



InterfaithFamily.com

Encouraging Jewish Choices & A Welcoming Jewish Community

What We Learned from the 2009 Passover/Easter Survey

By Micah Sachs

Abstract

While the confluence of Passover and Easter is not as culturally prominent as the so-called "December dilemma," deciding how to celebrate these major religious holidays is one of the key potential conflicts in interfaith families. In February and March 2009, we conducted our fifth annual Passover/Easter Survey to determine the attitudes and behaviors of people in interfaith relationships during Passover and Easter. In response to recent conflicting reports about the effect of intermarriage on American Jews' attitudes toward Israel, we also decided to ask questions about people's attitudes toward Israel.

Of the 802 respondents, we focused on the 229 who were in interfaith relationships and raising children exclusively Jewish.

All of these respondents plan on celebrating Passover in some way, while slightly less than half plan on celebrating Easter. Nearly all plan on attending a seder, while only a small fraction plan on hosting Easter dinner, going to church for Easter or telling the Easter story.

When it comes to Israel, the Jewish partners in interfaith marriages raising Jewish children are as supportive and as connected to Israel as American Jews in general. Their non-Jewish partners are also supportive of Israel, but feel less connected to Israel.

This report is composed of the following sections:

Abstract	1
Introduction.....	2
The Report	4
Attitudes Toward Israel.....	8
Demographic Portrait of Our Respondents.....	12
Conclusions.....	15
Policy Implications	16

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Introduction

In February and March 2009, InterfaithFamily.com conducted its fifth annual Passover/Easter Survey to determine the attitudes and behaviors of people in interfaith relationships during Passover and Easter. We also used this opportunity to ask people about their attitudes toward Israel.

The survey attracted 802 responses. Of those 802 respondents, 490 said they were in interfaith relationships. Of those 490, 315 have children. Of those 315, 229, or 73 percent, were raising their children solely in the Jewish religion. Nationally, 33 to 39 percent of interfaith couples are raising their children solely in the Jewish religion, according to the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Study.

This report focuses on the responses of the **229 survey participants who are in interfaith relationships and raising their children solely in the Jewish religion**. The report does not reflect the behaviors of interfaith couples in general, or the behaviors of all interfaith couples with children. The goal of this report is to determine how interfaith families raising their children Jewish deal with the competing demands of the two holidays.

We chose to focus on this population for several reasons:

1. One of the goals of our organization is to promote interfaith couples raising their children Jewish. We therefore want to know more about the exact dynamics of how this works, especially during potential periods of conflict, such as when Passover and Easter overlap.
2. Jewish community policy-makers are focusing increasing attention on engaging interfaith families with the Jewish community with the end goal of the families deciding to raise their children Jewish. As a 2007 study on the American Jewish population noted, "There is increasing evidence... that more intermarried families are choosing to raise children Jewishly."¹
3. There is increasing interest in what intermarried families raising their children Jewish "look like." Until recently, almost all studies of intermarriage have looked at intermarried Jews as an undifferentiated group and failed to make the important distinction between those intermarried couples that have chosen to create a Jewish home and those who have not. Last year, Combined

¹ Leonard Saxe, Elizabeth Tighe, Benjamin Phillips and Charles Kadushin, *Reconsidering the Size and Characteristics of the American Jewish Population: New Estimates of a Larger and More Diverse Community* (Waltham, Mass.: Steinhardt Social Research Institute, 2007), 29.



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Jewish Philanthropies (the Boston Jewish federation) released a report² that focused on the behaviors of intermarried couples raising their children Jewish. That paper's general conclusion was that intermarried families raising Jewish children behave remarkably like inmarried Reform Jewish families with children. This report, like our previous reports on the behaviors and attitudes of interfaith couples during the December and spring holidays, is intended to flesh out a portrait of what interfaith families raising Jewish children "look like."

4. An influential report from 2007³ argued that young adult American Jews from interfaith families are much more likely to feel alienated from Israel than their counterparts from inmarried families. A subsequent 2008 report by a different group of researchers⁴, looking at much of the same data, disputed these findings. We hope this report helps clarify what effect intermarriage has on Jews' attitudes toward Israel.

