

Gavriella Jacobs

Option B

Jewish History Final

My core belief is that everything should be in moderation; anything extreme can be, and usually is, dangerous. In order to achieve this type of society, I believe communication is key. I grew up in a home that taught me this value, and I was able to apply it to my learning of Jewish History this year.

During my childhood, I have always been given choice. Nothing was ever just black and white in my house because my dad ensured there is room to be reasonable. Even if the answer was no, I was always allowed to question why. When I did I was either met with satisfying answers, or a long discussion in which my dad took the time to explain his side and I would be allowed to express my own thoughts. But my mom is different. She would rather lay down the law and us follow it blindly but happily. Although this is the norm with parenting, us kids learned from my dad that there was another option, and being a family of strong minded, smart kids, we were going to opt for the more fair choice.

When I was seven I moved from Chicago to Cleveland. In Chicago, my family lived in a frum neighborhood where I attended *cheder lehavetz*. I was happy, but that was probably because I was young and didn't know any different. When we switched cities to Cleveland, a modern orthodox community, I realized I was raised differently. My morals were essentially the same and we practiced Judaism in like ways, but there was one key distinction between me and the people in my new home: I only wore skirts, while everyone else was allowed to wear pants.

I am someone who doesn't bend easily to peer pressure, but this was something visible that I wanted to change. It's not that I had to be just like them, but it sparked a question of why I

was the only one wearing skirts. When I respectfully questioned my mom, I received an unsatisfying answer, “Because that’s what we do.” So I went to my dad and asked the same thing, but he was much more willing to delve into the Judaism behind it, explaining the concept that girls should not wear the same clothes as boys. Even though I got an explanation, I was not happy. Clothes are made for boys and girls separately, so we are not wearing the same clothes as them. When I made my argument to my mom I was again met with a, “Because that’s what we do.” My dad proceeded to explain the concept of tzniut, that skirts are more modest. But again, I argued that pants are not necessarily worse, sometimes it’s the opposite. Sweatpants are baggy and comfortable, whereas pencil skirts are tight and show your figure, not to mention hard to walk in.

After years and years of conversations and explaining and back and forth, I was granted my wish. Now, I am able to wear loose fitting pants whenever I want, which is great. But something more amazing that I gained from the experience is the ability to rationally and calmly express my opinion and resolve conflicts in compromise by talking to and understanding the other side’s argument.

In Jewish History this year, we learned about the Arab-Israeli conflict. I was reminded of my pants/skirt situation when delving into this topic because in both, there was (originally, in my case) no compromise; one side would not settle for less than what they believe they deserved. The Arabs want Israel for themselves, refusing to sign onto the partition plan proposed by Israel and the United Nations, claiming the land belonged to them in the first place and violently expressing their opinions with words of hate and physical war. However, I believe that if everyone thinks less extremely and considers that it doesn’t have to be all or nothing, they can reach a consensus in which everyone wins. Growing up in an environment where I was and still

am allowed and encouraged to fight for what I believe in and having a dad so open to conversation and trusting in me helped me connect to this topic of Jewish History.

Ezra Klineman

Jewish History

Ms. Bolman

June 11, 2018

### This I Believe

This I believe, I believe in many things. I believe in the Cavs, I believe in getting good grades and I believe in the importance of family. However, the most important thing that I believe, is the safety and the right to the state of Israel.

This year we have covered everything, from the 1st Reich all the way to today. However, the one thing that has stayed constant through all the changes in our lives as Jews has been that we will always fight for our rights; and our right is to have the state of Israel. Given to us by our G-d As it says in the Torah, that the Jews read, that the Christians read and as the Quran says that Abraham and his children will live in this land forever.

