have sex with his wife, based upon profession (scholars were almost daily, camel drivers once every 30 days, and sailors once every six months). Pressuring one's wife to have sex, however, was forbidden.

Berachot 17a

There are three things that are a foretaste of the world to come: Shabbat, a sunny day, and sexual intercourse.

1. Why do you think the rabbis made this statement? Is there a similarity? Should something be added to this list?

Deuteronomy 24:5

When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, nor shall he be charged with any business; but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he has taken.

י ה כִּי־יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה חֲדָשָׁה לֹא יֵצֵא
 בַּצָּבָא וְלֹא־יַעֲבֹר עָלָיו לְכָל־דְּבַר נָקְוִי
 יִהְיֶה לְבֵיתוֹ שָׁנָה אַחַת וְשִׂמַּח
 אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח: וְלֹא־יִחַבֵּל
 רַחִים וְרָכַב כִּי־נִפֶּשׁ הוּא חַבֵּל:

1. Why is a newlywed prohibited from going off to war?
2. What is his obligation to his wife? What does the text mean by וְשִׂמַּח? How would you interpret it?

Leviticus 20:10

10. If a man commits adultery with a married woman, committing adultery with another man's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.

י וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנְאֹף אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אִישׁ
 אֲשֶׁר יִנְאֹף אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ רַעְהוּ מוֹת־יוֹמֵת
 הַנְּאֹף וְהַנְּאֹפֶת:

1. Why do you think that the Torah imposes such a harsh penalty for adultery?
2. This law appears in the middle of a series of laws often referred to as the Holiness Code. They detail out a list of forbidden sexual relationships, including adultery and incest.
3. One of the terms for a Jewish wedding ceremony is *kiddushin* which is derived from the same Hebrew root word for holiness (*kadosh*). If the relationship between spouses is holy, then the violation of that bond through adultery defiles that holiness.

Reflection: Modern Jewish Views on Sexuality (USYer p. 15)

The following includes opinions from Conservative rabbis on the Jewish approach towards human sexuality. The first two are excerpts from articles that originally appeared in *The Second Jewish Catalog* by Sharon Strassfeld and Michael Strassfeld, eds., (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976), 92.

"The Torah Tradition" by Hershel Matt

What does the Torah say concerning human sexuality?

The Torah says that "God began to create heaven and earth," the world and all that is in it - which is to say that what is often called "nature" is neither simply necessary nor simply accidental but comes as a result of God's power and wisdom and love, in accordance with His plan, for the fulfillment of His purpose. (Perhaps we should say "creation" rather than "nature.")

The Torah says that God "created man in His image" and that, since among all His other creatures "no fitting helper was found," "male and female He created them." What a strange paradox! Human beings, men and women both, are unique among God's creatures: they bear a likeness to God, who has personality but no sexuality; and they bear a likeness to animals, who have sexuality but no personality. And both the divine image and sexuality, each of them present from man's very creation - are essential to man's humanity. Furthermore, the two aspects affect each other and limit each other: on the one hand, even when man and woman are united sexually, their sexual union, though natural in the sense of normal, is not natural in the sense of a mere animal copulation. It is a distinctively human relationship, an I - Thou relationship, a relationship of two-persons-in-the-divine-image, each of infinite worth, neither one intended to be exploited as an object of the other's aggressiveness or selfish satisfaction. On the other hand, the relation between man and woman, however aesthetic and moral and spiritual, is an avenue to sexual expression.

The Torah says that "God saw all that He had made" - including man and women - "and found it very good." Human sexuality, therefore, far from being unworthy or ugly or "dirty" or obscene or in any way evil or displeasing to God, is good.

The Torah says that God's command to man - His very first command - was to "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth." Sexual relations and human reproduction are thus a fulfillment of God's will and intention for woman.

....Not only reproduction but also enduring companionship, mutuality, helpfulness - and sexual union as a regularly renewed means for their expression and nurture - are among God's prime purposes for man and woman. Furthermore, when children come of age they must break away from their parents and unite with others, founding new families of their own.

....In God's original plan and in the ideal world, human nakedness occasions no shame; in the actual human situation, however, nakedness connotes immodesty.

The Torah says: "You shall not commit adultery." "Do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge." "The devisings of man's mind are evil from his youth." Concerning the immoral sexual practices of the pagans, the Torah admonishes: "You shall... not... engage in any of the abhorrent practices... and you shall not defile yourselves through them." "I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse.

