

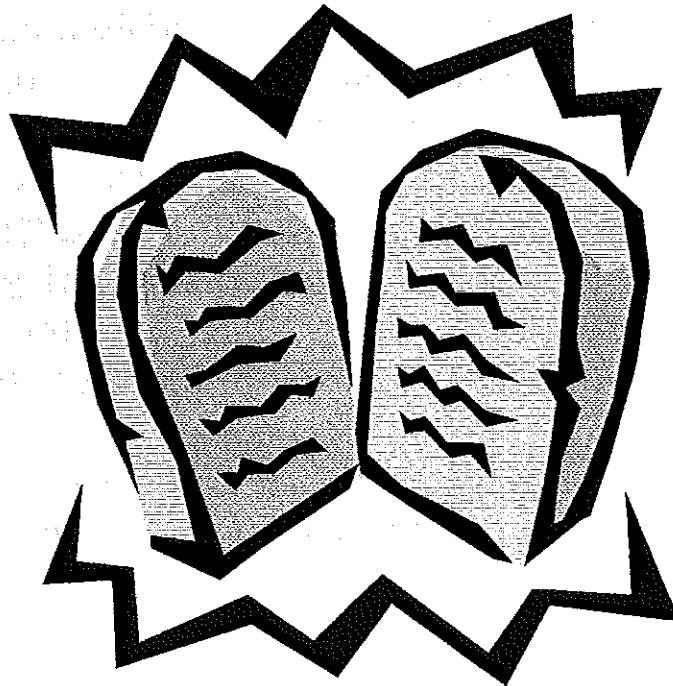
**By Michael Knopf**

**HaNegev Rel/Ed VP 2000-2001**



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## FORWARD

Welcome to the wonderful world of being a chapter Rel/Ed! You have just been selected to have the best and most important job in all of USY. You are, in a sense, what holds USY together, because without the "Synagogue" in "United Synagogue Youth" the whole acronym would fall through! One could say you guys are the cream in the Oreo, the meat in the Kosher Whopper...you get the idea. It is now your job to ensure your USY chapter includes Jewish content in its program and that your members are getting as much from the Jewish aspect of USY as they are from the social (even though these two components of USY are by no means mutually exclusive).

Of course, I won't sugarcoat the position of Rel/Ed VP: Your job, although incredibly fulfilling, is very difficult, and you have a hard year ahead of you. In your chapter, there are probably a lot of members who could care less about Judaism, and there could also be members who do not think that you are planning enough Jewish activities. How can you please everybody while knowing yourself that you are providing as much Jewish content as you should? The answer to that question is very difficult, and it is something you'll have to find out for yourself during the course of the year. Don't be scared, though. Remember the importance of your job and know that you have many people to turn to for help (NEVER be afraid to seek help from people).

In the spirit of helping, therefore, we here at HaNegev Region Religion/Education have put together a little sourcebook for you to use whenever and however you want! So enjoy this book and use it well. But above all else, sit back, relax, and enjoy the year!

## DEFINING THE POSITION

**What, you ask, is the actual definition of a Rel/Ed VP's job? Well let's define it right now!**

**First, a semantic point:**

**You are a Religion and Education Vice President. NOT a "Religious Education Vice President." The religion and education you bring to your chapter can be mutually exclusive or dependant. You can educate your chapter on non-Jewish subjects, just as you can provide religion to your chapter without necessarily adding an educational aspect. It is a common misconception to call this position a Religious Education VP, and I think that we should do away with that shoddy definition. But now that we're past that...**

**"REL"—**

**Short for "Religion." This means that every activity involving religion in your chapter will either be created by you, co-created by you, overseen by you, or all three. You are in charge of making sure religion is as much a part of your chapter's programming as SA/TO or social programming.**

**"/"—**

**This stands for the "and." Don't forget that your job includes Religion AND Education—not one or the other, and not a weird hybrid of the two.**

**"ED"—**

**Finally we're down to the "Ed," or "Education." This means that it is your job to provide any sort of education to your chapter. You are, in a sense the answer man (or woman). Be prepared to get asked questions about Judaism from USYers, board members, members of your shul, and so on. You may not know everything, but sometimes people expect you to. Just do not neglect this part of your position. It's easy to program religious activities, but it takes a special effort to educate your chapter's members. More advice on how to do this in the coming pages.**

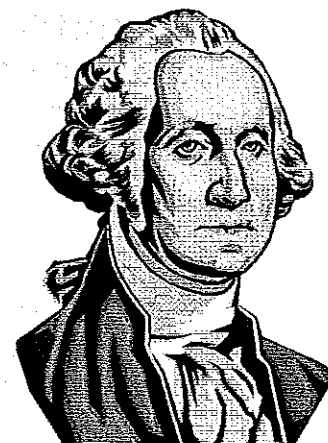


# BEING A DUGMA

WHAT IS THIS DUGMA THAT I SPEAK OF? CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, IT IS NOT THE RUSSIAN PARLIAMENT OR A MOVIE STARRING MATT DAMON. DUGMA IS THE HEBREW WORD FOR EXAMPLE, AND AS A CHAPTER BOARD MEMBER, BUT ESPECIALLY AS A REL/ED, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO BE A DUGMA TO YOUR FELLOW USYERS (AND EVEN SOMETIMES TO ADULTS). SO HERE'S A LITTLE LIST OF SOME DUGMA DO'S AND DON'TS. REMEMBER THIS LIST WHEN YOU ARE UP IN FRONT OF YOUR FELLOW USYERS OR EVEN JUST HANGING OUT AT A PROGRAM.