Establishing an identity. At the way beginning of this year, we talked about Michael A. Meyer's Jewish Identity. We Asked what does it mean to be a jew, what is your Jewish identity and is Judaism an ethnicity, or a religion. The answers to all of these can be decided by looking back at Jewish history. We have always defined ourselves as Jews. if someone walks up to you and asks, What are you? Our immediate reaction is I'm Jewish, not thinking twice about saying the state or country we live in. Even Hitler saw us as Jews, and while Hitler was the worst thing to ever happen to Germany and the world, and made every single wrong decision, he was right about that, we were Jewish Europeans. Not a German Jews, not Polish Jews but just Jews. However we must still answer Michael A. Meyer's question, what does it mean to be Jewish, and what is your

Jewish identity. If you go back to arguably the worst time period in Jewish life, the Holocaust, you can see that the one thing Jews had that the Germans could never strip away from them, was their faith. We will always keep our faith, it is what defines us and it is what it means to be Jewish. To believe G-d will always have our backs even when it does not seem like it.

The Jewish State. In February of 1896 The pamphlet *Der Judenstaat*, in English *On The Jewish State*, Was written by Theodore Herzl ז"ל. This pamphlet was the startup idea that fueled the entire plan to establish a Jewish state. The pamphlet describes, that the Jews, have gone through everything, they have lasted since the Dawn of time and are still standing, and that there is no nation more deserving of a land than the Jews. he then goes on to state his plan. In his plan, he says the Jews shall be granted a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy rightful requirements of a nation. And that the Jews will by hand build it up through tough, but satisfying labor. This pamphlet launched Theodore Herzl's belief in the Jewish state and set a goal to achieve it. Only a few years after this the first Zionist council was formed. The first movement was from August 29th, 1897 to August 31st, 1897. These three days followed a pattern of speeches about what they believe and on the last day they had a group discussion. In class, we had this group discussion where we got to argue the future plans for the state of Israel. We argued over many things but the main one was where the state of the Jews should be located. My end result was that the Jews need Israel. The Jews were born and raised to live in Israel since the beginning of exile we have been saying *l'shanah haba'ah b'yerushalayim*, not *l'shanah haba'ah b'Uganda*.

What is your mission? Like Theodore Herzl, we all have our own mission. Whether it's writing a prompt to start a movement for a Jewish state, or if it's going on facebook to post and Israeli advocacy article. However big or small all of our mission bring the same goal, to establish

the idea that Israel is ours and it has been for 5778 years. This year we have learned many things about Jewish history, however, the most important thing is what we learned about ourselves. And this class was the most eye-opening experience to see what I learned about myself. This year I learned my true purpose on this earth. I learned that whatever I do in life I have to stay connected. And to connect others to Israel. Israel has many issues. And one person cannot tackle it all. I need to gather people so that that they can help people understand why we wake up and say modeh ani to Hashem every single morning. It so we can say we are Jewish and we are proud! And part of being proud to be Jewish is to be proud in our own land. The land that was given to us by the same G-d that Muslims pray to 5 times a day, and the same G-d that Christians sing to weekly. And I think that by me finding my mission I can help others find theirs, in keeping the state of Israel a Jewish one

Simona Baskin

Ms. Bolman

Jewish History

June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### Perception changes your Experience

I have always known that if you have a positive outlook on life, your perception on every situation changes for the better and you are able to handle harder situations and live a happier life. However, I never really fully comprehended the depth of this statement until recently and even now I still only can grasp the meaning.

I learned of this concept at a very young age. My parents got divorced and I was forced to deal with it. I needed to learn to cope with my newfound reality. Unfortunately, it wasn't that simple. I began with dealing with having two houses and having to explain it to the other kids on the playground. Then, I was forced to become more responsible, fast, because I had double the houses which meant double the places to lose things and double the places to look. Year after year I had to overcome a task while a newer and scarier one was thrown at me. To make matters worse, nobody really understood what I was going through. There were other kids whose parents got divorced but each person seemed to be doing fine with the challenges that I had and had different ways of coping with them.

