



18FORTY



THE JOURNEY OF RELIGIOUS GROWTH

WHEN NO ONE IS FORCING YOU, HOW DO YOU SUSTAIN LONG TERM RELIGIOUS GROWTH?

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

CENTRAL IDEAS OF THE CLASS

- 1 The same way you mature in other areas of life—career, personality, relationships—it is also important to recognize the need to mature in your religious life.
- 2 Eventually there will be times in everyone's life when no one is forcing them to be religious. And it is important for students to recognize and reflect on their commitments so the rest of their life is not just driven by inertia but their own sense of self.
- 3 Social pressure is not a bad thing in religious life. It helps people maintain commitment. But that is a choice too. Will you want to place yourself among a community that will have a positive influence or negative?

SCENARIO (4-5 MINUTES)

There was a teen in high school who was forced to go to minyan every day. And they did. But after high school they stopped going to shul except on Shabbos. And when they went to shul on Shabbos they davened properly and loved going to shul.

Ask the class: Which period in this person's life would you say was better religiously? The time in high school or the time spent afterwards?

Ask the class: Reflect on the differences between transitioning into high school from elementary and transitioning from high school into Israel/seminary. What challenges are similar? What are different? What made you most nervous entering high school? What is your biggest concern now that you are leaving?

PODCAST CLIP #1 & DISCUSSION - FINDING YOUR RELIGIOUS MOMENT (10-15 MINUTES)

In this clip Rav Weinberger discusses how every Jew has a way to connect with Hashem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYZhhBftm3g>

Ask the class:

- What do you think he means "Hashem's Gan Eden is in the heart of a Jew"
- He clearly thinks every Jew wants and searches for a connection with Hashem. Do you agree with his assumption? How would this differ for different personalities?
- In what moments are you most religiously inspired?



PODCAST CLIP #2 & DISCUSSION - ON BEING NORMAL (10 MINUTES)

In this clip Rav Weinberger talks about being normal and making religious growth sustainable: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2Kzofa03Oo>

Ask the class:

- How would you define a “normal” Jew?
- Have you ever felt not normal about your Judaism?



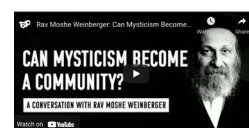
PODCAST CLIP #3 & DISCUSSION - BURDENING AND UNBURDENING RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT (10-15 MINUTES)

In this clip Rav Weinberger elaborates on a beautiful idea of the Beis Yaakov about helping people “load up” religiously and also helping people “unload” religiously. [see Beis Yaakov on the source sheet]:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0q3W6_4bCM

Ask the class:

- Has there been a time in your life where you felt like you needed the unburdening of Yiddishkeit?
- Has there been a time in your life where you felt you needed more of that sense of burden and commitment to Yiddishkeit?
- What does “unburdening” religiously look like?



CLOSING POLL AND DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

Introduce [the poll](#) as a moment to contemplate this next transition. Explain the notion of חסידות ראשונה that religious growth unfolds in stages and even if it has not yet occurred different stages in life naturally will lend themselves for different forms of religious commitment.

Have the students complete the poll and then discuss the results with the class. Use this a way to close this discussion and focus on the transition student’s are having now out of high school and how it is important to think about their journey of religious growth as they leave high school.

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