Jews in and Jews out: The Diaspora's Relationship with the Jewish Community in Israel A Limud of Masorti Israel Rav Siach

This source sheet is meant to help frame the question, what is the nature of the relationship between Jews in the land of Israel and Jews outside of the land of Israel?

Textual Context:

The content of this source sheet centers around one primary narrative, that of the tribes of Reuven and Gad choosing to remain East of the Jordan - not in Canaan.

After nearly 40 years of wandering in the desert, the generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt died off with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. The Israelites made it to the border of Eretz Canaan and had successful military campaigns against King Og and his army, King Sihon and his army, and Midian, three Kingdoms just East of Canaan. The tribes of Reuven and Gad approach Moses and the community leaders to ask permission to live in these newly conquered lands instead of living in the land of Canaan.

BaMidbar 32:1-5

מָקְנָה וּ רַב הָיָ๊ה לְבָנֵי רְאוּבֵן וְלִבְנֵי־גָד עָצִוּם מְאֵד וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־אֶרֶץ יַעְזֵר ׁ וְאֶת־אֶרֶץ גִּלְעָד וְהִנָּה הַמָּקוֹם מְקָוֹם מְקָנָה: וַיָּכְאוּ בְנֵי־גָד וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וַיֹּאמְרְוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אֶלְעָזֶר הַכּּהֵׁן וְאֶל־נְשִׁיאֵי הָעֵדָה לֵאמְר: עֲטָרְוֹת וְדִיבוֹ וְיַצְזֵר וְנִמְלָה וְשָׁבָּוֹ וְאֶלְעָלֻה וּשְׁבָם וּנְבָּוֹ וּבְעָן: הָאָרִץ אֲשֶׁר הָבָּה יְהוָה לִפְנֵי עֲדָת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶרֶץ מִקְנָה הֵוֹא וְלַעֲבָדֶיף מִקְנָה: וַיֹּאמְרוֹ אִם בֹּעבַדִיף לַאַחָזַה אַל־תַּעַבֵרנוּ אֶת־הַיַּרָדֵּן:

The Reubenites and Gadites, who had very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock. So they came to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the community, and said, "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon — the land the Lord subdued before the people of Israel is suitable for livestock, and your servants have livestock. If we have found favor in your eyes," they said, "let this land be given to your servants as our possession. Do not make us cross the Jordan."

Question for Reflection:

Reuven and Gad wish to live east of Canaan but cannot do so without the permission of Moses and the community elders. Is there pressure in our day to live in Israel? If so, where/who does it come from? Has it been different at different points in your life, or at different points in the history of the state of Israel?

BaMidbar 32:6-7

אָת־לֶב בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעֲבֹר אֶל־הָאָָרץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן לָהָם יְהָוָה [תְנִיאוּו]וְלָמָה תנואון:

Moses said to the Gadites and Reubenites, "Should your fellow Israelites go to war while you sit here? Why do you discourage the Israelites from crossing over into the land the Lord has given them?"

Question for Reflection:

Moses' underlying consideration is that the other Israelite tribes will have to go to war for the land and by not participating, Reuven and Gad will hurt the nation emotionally by opting out. Does the relationship between Israeli Jews and diaspora Jews feel different when there is a war being fought?

BaMidbar, 32:16-18

וַיּגְשָׁוּ אֵלִיוֹ וַיֹּאמְרֹוּ גִּדְרָת עָאן נִבְגָה לְמִקְנָנוּ פָּה וְעָרָים לְטַפְּנוּ: וַאֲנַחְנוּ נַחָלֵץ חֻשִׁים לְפְנֵּי יְשְׁרָאֵׁל אֵישׁ נְחָלְתוֹ: וַיִּאמֶר אֲבֹיהָם אֶל־ מְקוֹמֶם וְיָשָׁב טַפַּנוּ בְּעֵרִי הַמִּבְצָׁר מִפְּנֵי יִשְׁבִי הָאָרֶץ: לָא נָשִוּב אֶל־פָּתֵינוּ עַׁד הְתְנַחַל בְּנֵי יִשְׁרָאֵל אִישׁ נַחְלְתוֹ: וַיִּאמֶר אֲלֵיהָם מֹשֶׁה אָם־מַּצְשִׂוּן אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַאָּה אִם־תַּחָלְצָוּ לְפָנֵי יְהָוָה לַמִּלְחָמָה: וְעָבַּר לָכֶם כְּל־חָלְוּץ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לְפְנֵי יְהְוָה עִד הּוֹרִישׁוֹ אֶת־אֹיְבָיו מִפְּנְיו: :וְנִכְבְּשָׁה הָאָרֵץ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְאַחַר חָּשִּׁבוּ וִהְיִתָּם נְקִיּיָם מִיְהוָה וּמִיִשְׁרָאֵל וְהָיִתָּה הָאָרֵץ הַנְּאת לָבֶם לַאֲחָזָה לְפְּנֵי יְהוָה

Then they came up to him and said, "We would like to build pens here for our livestock and cities for our women and children. But we will arm ourselves for battle and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place. Meanwhile our women and children will live in fortified cities for protection from the inhabitants of the land. We will not return to our homes until each of the Israelites has received their inheritance.

Then Moses said to them, "If you will do this - if you will arm yourselves before the Lord for battle and if all of you who are armed cross over the Jordan before the Lord until he has driven his enemies out before him, then when the land is subdued before the Lord, you may return and be free from your obligation to the Lord and to Israel. And this land will be your possession before the Lord.

Question for Reflection:

Reuven and Gad agree that they have an obligation to those Israelites who are attempting to possess and live in Canaan. This obligation is to fight alongside the other tribes in order to ensure their physical safety in Canaan. Do diaspora Jews have an obligation to Jews in Israel? If so, how does it compare to the obligation Reuven and Gad had to the other tribes?

