

## Harga'ah for Erev Tisha B'Av

### Ilanot, Solelim, Shoafim(?)

Read the attached story about finding Jerusalem. Ask the following questions:

1. What does Jerusalem represent to the boy and his family?
2. What does Jerusalem mean to many Jews today?
3. What does Jerusalem mean to you?

### Shoafim (?), Tzad Bet Edot

Read one or more of the attached excerpts from the book "I Am A Jew". These are essays inspired by the final words of journalist Daniel Pearl, uttered prior to his murder by terrorists. Depending on your tzrif, you can choose to read one or more of the essays and explore the following:

1. Prior to the Temple's destruction, it was the center of Jewish "cultic" life. After the destruction, the Jewish people went into mourning and had to truly redefine themselves as well as their Judaism. As we live in the modern world we, too, must be constantly defining who we are as Jews and what that means.
2. How do the authors of the essays define themselves as Jews?
3. What do the words "I Am A Jew" mean to you?



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KERRI STRUG is an Olympic gold medalist in gymnastics.

“You’re Jewish?”

I have heard the same question over and over since I received my gold medal in gymnastics on the Olympic podium. “You’re Jewish?” people ask in a surprised tone. Perhaps it is my appearance or the stereotype that Jews and sports don’t mix that makes my Jewish heritage so unexpected. I think about the attributes that helped me reach that podium: perseverance when faced with pain, years of patience and hope in an uncertain future, and a belief and devotion to something greater than myself. It makes it hard for me to believe that I did not look Jewish up there on the podium. In my mind, those are attributes that have defined Jews throughout history.



ELIE WIESEL is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, and the author of more than forty books, the latest of which is *Wise Men and Their Tales*. In 1986, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

“For a Jew, Judaism and humanity must go together.”

Daniel Pearl’s last words are those of a Jew who was assassinated only for his Jewishness. They will resonate in many hearts. They are meant to be an answer to his murderers’ questions: Why are you here? Why do you oppose terrorism? Why do you denounce injustice? “I am Jewish,” answered Daniel Pearl.

Did he believe that to be Jewish today means what it meant yesterday and a thousand years ago? I do. It means for the Jew in me to seek fulfillment both as a Jew and as a human being. For a Jew, Judaism and humanity must go together. To be Jewish is to recognize that every person is created in God’s image and thus worthy of respect. Being Jewish to me is to reject fanaticism everywhere.

As a Jew I must be sensitive to the pain of all human beings. To remain indifferent to persecution and suffering anywhere, in Afghanistan or in Kiev, is to become an accomplice of the tormentor.



DAVID SUISSA is the founder and CEO of Suissa Miller Advertising, and founder and editor of *OLAM* magazine and [Meals4Israel.com](http://Meals4Israel.com).

“We’ve been praying, learning, suffering, debating, and asking for two thousand years for what you have right now: the chance to take that final step back to our homeland.”

When I think of being Jewish, I think of eighty generations of grandfathers and grandmothers, all holding hands. They’re now looking at me, and with their eyes they whisper: “We’ve been praying, learning, suffering, debating, and asking for two thousand years for what you have right now: the chance to take that final step back to our homeland. Please be grateful for that chance, please hold our hands, and please make sure it’s not the final step, but rather the first of many beautiful and holy steps that will continue our eternal mission of lighting up the world.”