## DO'S:

1. HELPING OUT A FRIEND IN NEED.
2. INCLUDING NEW MEMBERS INTO DISCUSSIONS OR ACTIVITIES.
3. GIVING TZEDAKAH.
4. SHOWING AN INTEREST IN LEARNING NEW THINGS.
5. GOING TO SHUL ON A REGULAR BASIS.



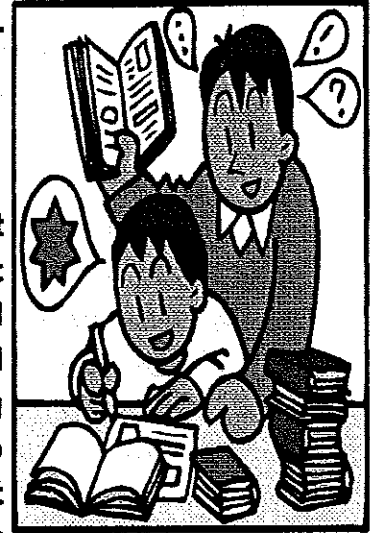
## DON'T'S:

1. TALKING DURING SERVICES.
2. USING FOUL LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC.
3. WEARING A KIPPAH IN A NON-KOSHER RESTAURANT (ESPECIALLY IF EATING NON-KOSHER FOOD).
4. EATING NON-KOSHER FOOD AT A USY EVENT (REALIZE THAT IT IS USY POLICY IN GENERAL THAT KASHRUT BE KEPT AT ALL USY FUNCTIONS).
5. BEING RUDE OR DISRESPECTFUL TO YOUR ADVISORS, OTHER ADULTS, OR OTHER USYERS.
6. FIGHTING (EITHER VERBALLY OR PHYSICALLY).
7. DESTROYING O.P.P. (OTHER PEOPLE'S PROPERTY; I.E. A HOTEL'S PROPERTY AT A CONVENTION).

THIS IS BY NO MEANS A COMPLETE LIST, BUT YOU GET THE IDEA OF WHAT BEING A DUGMA ENTAILS. AS A REL/ED, YOU ARE THE REPRESENTATIVE OF JUDAISM TO MANY PEOPLE. THIS IS A BIG RESPONSIBILITY! BUT DON'T FRET, ALWAYS BE ON GUARD FOR CHALLENGES AND KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE. IT'S NOT A BURDEN UNLESS YOU HAVE THAT MIND SET! IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO UPHOLD GOOD JEWISH VALUES ALL THE TIME, BUT ESPECIALLY WHEN PEOPLE ARE WATCHING (AND THEY WILL BE WATCHING). WITH THIS LIST, HOWEVER, YOU'LL BE ON YOUR WAY TO BEING A DUGMA TO END ALL DUGMAOT!!!

# CHAVER L'CHAVER: TEACHING YOUR MEMBERS

**A big part of your job as Rel/Ed is educating your peers. Whether you are leading a learner's minyan, or teaching about Jewish or non-Jewish subjects, it is imperative that you remember a few simple rules of thumb:**



- 1. ALWAYS** know what you're talking about. It says in Pirkei Avot 4:16, "Study with great care, for to err in teaching may be considered a deliberate sin" (Rabbi Yehuda). You should never pretend to know what you're talking about, lest you might lead your friends to do the wrong thing. (Dug. A friend asks you what the laws of Shabbat are. You do not know, but make up a few rules. Your "rules," then, cause your friend to transgress Shabbat. In Jewish tradition, this would be YOUR transgression.).
- 2. If you don't know the answer to something, ASK SOMEONE ELSE!** Your teachers, Rabbis, advisors, and parents are there for a reason! Use them to your advantage.
- 3. Don't talk down to your fellow USYer.** This is extremely important to remember, because no one likes feeling stupid. You obviously know a thing or two, otherwise you wouldn't be Rel/Ed; however, this does not make you smarter than your fellow USYer, nor does it give you the right to regard yourself as such. Just remember that teacher at school who always talked down to you and treated you like a kid. You hated her treating you like you were less intelligent than you knew you were. In the same light, you should not be that teacher to your fellow USYers. (Dug. A friend asks you a question that you feel is obvious. You sigh or roll your eyes and say to him, "Gee, even my three-year old sister knows that!" Thus embarrass-

ing him and making him feel ignorant.). Remember, there was a time when you, too, did not know everything!

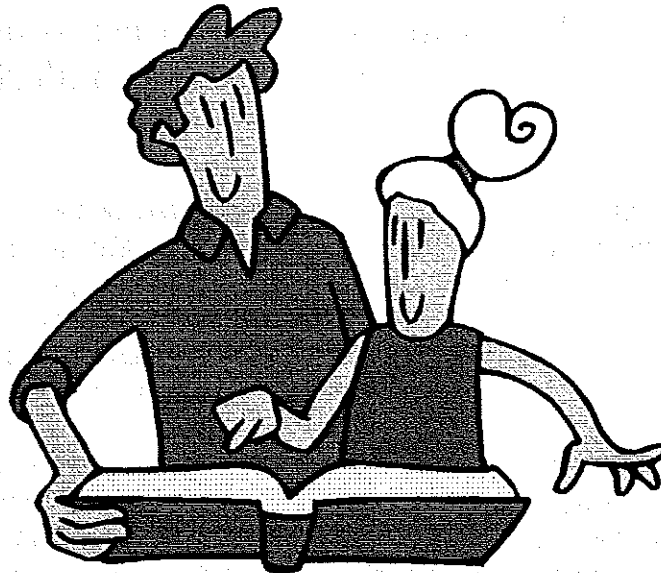
4. **Be prepared.** Never deliver a D'var Torah on the fly, never go into a study session you are supposed to lead not having studied the material, etc. Teaching is like having one major final exam: If you're not prepared, not only do you fail, but so does everybody you're teaching!
5. **Respect everybody's opinion.** There is a saying that if you put ten Jews in a room together, you'll get eleven different opinions. You must remember that everybody is different, and everybody has a different opinion. When it comes to opinions, one is not more valid than the other. So-called facts could be another story, but you must also keep in mind that there are many different sides to each "fact." Given this, you should respect what your fellow USYers say as equally valid to whatever you have to say. You may not like what they say, but as Voltaire says, you should defend to the death their right to say it!
6. **Be patient.** Do not lose your cool if someone doesn't understand a concept right away, or if someone asks you questions ad nauseum. Losing your patience or exploding at someone may hurt their feelings, and make you look pretty bad.