אַז יְקֶרָא יְהוֹשֶׁע לָרְאוּבָנַי וְלַגְּדֵי וְלַהָצֵי מַמָּה מְנַשֶּׁה: וַלָּאמֶר אֲלִיהֶם אָתְּבְּשׁ מָתְ לָלְרְאוּבַנַי וְלַגְּדֵי וְלַהָצֵי מַמָּה מְּנָהְ הַנְּיִם אָתָּ שְׁמָר מָבָּוֹת יְאָתְבָּם: לְא־צֵּוַבְתָּם אֶת־אֲחַיבֶּם אֶד יָמִים רַבִּּים אַד הֹיִוֹם הַאָּה וּשְׁמִרְהָּם אָשִׁר וְנָתְן לְּבָּם מְשׁהֹ עֲבָּד וְעַהָּה הַנִּים יְהָנָה אֲלְהִיכָּם לֵאֲחַיבָּם כַּאֲשֶׁר דְּצָרְ לְהָם וְעַתָּה פְּנוֹ וּלְכִבְּלָם אָל־אָהַלָּם אָל־אָהָלָה מָאַר לְבָּבָם וְעַתָּה הָנִים יְהָנָה אַלְהִיכָּם לַאֲחָלָה מָאַר וּלְדָבְקָה בְּבִל־דְּרָבִיו וְלִשְׁמֵּר מִאָּוֹו וּלְדְבָקְה־בְּוֹ וּלְעָבְּה וֹבְּלָבְיּ בְּלִי אְבָבְּה וּבְּלִילְבָבְם וּבְּלֶלְבָבְם וּבְּלְלְבָבְם וְנִבְּלְיבָבְם וְנְבְלִי אְלִיאָה וְנִשְׁע עְם־אָחָהָ וֹיִלְלָּא אִל־אָהָלִיהָם וּצְּלָבְה וְלַישְׁתְּי וְלְבָבְּה וְנִבְּלְיהְם וְבְּלָבְה וְנִבְייִה וְלִשְׁמָּת מְּבְּבְלְיה שְׁלִיהְה וְלַבְּה אָלִיה מְבּבְּלְיה שְׁלִיה וְנְבְּיוֹ וְלְשְׁמְר מִאָּוֹת וְלְדְבָּקְה־בְּוֹ וּלְעָבְה וֹבְּבְלָיה וְלִישְׁמִּוֹ וּבְּבְלִיה שְׁלִבי וּלְשְׁמְי מְלִבְּאָר בְּבְּלִיהְם וְבְּבְלְיה שְׁלִר אוֹנְיִי שְׁלְהְשׁ וְיִבְּיִי אְלִיה וְלְבְּיִי וְשְׁרְאִי וְיִבְייִי בְּבְּבְייִי וְלְישְׁמִי וְלְבָּבִי וְשְׁרְאָב וֹיבְנִיייִלְה אָלִיה שְׁבִּי שְׁבְּלִיה שְׁלִב וֹיִבְּייִי בְּבִי וְשְׁרְאָה וֹבְּיִי וְשְׁרְאֵל וִישְׁבְא שִׁם מְּבָּשְׁ וּבְּבִיי וְשְׁרְאִל וִישְׁרְא אָחָה לְצִילְי שִׁבְּי שְׁלְבִית אְבֹּבִי וְבְּבִיי וְשְׁרְאֵל וִישְׁבְע וְבְּבִיי וְשְׁרָאל וְשִׁיִם בְּבִּעְישׁי שְׁלִי שְׁבִּי וְשְׁרְאל וְשְיִי שְׁבְשׁל מְּלִי בְּשִׁי וִשְרָאל וְשְׁבְּי שְׁלְבוּי מִילְרְא מִיל בְּבִיי וּשְרְאבֹי וְיִבְייִי בְּבְיי וְשְרְאבִי וְשְרְאל וְבְיִי וְשְרְאב בְּייִבְים בְּבִּי וְשְרְאבְיי וְשְרְאב בִּיי וְשְרְשְׁבְי בְּבִיירְאבְאל וִישְׁלְשׁוֹ בְּילִים שְׁל וְשְׁבִי וְשְׁבְשְׁבְי שְׁבְּבְיי וְשְׁבְשְׁבְי בְּבִיי בְשְרְאב בִּיי בְּבְים בְּבְיבִי וְשְרְאב בְייבוּי וְשְבְשְׁבְי בְּבִייר וְשְרְשְּבְי בְּבִיירְשְבְּבִי וְשְבְּבְים בְּבִיי וְשְׁבְשְׁבְּי בְּבִייישְרְשִׁבְים בְּבִּבְיי וְלְשְׁבְּבְּים בְּבְישְׁבְים בְּבְיּבְיים בְּבְּבְיי בְּבְיבְים בְּבְייִים בְּבְישְׁבְּים בְּבְיבְיוּבְ

וְאִם־לָא מִדְּאָגָהֹ מִדְּבָּרעָשָׂינוּ אֶת־זָאת לֵאמֶר מְחָּר יֹאמֶרֹוּ בְנֵיכֶם לְבָנֵינוּ לֵאמֹר מַה־לָכֶּםוְלֵיהָוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וּגְבָוּל נָתִן־יְהוָה בֵּינֵנוּ וּבִינִיטָם בְּנִינוּ מִדְּיִבְרָא בְּיִבְּה בְּיַבָּה לְבָלָינוּ לְבִלְתָּי יְלָא מְת־יְהָוָה: וַבְּאמֶר נְצֵשֶׂה־נָא לְנוּ וּבִינִיטָם בְּנִירְאוּבְוּינִי לְבָלְתֹּא לְעָבַח: פִּי עַּד הוּא בֵינֵינוּ וּבִינִיכֶם וּבֵיוְדֹרוֹתֵינוּ לַעֲבّד אֶת־עֲבֹדֻת יְהוָה לְפָנִיו בְּעלוֹתֵינוּ יִּבִינִיהּ בַּיִרָב חַלָּקבּיהוָה : וּבִיבָם מָתַר לְבָנִינוּ אֵיִן־לָבֵם חֵלִקבּיהוָה ::
וּבִיקָימִנוּ וְלֹא־יֹאמֶרֹוּ בְּנֵיכָם מָתָר לְבָנִינוּ אֵיִן־לָבֵם חֵלִקבּיהוָה

Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh and said to them, "You have done all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. To this very day you have not deserted your fellow Israelites but have carried out the mission the Lord gave you. Now that the Lord has given them rest as he promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses gave you on the other side of the Jordan. But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to Him, to keep His commands, to hold fast to Him and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their homes. To the half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given land in Bashan, and to the other half of the tribe Joshua gave land on the west side of the Jordan along with their fellow Israelites. When Joshua sent them home, he blessed them, saying, "Return to your homes with your great wealth - with large herds of livestock, with silver, gold, bronze and iron, and a great quantity of clothing - and divide the plunder from your enemies with your fellow Israelites."

So the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh left the Israelites at Shiloh in Canaan to return to Gilead, their own land, which they had acquired in accordance with the command of the Lord through Moses. When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built a massive altar there by the Jordan. And when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them.

The Israelites sent Pinhas son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead, to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh with ten of the chief men, one from each of the tribes of Israel. They said to them: "The whole assembly of the Lord says: 'How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the Lord and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now?...

..."No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, 'What do you have to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? The Lord has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the Lord.' So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the Lord. "That is why we said, 'Let us build an altar, but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.' On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the Lord at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, 'You have no share in the Lord.'"

Questions for Reflection:

1) After fulfilling their promise to ensure that the other Israelite tribes conquered Canaan, Reuven, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh (for whom Moses designated land outside of Israel) leave Canaan to return to their homes on the other side of the Jordan. The very first thing that happens upon separating is a huge miscommunication. Reuven and Gad build an altar as a memorial to brotherhood with the tribes of Israel. However, the tribes who remain in Canaan fear that, by building this altar, Reuven and Gad are actually proclaiming a new site of worship; they consider this altar a threat to the spiritual well-being of those Israelites in Canaan.

How does distance affect the relationship between the Israeli and diaspora Jewish communities today? Are there similar miscommunications?

2) Reuven and Gad explain that the Israelites in Canaan also have an obligation to *them*: to continue treating them as part of the community of Israel.

Do Jews in Israel have an obligation to those Jews living outside of Israel? If so, how does it compare to the Israelites' obligation to Reuven and Gad, to affirm their portion in the community of Israel?

Conclusion:

Talmud Bavli, Shavuot 39a, introduces this concept: כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה, all of Israel is entangled together. This implies that the each member of the community of Israel exists in relation to one another. How that relationship looks and the extent to which it takes into account our shared history and our shared future is up to us.

What change, if any, would you like to see in the relationship between Jewish communities in the diaspora and those in Israel?

Extra modern sources:

כרמי .קשֶׁב ט

Listening\ T. Carmi

מַמָשׁ-שֶׁל-קָשֶׁה לִשְׁתֵּי קָנְכִיּוֹת לְשׁוֹחֵחַ שִּיחָה

It's hard for two seashells to share a real conversation.

נַנּנָּשּ-שֶּר-אֶשֶּׁה ּיְשְּנֵּי אֵנְּכִּיוּוּנ יְשּוּנֵוּנוּ שִּּינָּוּ בָּל אַחַת מַטָּה אֹזֶן לַיָּם שֶׁלָה. הָעַתִּיקוֹת-הַפְּנִינִים אוֹ סוֹחֵר-רֵק שׁוֹלֵה

Each inclines its ear to its own sea.
Only the pearl diver or the antique dealer
Can say for certain: the same sea

אוֹתוֹ יָם :יָכוֹל לִקְבּוֹע בְּלִי חֲשָׁשׁ

ם "זכויות יוצרים שמורות למחבר ולאקו © http://www.acum.org.il

Three approaches in relation to meeting the "Other"
You came to me, to open my eyes. your body was a view, A window and a mirror.

במפגש "שלושה אופני התייחסות ל"אחר כל השירים ,לאה גולדברג ,סליחות ,מתוך

ָאתָ אֵלַי אֶת עֵינַי לִפְקֹחַבּ **רְאִי וּן לֹּ וֹיָט וְחַבּ**פְּךְ לִי מַ וּוְג,