

**Survey of Those Who are Questioning, Leaving, or Have Left an Orthodox Community**  
**March, 2016**

## **Introduction**

### **Survey of Those Who are Questioning, Leaving, or Have Left an Orthodox Community**

While there have been many studies done among the Orthodox, there is little research among those who had an Orthodox upbringing but who have questioned or left their original community. This survey seeks to develop a deeper understanding of the Jewish identity, beliefs, practices and needs of these individuals, who are a fledgling segment of the larger Jewish community (and sometimes referred to as the "OTD community").

This survey takes about 12-15 minutes to complete and is 100% confidential. While responses to the individual survey questions are optional, we do encourage you to respond fully, in order that your views will be heard.

This survey is being conducted by Nishma Research, an independent research firm headed by Mark Trencher, along with an advisory committee that included Rachel Berger, Prof. Steven M. Cohen, Tsivia Finman, Zalman Newfield and Pesach Sommer. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of the beliefs, practices, needs and motivating factors of those who have transitioned away from the Orthodox community. Funding for this survey was provided entirely by Nishma Research as a service to the Jewish community. For questions or comments, please email: mark@nishmaresearch.com. The overall statistical results will be shared with the public. In appreciation for your participation, you will be given the opportunity at the end of the survey to directly receive this information via email. Thank you!!

## **Screenener**

### **MANDATORY RESPONSE**

Q1. This survey is aimed at people who have had an Orthodox Jewish background. In your opinion, did your background include being Orthodox?

1. Yes – I was raised fully Orthodox
2. Partially – Spent part of my life as Orthodox – Please describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**
3. No **TERMINATE**

### **MANDATORY RESPONSE**

Q2. Thinking about your current beliefs and practices, to what extent do you consider yourself to still be a member of the Orthodox community in which you were raised ... or that you were a member of?

1. Fully **TERMINATE**
2. Somewhat
3. Not at all

Q3. Please indicate if ...

1. Either or both of your parents were or are Baalei Teshuvah
2. Either or both of your parents had converted to Judaism

3. Your parents were never part of any Orthodox community

Scale:

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / No response

Q4. What type of Orthodox community were you a member of?

1. Chasidish
2. Yeshivish/Litvish
3. Modern Orthodox
4. Orthoprax
5. Other – Please describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**

**ASK IF Q4=1**

Q5. What type of Chasidish community were you a member of?

1. Belz
2. Bobov
3. Lubavitch / Chabad
4. Ger
5. Satmar
6. Skver
7. Vizhnitz
8. Other Chasidish– Please describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**

**ASK IF Q2=2**

Q6. You indicated that you currently consider yourself to somewhat be a member of the Orthodox community in which you were raised. Can you explain why you say that? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

**ASK IF Q2=3**

Q7. You indicated that you currently consider yourself to not at all be a member of the Orthodox community in which you were raised. Can you explain why you say that? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

Q8. Would you say that you are leading a “double life” – meaning that you are outwardly still a member of the community (e.g., in terms of appearances and visible actions), but internally you do not view yourself that way?

1. Yes – Why do you say that? How do you see yourself internally? **SMALL TEXT BOX**
2. No

Q9. At about what point did you feel that you were no longer fully a member of the Orthodox community in which you were raised?

1. Within the past year
2. In the past 1 to 2+ years
3. In the past 3 to 4+ years
4. In the past 5 to 9+ years
5. 10 or more years ago

Q10. Think of the Jewish Community where you grew up (for example, Borough Park, Crown Heights, Williamsburg, New Square, Lakewood, etc.). Do you still live in the same Jewish Community?

1. Yes
2. No

Q11. Where do you currently live?

1. In the USA - Please enter Zip Code SMALL TEXT BOX
2. Outside USA - Please enter Country SMALL TEXT BOX

Q12. Which of the following best describes how you see your Jewish affiliation at this time?

1. Cultural/ethnic Jewish (or "just Jewish")
2. Secular/Humanist Jewish
3. Traditional
4. Orthoprax
5. Conservative
6. Reform
7. Modern Orthodox
8. Yeshivish/Litvish
9. Chasidish
10. I do not consider myself Jewish
11. Other – Please describe SMALL TEXT BOX

## Demographics

Q13. What is your current marital/relationship status?

