

# HAMSA ALEINU



תרומה לדברים של  
דוידה בת שלמה ז"ל  
מיכאל בן אליעזר ז"ל  
דוב בן משה ז"ל

## CREDITS

The Photographers: Eldad Rafaeli, Pini Siluk, Avishag Shaar-Yashuv, Yoav Alon

Content, Graphic Design & Production: Promarket Group | Curator: Hila Segev Israel | Artistic consultant and chief photographer: Eldad Rafaeli | Texts: Hila Blum

Additional Photographers: Amit Sha'al, Oded Karni, Alex Kolomoisky

# Why Hamsa Aleinu?

*From Israel President Reuven (Ruvy) Rivlin*

The [Hamsa Aleinu](#) exhibition was created by Beit HaNasi—The Office of the President of the State of Israel and its flagship program "Israeli Hope," and Vibe Israel, an organization that specializes in Israel storytelling. The exhibition showcases the many creative partnerships that exist within Israeli society and the sense of mutual responsibility felt between Israelis and Jewish people around the world. Each photograph tells a real story, one unfolding here every day—mostly far from the media's spotlight. These stories and the many many more like them, are the sparks that result from new, bold, and surprising partnerships between and among Israel's different groups and communities. Taken together, they represent not only the indomitable Israeli spirit, but also the joy, curiosity, vitality, and innovation that flow from the encounter and cooperation between all of us. *That is the Israeli Hope.*

Israeli Hope is the president's flagship program for strengthening and establishing the partnership between the various groups that comprise Israeli society. It represents the practical application of the president's call to Israeli society, as presented in his 2015 speech, later known as the "The Four Tribes Speech."

Israeli Hope works to promote the full integration of all Israel's sectors into its society and economy, and to create collaborations and meaningful cooperation between them in key areas such as education, academia, employment, local government, and sports. It seeks to strengthen Israeli society's sense of togetherness while at the same time respecting the unique place of each group and community within it, all with the goal of ensuring the strength and prosperity of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

# Introduction

The activities suggested here are designed to be used in multiple settings and with middle school age learners and up. They vary based on the amount of time available for the activity and the outcomes the educator is seeking. Educators are invited to mix and match the activities to create a set of programs, activities, or lessons (a unit). We recommend using President Rivlin's video after learners have engaged in one or more of the activities.

The images are part of [Hamsa Aleinu](#), an initiative created by Israel's 10<sup>th</sup> president, Reuven (Ruvi) Rivlin and Vibe Israel. Included in the initiative is an animated video (with subtitles) describing what Rivlin suggests are four key sectors or "tribes" that make up Israeli society. We recommend using the video at the end of a series of activities or with more advanced students as it presumes a deeper knowledge of Israeli society.

The photos in the exhibition are also based on the special narratives developed by Vibe Israel, that showcase the uniqueness of Israel and Israeli society. The main narrative presented is Living Together: Israel as an amazing kaleidoscope of different colors, backgrounds, traditions, and religions. The past, present, and future are fueled by cultural diversity and shared destiny. Israel is full of contrasts and its people are what make it work!

You can read more about Vibe Israel's unique narratives [here](#).

As with any learning experience, we encourage you to spend some time thinking about your ultimate outcomes—what are the ideas, information, and questions you want to bring to your learners. Below is a set of enduring understandings and inquiry (essential) questions that may be helpful in determining desired goals/outcomes.

# Notes on Choosing Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions

Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings are meant to answer the “why” and “what” of any program or activity. “Why” are we learning about this? “What” does this add to my relationship with or insights about Israel? “What” does it teach me about myself and “what” is important to me? These ideas and questions are a guide to focus activities and conversations.

Any given program, activity, or course might focus on one to three enduring understandings and on the essential questions that emerge from those understandings. Choosing too many might diffuse the power of the learning. For each of the activities here, we have suggested an appropriate enduring understanding and essential question(s) selected from the list below. These are suggestions only—feel free to substitute a different one or frame your own.