I have four older siblings that can relate to my struggles and all of them have different solutions for the problem, but none seemed to help me. My oldest brother used his distance, he distanced himself from the family and any ties to his past that could potentially pull him down. My other older brother uses jokes as his defense mechanism, he played off everything as if it's all

a prank that will soon be over. My oldest sister threw herself into her work, she worked herself until her breaking point to the point where she couldn't deal with it and so she broke. My other sister used a mask, she shielded everything from everyone. She faked her personality, her interests and her truths. Each option seemed... lonely. I didn't want to have to change myself for a problem that was never my fault to begin with and it all just seemed unfair. It was unfair that they had to get divorced. It was unfair that they had to impact my life with their drama. It was unfair that my siblings had to close themselves off in order to cope. Life is unfair.

Life also just seemed to cycle, I woke up went to school came home did my homework maybe had some free time and then went to bed and repeated everything the next day. I sat down with my mom to ask her about the subject one night. Her response was brief yet made me think about it for a long time, in fact, I still think about it today. She said, "Life is not always the bigger picture. Sometimes, you get the most joy from the smallest things in life." Which is one hundred percent accurate, I have gotten 15 years and 9 months of my life to enjoy and some of my fondest memories are 10 or 15 minutes that my friends and I are goofing around together and just being our crazy selves. This thought opened my view on perception; I have to look at life from all angles. There are some pros to looking at the bigger picture but you also need to focus on the positives that come by day to day. It's a constant juggle. Live in the present, learn from the past and look towards the future.

I saw a perfect example of how this can really turn your life around in the holocaust documentary project. My partner and I had to focus on two survivors and each survivor could not have had a more different outcome on life. One was constantly suffering and stuck by the horrors of the past and unable to fully live her life in the present let alone think about the future.



However the other holocaust survivor started to think about it in the most positive way possible. He *survived*, he *won*. But he kept a balance, he was excited to start a new day but he remembered what the horrors of hsi pas were and he valued life even more for it.

I used to think that my situation is unfair. It still is however if you look at it from a slightly different perception then you see that it's unfair for the rest of the people around me. I was able to learn how to handle hard situations and keep track of my things and learn how to adapt to my surroundings. Nobody is perfect so I do mess up sometimes and I will make small mistakes sometimes big or even huge ones but they are learning mistakes all the same. Obviously I still struggle in my lifestyle but having an eye opening view like this really helps lift your spirit and inspire you to try a bit harder.

In society people often think that the only way to win is to fight back harder. If they hit you, hit them back harder. But that's not the case. I learned that just by shifting your perception, you can see their point of view and adjust yourself in a way that will be considerate of those around you. Your attitude will inspire those around you. If you smile at a person chances are they will smile back. But if you yell at someone chances are they will yell back.

David Lorand

6-11-18

Jewish History

A few years ago, when I was around the ages of 10-12, I never had a really deep connection to Israel. I was not a Zionist in any way, shape, or form. Even though I traveled to Israel many times in my life, I never felt as if I belonged there. I really had no dream of moving to Israel or anything even close to that. One time, I even tried persuading my friend to not want to move to Israel with statements like, "The U.S. is way more safe than Israel is." I didn't only do this once. I argued with my friends about Zionism many times, I'd even argue with my teachers about it. I hated how Fuchs Mizrahi pretty much forced Zionist ideas on everyone and didn't allow anyone to think to themselves. Every year, the school has dozens of events that promote Zionism. Because of this, I really didn't feel like I was apart of the school. My life went on like this until one Shabbos night where I debated with my mom about Zionism for hours. I started by talking about how Zionism is a bit crazy because Israel is way more dangerous than America, and America allows all Jews to practice their laws freely, just like Israel. I asked her how Israel can be a better country for the Jews than America is at the moment. She started off by teaching me the importance of Jewish history. The discussion started off by telling me about Avraham, what had happened his whole life, but more importantly, where it happened. My mom then continued by talking about Hashem promising Avraham his children will be as many as the stars. The discussion continued to the 12 tribes. Zooming forward in time, she got to Moshe and Bnei Yisrael wanting to flee to Canaan while in exile in Egypt, and how Israel was like our fortress of safety to protect us from enemies.

