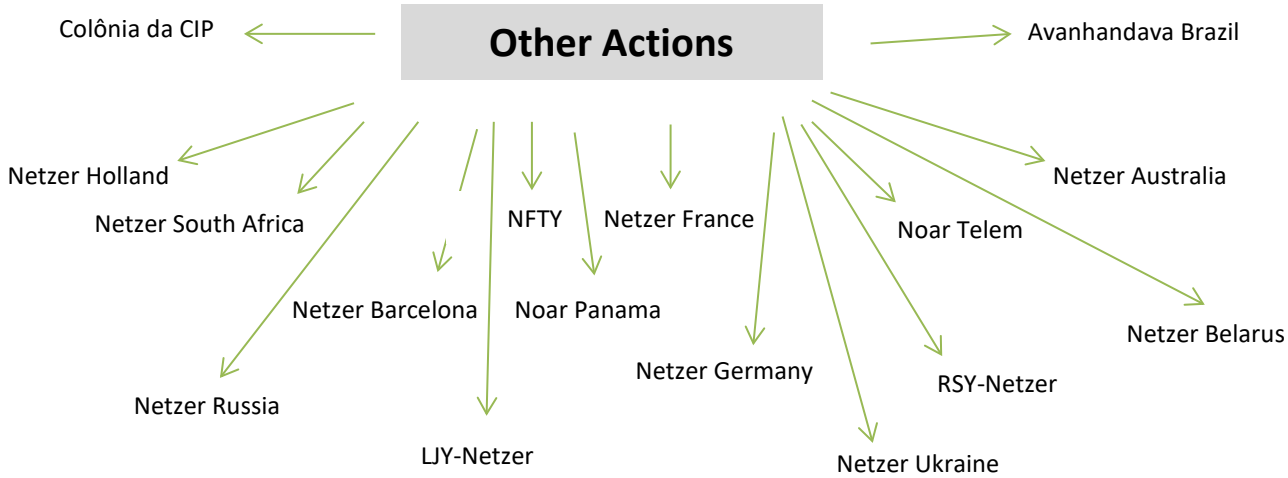
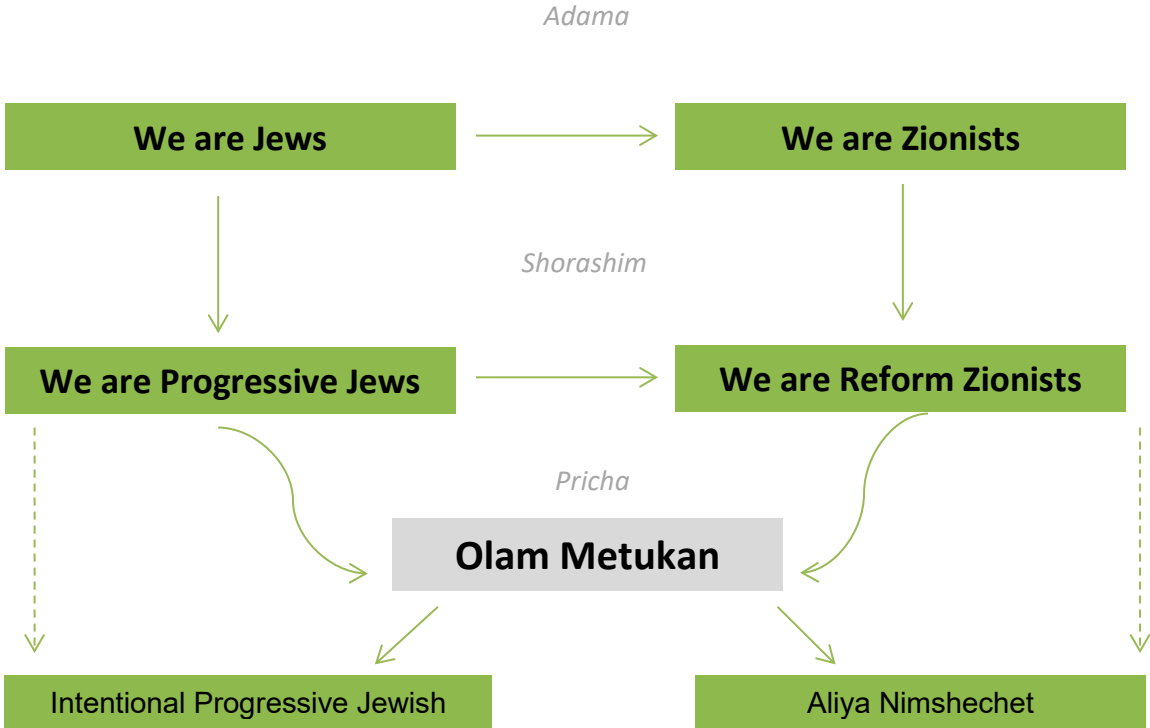