### **SOME GOOD IDEAS FOR STUDY PROGRAMS:**

1. **Shabbat Study Group.** At some shuls, people meet on Shabbat afternoon to discuss the weekly readings for Perek Yomi (the USCJ's program that encourages members to study a chapter of Tanach a day). This is a good idea if many members of your chapter are participating in Perek Yomi. Otherwise, there are an infinite amount of things you could study. This being Shabbat, you could discuss Shabbat-related topics. It is also customary to study Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) on Shabbat afternoons, so this would be a good time to have a Pirkei Avot study group with your USY chapter.
2. **Nosh N Drash.** This was a program a chapter in Atlanta

did this past year. Members met on the first Thursday of every month at different members' houses (or at the shul) and studied an array of Jewish topics (including Talmudic philosophies and interesting laws, Shabbat, Purim, Pirkei Avot, and Tanach) while “noshing” on pizza, coke, and other goodies. This is a fun and relaxing way to study with your chapter.

3. **Web Learning.** Of course, not all teaching or learning has to be done face-to-face nowadays. You can send out weekly Divrei Torah to your chapter via email, post questions for thought or discussion on your chapter's website, and so on. The sky's the limit to what you can do using the net!



## SENSITIVITY TRAINING

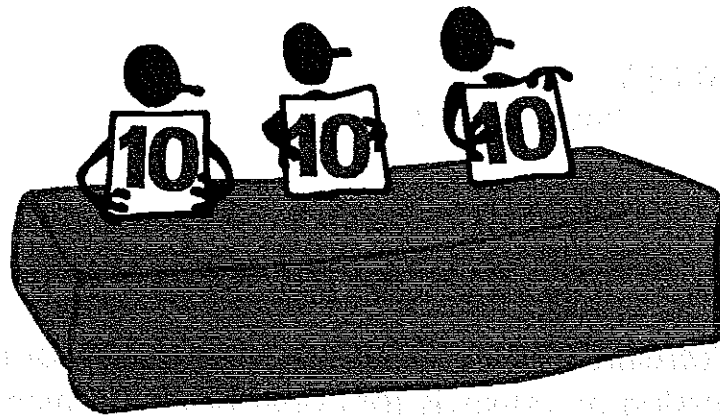
So here we are...members of the Conservative movement! But there's a funny little tidbit about our movement that you may or may not have noticed: because we're essentially the middle-of-the-road in Jewish practice, people of all different observance levels converge to make up our *Kehila*, our community. We have people who are highly observant, people who are less observant, people who observe with the same traditions you do, and people whose traditions may seem weird and wacky to you. Furthermore, there may be members of your chapter who are Reform, Orthodox, or Reconstructionist; people from other shuls with other customs; and people with different Jewish educations than you have. And yet, you are representing the Conservative Jewish opinion as a board member in USY. It is your job to teach and promote this stream of Judaism in your chapter. In this sense, you could be faced with a major dilemma—teaching the Conservative beliefs while being sensitive to everyone's level of observance and custom. In order to ensure the comfort of all your members, just remember this:

**One level of observance or one custom is no more valid than the other. As Conservative Jews, we are encouraged to practice a certain way, and it is your job to teach that way of practicing. However, this does not mean that we are entitled to discredit a person's personal belief. People's personal beliefs are their personal beliefs, and therefore one is not "wrong" for doing something differently than you do.**

**Try to always have the explanation of why you are doing something a certain way at your fingertips, in case somebody asks. (*Dug. Someone wants to know why you are standing for the Hatzi Kadesh while people in his congregation sit. You explain to him that it is a custom to stand during any prayer that talks about the Holiness of Hashem, and that Ashkenazim have adopted the custom of not interrupting their kavanah at a given moment by standing up for the Kadesh while they were previously sitting.*) . Again, you should ALWAYS know what you're talking about.**

**Never claim to be "better" than or more "right" than another person because of your level of knowledge and observance.**

## SCORE WITH CHAPTER MINYANIM



By now, you may be wondering what the best way to bring Jewish ruach, learning, davening, kavannah, and unity to your Chapter's members. Well, if you get real close, I'll whisper to you the time-honored secret of Rel/Ed. Come on...get close...closer still...even closer...OK now you're too close! Back up just a little bit so I can tell you. (Drum Roll Please).....

### A CHAPTER MINYAN!!!

But what, you ask, is this "chapter minyan" that I speak of? And how do you put one together? Well, I'm glad you asked, because I was just about to tell you! Whether it's on a weekday or Shabbat (which is probably a more ideal time), a chapter minyan gives you the opportunity to teach your members, learn from them, and daven with them, while having a great time. It turns people on to Judaism who, before, had thought it to be boring because they'd only been to an adult service. And most of all, it epitomizes what you're supposed to accomplish as a Rel/Ed VP.