² Katherine N. Gan, Patty Jacobson, Gil Preuss and Barry Shrage. *The 2005 Greater Boston Community Study, Intermarried Families and Their Children: A Report from Combined Jewish Philanthropies* (Boston: Combined Jewish Philanthropies, 2008).

³ Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman. *Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jews and Their Alienation from Israel* (New York: Jewish Identity Project of Reboot, 2007).

⁴ Theodore Sasson, Charles Kadushin and Leonard Saxe. *American Jewish Attachment to Israel: An Assessment of the "Distancing" Hypothesis* (Waltham, Mass.: Steinhardt Social Research Institute, 2008).

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The Report

Please note: Throughout the report, unless otherwise noted, "respondents" refers to respondents to the survey who are intermarried, have raised or are raising children and have raised or are raising their children exclusively Jewish. This is not a report on all interfaith couples, or all interfaith couples with children. These figures should not be reported as representative of all interfaith families.

All of the 229 respondents plan on participating in Passover activities. More than half plan to host a seder (56%) while more than three-quarters plan to attend one (76%). Taken together, nearly all (97%) plan on hosting or attending a seder. Most plan on telling the Passover story (79%) or eating matzah (90%). A majority (62%) plan on following the dietary restrictions for most or all of the eight days of Passover. Moreover, nearly half of the non-Jewish respondents (45%) plan on following dietary restrictions during Passover.

Also, seder does not just mean dinner for our respondents. The vast majority expect their seders to include dinner (98%), food rituals like dipping greens into salt water (98%), a seder plate (97%), readings from a haggadah (96%) and the hiding of the Afikoman (95%).

Q2. What Passover activities do you plan to participate in this year? Please check all that apply.	% (of 229)
Hosting seder	56%
Attending seder at family's place	42%
Attending seder at friend's place	25%
Attending communal or other public seder	21%
Telling the story of Passover	79%
Eating matzah	90%
Following dietary restrictions for most or all eight days of Passover	62%
Other (please specify)	6%

Table 1. Passover Activities of Respondents

Meanwhile, fewer than half plan on participating in Easter activities (49%). Few plan on participating in the more "religious" Easter activities like going to church (10%) or telling the Easter story (3%). Only 36% plan on hosting or attending an Easter dinner--compare this with the 97% who plan on hosting or attending a seder.



Q9. What Easter activities do you plan on participating in this year? Please check all that apply.	% (of 229)
Hosting Easter meal	5%
Attending Easter meal at family's place	30%
Attending Easter meal at friends' place	1%
Telling the Easter story	3%
Going to church	10%
Decorating eggs	26%
Participating in an Easter egg hunt	24%
Watching an Easter-themed movie or play	3%
Other (please specify)	5%

Table 2. Easter Activities of Respondents

These respondents also see significant differences in the level of religiousness of their celebrations of Passover and Easter. Few say their celebrations of either holiday will be deeply religious, but far more say their celebrations of Easter will be entirely secular (63%) than say their celebrations of Passover will be entirely secular (1%). And 42% see their Passover celebrations as tending toward the religious side of the spectrum vs. only 7% who see their Easter celebrations as deeply religious or religious.

Overall, the great majority of respondents say they are "very comfortable" or comfortable (86%) with participating in Passover celebrations. Meanwhile, there is a far greater level of ambivalence over Easter's arrival, with 34% saying they're uncomfortable or very uncomfortable about participating in Easter celebrations. Non-Jewish respondents are more than three times more likely (73%) to be comfortable with Passover than Jewish respondents are with Easter (22%).

This year, Easter falls on the fourth day of Passover--which could potentially create a conflict, especially for those observing the dietary rules of Passover, which prohibit bread, pasta and many other common foods. Last year, Easter did not fall during Passover. Comparing last year's survey to this year's survey, we find no statistical difference between the percentage of respondents who said they planned on celebrating Easter (45% in 2008 vs. 49% in 2009). This suggests that the confluence of Easter and Passover is not causing our respondents to forgo Easter. And with the 100% participation rate in Passover, they are not bypassing Passover either.

Of those celebrating both holidays, most (61%) say the confluence of the holidays will not change their celebrations. Those that are changing their celebrations are adapting, with 29% saying they will not eat

prohibited foods at the Easter meal and 9% saying they will eat prohibited foods at the Easter meal but not for the rest of Passover.