# Netzer Olami Ideology



**Updated: January 2020**

# Netzer Olami Ideology model



## Annotations for Model

1. **We are Jews:** Judaism, inspired divinely by the Torah, is the basis for Zionism, our movement, and the starting point for our ideology. In a Netzer context, it is the foundation upon which we build our actions and beliefs.
2. **We are Zionists:** Judaism is a people, a nation and a religion, and, as the Jewish expression of nationalism, Zionism is a logical extension of Judaism.
3. **We are Progressive Jews:** We see Progressive Judaism as the most logical and appropriate expression of Judaism. Please refer to the “Progressive Judaism” section of the Platform for more details.
4. **We are Reform Zionists:** Reform Zionism is the nationalistic expression of Progressive Judaism and therefore, as Zionism is the logical extension of Judaism, Reform Zionism is our extension of Progressive Judaism.
5. **Olam Metukan - a world which we are perfecting:** Our commitment to Progressive Judaism and Reform Zionism make it our obligation to strive for an Olam Metukan through the actualisation of these ideologies on a personal, communal, societal, national and global level.
6. **Intentional Progressive Jewish Living:** As a direct step in the actualising of the Progressive Jewish vision, all chaverim of Netzer should commit to living their lives informed by Progressive Judaism, in pursuit of an Olam Metukan.
7. **Aliyah Nimschechet:** As a direct step in the actualisation of the Reform Zionist vision, chaverim in Netzer, in seeing Netzer as the ultimate destination for living a fulfilled Jewish life, should seriously consider moving to Israel and working to make it a national example as well as continuing to act towards a repaired world in the vision of Progressive Judaism and Reform Zionism, as a step towards an Olam Metukan.
8. **Actions:** Over and above Intentional Progressive Jewish living and Aliyah Nimschechet, each *snif* (branch) of Netzer Olami may have their own specific actions, informed by Progressive Judaism and Reform Zionism, to which they commit in order to strive, in their own ways, towards an Olam Metukan. These are outlined in the ideological documents of each individual *snif*.

## **NETZER OLAMI PLATFORM**

### **PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM**

#### ***Because we are Jews, we are Progressive Jews***

In order to ensure that Jewish ritual and practice has engaged the Jewish People on a dynamic level, Judaism over the centuries has constantly interpreted and reinterpreted our texts and lessons in response to the various contexts in which it was practiced. In seeking to take responsibility for and ownership over our Jewish practice, and as a natural continuation of this tradition, we proudly identify as Progressive Jews.

We view the Jewish People as:

- A united people, nation and religion
- A society that values an unconditional respect and tolerance for all people as created 'b'tzelem elohim' - 'in the image of God' - as essential to fulfilment
- Being morally bound by Jewish texts and tradition to act in the spirit of Jewish values as an "or l'goyim" - "light unto the nations"

We act upon this by:

- Advocating for, and striving towards, the living of an intentionally Progressive Jewish lifestyle, through constant education and informed decision-making regarding our Judaism. We therefore take conscious action to create a Judaism that is compatible with modern values.