1. Married
2. Living with a partner
3. In a long-term relationship
4. Single
5. Divorced
6. Separated
7. Widowed

Q14. What was your marital status when you first STARTED moving away from the Orthodox community in which you were raised?

1. Married to the same person to whom I am now married
2. Married to a spouse from whom I am now divorced or separated
3. Living with a partner
4. In a long-term relationship
5. Single
6. Divorced
7. Separated
8. Widowed

Q15. Did you have children at that time (when you first started moving away from the Orthodox community in which you were raised)?

1. Yes – Please enter number of children SMALL TEXT BOX
2. No

ASK IF Q15=1

Q16. How would you describe your child(ren)'s current religious orientation?

1. Fully or mostly religious
2. Fully or mostly secular
3. Mixed religious/secular
4. Other – Please describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**

ASK IF Q15=1

Q17. What type of school(s) do your child(ren) currently attend? Please check all that apply.

**MULTIPLE RESPONSES**

1. Jewish Religious School
2. Jewish Non-Orthodox School
3. Public or Private Non-Jewish School
4. None – they are not school age
5. Other – Please describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**

### **Factors Affecting Changing Religious Views**

The next few questions explore how people decide to change their religious views and practices.

Q18. Please think back to when you started moving away in belief or practice from the Orthodox community in which you were raised. What were the key things that caused your beliefs and practices to change? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

Q19. Still thinking about the time when you started moving away from the Orthodox community, were there any organizations or people that helped you in making that transition? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

Q20. Are there resources (people, organizations, etc.) you didn't have available at that time, but wished you had? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

### **Organizational Memberships**

Q21. Are you currently a member of, associated with, or receive services from any of the following organizations or support groups that deal with Jewish community issues? Please check all that apply.

**MULTIPLE RESPONSES**

1. Eshel
2. Footsteps
3. Kava Shtiebel
4. OTD Meetup
5. Project Makom
6. Thursday Night Chulent
7. Other organizations or support groups – Please describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**
8. None of the above

Q22. Are you currently associated with or receive services from any of the following online groups that deal with Jewish community issues? Please check all that apply.

**MULTIPLE RESPONSES**

1. Off The Derech Facebook group
2. Yiddishkeit? Facebook group

3. Other Facebook groups – Please describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**
4. Other online support groups – Please describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**
5. None of the above

### **Jewish Identity, Connection & Community Differences**

The next few questions explore personal and Jewish community identity. Some of these questions were included in the Pew Survey; your answers will allow us to find out whether there are distinct characteristics shared by those who have left their communities of origin.

Q23. Right now, how important is being Jewish in your life?

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not very important
4. Not at all important
5. I do not consider myself Jewish
6. Don't know

Q24. Right now, how important is it to you to be part of a Jewish community?

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not very important
4. Not at all important
5. Don't know

Q25. Would you say your sense of belonging to the Jewish people is:

1. Very strong
2. Somewhat strong
3. Not so strong
4. Not strong at all
5. Don't know

Q26. Are you currently active in, or do you want to be active in, social issues that affect the Jewish community?

1. I am currently active on Jewish communal social issue(s)
2. I am currently not active, but I want to become active
3. I am currently not active, and have no plans to become active

**ASK IF Q26=1**

Q27. In what Jewish communal social issue(s) are you currently active? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

**ASK IF Q26=2**

Q28. In what Jewish communal social issue(s) do you want to become active? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

Q29. Do you agree with the statement: "God exists" ?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree

3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. I do not find this statement relevant to me

Q30. To what extent would it upset you if a child of yours married a non-Jew who did not convert to Judaism?

1. Very much
2. Somewhat
3. Slightly
4. Not at all
5. Don't know

ASK IF Q4=1-2

Q31. To what extent do you currently dress the same way as when you were in the Orthodox community where you grew up?

1. To a great extent
2. To some extent
3. A little
4. Not at all

Q32. How is your current relationship with each of the following?

1. Your father
2. Your mother
3. Your oldest sibling
4. Your youngest sibling
5. Your child(ren)

Scale:

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Mixed relationship
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative
- Not relevant / no such person in my life

Q33. Thinking of your birth family, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. They accept me as I am.
2. I meet with them / visit them.
3. I am more in contact with my family now than when I first left the community.
4. They understand the decisions I've made relating to my religious practices and beliefs.
5. They have come to accept me, despite my decisions.