Choose life." Woman is endowed with the capacity to distinguish and the ability to choose; woman is able to resist temptation; no woman always does; as Ecclesiastes says: "For there is not one good man on earth who does what is best and doesn't err."

The Torah . . . has many other things to say about human sexuality; about how human beings are meant to act and not act; about those who live faithfully by God's command and those who live unfaithfully; about the consequences of sexual immorality for the individual and for society. And throughout this literature, which has been studied through the ages by old and young, there is almost always a striking frankness and explicitness. It was evidently not felt that holiness must involve prudishness or censorship, or that explicitness of sexual reference constituted a profanation of the sacred. Yet in spite of the frankness and explicitness, the Torah tradition, in both literature and life, managed to nurture and sustain in sexual matters the quality *t'zniyut* - an exquisite mood of delicacy, reserve and modesty.

"The Scope of Tradition and Its Application" by David Feldman

...Judaism imposes certain restraints and discipline upon this area of life that are intended to safeguard both persons and sex itself from abuse.

In its proper setting, sex is a *mitzvah*. The marital sex obligation is defined by *halachah* in terms both frequency and quality. The husband may not be "pious" at the wife's expense and pursue ascetic inclinations to the neglect of the marital *mitzvah*.... Moreover, the husband has the *mitzvah* of quality as well; he is to "give happiness to the woman he has married" (Deuteronomy 24:5) in this matter of sex relations. The sex act itself is described in the classic Jewish sources as both good and holy.

While the idea of living together without marriage may be attractive to lovers who are impatient with the commitment or exclusivity, with social status, or with any long-run considerations, those who share society's goals and religion's ideals will see the ceremony and certificate as their allies to that end.

The Jewish sex ethic, then, affirms sexual pleasure in the undisciplined structure of family life and holds the restraints of civilization to be the means of holiness.

This Is My Beloved, This Is My Friend: A Rabbinic Letter on Intimate Relations by Rabbi Elliot Dorff

Only marriages can attain the holiness and communal sanction of *kiddushin* because it is in the marital context which holds the most promise that people can live by those views and values in their intimate relationships. Judaism would therefore have us refrain from sexual intercourse outside of marriage....It does so because in that setting the couple can attain the threefold purposes for marital sex....namely, companionship, procreation, and the education of the next generation. While non-marital sex can provide companionship as well as physical release... unmarried couples generally do not want to undertake the responsibilities of education children... and the physical and psychological pleasures which sex provides lead them to engage in sexual relations with each other [outside of marriage]. Judaism cannot condone such relationships.

Man is Not Alone by Abraham Joshua Heschel

Judaism does not despise the carnal. It does not urge us to desert the flesh, but to control and to counsel it; to please the natural needs of the flesh so that the spirit should not be molested by unnatural frustrations... Judaism teaches us how even the gratification of animal needs can be an act of sanctity.

1. Give some examples of how modern media (radio, television, music, Internet, etc.) deal with sexuality. What values to these examples express?
2. What is the Jewish attitude towards the body?
3. Why might we need to “control” and “counsel” regarding our physical selves?
4. How can the “gratification of animal needs” be “an act of sanctification”?
5. Compare and contrast these implied values with the Jewish practice as described above. Which ones are better? What criteria are you using? Which offers more help to people growing and learning how to deal with sexuality? Which is better for the future of Judaism? Which is better for the future of the world? With which are you more comfortable?
6. Can a person maintain a monogamous marriage relationship if that individual had participated in successive non-marital sexual relationships with others on a casual basis before getting married?

Text study: Is it Love or Something Else? (USYer p. 17)

Divide them into three groups. Assign each group a different quote from the sources in their source books. Ask the USYers to answer the following questions about their sources:

1. Can you find examples of romantic love? Selfish love? Mature love?
2. Can you find examples of sexual attraction being primary? Or of concern for the joint relationship being stronger than the desire of either partner?
3. Do you think the stories would work as a Hollywood screenplay? How would Hollywood present it?

When they're finished, have them present their source to the entire group. An alternative is to have them act out the sources and have the rest of the group try to describe the love from the presentation.

