

Voices, Together: Conversation Cloth

How can we facilitate different voices around the relationship between Israel and the Jewish people? How can we have a diverse conversation around Israel?

We wish to raise these essential questions utilizing the celebration of Israel's 75th and **Voices, together** with this unique tool – the Conversation Cloth!

The main purpose of the conversation cloth is to allow open and honest conversation, based on texts and ideas. During this activity participants will be active in reacting to classic and modern texts, voice their own opinions and suggest words and language they think should be used today.

What is a conversation cloth?

A tailor made tablecloth, printed with seven different texts each expressing a different voice and perspective. The designed cloth is available for your own use, feel free to print it or use it online.

Where can it be used, and with whom?

This tool is designed to fit a variety of crowds (youth, young adults, leadership etc.) and capacities. Some examples can be:

- Partnership Together Steering Committees
- Community round-tables sessions
- Informal or formal education settings
- As prompt during community events
- Delegations to/from Israel
- And more!

How can I use the conversation cloth?

- 1) Place people in small groups (4-6 people) around rectangle tables or in breakout groups online. Place the conversation cloth front and center on the table.
- 2) Give the group time to read each text OR ask each person to look at the text in front of them.
- 3) As a group or individuals ask to follow the following instructions (also printed on the tablecloth itself)
 - How does each text envision the relationship between Israel and the rest of the Jewish world?
 - How does that model strike you?
 - How does it make you feel? How might you add to / adjust / correct / push back against this writer's voice?
- 4) Now, invite people to add their voice by physically commenting on the text/s: Their commentary can clarify, argue, question, suggest something new. They should physically write on the cloth!
- 5) Your finished conversation cloth should be a written-on tablecloth, filled with words, voices and interpretations.
- 6) Urge every participant to upload their “voice” to the Voices, together website and take part in writing "**The People's Song**", a collaborative writing process, led by renowned Israeli musician Sha'anana Streett

Texts:

1.

<p> "הקבוץ הזה, אשר יתלקט מעט מעט, יהיה ברבות הימים למרכז האומה, בו יתגשם רוחה בטהרתו, יתפתח לכל צדדיו ויגיע עד השלמות האפשרית לו. ומן המרכז יבוא אז רוח היהדות אל כל ה"היקף" הגדול, אל כל קהלות הגולה, להחיותן ולשמור על אחדותן הכללית. ואז, כאשר הקולטורא הלאומית בארץ ישראל תגיע למדרגה כזו, ניכל לבטוח בה, כי היא עצמה תקים אנשים מבניה, שיהיו מוכשרים להשתמש בשעת הכושר בשביל ליסד שם גם "מדינה – לא רק מדינת-יהודים, כי אם מדינה יהודית באמת" (אחד העם, מדינת היהודים ו"צרת היהודים") </p>	<p> "This Jewish settlement, which will be a gradual growth, will become in course of time the center of the nation, wherein its spirit will find pure expression and develop in all its aspects to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. Then, from this center the spirit of Judaism will radiate to the great circumference, to all the communities of the Diaspora, to inspire them with new life and to preserve the overall unity of our people. When our national culture in Palestine has attained that level, we may be confident that it will produce men in the Land of itself who will be able, at a favorable moment, to establish a State there—one which will be not merely a State of Jews but really a Jewish State." (Ahad Ha'Am: The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem") </p>
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2.

<p> "ברוח אמיתית של ידידותיות, עלינו להשמיע הערת זהירות לישראל ולמנהיגיה: ישראל חייבת להכיר בכך שלישראל יש אחריות לא להשפיע לרעה על הרגישויות של יהודים שהם אזרחי מדינות אחרות על ידי מה שהיא אומרת או עושה. היחסים העתידיים בין הקהילה היהודית האמריקאית למדינת ישראל חייבים להתבסס על כבוד הדדי לרגשות ולצרכיו של זה, ועל שמירה על שלמותן של שתי הקהילות ומוסדותיהן." (יעקב בלאושטיין) </p>	<p> "In a true spirit of friendliness, we must sound a note of caution to Israel and its leaders: Israel must recognize that Israel has a responsibility to not affect adversely the sensibilities of Jews who are citizens of other states by what it says or does. Future relations between the American Jewish community and the State of Israel must be based on mutual respect for one another's feelings and needs, and on the preservation of the integrity of the two communities and their institutions" (Jacob Blaustein) </p>
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3.