Zooming forward in time yet again, she eventually got to the subject of the Holocaust. While I already knew general knowledge about the Holocaust, she spoke about the murder and suffering of the Jews during the time period. It eventually went on until we got to the point where Jews were trying desperately to get into Israel. I learned that Jews needed to go there so bad because it is the only place where they can really practice their religion freely without worry. She said that Jews can't really do that in America because Jews have a very long, deep, meaningful, and holy connection to the land itself. It's not just a piece of land for the Jews, it's their history. No other nation has so much history to any piece of land like the Jews have towards Israel. If Jews were to think that Israel was just a piece of land like the U.S. is, then we'd lose our history as a people and we'd forget who we are. The conversation pretty much ended there. I really thought about what my mom said and I think it completely changed my view point of Israel and Zionism in general. I now realized that Zionism was so important to the Jews as a whole, that if we didn't believe in Zionism, the Jews would completely fall apart. I think that learning about the 6 day war was the most inspiring subject to me. Even against armies way more than twice our size, somehow Israel came out on top and lived on. Going to Israel again after my debate with my mom, looking out into the streets and seeing Jews thrive was really the last point to her debate. Just learning about what Jews have gone through to fight for our land, and then actually see in person, Jews thriving in the land of Israel is just awe-inspiring. 3 years later, I still hold that exact viewpoint and don't know where I would be without it. Going into tenth grade and learning not only about our biblical history but our more recent history was inspiring to me as a Jew. It was inspiring to me because I learned about how, just through our connection to Israel, Jews have come through so much and fought so hard for something we believe in. I believe that Zionism itself has held together the Jewish people

throughout thousands of years of exile because we had drive. I believe that belief is the strongest motivator and I believe in zionism.

Dovid Ben-Tor

Throughout this year, we have gone through the basics of the history of the Jews in Galut from the last six hundred years. It was extremely moving to me to go from learning about persecution in Europe and the Holocaust to learning about what is in my opinion “reishit smichat giulateinu” (the beginning of the flowering of our redemption) in the State of Israel. One of the most intense lessons for me was when we did the Gallery walk and read about the persecution of Jews in France in the 1800s (page 55). The picture I chose to write about was one of two Jews running holding Sifrei Torahs. This hit me hard as I wrote “I could not imagine having to remove a Torah from an Aron in order to save it” (page 54). This idea was and is scary; to have to remove a Sefer Torah, the scroll on which all of our beliefs are based, from the Aron because otherwise it would be burned, is something which Christians did not have to fear in the 1800s or really ever. Only a few days later, we had another gallery walk showing images of Israeli soldiers and other modern Zionist pictures (page 67). I chose to write about a picture of an Israeli soldier davening next to a tank. I felt that this image “brought me back to what I perceived as pure Zionism because while this man is a soldier fighting for his Jews, he is also staying true to what it really means to be “Jewish” (page 67). Going from learning about persecution and evil to only a few days later learn about us being able to once again fight for our nation was very meaningful and struck true to why I have always been very Zionist. After this we went on to our in-depth study of the Holocaust, the worst event in history, and learned about the terrors that happened because of anti-Semitism and hate. But what really interested and inspired me was what we learned after that.

The entire year I had been waiting to get to this unit; we had been spending all this time on the misfortunes of the Jews but finally, now we started learning about the triumphs and victories. I

think that everything that we learned about persecution and Anti-Semitism is the reason that it is so important and extraordinary that we now have a state and an army. This is because when the Christians hated us, they came and killed our men and raped our women, when the Germans hated us and stated clearly that they planned to make the Jews into simply something you see in a museum like extinct species of animals, they succeeded in killing more than half of us. But now, with the arab leaders swearing to push the Jews into the sea and that they are “glad that the jews are all coming to Israel so that they don’t have to go far to kill us”, they have not been able to fulfill any of their promises. The common factor in almost all examples of persecution of Jews for the past two thousand years is that we have had no way to defend ourselves. Even in the early days of Jewish migration to what was then british mandate Palestine, the arabs could simply get mad and kill dozens of Jews like what happened in Chevron in 1929, in my reflection about this attack i wrote “they slaughtered dozens of Jews, they destroyed families, and killed wife’s, fathers, sons, daughters and grandparents, and for what? All these people wanted to do was live in peace” (page 192). But these people did not have a way to defend themselves, many of the british soldiers thought that the Jews were devils and they deserved it and the british government needed the arabs oil. But now if the arabs want to hurt Jews then they first have to go through one of the best and most powerful armies in the world.