Jewish respondents are more likely to avoid prohibited foods at the Easter meal (42%) than non-Jewish respondents (8%), which makes sense given that many more Jewish respondents plan on following dietary restrictions for most of Passover (70% vs. 45% for non-Jewish respondents).

Q12. This year, Easter falls during Passover. How will this affect how you celebrate the holidays? Please check all that apply.	% (of 111)
This will not affect my celebrations.	61%
I will attend an Easter meal but not eat food prohibited on Passover (such as bread).	29%
I will eat what is served at the Easter meal but follow the dietary restrictions for the rest of Passover.	9%
Because Easter falls during Passover, I will not attend an Easter meal.	3%
I will host or attend an Easter meal before or after Passover.	1%
Other (please specify)	6%

Table 3. Effect of Easter on Passover Celebrations, Respondents Participating in Easter Celebrations

How do interfaith families raising Jewish children explain their participation in Easter celebrations to their children? Most pointed to respect for the non-Jewish parent (62%), respect for the traditions of the non-Jewish parent's extended family (67%) or open-mindedness/tolerance (56%). Few explained their participation in Easter celebrations as a way not to upset the non-Jewish parent (11%) or her extended family (12%), and few told their children participating in Easter was an opportunity for them to decide what religion to adopt (8%). However, two-fifths (41%) explained their participation to their children as a way to expose them to faith traditions other than their own. We did not ask what parents' reasons were for participating in Easter so it is possible there is a divergence between their motivations and what they tell their children.

There were some differences between how Jewish respondents and non-Jewish respondents explained Easter participation to their children. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of non-Jewish respondents pointed to open-mindedness/tolerance, compared to 44% of Jewish respondents. Jewish parents also cited a desire not to upset the non-Jewish parent's family more often than non-Jewish parents did (16% vs. 2%). These differences suggest that Jewish and non-Jewish spouses might not be entirely on the same page when it comes to explaining Easter celebrations to their children.



Q35. How do you explain or talk about your participation in Easter celebrations to your children?	% (of 131)
Respect for the non-Jewish parent's traditions	62%
Desire not to upset the non-Jewish parent	11%
Respect for the traditions of the non-Jewish parent's extended family	67%
Desire not to upset the non-Jewish parent's extended family	12%
Open-mindedness/tolerance	56%
Desire to expose your children to different faith traditions than your own	41%
Opportunity for your children to make up their own mind about what religion to adopt	8%
Other	16%

Table 4. How Respondents Explain Their Participation in Easter to Their Children

We also asked several demographic questions to understand the Jewish behaviors of the respondents. Basing our questions on the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 and the 2005 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study, we asked respondents about the frequency of key Jewish behaviors (lighting Shabbat candles, attending weekly synagogue services, etc.), number of Jewish friends and membership in religious organizations. Our respondents were very similar to the Jewish population in general as reported by the NJPS 2000-01. Our respondents are more likely to light Shabbat candles "always" or "usually" than the general Jewish population (45% vs. 28%) and far more likely to be synagogue members than the general population (78% vs. 46%).

	Respondents to our survey	NJPS 2000- 01
Half or more friends are Jewish*	55%	52%
Hold/attend Passover seder	80%	77%
Light Shabbat candles	45%	28%
Light Hanukkah candles	75%	72%
Attend Jewish religious services**	26%	27%
Belong to synagogue	78%	46%
Belong to JCC	19%	21%

*The NJPS asked about "close" friends.

**The NJPS asked about attending Jewish religious services "monthly or more." We asked whether someone in your household attended weekly services at a synagogue all of the time, usually, some of the time or never. We calculated a comparable percentage by adding the responses to "all of the time" and "usually."

Table 5. Jewish Connections of Respondents vs. American Jews (NJPS 2000-01)

Attitudes Toward Israel

A number of recent reports^{5,6,7,8} have argued either for or against the hypothesis that intermarriage has weakened American Jews' attachment to Israel. We decided to test the hypothesis on our respondents by asking them many of the same questions those reports based their findings on. We drew our questions, word-for-word, from the 2007 National Survey of American Jews and the 2007 and 2008 Annual Surveys of American Jewish Opinion.