### **REFORM ZIONISM**

#### ***Because we are Progressive Jews, we are Reform Zionists***

Netzer believes that Reform Zionism is the logical extension of Progressive Judaism. This means that we believe in a religious form of Zionism, based on the principles of Progressive Judaism, seeing Israel as the ultimate destination for living a fulfilled Jewish life. Chaverim of Netzer should seriously consider moving to Israel as a step in the process of repairing the world (*Tikkun Olam*), and all Aliyah should be *Aliyah Nimschechet*.

We view Israel as:

- Not necessarily defined by biblical boundaries, but should uphold its original purpose as a refuge of peace and safety for *Am Yisrael*, and as the spiritual, cultural and religious centre of Jewish life

- The nationalistic expression of Judaism, and therefore a state with an obligation to act in accordance with our Progressive Jewish values, such as justice, tolerance and peace
- A land where one should live an intentional Progressive Jewish life, within a communal framework

We do this by:

- Advocating for the full civil, human and religious rights of all Israeli citizens
- Supporting the pursuit of Progressive Jewish values and interests within Israeli society
- Encouraging movement *chaverim* to spend significant time in Israel
- Educating our chaverim on the importance of *Aliyah Nimschechet* to the actualisation of Netzer's ideology
- Striving to create Reform Zionist total community – *Kehila Kedosha* (sacred community)
- Continuing to intensify the use and teaching of *Ivrit* (hebrew) within our movement

## **OLAM METUKAN**

### ***A world which we are perfecting***

Our commitment to Progressive Judaism and Reform Zionism make it our obligation to actively strive for a Messianic Era through the actualisation of these ideologies on a personal, communal, societal, national and global level, in the vision of our Prophets. In viewing the Messianic Era as divinely inspired by a God of our own personal understanding, we see it as our human responsibility to undertake a process of *Tikkun* (reparation) in pursuit of this ideal, informed by our Jewish teachings, texts and values.

# Netzer Olami's Ideology Platform (2017 update)

We, Netzer Olami, as a youth movement committed to an ideology of 'Reform Zionism' and 'Progressive Judaism', do affirm our belief in the following points as being key elements of our beliefs and values, that all of our member sniffim commit to:

## 1. Judaism is a People, a Nation and a Religion:

The restoration of Am Yisrael (the Jewish People) to its ancestral homeland, with Jerusalem as the spiritual centre, after nearly two thousand years of statelessness and powerlessness represents an historic triumph of the Jewish people. We acknowledge the importance of Israel's role in providing a physical refuge and yet we affirm the more important role of providing for the possibility of the religious and cultural renewal of the Jewish People on its own soil, and the realization of God's promise to Abraham: "to your offspring I assign this land".<sup>1</sup> As Religious Zionists we affirm that Judaism is a People, a Nation and a Religion, and that these three elements are indivisible.

## 2. The covenant as a moral obligation:

We believe that the eternal covenant established at Sinai ordained a unique religious purpose for Am Yisrael. The goal of Medinat Yisrael (the Jewish State) is therefore not to be a normal state like all others. Its obligation is to strive towards the attainment of the Jewish people's highest moral ideals to be a mamlechet kohanim [a kingdom of priests]<sup>2</sup>, a goy kadosh [a holy people]<sup>3</sup>, and l'or goyim [a light unto the nations]<sup>4</sup>.

## 3. Sovereignty:

During two millennia of dispersion and persecution, Am Yisrael never abandoned hope for the rebirth of a national home in Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel). Centuries of Jewish persecution, culminating in the Shoah (the Holocaust), demonstrated the risks of Jewish powerlessness. We, therefore, affirm Am Yisrael's reassertion of national sovereignty, where Jews once again can live within a Jewish majority, but we are part of striving to ensure that it be used to create the kind of society in which full civil, human, and religious rights exist for all its citizens and, in particular where the individual rights of all religious and cultural minorities are respected - a society that is both Jewish and Democratic in character. "Ultimately, Medinat Yisrael will be judged not on its military might but the strength of its character".<sup>5</sup> Reclaiming our Sovereignty offers us the opportunity to strive to demonstrate that the traditions and values of Judaism that we believe in have relevance for dealing with the issues of the modern world of nation states.