## Ingredients for a successful Shabbat Chapter Minyan:

- (At least) 10 USYers
- (At least) 10 siddurim (1 per USYer)
- 1 Torah\*
- 8 Torah readings (7 and a maftir)\*
- 1 Haftarah reading
- 1 D'Var Torah
- 1 Lunch afterwards (optional but recommended for best taste)
- 1 Ruach session afterwards (optional but recommended for best taste)
- 1 Study session afterwards (optional but recommended for best taste)

### Baking Instructions:

Take the 10+ USYers and put them in a room. Give each of them a siddur, and welcome them to a service run and led by USYers. Stir vigorously with a lot of davening, ruach, and kavanah. At the correct time add into mixture: First, Pesukei D'Zimrah; Second, Shacharit; Third, Torah Service; Fourth, a D'Var Torah; Fifth, Musaf. To ensure best flavor, periodically singing and dancing (tastefully) is recommended.

After the service has concluded, it is recommended that lunch be served, ruach be sang, benching be done, and studying be commenced (in this order). These steps are not necessary, but they are always enjoyed.

### NOTE:

Preparation prior to baking **MANDATORY!** Make sure you have USYers leading each part of the service, reading all the Torah and Haftarah readings, doing the aliyot, delivering the D'Var Torah, etc. at least a week prior to baking. This ensures the freshness of the mixture.

\* = This may change on Yom Tov or Rosh Chodesh. Consult your

## Introduction to a D'var Torah

After numerous talks with many chapter presidents and regional and international officers, it has become evident that there is a definite need for some type of handbook on the "how to's" of giving a D'var Torah. Just for the record, it should be emphasized that as a Jewish Youth Group it is part of our responsibility "to teach," and perhaps one of the best ways to do that is through D'verei Torah. As USYers and as Jews, we believe that no meeting or gathering is complete without a D'var Torah. It is written, "If two Jews sit together and exchange no words of Torah, they are a meeting of scoffers, but when two Jews sit together and do exchange words of Torah, the divine presence abides with them...If three Jews have eaten together at a table and have not spoken any words of Torah, it is as if they had eaten at a table for sacrifices to dead idols, but if they speak words of Torah, it is as if they had eaten at the table of G-d." (Rabbi Simon in Pirke Avot). In addition, it is also written, "If you do this you will be happy and all will be well with you." (Pirke Avot 6:4).

For most, however, recognizing the duty to speak D'verei Torah at meetings and events is not the hard part in giving a D'var Torah, it is their confusion about how to actually prepare one. This is the purpose of this section, to dispell the myth that giving D'verei Torah is only a Rabbi's job and to end the confusion surrounding the preparation of a D'var Torah.

First, you should have an understanding of exactly what a D'var Torah is. Although traditionally a D'var Torah is a commentary on the weekly Torah or Haftorah portion, it is not limited to that definition (D'var Torah simply means "words of Torah"). A D'var Torah can come from the Talmud, Midrash (stories), personal interpretations of different Jewish customs or laws, prayers, the evening news, or any Jewish works or piece of Jewish wisdom. Most importantly, no matter what the D'var Torah is, all present should feel that they have gained some insight, enlightenment, or that they have been forced into discerning their own views on an important subject.

After comprehending what a D'var Torah is, you may be faced with either of two dilemmas: 1. You have an idea for a topic, but you don't know where to go after that or 2. You have absolutely no idea on what to talk about. I hope that the next few pages will help you solve your problems.

## How To Decide On A Topic

1. Be creative and adventurous. Here is where I would not suggest going to the Rabbi first. You should be able to come up with an idea. First, think about when and where you are giving a D'var Torah. If it's around a holiday use that holiday, if it is at a meeting talk about leadership or Jewish law. If it is at Saturday Morning Services use the Torah/Haftorah portion, etc. Second, go exploring, pick up a prayer book or Jewish text and start reading, something is almost guaranteed to jump out at you and say, "This is a good idea". Thirdly, think about something you have always wanted to know about. Finally, if you are having a program specifically about something or someone (Heschel, creative service themes, Tzedakah, etc.) then deal with that subject in your D'var Torah.
2. After you have an idea talk to your Rabbi, they don't mind helping you along, but they may be offended if you have them do all of your work for you. Now, go to the proceeding page for help on finding sources.
3. You may want to develop one theme idea for the year or for a series of meetings/programs. There are many ideas for themes in the USY Program Bank, but here are a few of the better ones:
  - A. Prayer: Explore and explain one prayer each time (for instance, progress through the service). Deal with why we say each prayer and why it is placed that way that it is in the service.
  - B. Shabbat: This topic has unlimited possibilities. You may want to deal with why we observe Shabbat the way we do, how certain customs have developed and what significance they have for us today. Examine the differences in the weekday and Shabbat services, and analyze the Zmirot for Shabbat.
  - C. Pirke Avot: An inexhaustible source. Take one passage at a time and relate its importance to us today. Take one idea from Pirke Avot (leadership, community service, study, etc.) and develop it at each meeting.
  - D. Current Events: A personal favorite, this subject allows you to analyze world events and parallel them with Jewish views on the subject or stimulate an ethical question in your members' minds.

## How To Find Information On A Known Topic

This is easier than you may think!