Q25. How close do you feel to Israel?	Very close	Fairly close	Fairly distant	Very distant	Not sure
Jewish respondents (n=154)	23%	42%	24%	4%	8%
Non-Jewish respondents (n=71)	4%	18%	45%	21%	11%
2008 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion	29%	38%	23%	8%	2%

Table 6. "Closeness" to Israel, Respondents vs. 2008 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion

Overall, we found that our Jewish respondents are equally supportive of and connected to Israel as American Jews in general. Sixty-five percent of Jewish respondents say they feel "very close" or "fairly close" to Israel, compared to 67% of American Jews in general. A greater number of our Jewish respondents (76%) than American Jews in general (64%) agreed with the statement: "If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest tragedies of my life." Eighty-eight percent of our Jewish respondents would call themselves a supporter of Israel, as compared to 82% of American Jews. And 78% of our Jewish respondents agree that "Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew," vs. 69% of American Jews.

⁵ Cohen and Kelman. *Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jews and Their Alienation from Israel*.

⁶ Sasson, Kadushin and Saxe. *American Jewish Attachment to Israel: An Assessment of the "Distancing" Hypothesis*.

⁷ Cohen. "The Uncontestable, Incontrovertible & Absolutely Convincing Case for the Distancing from Israel Hypothesis" (presentation at 40th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, Washington, Dec. 23, 2008).

⁸ Ira Sheskin, Arnold Dashefsky, Ron Miller and David Kremelberg. "The Distancing Hypothesis Reassessed: Israel Attachments in Local Community Studies" (presentation at 40th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, Washington, Dec. 21-23, 2008).



Q26. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest tragedies of my life.	Agree*	Not sure	Disagree*
Jewish respondents (n=154)	76%	12%	12%
Non-Jewish respondents (n=71)	32%	39%	28%
2007 National Survey of American Jews	64%	18%	18%

*Both our survey and the 2007 National Survey of American Jews presented a series of statements about Israel and asked whether respondents "agree strongly," "agree," "not sure," "disagree" or "disagree strongly." For clarity of presentation, we combined the "agree strongly" and "agree" responses into one category, "Agree," and combined the "disagree strongly" and "disagree" responses into one category, "Disagree." We followed this convention throughout our presentation and analysis of data derived from questions from the 2007 National Survey of American Jews.

Table 7. Feelings if Israel Were Destroyed, Respondents vs. 2007 National Survey of American Jews

Q30. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew."	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Jewish respondents (n=154)	78%	5%	17%
2007 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion	69%	28%	3%

Table 8. Israel and Jewish Identity, Jewish Respondents vs. 2007 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion

At the same time, non-Jewish members of interfaith couples raising Jewish children feel significantly less connected to Israel and show a much greater level of ambivalence towards Israel than their partners. Sixty-six percent of non-Jewish respondents feel "fairly distant" or "very distant" to Israel, compared to 28% of their partners, and 31% of American Jews in general. Sixty-seven percent of non-Jewish partners say they disagree with or are not sure whether the destruction of Israel would be a great personal tragedy, compared to 24% of Jewish partners and 36% of American Jews. At the same time, more than three-fourths of non-Jewish partners (77%) characterize themselves as supporters of Israel, which is only a little bit lower than the percentages of Jewish partners and American Jews who do so.

It's not entirely clear how non-Jewish partners' attitudes toward Israel compare with general American attitudes. In a Gallup poll⁹ conducted concurrently with ours, 59% of Americans said their sympathies lie more with the Israelis than with the Palestinians, and 63% had a favorable opinion of Israel. In a

⁹ Lydia Saad. "Americans' Support for Israel Unchanged Since the Gaza Conflict," *Gallup*, March 3, 2009, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/116308/Americans-Support-Israel-Unchanged-Gaza-Conflict.aspx>.

2007 Public Opinion Strategies survey¹⁰, 50% of respondents characterized themselves as a supporter of Israel--but that survey also gave people the option to identify themselves as supporters of the Palestinians (8%) or as supporters of neither side (19%).