Scale:

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Statement not relevant to me

Q34. Do you agree with the following statements?

1. I still feel connected to the Orthodox community in which I grew up.
2. I currently feel connected to a new Jewish community (not the one in which I grew up).
3. I currently feel connected to a community where being Jewish has little or no relevance.
4. I am happy with the "community connections" that I have.
5. I feel something is missing from my "community connections."

Scale:

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Statement not relevant to me

ASK IF Q34.5=1-2

Q35. You say that you feel something is missing from your community connections. Can you explain why you say this? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

Q36. How often do you ...

1. Participate in a Friday night Shabbos meal?
2. Visit Jewish websites or look for Jewish information online?
3. Have Shabbos candles lit in your home?
4. Listen to Jewish music?
5. Visit a Jewish Community Center?
6. Engage in Jewish learning / spiritual inquiry?

Scale:

- Regularly
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q37. Which of the following best describes you in terms of keeping kosher?

1. Strictly kosher
2. Mostly kosher
3. Somewhat kosher
4. Not at kosher
5. Not sure / No response

Q38. Do you ...

1. Send your school-age child(ren) to a Jewish day school?
2. Send your camp-age child(ren) to a Jewish summer camp?

Scale:

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes or some of them
- I do not have children of that age, or custodial decision-making

Q39. How emotionally attached are you to Israel?

1. Very attached
2. Somewhat attached
3. Not very attached
4. Not at all attached
5. Don't know

Q40. In general, how would you describe your political views?

1. Very conservative
2. Conservative
3. Moderate
4. Liberal
5. Very liberal
6. I am not political
7. Other – Please Describe **SMALL TEXT BOX**

### **Needs, Priorities & Satisfaction**

The next few questions will explore community services that are important to you and whether you are satisfied with the support you may have received.

Q41. In the list below, please check the most important needs you may have at this time (up to 5).

**RANDOMIZE ORDER OF ITEMS #1-14 MULTIPLE RESPONSES; UP TO 5**

1. Educational counseling, e.g., getting a GED/TASC high school degree, finding scholarship funding
2. Help in finding a job and/or developing a career vision and plan
3. Help in finding a place to live
4. Help in learning new skills and how to participate in society
5. Help in relating to dating and relationships
6. Help relating to divorce or child custody
7. Help/counseling for your parents/family
8. Finding a therapist
9. Helping you feel that you are part of a Jewish community
10. Help in giving you emotional support, to figure out “who you are”
11. Help in giving you referrals to people you could speak with for various needs
12. Help in giving you opportunities to socialize more with people like yourself
13. Helping you to feel Jewish
14. Help finding answers to religious and spiritual questions
15. **ANCHORED** Other – Please describe **TEXT BOX**
16. **ANCHORED** None of the above

Q42. Thinking of the various support services you may have needed since you started moving away from your community, where did you go for such services? Please check all that apply.

**MULTIPLE RESPONSES**

1. Friends
2. Relatives
3. Community leaders, rabbis, etc.
4. Facebook group or other social media
5. Footsteps



6. Project Makom
7. Other organizations/resources in the Jewish community – Please describe SMALL TEXT BOX
8. Organizations/resources outside the Jewish community – Please describe SMALL TEXT BOX
9. I did not go to any of the above
10. I have not needed such support services

### Net Promoter Score (for Footsteps members)

ASK IF Q21.2 IS CHECKED OR IF Q42.5 IS CHECKED (MEMBER OR USED SERVICES OF FOOTSTEPS)

Q43. You indicated that you are a member of Footsteps or have used their services. How likely is it that you would recommend Footsteps to a friend or colleague, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 = not at all likely and 0 = extremely likely?

ASK IF Q43=9-10 (MEMBER OR USED SERVICES OF FOOTSTEPS, WITH RATING OF 9-10 - PROMOTERS)

Q44. What are the one or two most important reasons for the recommendation rating you gave to Footsteps?

