

Limits of Labels:
Addressing the Challenges to Jewish Unity

HOME: LABELS OF GEOGRAPHY

INTRO: (Read aloud)

There is a commonly understood lack of connection between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. Much of the time, being in Israel seems to complete the picture for people, leaving them with no need to see beyond the physical borders. Similarly, many Jews in the Diaspora (America and elsewhere) see within the confines of their homebred community borders, and don't sense the necessity to look beyond.

Interestingly enough, even though we tend not to look past our borders on a day to day basis, when tragedy strikes one of our community members, whether in Israel, France, the US, or elsewhere, we all feel the pain. We all react. There is no you and me. We automatically become us.

(Same as in Part 1: We are now going to assess various quotes and videos that will cultivate a greater discussion around this topic. There will be a couple of guiding questions in between the sources along with ones that create a discussion around the topic as a whole.)

QUOTES: (Read aloud)

Quote #1:

"We' is our camp. 'We' is our community. But 'We' is also Israel, a place that they do not live, a place that they may not know as anything other than the mythical land of Torah stories and Zionist myths. Yet, they feel connected to the people of Israel, united in the face of tragedy."

Source: https://israelforever.org/interact/blog/lessons_fresh_wound/

Quote #2:

"Every so often I read about a Jew who lives in the Diaspora who gives his opinion of what Israel should or should not do. Then an Israeli retorts saying the Diaspora Jew has no business telling Jews in Israel how to live their lives. Generally the logic goes something like: 'You are a national of a foreign county. You reside and vote in that country by your choice. We don't tell your country what to do, so don't tell us what to do.'

Generally the verbiage is varied, but the message is the same: 'If you want to give us your opinion of Israeli politics, come live in Israel, share our burden, and we will listen.'"

Source: <http://www.jewishmag.com/103mag/jewopinion/jewopinion.htm>

Strong Together

WATCH:

The Challenge of Being Jewish in the Diaspora - Start at 1:07; End at 2:10 (Rachel Korpus)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IRvJWD_IgI

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Do you feel a connection to Israeli Jews? To other American / European / Latin / African / Asian Jews?

What are some scenarios you've been in where you felt this unspoken connection?

How can Diaspora Jews create a greater dialogue with Israeli Jews?

Do you feel that Diaspora Jews have a valid voice when it comes to issues directly pertaining to Israel? Why or why not?

Strong Together