The final thing that hit me in this class was how quickly Germany went from being one of the most educated countries in the worlds to the most murderous one. I wrote that “because it was done in small steps at a time, it was not as strange to the germans and they were less sensitive” (page 219). This is the same case with the arabs, no one is born evil or anti semitic, but when in classrooms you learn math by “one dead jew plus one dead jew equals two dead jews” it is hard to

not hate israel and its Jewish inhabitants. People around the world are also easily brainwashed to be anti israel and this is why it is so important that as Jews we learn to advocate for Israel in order to counter the brainwashing that is done by many mainstream media companies as well as colleges and schools across the country. This is why I believe that this was one of the most important classes we can have because by learning about israel's past we can properly advocate for its future

Menachem Edelstein

option B (this I believe)

The most thought provoking lesson I am taking out of Jewish History Class this year is how important and connected religion is and must be to Israel. This I believe is a result of the Holocaust. My grandparents on my father's side of my family both survived Auschwitz. They lived in Sweden before moving to America. After going through the awful experiences they endured they faced an extremely difficult decision to make, continue their belief in it and continue on the path of Religion or forget it all and live out their life forgetting their past. This decision was one that would and was ~~affected~~ affected my family and will forever have an impact on my family line. They somehow chose to forgive G-d and continue to pray believe and celebrate (to) Him. This I believe had to do with the Jews reclaiming Israel in 1948. Within Israel Jews faced the same challenge to enforce a Jewish ethnicity, style life or forget religion and have Israel be another



# Mendel Ederstein

Said, "Our Identity is bound up with Torah; the definition of our nationhood is that we are carriers of Torah." From him and so many others do we get an understanding <sup>increasing</sup> behind the importance of Judaism and religion in the fight for Israel. If we choose to forget religion there is no field for Israel or any holy land. Even though I never met them I am grateful <sup>(thankful)</sup> to both of my grandparents they chose to keep a ~~cent~~ thousand year old tradition alive and instilled a love and understanding of the importance of Israel. They showed such strength in forgiving G-d and to be able to continue down his path is mind blowing to me. Their descendants will forever be indebted to them. It is for them that I believe in religion and Judaism and also its great importance on the land of Israel. I pray that one day there will be no fighting or politics in Israel and Judaism will blossom and its people will too. Lastly, I hope we will forget the atrocities that took place but

## Rafiseknik - Jewish History Final - This I Believe (6-11-18)

The story in my life I will tell exemplifies a critical piece of my belief system. My belief is that with persistence and a goal in mind, it is difficult to be spiritually deterred. My story specifically focuses on maintaining my religiosity through a series of distractions and somewhat difficult experiences. I have always been known for having a tough (or stubborn) mental shell. This has been both beneficial and endangering. It is beneficial because I have been able to stick to my beliefs and support them though has hurt me in the same fields, such as debate and discussion. I attended the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland from the age of 2.5 until 7th grade. I don't mean to hate on HAE as many people that the school establishes proper values, but I would ~~begin~~ beg to differ. Throughout my long endeavour, I was constantly being cornered and forced to believe in certain ideals. My family has always been subject to societal change, which I generally support. My Rebbes and Morahs (as we referred to them) usually contested and ignored modern views. I