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Israel, like North America, is made up of multiple sub-groups (by culture, religious practices and beliefs, family origin, geographic location, political leanings) which together build the fabric and daily life of Israeli culture and society.
- We are all part of multiple sub-groups which can be exciting and, at the same time, challenge us and make us feel pulled in multiple directions.
- Engaging with someone who belongs to groups with which I am unfamiliar or do not agree requires that I step forward with listening ears and an open heart. This teaching comes from Pirkei Avot 1:6, *v'hevei dan et kol ha'adam l'chaf zechut* (והוי דן את כל האדם לכף זכות)
- We are enriched by the groups of which we are a part and are strengthened when our groups come together to create a whole.

## ESSENTIAL/INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- Who are people in our lives who are similar to us yet also different? How do we interact with them? How might we interact with them—what might work and what might not work?
- How can we find what we share?
- When we find what we share, how might we express the things we share collaboratively?

- When we discover things that we do not have in common (i.e. religious beliefs, values, practices, existential issues, etc.), how do we connect and build relationships despite or even **because of** these differences?
- Why might we want to connect and build relationships? What are the benefits or opportunities? What are the costs?
- How do we live in a small place with groups that are so different from us?
- What can we learn about the reality of life in Israel through coming to know the many groups that comprise Israeli society?

## More About the Activities

### USING THESE RESOURCES

Before beginning, visit the [Hamsa Aleinu website](#) to learn more about the genesis of the project and the images. It is also recommended to view the [short video narrated by President Reuven Rivlin](#). The video will provide context for you as you begin. However, we recommend that it be used only after learners have engaged with the photos—not as an opening exercise.

As you read the materials and consider what to do with your learners, please note the following about the activities that we have included in this collection:

**Time frame and use of activity:** Most of the suggested activities are of 45-60 minutes duration. It is possible to shorten any one of them by omitting some of the discussion. If this is the case, always be sure to include some time at the end for participants to reflect, and share their takeaways and insights.

**Photo Selection:** There are so many wonderful photos in the collection, though likely too many to use all at once. When selecting photos to use, consider which ones will most resonate with the learners. The following criteria may be helpful in the decision making.

- Age of participants: Will the learners understand what they are seeing?
- Complexity: What kind of conversations will the photo elicit? Which of the stories are most intriguing and will generate conversation?
- Overall goal: If an overall goal is for participants to identify with the photos, choose those in which they can identify activities that they like or places they may have been.

- Theme: Which themes or areas will be of most interest to the learners? Do you want to include multiple themes in order to appeal to a broad range of participants?
- Size of group:
  - Calibrate the number of photos to the size of the group. A good rule of thumb is to bring enough photos from which participants can choose while ensuring a critical number of them choose any given photo. This will ensure that no one is alone to discuss a photo.
  - For larger groups (greater than 20 or 25): You can choose to use most or all the photos or, if there are some you feel are particularly resonant for your age group or setting, divide participants into two groups and make two or more sets of a smaller number of photos.

**Recommended Order of Activities:** We strongly recommend that the video from President Rivlin be shown after participants have engaged in and reflected on at least one of the photograph activities. The video presumes knowledge of Israeli society and its diverse populations beyond that of most North American teens. For example, many might not know the difference between a Haredi and a Religious Zionist Jew. It is also possible that they are not familiar with most of the cities in Israel (outside of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem) or other basic elements of Israel and Israeli society.

## LIST OF ACTIVITIES

1. Gallery Walk—In Depth.....Page 7
2. Bringing the Photographs to Life through Storytelling, Drama, and Writing.....Page 11
3. Hamsa Aleinu Video Viewing and Debrief.....Page 15

# Gallery Walk—In Depth

This activity is an opportunity for participants to delve into the stories and realities of the individuals in the photographs and the organizations or initiatives of which they are a part.

Below are multiple ways to help participants explore and uncover the images. Choose one or two that you think will most resonate for the participants. For example, one could create thematic groupings and assign participants to a themed group of photos depending on their interests, or ask participants to examine all the photos and group them according to themes as a way to give them a broader view of Israeli societies. In each case, and as reflected in the enduring understandings below, following or as part of the activities, participants should have an opportunity to reflect on the multiple groups in their worlds, what they share and where there are differences.

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Israel, like North America, is made up of multiple sub-groups (by culture, religious practices and beliefs, family origin, geographic location, political leanings, etc.) which together build the fabric and daily life of Israeli culture and society.
- We are all part of multiple sub-groups which can sometimes challenge us and make us feel pulled in multiple directions.
- We are enriched by the groups of which we are a part and are strengthened when our groups come together to create a whole.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Who are people in our lives who are similar to us yet also different? How do we interact with them? How might we interact with them—what might work and what might not work?
- How can we find similarities and what we have in common?
- When we find what we have in common, how might we express them collaboratively?

**Time Frame: 1-2 hours**

## **OUTCOMES**

Participants will:

- Identify and describe 2-4 groups/sectors that comprise Israeli society
- Describe 2-3 projects that help create connections between groups that do not usually encounter one another
- Share in depth information about a specific initiative encountered in the photographs that resonates for them (through internet research)
- Articulate which group they most identify with and why
- Identify 1-2 (Jewish or other-than-Jewish) groups in their immediate environment with which they would like to create greater connections and describe why
- Use examples from the photographs to, come up with 1-2 potential bridging projects for their community
- Create a collage or some other visual representation of all the groups and initiatives and their stories

## **INITIAL GALLERY WALK (10 minutes)**

Ask the participants to walk around and look at the photographs.

(If there are more than 10 photographs, they might want to do an initial cursory look followed by a second walk-around where they more closely examine the images and respond to some of the following prompts.)

After two minutes, ask participants to choose one photo using the following prompts:

Stand next to the photograph that...

...most intrigues you.

...brings up a story for you that you can share.

...most surprises you.

...you have questions about.

...you really like.



With the other people who have chosen your photo:

- Describe the photo: what do you see?
- What can you say/do you notice about the people in the photo?
- What do you think is the story of the photo?
- Why did you choose it?
- Think of a caption for the photo based on your stories (there can be multiple captions).

## **READ AND DISCUSS THE STORY OF THE PHOTO (15 minutes)**

Read the story on the back of (at the bottom of) the photo:

- How is it the same or different from what you thought it would be?
- What surprises you about the story?
- Why do you think the caption in the photo was chosen?
- Based on the story, what did you learn about the people in the photo? Who are they? Why might they be part of the photo/story?
- If you could re-caption the photo, what would you write? (The group should agree on one caption.)
- Do you know of similar types of projects in your community? Describe them.

## **LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INITIATIVES AND "TRIBE" (15 minutes)**

Do an internet search for the group and/or initiative featured in your photo (assuming that technology is available):

- Share one interesting additional learning with your group/partners that you think other participants might be interested in.
- Add an image from your search and one fun fact about the initiative or people to a group [Padlet](#) or [Jamboard](#).

## EXCHANGING PHOTOS AND STORIES (15 minutes)

Join together with one or two other groups (up to three images) to share the story of your photo, the people in the photo, and what you have learned (15 minutes)

The goal of this section is to begin to create a fuller picture of the multiple sectors or groups in Israel.

- Share the following about your photo:
  - Who are the people?
  - What group(s) do they belong to?
  - What are they doing?
  - What is the initiative or project in which they are involved?
- Take note of the different groups: how many different groups are there, where do they overlap, what they do that is similar or different. Share your captions and the stories of the photo.
- Create a visual “map” or depiction of the group on a piece of flipchart paper or digitally.
- Draw lines between the groups according to where you see they are connected. Which groups are most connected? Least connected?

## WRAP UP/REFLECTION (10 minutes)

Explain: The images and stories we explored revealed many, but not all of the groups that make up Israeli society. We, too, encounter many different groups in our daily lives—groups to which we belong and those to which we do not belong. We live in a highly connected network of groups.

Take three minutes to write down all the groups you encounter in a given week. Be sure to include both groups you belong to and those you do not belong to or feel a part of.

Ask participants to share one or two of the groups they wrote down from each category (belong/not belong) and write them on a flipchart or [Jamboard](#).

With the person next to you:

- Think back to ways in which the different groups in Israel were able to build relationships and break down barriers.
- Come up with one or two ideas based on things you love to do, that could do the same in your community.

Share some ideas. Carry these ideas with you and try to imagine the photo and story you will someday share with the world!

# Bringing the Photographs to Life through Storytelling, Drama, and Writing

Each of these photos tells a story, and all of them together begin to illustrate the diversity of Israeli society. By taking a closer look at the photos and lifting up the stories they tell, the participants will uncover parts of Israel that are new and relatable.

These activities are an alternative introduction to the multiple groups that make up Israeli society. The goal is to provide participants with the opportunity to understand the groups in Israeli society through the different realms where they interact. The activity options allow the participants to explore the ideas in creative ways.

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Israel, like North America, is made up of multiple sub-groups (by culture, religious practices and beliefs, family origin, geographic location, political leanings, etc.) which together build the fabric and daily life of Israeli culture and society.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What can we learn about the reality of life in Israel through coming to know the many groups that comprise Israeli society?

Post a selection of photographs around the room. Choose one of the following activities to explore the photographs through drama or writing.

## OPTION 1: THEATER ARTS—TABLEAU (45 minutes)

### Outcomes:

Participants will:

- Create a series of tableaux to represent the possible stories behind a selected photograph
- Consider the stories behind other photographs through their viewing of the scenes created by other groups
- Identify one to two (Jewish or other-than-Jewish) groups in their immediate environment with which they would like to create greater connections and describe why

### Step One: Analyzing

In small groups, the participants should select one photograph that is relevant or meaningful to the group.

- What is the story told through these images? Who are the people in the photograph?
- What might have happened before this was taken? What could happen next?

### Step Two: Creating

Create a tableau (a “photograph with your bodies”) to represent the photograph as it is shown. Now add a second or third tableau to explore what might have occurred before or after the moment depicted in the photo.

A different variation could be for the group to bring the tableau to life and create a scene that shows the story behind the photograph. Consider: What is the relationship between the people in the photo? What might they say to one another?

Present the scenes to the rest of the group.

**Note:** The wrap up/reflection exercise for this activity is found at the end of this section.

## OPTION 2: CREATIVE WRITING (45 minutes)

### Outcomes:

Participants will:

- Analyze the photographs through the details that are revealed by careful examination
- Explore the stories behind the photographs through creative writing exercises
- Consider the stories behind other photographs through listening to what other people have written
- Identify 1-2 (Jewish or other-than-Jewish) groups in their immediate environment with which they would like to create greater connections and describe why

### Step One: Analyzing

There are many ways to explore the stories behind these photographs. Have your participants select one photograph they want to explore and choose a written exercise from the list below.

Take a good look at the photograph you have selected. Absorb the details in the photo.

- What is the focal point of the photograph?
- What is in the background?
- What small details do you notice?

Focus on how you feel emotionally or physically.

- What do you think of or feel like doing?
- Does this photo conjure up any personal memories?
- Do you connect on a personal level to this photograph?

### Step Two: Writing

Ask each participant to select and do one of these activities:

- 1) Write a five-line poem or Haiku style poem to capture the theme or essence of the photograph and what you think it is trying to show.
- 2) In small groups, write a short story (up to 15 lines) using the scene depicted in the photograph as either the starting or ending point for that story.

- 3) You are a news reporter who accompanied the photographer on this photoshoot. You are writing an article to tell what is happening. Write a headline and a short article that would be published with this photograph in an Israeli English newspaper.
- 4) Choose one of the people in the photograph. Write the story this photo is telling through that person's perspective.
- 5) Action word story: Write a short story about what is happening in the photograph. Make sure to use at least six different action words to make the story come to life.
- 6) Write a personal story that connects you to the photograph you chose.

## WRAP UP/REFLECTION (10 minutes)

**Note:** This section is designed to come after either the theater or creative writing exercises

Share: The images and stories we explored revealed many but not all of the groups that make up Israeli society. We, too, encounter many different groups in our daily lives—groups to which we belong and those to which we do not belong. We live in a highly connected network of groups.

Take three minutes to write down all the groups you encounter in a given week. Be sure to include both groups you belong to and those you do not belong to or feel a part of.

Ask participants to share one or two of the groups they wrote down from each category (belong/not belong) and write them on a flipchart or [Jamboard](#).

With the person next to you:

- Think back to ways in which the groups in Israel found to build relationships and break down barriers
- Come up with one or two ideas based on things you love to do, that could do the same in your community

Share some ideas. Carry these ideas with you and try to imagine the photo and story you will someday share with the world!

# Hamsa Aleinu Video Viewing and Debrief

Background: The video is taken from a [2015 speech President Reuven Rivlin gave](#), framing what he considers to be the composition of the “New Israeli Order.” [The video can be watched here.](#)

Below are the key points of the video and Rivlin’s vision for Israel today and in the future:

- Four tribes/sectors in Israel: secular (Jewish), national religious (orthodox, Jewish), ultra-orthodox (Haredi, Jewish), and Arab.
- Each tribe/sector has different education systems, newspapers, TV stations, and cities/neighborhoods.
- The 'old order' was one of majority-minority (like secular Israeli and all the other groups) whereas the New Israeli Order (according to Rivlin) requires 'partnership' between the tribes/sectors.
- Four critical qualities needed for the success of the partnership:
  - Each group must be able to hold on to its values
  - Groups must have a sense of mutual responsibility for one another
  - Fairness and equality among groups
  - A shared sense of Israeli identity
- Areas of function:
  - Diversity in economic and public sectors
  - Diversity and respect in academia
  - Education systems that educate for difference
  - Open, diverse political landscape

**Note:** This video is recommended to be viewed following at least one of the activities with the Hamsa Aleinu photos and their stories. The overarching goal is for participants to make connections between individual photos and initiatives/projects and the connection between Rivlin’s “Israeli Hope” initiative and what’s happening in the photos. This is both a summative exercise and one that can open up opportunities to learn about each of the four sectors in depth as a follow-up unit or program. The essential questions below can be used as a frame for participants to view the video (see video viewing guide below).

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Israel, like North America, is made up of multiple sub-groups (by culture, religious practices and beliefs, family origin, geographic location, political leanings, etc.) which together build the fabric and daily life of Israeli culture and society.
- Engaging with someone who belongs to groups with which I am unfamiliar or do not agree requires that I step forward with listening ears and an open heart. This teaching comes from Pirkei Avot 1:6, v'hevei dan et kol ha'adam l'chaf zechut (והוי דן את כל האדם לכף זכות)

## ESSENTIAL/INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- When we discover things that we do not have in common (religious beliefs, values, practices, existential issues, etc.), how do we connect and build relationships despite or even **because of** these differences?
- How do we live in a small place with groups that are so different from us?
- What can we learn about the reality of life in Israel through coming to know the many groups that comprise Israeli society?

**Time frame: 45-60 minutes**

## OUTCOMES

Participants will be able to:

- Name the four sectors of Israeli society and ask questions about them
- Identify qualities needed to create a diverse Israeli society
- Make a connection between how the four sectors in the photos and their stories represent a coming together of the four sectors: what are the areas or function, which tribes come together where/when.
- Describe some of the gaps and divides in society that the projects in the photographs aim to address.
- Use the lens of the four sectors to think about bridging gaps in the places they live.



## INTRODUCTION (5-10 minutes)

The goal of the introduction is to frame the video and activities in connection with the Hamsa Aleinu photos with which participants have been engaging.

### Quick check in (3-5 minutes)

Hang some of the photos around and ask participants to try to name the different groups of people represented in them. Write the groups on flip chart paper or remember them to repeat back at the end.

### Framing (3-5 minutes)

Acknowledge the groups participants named and follow up with following points:

- Each of us identify and engage with multiple communities and groups that play roles in our lives.
- Sometimes we seek out opportunities to meet and interact with people from other groups around us.
- The photographs we've explored open windows into many parts of Israeli life, highlighting initiatives that contribute to the building bridges between different parts of Israeli society.
- The five-minute video we are about to see puts a frame around and name to some of the groups that we've seen in the photos and the significance of the various initiatives

## VIDEO VIEWING AND DEBRIEF (15 minutes)

Describe the video:

- The video is based on a speech that President Ruviv Rivlin (Israel is a really informal place and it's okay to call the President by his nickname, Ruviv!) delivered when he first proposed the "Four Tribes" model in 2015
- The photographs are part of a far-reaching initiative created under the auspices of the President of Israel as he nears the end of his seven-year term.
- Even if you follow Israeli news and culture, you may not be familiar with President Reuven Rivlin. Unlike the U.S. system, in Israel the president fills a largely ceremonial role, while the

prime minister is the country's political leader. The president's primary job is to unite the people, and to encourage the public to come together around shared values.

It's a short video so participants should pay close attention using the "Viewing Guide."

Review questions beforehand and, if possible, ask participants to make some notes. (See introduction to this activity for a summary of the key points.)

### **Viewing guide:**

- Note the names of the four tribes
- What has changed in the past 20 years or so in the make-up of Israel's population?
- Where DON'T the groups interact with one another?
- How, according to the video, might the different groups come to understand one another and connect? (You will find many answers to this question in the video)
- What are the challenges Israel faces in bringing the tribes together?

### [Play the video](#)

### **Debrief of the video:**

- What questions do you have based on the video?
- What are the names of the "tribes?"
  - Have you heard of them?
  - What do you know about them?
  - What surprised or puzzled you, if anything?
  - What other groups, if any, might exist in Israel?
- Rivlin wants Israel (the tribes) to see themselves as belonging to one country:
  - What does each group need in order to feel safe connecting with the other groups? (Why might they feel uncomfortable coming together with other groups?)
  - (This might be a good place to ask participants to think about different groups in their communities—with what groups do they feel comfortable interacting and with which ones do they not feel comfortable and why? They don't have to share the names of the groups—just the "why don't they feel comfortable?")

- With the Hamsa Aleinu exhibit, President Rivlin adds in the idea of a fifth tribe—diaspora/world Jewry. This view offers an opportunity for us all to take an active role in Rivlin’s view of Israeli society.
  - How do you feel about being a member of one of the groups in this vision of Israel? Does it make you feel welcome? How comfortable are you with this framing?
  - Which other group do you most identify with, if any, and why?
  - How might you reach out to members of the other four groups? What benefits or opportunities might come from such outreach?

**Note:** Some participants may not understand the distinction between Haredim and National Religious Jews. They may lump them all together as “Orthodox.” A simple distinction is each respective group’s stance on Zionism. Israeli National Religious embrace modern Zionism as essential to the fulfillment of the Jewish people and many branches of Israeli Haredim reject modern Zionism, based on their interpretation of religious texts.

## BEING RUVI’S ADVISORS (20 minutes)

Break participants into small groups of 3-5. Explain that they are going to be advisors to President Rivlin, helping him to figure out what they think would be helpful in bridging the gaps between the tribes.

### Before breaking into groups:

- Remind participants of what needs to be present for groups to feel safe coming together.
- Participants can suggest ideas for any age group (including their own).
- It’s fine to use ideas they learned about in the photos—they should be able to explain their choices.

(Participants can get up to look at the photos if they want ideas or, if this is online, give them the link to the photos.)

### In the small groups: (10-15 minutes)

- Each group should come up with 3 ideas

- Choose their favorite
- Be able to explain to President Rivlin (and other participants) why it's their favorite, why it's a great idea (think about what makes it safe for groups, why they'll be attracted to the idea) and why it should be implemented

Bring groups back together to share their ideas and why they think their idea is spectacular.

(Maybe even consider suggesting it as part of an idea box for Hamsa Aleinu)

## **WRAP UP** (10 minutes)

**This wrap up has two parts:**

- 1) About Israel
- 2) About participants' own worlds

Part 1: Ask participants to come up with one word or phrase describing what new insight they had about Israel: what surprised them, intrigued them, did they love, did they learn?

Write these down.

Part 2: Ask participants to reconsider the groups they may have thought of earlier in the program (groups in their communities and what they need to be safe enough to interact).

What ideas from what they explored would they like to see happen in their communities? Other ideas?

Make a note of these for future reference.