Source A

Genesis 24:63-67

63. And Isaac went out walking in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching. 64. Raising her eyes, Rebekah saw Isaac. She alighted from the camel 65. and said to the servant, “Who is that man walking in the field toward us?” And the servant said, “That is my master.” So she took

סג ויצא יצחק לשׁוּחַ בַּשָּׂדֶה לַפְּנֹת
עֶרֶב וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה גַמְלִים
בָּאִים: סד וַתִּשָּׂא רֵבְקָה אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ
וַתִּרְא אֶת־יִצְחָק וַתִּפֹּל מֵעַל הַגָּמֶל:
סה וַתִּנְאֶמֶר אֶל־הָעֶבֶד מִי־הָאִישׁ
הַלֵּזָה הַהֹלֵךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה לְקִרְאֹתֵינוּ וַיֹּאמֶר

her veil and covered herself. 66. The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67. Isaac then brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he took Rebekah as his wife. Isaac loved her, and thus found comfort after his mother's death.

הַעֶבֶד הוּא אָדֹנָי וַתִּקַּח הַצֶּעִיף
וַתִּתְּכֶס׃ סו וַיְסַפֵּר הַעֶבֶד לְיִצְחָק אֵת
כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה׃ סז וַיְבִאֶהָ
יִצְחָק הָאֵהָלָה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח
אֶת־רֵבֶקָה וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֶּאֱהָבֶהָ
וַיִּנְחַם יִצְחָק אַחֲרֵי אִמּוֹ׃

Source B

Genesis 29:16-21

16. Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17. Leah had weak eyes; Rachel was shapely and beautiful. 18. Jacob loved Rachel; so he answered, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." 19. Laban said, "Better that I give her to you than that I should give her to an outsider. Stay with me." 20. So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her. 21. Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is fulfilled, that I may cohabit with her."

טז וּלְלָבָן שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת שֵׁם הַגְּדֹלָה לְאֵהָ
וְשֵׁם הַקְּטָנָה רָחֵל׃ יז וַעֲיִנֵי לְאֵהָ רַכּוֹת
וְרָחֵל הָיְתָה יִפְת־תָּאֵר וַיִּפֶת מֵרְאֶהָ׃
יח וַיֶּאֱהָב יַעֲקֹב אֶת־רָחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶעֱבֹדָךְ שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים בְּרָחֵל בְּתוּךָ
הַקְּטָנָה׃ יט וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן טוֹב תַּתֵּנִי
אֵתָהּ לָךְ מִתַּתֵּנִי אֵתָהּ לְאִישׁ אַחֵר
שָׁבָה עִמָּדִי׃ כ וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרָחֵל
שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים וַיְהִיוּ בְּעֵינָיו כְּיָמִים
אַחָדִים בְּאֶהְבֶּתָּ אֵתָהּ׃ כא וַיֹּאמֶר
יַעֲקֹב אֶל־לָבָן הֲבֵה אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי כִּי
מָלְאוּ יָמַי וְאֲבוֹאָה אֵלֶיךָ׃

Source C

II Samuel 11:2-17, 26-27

2. Late one afternoon, David rose from his couch and strolled on the roof of the royal palace; and from the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, 3. and the king sent someone to make inquiries about the woman. He reported, "She is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam [and] wife of Uriah the Hittite." 4. David sent messengers to fetch her; she came to him and he lay with her—she had just purified herself after her period—and she went back home. 5. The woman conceived, and she sent word to David, "I am pregnant." 6. Thereupon David sent a message to Joab, "Send Uriah the

כז וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ
בְּיְהוָה | לַעֲת הָעָרֶב וַיִּקָּם דָּוִד מֵעַל
מִשְׁכְּבוֹ וַיִּיתְהַלֵּךְ עַל־גַּג בַּיַּת־הַמִּלְךָ׃
וַיֵּרָא אִשָּׁה רַחֲצַת מֵעַל הַגַּג וְהָאִשָּׁה
טוֹבַת מֵרְאֶה מְאֹד׃ ג וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד
וַיִּדְרֹשׁ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא־זֹאת
בֵּת־שֶׁבַע בַּת־אֱלִיעָזָר אִשְׁתׁ אֲוִרְיָה
הַחֲתָן׃ ד וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד מַלְאָכִים וַיִּקְחֶהָ
וַתָּבוֹא אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב עִמָּהּ וְהִיא
מִתְקַדְּשֶׁת מִטְּמֵאתָהּ וַתֵּשֶׁב
אֶל־בֵּיתָהּ׃ ה וַתַּהַר הָאִשָּׁה וַתִּשְׁלַח
וַתִּגַּד לְדָוִד וַתֹּאמֶר הִרָה אֲנִכִּי׃