Would simply not put up with this,  
 solely because of my stubborn yet  
 Practical belief. This long story  
 was only the beginning of the establishment  
 of my character. ~~The second story~~ The  
 second time my belief system was  
 compromised was when I slowly watched  
 my brother slip away from Judaism. This  
 is a bit closer to home. There was nothing  
 I feared more than falling into the category  
 of a slacker, both educationally and spiritually.  
 I was not about to fall into the same  
 boat he had. Life at home went on, he stopped  
 wearing a Kippah, or singing on Friday nights; ~~as~~  
 as far as I'm concerned, he even stopped  
 keeping Shabbos and Kashrus. ~~One thing~~  
 Throughout all of this, one thing wouldn't  
 leave my subconscious; my belief of  
 Spiritual Persistence. I have not faltered  
 and I don't plan on it. Outside influence  
 is solely a distraction. It's important  
 to think to yourself every so often,  
 "a I really Persistent? Do I have a  
 spiritual goal in mind? Can I balance  
 change and my belief system?" Many  
 stories throughout my life aside  
 from the two that I ~~mentioned~~ mentioned  
 have solidified what I believe is the  
 most important ~~most important~~ <sup>enhancer</sup> of the  
 moral code, only through persistence  
 and purpose have I been capable of  
 staying aligned religiously and spiritually.

# 1

## Elijah Souot

### Jewish History Final

This I Believe "Thousands of years dreaming,  
70 years of reality"

It was the Summer of 2011,  
my family and I were spending a month  
in Israel and were going to be touring

all over the country. The Hip was  
amazing and to this day I have

stories about family, experiences, and all the  
amazing attributes this land and its people  
possess. However there were a few days

on this Hip that were not quite  
like the rest. I was sitting in

the Hall in Jerusalem eating lunch

with all the Sudan I had an

incredibly loud Siren. People panicking not

knowing what's going on all quickly

2

being moved into bomb shelters. There were ~~bombs~~ ~~be~~ missiles being sent into Israel and being my younger self this was an experience I will never forget. A few days later we were driving and again heard a loud siren. We all got out of the car and crouched on the side of the road as we watched the "Iron Dome" track the missile and stop it. These two experiences were times in my life that I will never forget.

Being a Jew and having a belief and passion for the state of Israel does not mean we only stand up when it's easy it means being strong in our beliefs no matter what the situation is.



Looking back on this experience I  
 am constantly reminded that it will  
 never be easy to leave our  
 homeland. This has been evident to  
 me everytime I took a trip to Israel,  
 my family constantly being asked if  
 we would still be going given the  
 situation (crimes) we why it's so  
 important to not be scared but to  
 be proud and go to the land that  
 G-d has given us after thousands of  
 years. 2001 <sup>summer</sup> & Jews are taken out of Gaza  
 and although I do not remember I ~~don't~~ am  
 told our very own four year old boy killed  
 him and no longer has a home. Both the  
 three boys were kidnapped and Leah found  
 I witnessed Israeli helicopters flying above

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have to reach there late and explore the  
vulnerable situation. 2011 - I already spoke  
earlier and 2016 dozens were being stabbed  
simply for being Jews. I tell you this  
not b/c you just know but to show  
why we must stand for what we  
believe in through good times and bad.  
I realized that I as well as the  
Jewish people must be a voice for  
one another and stand for what we  
believe in. ~~Since~~ Since all of this  
I had the chance to go back again  
in Jan. 2018, Although the situation  
was not as intense this time  
there was a different narrative  
that ~~reminded~~ reminded me why it's  
so important to stand for what we

believe in and support the land of Israel.

We learned this year about mass

migrations to Israel from all over

the world and seeing how committed

people have to sacrifice and give up.

We never learned ~~about~~ more specifically

about people leaving their families and

homes and this is where my story

comes into play. I had always known

my older sister Abby had a passion

for Israel given her position as head

of the BRIT and we both had never

seen what scale this was at. In

Jan. I found out she would be

working abroad and living in Israel for

good. This was a very real moment

for me that had given me an even greater



appreciation for her commitment to ESOI  
 but all the people that have sacrificed  
 here mainstream ideas to go and make  
 Atiyah. Although I will miss ~~the~~ her of  
 course it reinforces for me the  
 gift that we ~~have~~ have which is ESOI.  
 Whether learning this year about the  
 sacrifices people made of seeing first  
 hand the commitment ~~and sacrifice~~ ~~that~~  
~~is that~~ people have ~~is~~ for their homeland,  
 I have a greater appreciation for my nation's  
 past and understand the responsibility we  
 have to establish its future.