1. Talk to your Rabbi. I can't think of any better suggestion than to always talk to your Rabbi. He/She is a great resource that is always willing to help out. They won't have all the answers all the time, so don't expect miracles, but they will give you a lot of useful suggestions. In addition, this will build beneficial relations with your rabbi, which can never hurt.
2. Go get sources. Browsing your synagogue's library is a good start. Find local experts on the subject that you are considering. Another possibility is to look at the many different indexes on Jewish sources, which can tell you where your topic might be addressed in Jewish texts. You might want to ask your Rabbi for suggestions in this area. Remember though. Use, don't abuse your Rabbi do as much as you can by yourself.
3. Make a point. After you have found and collected your sources, start reading them and try to come up with a point to make. Don't just give a D'var Torah on a subject, relate it to USY, leadership, the purpose of your meeting, or any other pertinent aspect of our lives. Explain the importance of what you're teaching, even if you are just learning for learning's sake.
4. Write the D'var Torah. Pick out which quotes and passages that you will use from your sources. Then, organize them into some kind of logical order (chronological, indirect to direct relevance, sectionally: Torah, commentaries, Midrash, etc.), this will make it much easier to write the talk. Next, find an exciting way to open the speech, a story, rhetorical question, quote, current event, etc. are all excellent ways to start. There are also many different formats, which can be used for Divrei Torah. 1. Discuss one prayer, line from the Torah, story, etc. and its interpretations. First start with what you will be using, then give your personal interpretation, then mention commentaries and text which support your position, and finally end with its relevance or meaning to us in everyday life. 2. Ask a question, answer it through text, and finally discuss meaning of the answer. 3. Introduce a law or custom then chronologically trace its development. 4. Take an event and discuss how Jewish law would address it. 5. Anything else that you feel comfortable with.
5. Go over the finished product with someone knowledgeable on your subject. Also, make sure that it fits the audience, which you are addressing (USY, Junior Services, Youth Commission, etc.) and that it is the right length of time (meeting: 5 minutes, sermon: 15-30, etc.)

## Other Suggestions

1. Don't be afraid to delegate responsibility. Have other officers or board members give D'vrei Torah sometimes as well (unless you were specifically asked to do it).
2. A D'var Torah is for learning. Don't be nervous, the purpose is not for you to be perfect, but for everyone to learn, don't get intimidated, otherwise you may defeat the purpose of giving a D'var Torah.
3. Be thorough. Make sure that you are making a valid conclusion, or that you are not misinterpreting your sources (check with your Rabbi to be sure).
4. Always try to apply what you are saying to what the group is doing or to something which relates to current events or everyday life, whether you give the D'var Torah at the beginning or the end of the event.

## QUIZ: LEADERSHIP AND JUDAISM—HOW DOES YOUR BOARD RANK?

By now you realize that it is your job to ensure that Judaism plays a key role in your chapter. However, how can it play a key role in your chapter if it does not play a key role in your chapter executive board? Here's a short little quiz which will give you insight on how much emphasis is placed on the importance of Judaism on your chapter board.

1. Divrei Torah are delivered:
  - A) At every board meeting.
  - B) At the majority of board meetings.
  - C) When someone feels like giving one
  - D) What's a D'var Torah?
2. Your board davens together (Including birkat hamazon)
  - A) At every board meeting that falls during a time in which one can daven (I.e. doing mincha at an afternoon board meeting).
  - B) At most board meetings, depending on how everyone feels.
  - C) Usually not, but if we happened to be in the mood and had siddurim, sure.
  - D) Never.
3. Observance requirements are
  - A) Strictly enforced for board members.
  - B) Recommended for board members.
  - C) Mentioned once to board members.
  - D) Laughed at by board members.
4. Attendance of your chapter board at Rel/Ed programs is
  - A) 90-100%. Everyone LOVES them.
  - B) 80-90%. They usually get excited.
  - C) 60-80%. If they have nothing better to do.
  - D) Below 60%. What? And miss VH1's The List?
5. At board meetings
  - A) Males are required to wear a kippah
  - B) Males are required to wear a head-covering of some sort, especially if food is being served.
  - C) Head-coverings are recommended, but not required.
  - D) Head-coverings are rarely worn ("What, and mess up my 'do?!").

6. Board members are required to come to shul
- A) Four times a month or more
  - B) Two-Three times a month
  - C) Once a month
  - D) Whenever it is convenient for them (if at all).

**NOW ADD UP YOUR SCORE:**

For every "A" answer, give yourself 4 points.

For every "B" answer, give yourself 3 points.

For every "C" answer, give yourself 2 points.

For every "D" answer, give yourself 1 point.

**20-24 Points:**

Your board members are super-Jews! Judaism plays a large role in your board's functioning and it is important for them to not only observe Judaism to their comfort, but also to become Jewish Dugmaot for their fellow USYers. Your board deserves a cookie!

**15-19 Points:**

Your board members obviously take great care and pride in their Judaism, and it plays a large role in the inner-workings of your board. A problem may arise where a board member is not the best Jewish Dugma, or you may not have a D'var Torah at all board meetings, but overall if you are in this category, you are essentially in safe waters. There is nothing at all wrong with being in this category, but you want to make sure that the interest in Judaism does not dip past this level. You also want to tell your board to keep up the good work, but to ensure the importance of Jewish content in the chapter, they need to make sure to at least keep striving for that 26-32 category!

**10-14 Points:**

BEWARE! Your board is approaching the danger level when it comes to being Jewish dugmaot and caring about the level of importance Judaism plays in your board's inner-workings. If this problem continues, you run the risk of having a board (and even chapter) that puts little to no emphasis on the importance of Judaism and being a Jewish role model. IT IS YOUR JOB TO REVERSE THIS TREND! Look at the answers you circled "C" or "D" and try to get those up to the "A" or "B" answers.

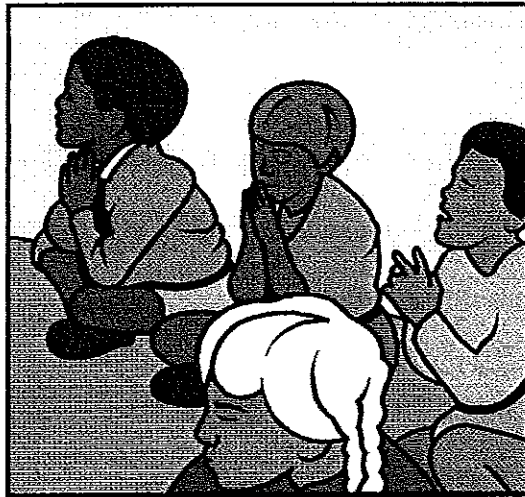
**6-9 Points:**

I don't want to alarm you, but your board seriously needs a good kick in the pants to get them on the right track. Judaism is only slightly important to your board members, which is not good for the survival of your chapter. A board (and subsequently a chapter) without an emphasis on Judaism is almost the opposite of what USY strives to achieve. Look at the answers you circled "C" or "D" and try to get those up to the "A" or "B" answers, ASAP.

