

The Pedagogies of Jewish Peoplehood: Cultivating Collective Consciousness With Educational Creativity

When the Israelites stood at Sinai, Rashi imagined them gathered *k'ish echad b'lev echad* (Exodus 19:2) — as one person with one heart. Jewish history suggests that such moments are fleeting and difficult to sustain. And yet the aspiration itself still matters. This is the work that these Peoplehood Papers take up. And in this moment in Jewish life, it is work that could not feel more necessary.

At the outset, this project was driven more by instinct than certainty — by a shared hunch that while many people speak about Jewish Peoplehood, far fewer know how to cultivate it in meaningful ways. We sensed that beneath the language of community and connection were deeper questions that deserved more serious exploration: What does it actually mean to belong to the Jewish People? What responsibilities emerge from that belonging? Who do we mean when we say *Klal Israel* (the people of Israel)? And how might educators help others live and enact those questions more fully?

So, in 2023, we created a fellowship for twelve master Jewish educators from across the world to explore these questions. And then, six months into the first fellowship, October 7th happened.

For a brief, shattering moment, the Jewish People came together as they had not in a generation. And then, almost as quickly, the divisions returned, even sharper than before. In a moment rife with fracture, both within and beyond the Jewish community, the work of Jewish Peoplehood stopped feeling conceptual and began to feel urgent, even moral.

The approach for this inquiry was intentionally modest: a group of master Jewish educators from around the world, from diverse disciplines and institutions, gathering every other week for ten months over Zoom to grapple with the topic of Jewish Peoplehood. From that shared inquiry, each fellow explored a topic around Jewish Peoplehood that interested them. Each fellow then composed a paper and developed an educational resource that they — and others — could use to cultivate Jewish Peoplehood. The richness of the educational possibilities uncovered by the twelve fellowships proved that this endeavor was generative and creative, and so in 2025 we launched a second cohort, which led to twelve more creative practices for cultivating Jewish Peoplehood.

During the year-long process, fellows presented their work to one another and helped sharpen each other's thinking. They developed stronger worldviews and educational philosophies through the act of writing and creating. It was not a linear process. They moved forward, backward, sideways, and forward again. It was messy and beautiful, the way all real creation tends to be.

And yet, the very tensions we set out to explore often showed up inside the group itself. There was not always consensus, not even on what Jewish peoplehood means, let alone how to teach it. People experienced the weight of this moment differently, and those differences were palpable.

We discovered how difficult it can be to hold the intellectual work and the relational work at the same time: to move both the conversation and the project forward while also tending to the process, the people, and the pain in the room.

Engaging with Jewish Peoplehood proved difficult to cultivate even among ourselves. We shouldn't see this as a shortcoming, but rather as evidence of how deeply these questions matter. If a group of committed, master Jewish educators cannot easily define or embody Peoplehood, perhaps that is exactly why this work matters.

We chose ten (out of 24) that showcase the variety, the creativity and the versatility of what was developed. Despite their diversity, they are all reaching for the same goal: a stronger connection among the Jewish people, across the past, present, and future.

We are deeply grateful to our partner Z3 for making this work possible.

Happy reading. Turn it and turn it over again, for there is much in it.



To access all the Peoplehood Pedagogies developed by the fellows, scan the QR code or [click here](#).



Mollie Andron has over 20 years of experience teaching in a variety of Jewish educational settings – from formal classroom teaching to nature education, from theatre education to collaborative philanthropy education. She enjoys being in the field as well as building programs and trainings to support others. Mollie holds a double Master's in Midrash and Jewish Experiential Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary, a BA in Religion from Bard College and is a graduate of M2's Senior Educators Cohort. She lives in Brooklyn, NY with her husband and children.