Hittite to me”; and Joab sent Uriah to David. 7. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab and the troops were faring and how the war was going. 8. Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and bathe your feet.” When Uriah left the royal palace, a present from the king followed him. 9. But Uriah slept at the entrance of the royal palace, along with the other officers of his lord, and did not go down to his house. 10. When David was told that Uriah had not gone down to his house, he said to Uriah, “You just came from a journey; why didn’t you go down to your house?” 11. Uriah answered David, “The Ark and Israel and Judah are located at Succoth, and my master Joab and Your Majesty’s men are camped in the open; how can I go home and eat and drink and sleep with my wife? a- As you live, by your very life, I will not do this!” 12. David said to Uriah, “Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will send you off.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. The next day, 13. David summoned him, and he ate and drank with him until he got him drunk; but in the evening, [Uriah] went out to sleep in the same place, with his lord’s officers; he did not go down to his home. 14. In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab, which he sent with Uriah. 15. He wrote in the letter as follows: “Place Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest; then fall back so that he may be killed.” 16. So when Joab was besieging the city, he stationed Uriah at the point where he knew that there were able warriors. 17. The men of the city sallied out and attacked Joab, and some of David’s officers among the troops fell; Uriah the Hittite was among those who died.

וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד אֶל-יֹאָב שְׁלַח אֵלַי
אֶת-אֲוִרְיָה הַחֲתִי וַיִּשְׁלַח יֹאָב
אֶת-אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-דָּוִד: ז וַיָּבֵא אֲוִרְיָה
אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד לְשָׁלוֹם יֹאָב
וְלְשָׁלוֹם הָעָם וְלְשָׁלוֹם הַמְּלַחְמָה:
ח וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְאֲוִרְיָה רֵד לְבֵיתְךָ
וּרְחֹץ רַגְלֶיךָ וַיֵּצֵא אֲוִרְיָה מִבַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ:
וַתֵּצֵא אַחֲרָיו מִשָּׂאת הַמֶּלֶךְ: ט וַיִּשְׁכַּב
אֲוִרְיָה פֶתַח בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת כָּל-עַבְדָּיו
אֲדָנָיו וְלֹא יָרַד אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ: י וַיִּגְדוּ לְדָוִד
לֵאמֹר לֹא-יָרַד אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר
דָּוִד אֶל-אֲוִרְיָה הֲלוֹא מְדַרְדֵּךְ אַתָּה בָּא
מִדָּוֶע לֹא-יָרַדְתָּ אֶל-בֵּיתְךָ: יא וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-דָּוִד הָאָרוֹן וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל
וַיְהוּדָה יֹשְׁבִים בְּסוּכֹת וְאֲדָנִי יֹאָב
וְעַבְדֵי אֲדָנִי עַל-פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה חֲנִים וְאֲנִי
אָבֹא אֶל-בֵּיתִי לֶאֱכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת
וְלִשְׁכַּב עִם-אִשְׁתִּי חִיָּה וְחִי נַפְשִׁי:
אס-אֲעֹשֶׂה אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה: יב וַיֹּאמֶר
דָּוִד אֶל-אֲוִרְיָה שֵׁב בְּזֶה גַם-הַיּוֹם
וּמָחָר אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲוִרְיָה בִירוּשָׁלַם
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וּמִמָּחָרָת: יג וַיִּקְרָא-לּוֹ
דָּוִד וַיֹּאכַל לִפְנָיו וַיִּשֶׁת וַיִּשְׁכַּרְהוּ וַיֵּצֵא
בְּעָרֶב לִשְׁכַּב בְּמִשְׁכָּבוֹ עִם-עַבְדָּיו
אֲדָנָיו וְאֶל-בֵּיתוֹ לֹא יָרַד: יד וַיְהִי
בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּכְתֹּב דָּוִד סֵפֶר אֶל-יֹאָב
וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּיַד אֲוִרְיָה: טו וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר
לֵאמֹר הֲבֵן אֶת-אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-מוֹל פְּנֵי
הַמְּלַחְמָה הַחֲזָקָה וְשַׁבְתֶּם מֵאַחֲרָיו
וְנָכָה וּמָת: טז וַיְהִי בְּשִׁמּוֹר יֹאָב
אֶל-הָעִיר וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר יָדַע כִּי אֲנָשֵׁי-חֵיל שָׁם: יז וַיֵּצֵאוּ
אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ אֶת-יֹאָב וַיַּפֵּל
מִן-הָעָם מֵעַבְדֵי דָוִד וַיָּמָת גַּם אֲוִרְיָה
הַחֲתִי:

26. When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she lamented over her husband. 27. After the period of mourning was over, David sent and had her brought into his palace; she became his wife and she bore him a son.

כּוּ וַתִּשְׁמַע אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶת־אֲוִיָּה כִּי־מֵת אֶרְיָה
אִשָּׁה וַתִּסְפֹּד עַל־בְּעָלָהּ: כּוּ וַיַּעֲבֹר
הָאֵבֶל וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד וַיֹּאסֶפֶה אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ
וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד לּוֹ בֶן וַיִּרַע
הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה דָּוִד בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה:

Discussion: On Relationships

Think of a couple that you know who get along very well with each other. They could be people your own age; your parents, relatives, or friends; married or unmarried. Now think of a couple you know who appear not to have a very good relationship. Again, they may be married or unmarried; your age or any age; relative or friend.

Note: As you ask these questions, make sure that the USYers do not identify who they are thinking of.

1. What are some of the behaviors that each couple exhibit that give you a clue that they are getting along or not getting along?
2. Is there a pattern to these behaviors that you are able to identify?
3. To what extent are the relationships characterized by selfishness, immaturity, self-denial, idolization of the partner, or a willingness to work things out together?

Kaddish D'Rabbanan (Kaddish of the Rabbis) קדיש דרבנן (USY p. 19)

After the study of Torah, we praise God with the *Kaddish*, and include in it a prayer for the well-being of teachers and students of Torah, whose learning enhances the world. Please ask the USYers to rise as you recite this together.

Hallowed and enhanced may He be throughout the world of His own creation. May He cause His sovereignty soon to be accepted, during our life and the life of all Israel. And let us say: Amen.

יִתְגַּדַּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי
בְּרָא כְרַעוּתֵיהּ, וַיִּמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵיהּ
בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמּוֹן קָרִיב וְאַמְרוּ
אַמֵּן:

May he be praised throughout all time.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וְלְעַלְמֵי
עֶלְמָיָא:

Glorified and celebrated, lauded and worshiped,

יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמַם

acclaimed and honored, extolled and exalted may the Holy One be, praised beyond all song and psalm, beyond all tributes which mortals can utter. And let us say: Amen.

Heavenly Father, grant lasting peace to our people and their leaders, to our teachers and their disciples, to all who engage in the study of Torah in this land and in all other lands. Let there be grace and kindness, compassion and love for them and for us all. Grant us fullness of life, and sustenance. Save us from all danger and distress. And let us say: Amen.

Let there be abundant peace from Heaven, with life's goodness for us and for all the people Israel. And let us say: Amen.

He who brings peace to His universe will bring peace to us and to all the people Israel. And let us say: Amen

וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא וַיִּתְהַדָּר וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ
דְּקֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא לְעֵלְא מִן כָּל
בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא,
דְּאָמְרוּ בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל רַבָּנָן, וְעַל תַּלְמִידֵיהוֹן
וְעַל כָּל תַּלְמִידֵי תַלְמִידֵיהוֹן, וְעַל כָּל
מָאן דְּעִסְקִין בְּאוֹרֵיתָא, דִּי בְּאַתְרָא
הָדִין וְדִי בְּכָל אֶתְר וְאַתְר. יְהֵא לְהוֹן
וְלַכוּן שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא, חֲנָא וְחֶסֶדָא
וְרַחֲמִין, וְחַיִּין אֲרִיכִין, וּמְזוּנֵי רְוִיחִי,
וּפְרָקְנָא, מִן קָדָם אַבוּהוֹן דִּי בְּשִׁמְיָא
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים
טוֹבִים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ
אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא בְּרַחֲמָיו
יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: