

# iEngage

Engaging Israel:  
Foundations for a New Relationship



A project of the Shalom Hartman Institute

## Bring the excellence of Hartman scholarship into your community with the Hartman Institute Video Lecture Series

Going deeper than politics or advocacy, the Engaging Israel course reframes the discussion about the enduring significance of the State of Israel for contemporary Jews worldwide. The iEngage curriculum elevates the conversation about Israel by rooting it in Jewish values and ideas rather than in a response to crisis, exploring key questions such as:

- > What are the benefits of Jewish sovereignty?
- > How should a Jewish state exercise military power ethically?
- > How can Israel create and maintain a Jewish democracy?
- > What values should a Jewish state embody?
- > Why should American Jews care about Israel, and what should be the nature of our relationship with the Jewish state?

Engaging Israel thus equips individuals and communities with a quintessentially Jewish values-based vocabulary to define and articulate why Israel can and should be fundamental to their Jewish identity.

The Hartman Institute Video Lecture Series brings the world-renowned faculty of the Shalom Hartman Institute into partnership with community rabbis and educators across North America to create a customized course of study that provides relevant, contemporary approaches to the urgent challenges facing the Jewish people.

### The iEngage Video Lecture Series includes:

**Nine curricular units containing video lectures and dialogues on DVD and USB:** Each unit includes a lecture by Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman (approx. 25 min.), followed by a dialogue between Rabbi Dr. Hartman and members of the Engaging Israel Research Team or other experts exploring the complexities of the issues raised in the lectures (approx. 25 min.). *See reverse for details.*

**Source Book:** Includes all texts referenced in the lectures plus additional relevant sources; accompanying background readings for each unit are available online. Package includes one book for the leader; additional books for participants may be purchased for \$20 each.

**Interactive Hevruta Training Course for the Leader on USB:** Video explanations by Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman for each of the 151 texts featured in the source book, highlighting their particular contextual relevance.

**Leader's Guide:** Suggested questions for guiding hevruta study and group discussion and advice on structuring and teaching the course.

**Price:** \$500 including shipping

To purchase the iEngage Video Lecture Series, visit [www.iengage.org.il](http://www.iengage.org.il)

“The Engaging Israel program was exceptionally well received by a diverse spectrum of congregants. Despite their various political leanings and points of connection with Israel and her people, they hung in for the whole ride and the response was so positive that we are offering the course again. Engaging Israel helped create a common language of discourse that is so often lacking in contemporary conversations around potent subjects.” — Rabbi Eric Gurvis, Temple Shalom of Newton, Newton, MA



## Central Themes of the iEngage Curriculum

- 1 From Crisis to Covenant** explores the foundations of the current relationship between Israel and world Jewry and why the Jewish community is so committed to maintaining it. What directions should a new narrative about Israel take, given new realities that question Israel's significance and even its legitimacy?
- 2 Religion and Peoplehood:** Israel as the sovereign expression of Jewish peoplehood matters only to the extent that peoplehood is viewed as essential to Jewish identity. In a world of individualism, can Judaism be redefined as a primarily personal experience? How does a sense of belonging to a Jewish collective affect the meaning of contemporary Jewish life?
- 3 Sovereignty and Identity:** The establishment of the State of Israel represents the decision of the Jewish people to grant their collective identity a sovereign form. Is sovereignty significant for Israelis only, or does it contribute to the self-understanding of Jews worldwide?
- 4 Power and Powerlessness:** Like other sovereign nations, Israel uses military power—or its ability to exercise this power—as the foundation of its independence and a means of safeguarding it. In the face of the modern critique of power as a corrupting force, how does Judaism perceive the moral foundations, responsibilities, and challenges of power?
- 5 War and Occupation:** How can Israel respond to the moral challenges of exercising power in a way that is consistent with the highest standards of morality and Jewish and democratic values, balancing its legitimate right of self-defense with values of peace and the rights of others? How should Israel determine what constitutes a just war? What are the moral obligations and consequences of occupation?
- 6 Morality on the Battlefield:** Once in a state of war, the integrity of one's moral compass shifts to the battlefield. What Jewish values do Israeli soldiers carry with them into battle? How do complex moral responsibilities meet the horror of war and the morally ambiguous reality of asymmetric conflict and terrorist tactics?  
*(Note: Unit 6 features a half-hour interview with Professor Moshe Halbertal instead of a lecture by Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman).*
- 7 Jewish and Democratic State:** What are the defining features of a Jewish state, and are they compatible with the principles of democracy? How can Israel's aspirations to be both Jewish and democratic be brought together in the realm of policy?
- 8 Religious Pluralism and Human Rights:** As a democracy, Israel is committed to being religiously pluralistic and to providing equal rights to all of its citizens, Jews and non-Jews alike. Does Israel's Jewish dimension serve or hinder these commitments? What principles and ideas ought to govern Israel's policies on these issues?
- 9 Values Nation:** Israel is the project of the Jewish people, in which Jewish values and ideals meet the challenges of governance and everyday life. What resources within the Jewish tradition can contribute to the shaping of Israel as a paragon of moral and democratic values and help fulfill the aspiration of Israel to be a nation of values?