Remember, as your chapter's Rel/Ed VP, it is your job to ensure an emphasis is placed on Jewish content in your chapter. This emphasis should go from the president to your board members to your chapter's members. Meaning that it is important your fellow board members see the importance of this. This does not mean, of course, that you should tell your board how or what they are "supposed to" observe, but you should encourage doing little things (if you don't already do them).

- **Open board meetings with a D'var Torah.**
- **Stress observance of the mitzvot to your board.**
  - **Daven together as a board.**
- **Recite the appropriate brachot for food served at meetings.**
- **Contribute to tzedakah at board meetings on a regular basis.**

There are lots of other ways you can bring Jewish content to your board, but those are five really easy, really effective ways to do it. What ways can YOU think of???



**REMEMBER:** The board that prays together, stays together.

# THE ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL HONOR SOCIETY AND YOU: PARTNERS IN FREEDOM!

**"The dignity of being a Jew is in the sense of commitment."  
- Abraham Joshua Heschel**

## **The Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society**

It's relatively easy to join USY. Becoming a committed and active member of the Jewish community is not so easy. But the future of the North American Jewish community lies in the hands of those who are conscientiously learning about Judaism and practicing what they learn.

To encourage USYers to learn more about Judaism and the observance of Mitzvot, USY established the **Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society** in 1979. The society is named after Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), a faculty member of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and one of the most influential Jewish figures of modern times. Through the development of his original philosophy of Judaism and the application of that philosophy to the problems of modern times, Rabbi Heschel became a man to honor and emulate.

The Heschel Society is a very special core group of USYers who are committed to their Judaism. Because Heschel Society members are a significant and elite group within USY, USY offers special programs for them.

## **Some of these programs are:**

- The annual **International Heschel Study Kinnus** (convention) held in a different city each year.
- Special mailings of various topics sent to Heschel Society members throughout the year.
- Subscription to the **newsletter** of the society, **Boer B'aesh**.
- Special activities which take place at Regional and International USY Conventions. Most regions hold special study sessions and receptions open only to Heschel members. Many regions also honor their Heschel Society members with small gifts.
- The annual USY International Convention is the site of the Heschel Society induction. This is in addition to a special educational program at the convention only for Heschel Society members.

## **The Heschel Society requires a USYer to demonstrate active involvement in each of the following three areas:**

**The Study of Torah:** Society members must take part in at least two hours of supervised Jewish study per week or enroll in the USY Home Study Program.

**Prayer (Avodah):** Society members must participate in congregational prayer at least four times a month - three of which should be on Shabbat.

**Acts of Loving Kindness (G'milut Chasadim):** At least once a month, society members must engage in a community service project such as visiting the sick, tutoring, assisting in Hebrew Schools, etc. Heschel Society members are currently involved in many of these worthwhile projects.

**HOW TO APPLY:**

**STEP 1: PRINT OUT THE APPLICATION FROM THE WEB**

**AT**

**[http://www.uscj.org/usy/RELED/content/heschel/  
apply.html](http://www.uscj.org/usy/RELED/content/heschel/apply.html)**

**STEP 2: FILL IT OUT.**

**STEP 3: MAIL IT TO:**

**USY**

**Heschel Honor Society**

**155 5th Avenue**

**New York, NY 10010**

**OR**

**Take it from the last page of this packet, Appendix E.**

# APPENDIX A: REL/ED PROGRAM BANK

## For Holy Days:

### **High Holy Day Youth Service/Discussion**

One of the worst parts of the High Holy Days is sitting in that boring grown-ups service, listening to the cantor's long, drawn-out singing and the choir repeating him/her after every word. How do you get your members excited about the High Holy Days if this is what they're like where you live??? The answer is a USY Service and discussion. You can make the High Holy Day service quick, fun, and accessible, using your free-thinking and ruach-filled USYers as fuel for an awesome service. The service and discussion should be done exclusively by USYers. Add in creative activities like short skits about the Holy Day, or have a High Holy Day game show. The possibilities are endless!

### **Sukkot Sukkah Party**

This is always a popular event. There are an infinite amount of things you can do. Some chapters have regressive dinners in a Sukkah. Others have a joint World Series and Sukkah party. And still others invite shelter kids to come learn about Sukkot with them and play Sukkot games. On Chol HaMoed, there are so many things that you can do because you are not restricted by the laws of Yom Tov, so the sky is literally the limit with a Sukkah party.

### **Chanukah Latke Lock-In**

This program is also wide-open to change, because there is so much one can do in the spirit of Chanukah. You can have an all-you-can-eat latke and sufganiot (jelly doughnuts) bar, a dreidel casino, Biblio-dramas using the story of Chanukah, and so on. This can either be a lock-in (as the title suggests) or just a program for an evening. This is an excellent time to teach members about little-known things about Chanukah, or to engage them in a discussion about Chanukah's true meaning.

### **Purim Carnival**

Invite the whole community to come out for this one. Have games and concessions set up for the kinder, and donate the profits to Tikun Olam (tzedakah). Some chapters make over \$1000 at their Purim carnival's, so your SA/TO VP will also be happy. Also, be sure to have a Megillah reading, which can be led by USYers. Another fun thing to do is a costume contest.

### **Pesach Chocolate Seder**

This program invites USYers to ditch the preconceived notions of a Pesach Seder and adopt a more tasty one...one that's done completely with chocolate! Matzah is now Hershey's bars, wine is chocolate milk, Karpas is green M&M's, etc. The seder is conducted just as a normal one, with the exception of these substitutions (and remember

that every prayer is "She'hakol"). This is a fun way for USYers to learn about the Pesach service, to view the holy day in a fun way, and to eat lots and lots of chocolate (a USY staple food). This program must be done before Pesach so you can eat non-Kosher for Passover chocolate (if you do it on Passover, you have to be careful about what you use—M&M's, for example, are not Kosher for Pesach).

### **Tikun Leil Shavuot**

A Shavuot staple in some shuls, "Tikun Leil Shavuot" is a late night (or all night) study session on Erev Shavuot. A midrash explains that the night before the Torah was given at Har Sinai, the B'nai Yisrael slept so soundly that they nearly missed the giving of the Torah the next morning! A custom developed, therefore, to stay up all night studying on Erev Shavuot, so we don't miss the giving of the Torah. Have a USY Tikun Leil Shavuot and observe this great minhag!

**These were just a few good examples of the wide array of programs you can do on Holy Days!**

### **For Shabbat:**

#### **Chapter Minyan**

This is a good way to throw into your chapter all sorts of Rel/Ed goodies: services led in full by USYers, chapter unity, LOTS of ruach, and the holiness of Shabbat are all involved in a successful chapter minyan. Ask members of your chapter to lead services, read Torah, and do aliyot. Add in a good USYer D'var Torah and you're ready to roll! The more people you get involved, the more successful the minyan! This is typically done once a month, but if you wished to do it less or more often it would work as well. Just make sure it's ok with your Rabbi to hold a separate USY service...some don't like the competition!

#### **Shabbat Study Group**

At some shuls, people meet on Shabbat afternoon to discuss the weekly readings for Perek Yomi. This is a good idea if many members of your chapter are participating in Perek Yomi. Otherwise, there are an infinite amount of things you could study. This being Shabbat, you could discuss Shabbat-related topics. It is also customary to study Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) on Shabbat afternoons, so this would be a good time to have a Pirkei Avot study group with your USY chapter.

**These were just a few good examples of the wide array of programs you can do on Shabbat!**

### **Just to have a Rel/Ed program:**

#### **Nosh N Drash**

This was a program a chapter in Atlanta did this past year. Members met on the first Thursday of every month at different members' houses (or at the shul) and studied an array of Jewish topics (including Talmudic philosophies and interesting laws, Shabbat, Purim, Pirkei Avot, and Tanach) while "noshing" on pizza, coke, and other goodies. This is a fun and relaxing way to study with your chapter.

## **Etgar**

This is a tough program to pull off, but if you can, all the more power to ya! This program focuses more on the "Ed" portion of your title. Your chapter would take a trip to an American city that has a good level of history in it (good dugmaot: New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Memphis, Boston, Washington D.C., et. al.). After choosing a city, you should pick an educational theme for the weekend which corresponds to the city to which you are traveling (I.e. Rock and Roll and Civil Rights in Memphis, Jewish life in America in New York City, etc.). While there, you will tour the major sites, museums, and landmarks in the city, and discuss how they relate to your topic. Participants in the weekend should submit essays which pertain to the topic before departing on the trip, and a sourcebook should be prepared with the USYers' essays, information on the topic, and so on. You can spend Shabbat with another chapter in the city, or if you choose to stay in a hotel, you can have Shabbat there. This program is not only insanely fun, but incredibly educational. **NOTE: THIS PROGRAM MAY BE VERY EXPENSIVE, AND REQUIRES MUCH PREPARATION PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL DATE OF THE PROGRAM.**

## **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Tolerance Conference**

Next Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (in January) invite a group of African-American teens (there is probably a church in your area) to join your chapter for a discussion on current relations between the Black and Jewish communities, stereotypes we have about each other and to what extent are they valid (or in-valid), the status of equality and civil rights in America, and other such issues. This will get members to view there African-American neighbors in a different way, and help share in the spirit of the day, which is important for Jews as well as Black Americans.

## **Trip to the Zoo...Jewish Style!**

Take your chapter to the zoo and while walking around looking at the animals, discuss Jewish views on sensitivity and kindness to animals, the laws of kashrut, the validity of vegetarianism in Judaism, and so on. Not only is it fun because you are at the zoo, but you are learning about a very important topic.

## **Yom Hashoa Program**

As a chapter, attend your community's Yom Hashoa memorial service (or conduct one yourselves if your community does not have one) and meet up for a discussion on the Holocaust. Bring in a survivor to speak to you, or just discuss the Holocaust and Jewish survival with each other. Bring in various readings and documents about the Holocaust and discuss their power and impact on the way people view the Holocaust and its importance.