<p> "זה נכון שהמצב כאן לא מזהיר יש בעיות וטעויות מקיר לקיר ומשהו בתוכנו קצת נשבר אבל דווקא בגלל זה אני נשאר זה נכון שיש כאן פחד קיומי אני מבחין בו בעיניה של אימי הסדק שבינינו שוב נפער אבל דווקא בגלל זה אני נשאר ולפעמים אני שוכח אני מרגיש כאן כמו אורח תגיד לי מה יהיה מחר דווקא בגלל זה אני נשאר ולפעמים אני שמח כי יש כאן טוב, הוא ינצח אני לרגע מאושר, שר כן, דווקא בגלל זה אני נשאר" (נועם חורב, 2022) </p>	<p> "It is true that the situation here is not great at all There are problems and mistakes from wall to wall And something inside us broke a little But that's exactly why I stay It is true that there is an existential fear I see it in my mother's eyes The rift between us opened again But that's exactly why I stay And sometimes I forget I feel like a guest here tell me what will happen tomorrow That's exactly why I stay And sometimes I'm happy Because there is good and it will win I'm happy for a moment, and sing Yes, that's exactly why I stay" (Noam Horev, 2022) </p>
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<p> לא שָׁרְתִי לָךְ אֶרֶץ, וְלֹא פְּאֲרֹתֵי שְׂמֵךְ בְּעֵלְיֹת גְּבוּרָה בְּשַׁלַּל קַרְבּוֹת. </p>	<p> "I cannot offer you, my land, In praise, heroic deeds; One tree I planted on the way Which to the Jordan leads. </p>
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<p> רק עץ יָדִי נָטַעוּ חוֹפֵי יַרְדֵּן שׁוֹקֵטִים, רק שְׂבִיל כְּבֶשֶׂת רַגְלִי עַל פְּנֵי שָׂדוֹת. אָכֵן דֵּלָה מְאֹד, יִדְעֵתִי זֹאת, הָאֵם, אָכֵן דֵּלָה מְאֹד מִנְחַת בִּתְךָ. רק קוֹל תְּרוּעַת הַגִּיל בְּיוֹם יְגֵה הָאוֹר, רק בְּכִי בַמִּסְתָּרִים עָלִי עָנִיף. (רחל בלובשטיין) </p>	<p> One narrow path to my feet yields, Which runs across the fields. I know how humble are the gifts The child offers her mother: A cry of joy one glorious day, When shines the sun in splendor; And, shed for you, a secret tear To see the shabby clothes you wear. (Rachel Bluwstein) </p>
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5.

<p> "אֲנִי נוֹשְׁמֵת בְּעֵבְרִית קוֹנָה בְּאִנְגְּלִית אוֹהֶבֶת בְּעֵרָבִית כִּפְרָה עַל הַסּוּרְב מִתְבַּכֵּינֶת בְּמִזְרָחִית The revolution will not be televised כִּי בְטֵלִיזְיֹה יֵשׁ רַק פְּרוֹסִמוֹת שֶׁל כָּל מִינֵי בְלוֹנְדִינִיּוֹת אוֹלֵי בְּגָלֵל זֶה קָרָאוּ לִי בְּבֵית סֵפֶר בְּנִשִּׁית בְּהַפְּסָקוֹת אֲנִי בְּאֲמֻצֵּעַ לֹא לְכָאן וְלֹא לְכָאן אִם הָיִיתִי צְרִיכָה לְבַחֵר הָיִיתִי בּוֹחֶרֶת אֶפְרוֹ תִימֹן" (עדי קיסר) </p>	<p> "I breathe in Hebrew shop in English love in Arabic kapparah 'al ha-surac whine in Mizrahi dialect The revolution will not be televised The revolution will not be televised Because on TV there is nothing but commercials of all kinds of blondes maybe that's why at school they called me kushit during recess I am in the middle neither here nor there if I needed to choose I would choose Afro-Yemen. (Adi Keissar) </p>
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<p> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְבְנֵי גַד וְלְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן הַאֲחִיכֶם יֵבְאוּ לְמִלְחָמָה וְאַתֶּם תֵּשְׁבוּ פֹה? (שמות ל"ב:ו') </p>	<p> Moses replied to the Gadites and the Reubenites, "Are your brothers to go to war while you stay here"? (Numbers 32:6) </p>
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7.

<p> "ציוני הוא אדם שרצה, או תמך בהקמתה של, מדינה יהודית בארץ-ישראל. אבל איזו מדינה? כל ציוני היה בעל חזון משלו ולכל אחד תוכנית משלו. ציונות אינה אידאולוגיה, אלא רק פלטפורמה רחבה מאוד לאידאולוגיות שונות ואפילו סותרות זו את זו" (א ב יהושע, מאי 2021) </p>	<p> "A Zionist is a person who wanted, or supported the establishment of, a Jewish state in Israel. But what (type of) State? Every Zionist had their own vision and each their own plan. Zionism is not an ideology, but only a broad platform for different ideologies – sometimes very contradictory to each other" (A B Yehushua, May 2021) </p>
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