Q26. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? I would call myself a supporter of Israel.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Jewish respondents (n=154)	88%	10%	3%
Non-Jewish respondents (n=71)	77%	23%	0%
2007 National Survey of American Jews	82%	12%	6%

Table 9. Support for Israel, Respondents vs. 2007 National Survey of American Jews

For our respondents--Jewish or not--supporting Israel does not mean showing no sympathy for the Palestinians. About twice as many of our respondents--both Jewish (49%) and non-Jewish (51%)--say they are "sympathetic with the Palestinians' drive for national liberation" than American Jews in general (25%). Our respondents (19%, weighted) are a little more likely than American Jews in general (13%) to feel that Israel occupies lands that belong to another people. Also like American Jews, only about one in 10 is uncomfortable with the idea of Israel as a Jewish state.

Q26. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Though I don't condone terrorism, I am sympathetic with the Palestinians' drive for national liberation.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Jewish respondents (n=154)	49%	21%	30%
Non-Jewish respondents (n=71)	51%	23%	27%
2007 National Survey of American Jews	25%	21%	54%

Table 10. Sympathy with Palestinians, Respondents vs. 2007 National Survey of American Jews

However, non-Jewish respondents show much higher levels of ambivalence about these ideas than their partners or American Jews in general: 38% are not sure whether they feel that Israel occupies others' land (vs. 18% of Jewish partners and 17% of American Jews), and 30% are not sure about their comfort with the idea of Israel as a Jewish state, compared to 15% of their partners and 18% of American Jews.

¹⁰ Public Opinion Strategies survey conducted Jan. 18-21, 2007, quoted in "American Attitudes Toward the Middle East," *Jewish Virtual Library*, updated Jan. 26, 2009, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/pomegen.html>.



Q26. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Given my views on tolerance, diversity and pluralism, I am uncomfortable with the idea of a "Jewish state" of Israel.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Jewish respondents (n=154)	12%	15%	73%
Non-Jewish respondents (n=71)	11%	30%	59%
2007 National Survey of American Jews	12%	18%	70%

Table 11. Comfort with "Jewish State," Respondents vs. 2007 National Survey of American Jews

Q26. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Israel occupies lands that belong to another people.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Jewish respondents (n=154)	21%	18%	62%
Non-Jewish respondents (n=71)	17%	38%	45%
2007 National Survey of American Jews	13%	17%	68%

Table 12. Is Israel an Occupier, Respondents vs. 2007 National Survey of American Jews

Because of the recent war in Gaza, we also asked whether people anticipated discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at their Passover celebrations. Barely a fifth (21%) said yes; nearly half (42%) said they were unsure--which is perhaps to be expected since the survey was conducted more than a month in advance of the start of Passover. This behavior is little different from the behavior of inmarried Jews who responded to our survey; among inmarried Jews, 26% anticipate discussing the conflict, while 38% are not sure if they will.



Demographic Portrait of Our Respondents

Of the 802 people who responded to our Passover-Easter Survey, 229 said they were intermarried, had children and had raised or were raising their children exclusively Jewish. Of those 229 respondents, the majority (69%) are Jewish:

Q14. What is your religion? Please check all that apply.	% (of 229)
Jewish	69%
Catholic	10%
Protestant	13%
Muslim	0%
Hindu	0%
Agnostic/Atheist	4%
None	3%
Other	4%

Table 13. Religion of Respondents

Their partners were a mix of Jewish (39%), Catholic (25%), Protestant (14%) and other religions. Because respondents could check multiple religions, there is some overlap where intermarried respondents characterized themselves and their partner as Jewish, as well as other religions. This also reflects some people in conversionary couples--where both partners are officially Jewish--characterizing themselves as intermarried because of the convert's original religious background.



Q18. What is your spouse's religion? Please check all that apply.	% (of 229)
Jewish	39%
Catholic	25%
Protestant	14%
Other Christian	4%
Muslim	0%
Hindu	0%
Agnostic/Atheist	11%
None	6%
Not applicable	1%
Other	8%

Table 14. Religion of Respondents' Spouses

The great majority of the respondents were female (83%).

Q13. What is your gender?	% (of 229)
Female	83%
Male	17%

Table 15. Gender of Respondents

Nearly three-quarters were between the ages of 30 and 49.

Q21. What is your age?	% (of 229)
Under 20	0%
20-29	4%
30-39	43%
40-49	29%
50-59	17%
60-69	6%
70 and over	1%

Table 16. Age of Respondents



Forty-four percent have children 3 or younger. Sixty-eight percent have children 8 or younger.