LARGE TEXT BOX

ASK IF Q43=7-8 (MEMBER OR USED SERVICES OF FOOTSTEPS, WITH RATING OF 7-8 - PASSIVES)

Q45. What are the one or two most important reasons for the recommendation rating you gave to Footsteps?

LARGE TEXT BOX

ASK IF Q43=0-6 (MEMBER OR USED SERVICES OF FOOTSTEPS, WITH RATING OF 0-6 - DETRACTORS)

Q45. What are the one or two most important reasons for the recommendation rating you gave to Footsteps?

LARGE TEXT BOX

### Market Sizing

ASK IF Q9=1 (DOUBLE-LIFERS)

Q46. What is the likelihood that you will fully leave your community at some point in the future, on a scale from 0 (you definitely will never leave) to 10 (you definitely will eventually leave)?

Q47. Think back to your close original peer group growing up, for example your family, classmates, etc. How would you complete the following sentence? **Among my close original peer group growing up, I would guess that \_\_\_ of them have left their Orthodox community.** (Please enter your best estimate/guess.)

1. None
2. One or two
3. Three or four
4. 5 to 9
5. 10 to 19
6. 20 to 29
7. 30 to 49
8. 50 or more
9. I have no idea

Q48. Think back to your close original peer group growing up, for example your family, classmates, etc. How would you complete the following sentence? **Among my close original peer group growing up, I would guess that \_\_\_ of them might leave their Orthodox community in the future.** (Please enter your best estimate/guess.)

1. None
2. One or two
3. Three or four

4. 5 to 9
5. 10 to 19
6. 20 to 29
7. 30 to 49
8. 50 or more
9. I have no idea

### **Additional Demographics**

We want to learn a little bit more about you. This will be helpful when we combine all the responses and do our analysis.

Q49. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Transgender
4. Other - Please describe SMALL TEXT BOX

Q50. In what year were you born? SMALL TEXT BOX

Q51. What languages were commonly spoken in your home, when you were growing up? Please check all that apply.

MULTIPLE RESPONSES

1. English
2. Yiddish
3. Hebrew
4. Other(s) – Please describe SMALL TEXT BOX

Q52. What is the highest level of secular studies schooling you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

1. Less than high school (Grades 1-8 or no formal schooling)
2. High school incomplete (Grades 9-11 or Grade 12 with NO diploma)
3. High school graduate (Grade 12 with diploma or GED certificate)
4. Some college, no degree (includes community college)
5. Two year associate degree from a college or university
6. Four year college or university degree/Bachelor's degree
7. Some postgraduate or professional schooling, no postgraduate degree
8. Postgraduate or professional degree, including master's, doctorate, medical or law degree

Q53. Which of these best describes your current employment status?

1. Employed full-time
2. Employed part-time
3. Student
4. Working or volunteering - non-paid
5. Self-employed
6. Retired
7. Not presently employed

Q54. What is your annual household income?

1. Under \$10,000
2. \$10,000 - \$29,999
3. \$30,000 - \$49,999
4. \$50,000 - \$74,999
5. \$75,000 - \$99,999
6. \$100,000 - \$149,999
7. \$150,000 or more

## Final Thoughts and Conclusion

Now we'd like to give you a chance to express some final thoughts and conclusions.

ASK IF Q5=2-3 (OTD RESPONDENTS)

Q55. Many people don't well understand those who have left, or may leave, their Orthodox community of origin. What do you want to tell people about this group? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

ASK IF Q5=2-3 (OTD RESPONDENTS)

Q56. Looking back at your experiences, what if anything would you have done differently? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

ASK IF Q5=2-3 (OTD RESPONDENTS)

Q57. In conclusion, what advice would you give to others who are considering leaving their Orthodox community, for a more modern lifestyle? **LARGE TEXT BOX**

**Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts. Your response is very important to us.**

Q58. Please let us know if ...

- Check here if you would be interested in possibly participating in future research on related topics.
- Check here if you would you like to get free reports on the survey results.

IF EITHER BOX IN Q58 IS CHECKED:

Please let us know your email address, so that we can contact you as appropriate. **Your email will be totally confidential. It will not be used for any other purposes, and will not be attached to your survey responses.**  
**Thank you!** **SMALL TEXT BOX**

**Thank You Screen**

***Thank you for taking our survey! We really appreciate the time you took to share your thoughts with us.***