**These were just a few good examples of the wide array of Rel/Ed programs you can do!**

# **APPENDIX B: READER'S DIGEST GUIDE TO SHABBAT AND YOM TOV**

**THIS IS MEANT AS A SIMPLE GUIDE TO SHABBAT AND YOM TOV OBSERVANCE. IT IS BY NO MEANS A COMPLETE OR DETAILED LIST. FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTION, CONSULT YOUR RABBI.**

**(INFORMATION TAKEN FROM A GUIDE TO JEWISH RELIGIOUS PRACTICE,  
BY ISAAC KLEIN)**

## **SHABBAT:**

**1. IT IS A MITZVAH TO HEAR THE TORAH BEING READ ON SHABBAT (OR ON ANY OTHER DAY), SO ONE SHOULD TRY TO GO TO SHUL.**

**ONE IS ENCOURAGED TO REFRAIN FROM:**

- 1. CARRYING OBJECTS (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF INSIDE A "PRIVATE DOMAIN.")**
- 2. LIGHTING OF A FIRE.**
- 3. DRIVING (ACCORDING TO CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM, UNLESS TO SHUL OR TO GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM).**
- 4. COOKING (THIS GOES BACK TO THE LIGHTING A FIRE, AND IT'S A COMPLICATED LAW, BUT BASICALLY YOU CANNOT PREPARE FOOD ON SHABBAT).**
- 5. WRITING.**
- 6. USE OF ELECTRICITY.**
- 7. USING ELECTRONICS SUCH AS A COMPUTER, TELEVISION, CAMERA, ETC.**
- 8. TRAVELING (DERIVED FROM THE PASSAGE, "ABIDE YE EVERY MAN IN HIS PLACE... ON THE SEVENTH DAY," EXODUS 16:29). ONE MAY TRAVEL NO FARTHER THAN 3/4 OF A MILE OUTSIDE HIS CITY'S BOUNDARIES. (THIS MEANS WALKING).**

## **YOM TOV:**

- SAME AS SHABBAT, EXCEPT ONE IS ALLOWED TO COOK FOOD. HOWEVER, IF YOM TOV FALLS ON SHABBAT, SHABBAT LAW SUPERCEEDS YOM TOV AND ONE MUST REFRAIN FROM COOKING.**

**WE WISH YOU HAPPY YOM TOVS AND RESTFUL SHABBATOT ALL YEAR!!!!**

**APPENDIX C:  
INTERNATIONAL USY RELIGION/  
EDUCATION ON THE WEB**

**REPEAT AFTER ME:**

**WWW  
DOT  
USY  
DOT  
ORG  
SLASH  
RELED**

**This site is the center of International Religion/Education. It has information about all International Rel/Ed programs, as well as information to various regional Religion/Education programs. It has a database of Divrei Torah, links to other Jewish sites on the web, etc. This site could be incredibly useful to you. Check it out!**

**You can also sign up for the International Rel/Ed listserv on the website. This listserv is a way to share ideas and advice with other Rel/eds throughout the country.**

## **APPENDIX D: WHERE TO FIND RESOURCES AND ANSWERS**

**AS I HAVE SAID BEFORE, THE BEST RESOURCE AVAILABLE TO YOU IS BY FAR YOUR RABBI. HOWEVER, IF FOR SOME REASON YOUR RABBI IS NOT AVAILABLE, OR YOU DO NOT THINK YOUR RABBI CAN HELP WITH YOUR PARTICULAR QUESTION, HERE IS A LIST OF SOME PLACES YOU CAN LOOK:**

### **USY ONLINE PROGRAM BANK**

**AN ENORMOUS DATABASE OF PROGRAMS.**

**URL: [HTTP://USCJ.ORG/USY/PB/NUMBER.HTM](http://uscj.org/usy/pb/number.htm)**

### **USY ONLINE DVAR TORAH BANK**

**A GREAT DATABASE OF DIVREI TORAH IF YOU'RE EVER STUCK ON AN IDEA. NOTE: NEVER PLAGIARIZE. MERELY USE THESE DIVREI TO SPARK YOUR OWN CREATIVE PROCESS.**

**URL: [HTTP://USCJ.ORG/USY/RELED/DT/INDEX.HTML](http://uscj.org/usy/reled/dt/index.html)**

### **MAVENSEARCH**

**ONLINE JEWISH SEARCH ENGINE. VERY USEFUL, VERY RELIABLE.**

**URL: [WWW.MAVENSEARCH.COM](http://www.mavensearch.com)**

### **VIRTUALJERUSALEM**

**PROBABLY THE LARGEST (AND MOST UPDATED) JEWISH SOURCE ON THE WEB. LOTS OF GREAT STUFF ON THE SITE (SUCH AS CANDLELIGHTING TIMES), PLUS LOTS OF USEFUL LINKS.**

**URL: [WWW.VIRTUALJERUSALEM.COM](http://www.virtualjerusalem.com)**

### **A GUIDE TO JEWISH RELIGIOUS PRACTICE BY ISAAC KLEIN**

**MOST LIKELY THE MOST COMPLETE REFERENCE GUIDE TO CONSERVATIVE JEWISH PRACTICE. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT A CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM'S BELIEF OR PRACTICE, AND YOUR RABBI IS NOT AVAILABLE, THIS BOOK WILL BE YOUR SAVIOR! NOTE: MAY BE HARD TO FIND.**

# APPENDIX E: APPLICATION FOR HESCHEL HONOR SOCIETY.

Return to: USY Heschel Honor Society, 155 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010. If you have any questions, be sure to call us at 212-533-7800, extension 2327.

DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ CURRENT GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

REGION: \_\_\_\_\_ SYNAGOGUE: \_\_\_\_\_

I fulfill the TORAH requirement by (circle one):

- A) Attending Hebrew High School
- B) USY Home Study Program
- C) Private Study with a teacher.

Describe your course of study: \_\_\_\_\_

- D) Attending a Jewish Day School

Describe your G'MILUT CHASADIM project below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I attend the required number of religious services (initial here): \_\_\_\_\_

I pledge to take my standardized tests on a non-Saturday date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SPONSORSHIP:** I wish to sponsor the above USYer as a member of the Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society of United Synagogue Youth. S/he fulfills all the requirements including: TORAH study (at least 2 hours per week); AVODAH (attends synagogue at least 4 times a month, 3 of which are on Shabbat); G'MILUT CHASADIM (involvement in a community service project at least 3 hours per month).

SPONSOR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP TO USYER: \_\_\_\_\_

(Sponsor should not be a parent, friend, or other USYer)