Q23. What is the age of your children? Please check all that apply.	% (of 196)
0-3	44%
4-5	23%
6-8	21%
9-12	18%
13-17	14%
18-30	14%
30 and over	8%

Table 17. Age of Respondents' Children

Conclusions

Overall, intermarried people who have decided to raise their children Jewish appear to be doing a good job of promoting Jewish behavior and de-emphasizing non-Jewish behavior. The great majority are participating in numerous Passover activities. Nearly all plan on hosting or attending a seder and nearly two-thirds plan on following dietary restrictions for most or all of the eight days of Passover.

Conversely, they are participating in far fewer Easter activities. More than half are not participating in Easter celebrations at all, while only 36% plan on hosting or attending an Easter dinner. Only very small minorities plan to engage in "religious" Easter activities like telling the Easter story or attending religious services.

For those that are participating in Easter, they overwhelmingly see their participation in Easter as secular. Conversely, while they don't see Passover as deeply religious, they see it as significantly more religious than Easter.

At the same time, this cohort is not abandoning Easter altogether; despite Easter falling during Passover this year, nearly half plan on participating in Easter celebrations in some way--the same percentage that said they would do so last year, when the holidays did not overlap.

Having firmly decided on a religious tradition for their children, the respondents rarely explain to their children that they're participating in Easter so they can make up their own mind about what religion to adopt. Most respondents say they explain their family's participation in Easter to their children as a matter of "respect" for either the non-Jewish parent's traditions or the traditions of the non-Jewish parent's extended family.

When it comes to Israel, there are clear differences between the Jewish partners and the non-Jewish partners in interfaith couples raising Jewish children. Jewish partners feel as connected to, and are as supportive of, Israel as American Jews in general. Their non-Jewish partners are nearly equally supportive of Israel, but feel much less connected. They are also much more likely to feel ambivalent about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the status of Israel as a Jewish state.

Whether they're Jewish or non-Jewish, half of the respondents are sympathetic towards the Palestinians' drive for national liberation, while only a quarter of American Jews in general are.

Policy Implications

Interfaith families raising Jewish children are creating a strong base of support for, and attachment to, Israel for their children. Both partners are very supportive of Israel, and the Jewish partners feel very connected. That their non-Jewish partners--presumably raised without any identification with Israel--feel less connected to Israel is not surprising, but suggests a programmatic need to be addressed.

From a (macro) continuity standpoint, increasing the non-Jewish partner's connection to Israel will increase the likelihood both partners will make Israel an important part of their family's Jewish identity. From a (micro) humanistic standpoint, non-Jewish partners will feel more comfortable with their families' religious choices if they feel closer to Israel. How, then, should the organized Jewish community respond?

One of the strongest links with attachment to Israel is travel to Israel. "On an Israel-attitude scale ranging from 0 to 100, the single Israel trip taken in any point in one's life is associated with about 8 percentage points of improvement in scores and a reduction of 4 points in the number who qualify as alienated from Israel," write the authors of *Beyond Distancing*¹¹. Therefore, the organized Jewish community should strongly consider funding trips to Israel for interfaith couples.

There are a handful of existing models for such trips: Israel Encounter, an Atlanta-based program, runs annual trips to Israel for interfaith couples; last year, the Interfaith Connection at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco ran a similar trip. Testimonials from non-Jewish participants on these trips suggest they lead to positive changes in their attitudes towards Israel. On a much, much larger scale, Birthright Israel's program of free trips to Israel for young Jews aged 18-26, which are open to children of intermarried parents, have been shown to increase attachment to Israel significantly.

To help improve non-Jewish partners' feelings of connection to Israel, the organized Jewish community need not invest massive financial resources on the scale of Birthright Israel. Interfaith couples in their late 20s and older have a higher level of discretionary income than college-age or immediately post-college-age Jews. A partial subsidy--like the one participants in Israel Encounter enjoy--may be sufficient to entice large numbers of interfaith couples to take trips to Israel.

The impact of travel to Israel on non-Jewish partners' feelings toward Israel is also a subject worthy of further study.

¹¹ Cohen and Kelman. *Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jews and Their Alienation from Israel*, 17.