



## Yom Kippur debates: a new way of engaging our community's youth

Tribe, the United Synagogue's youth arm, has launched the 'Yom Kippur Debate'. The purpose of the Yom Kippur Debate is to capture the imagination of thousands of young people and students who fill the US' synagogues on Yom Kippur and enable them to discuss contemporary issues within the framework of the Jewish community.

The three provocative motions to be debated are:

1. This House believes that a young person brainwashed by a terrorist group is not responsible for their actions.
2. This House believes that you should kill one person to save the lives of many others.
3. This House believes that structured prayer is out of date

Using texts and materials produced by United Synagogue Israel Rabbi, Gideon Sylvester, the debates will enable communities to explore important questions such as:

1. Are we always responsible for our actions?
2. Can we ever choose one life over another?
3. Does structured prayer enhance or obstruct us?

Tribe Rabbi and Associate Rabbi of South Hampstead Synagogue, Eli Levin, said: "It's essential that we connect with young people in our communities each Shabbat and every day of the week. However in reality many Jewish teenagers are more likely to get involved over the High Holydays and other festivals. Through Tribe, the United Synagogue wants to ensure that we capitalise on these moments of participation by providing creative and meaningful programming.

"Young people love debating big issues. Of all the festivals Yom Kippur is the big one in terms of shul attendance. We created the Yom Kippur Debate to foster a culture among young people who want to talk about the big issues of the day through a Jewish framework. We need young people to feel that they are an essential part of our communities, that we value their opinion, want to give them a voice and actually hear what they have to say."

The Yom Kippur Debate was conceived and developed at South Hampstead Synagogue. Through Tribe and the United Synagogue it has become a national programme. Each shul is able to adapt the materials to deliver the programme in its own way. Some shuls are running the debate during Musaf for young people, others are using the break between Musaf and Mincha to bring the whole community together and have the older members listen to the young people debating.

Here's a link to one of the beautifully produced short films (this is the one on prayer): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWppRt3Zu2s&feature=youtu.be> [1]



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### Links

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWppRt3Zu2s&feature=youtu.be>