## 4. Israel & Diaspora:

Even as Medinat Yisrael and Jerusalem serve uniquely as the spiritual and cultural focal point of world Jewry, Israeli and Diaspora Jewry are inter-dependent, responsible for one another, and partners in the shaping of Jewish destiny. Each kehilla [Jewish community], though autonomous and self-regulating, shares responsibility for the fate of Jews everywhere. By deepening the social, spiritual, and intellectual relationship among the kehilot worldwide, we can revitalize Judaism both in Israel and the Diaspora. As it is said, "kol yisrael eruvim ze l'ze" (all Israel is responsible, one for the other).<sup>6</sup>

## **5. Aliya Nimshechet:**

While affirming the authenticity and necessity of a creative and vibrant Diaspora Jewry, we strongly encourage Aliya [immigration] to Israel in pursuance of the precept of yishuv Eretz Yisrael [settling the Land of Israel]. While Jews can live Torah-centred lives in the Diaspora, only in Medinat Yisrael do they bear the primary responsibility for the governance of society, and thus may realize, individually and communally, the full potential of their spiritual and ideological individual and communal religious strivings. In Israel Jews are able to lead a Jewish life in both the private and the public spheres, living their national life according to the Jewish calendar and rhythms of the year.

We therefore encourage all of our chaverim (members) to seriously consider Aliya as one of their life options as a Jew. The very act of Aliya however is not enough. We encourage all those people who do choose to make Aliya to ensure that this is an ongoing process of Aliya Nimshechet (continuing Aliya) - that is, an ongoing striving to live out the movement's values and beliefs in Israel both at a personal level and in terms of creating the kind of society that we as Netzer envision.

## **6. Progressive Judaism in Israel:**

Confident that Progressive Judaism's synthesis of tradition and modernity and its historic commitment to Tikun Olam (repairing/perfecting the world), can make a unique and positive contribution to the Jewish state, we resolve to intensify our efforts to inform and educate Israelis about the values of Progressive Judaism. We support, in all ways that we can, the development and strengthening of an indigenous Progressive Judaism in Medinat Yisrael.

## **7. A pluralistic approach to Judaism in Israel:**

Medinat Yisrael exists not only for the benefit of its citizens but also to defend the spiritual integrity and the physical security of the Jewish people. Realizing that Am Yisrael consists of a combination of different, sometimes conflicting, religious interpretations, the Jewish people will be best served when Medinat Yisrael is constituted as a pluralistic, democratic society. Therefore we seek, and help strive towards, a Jewish state in which no one interpretation of Judaism takes legal precedence over another.

## **8. Tikun Olam:**

We are committed to idea of Tikun Olam (repairing/perfecting the world) and to our active role in that process. We believe that as Jews we have a particular role to play in making the world a better place, in line with our particular values and vision, and thus helping bring about the Messianic Era. We believe that this process of Tikun, this striving for improvement and ideally for perfection, must take place at various levels of our lives: In terms of ourselves as individuals (Tikun Atzmi) , in terms of our own communities (Tikun Kehila); of our Jewish State (Tikun Medina/Chevra); of the Jewish People (Tikun Am); and of the whole world (Tikun Olam). We reject the idea that this is a staged process where one needs to complete one of these areas before moving on to the next. Rather, we strive to be involved in bettering all these areas of our lives at all times. In that sense, we are both 'universalistic' and 'particularistic' – that is, we are concerned both with ourselves, the Jewish People specifically, and also with the rest of the world.

## **9. Our Values and responsibilities:**

As Reform Zionists, we believe in a particular set of values that are fundamental to our vision. We strive to ensure that these values inform and underpin everything that we do. Some of the most important of these core values are:

- Prayer through Ma'amad (a term used in the movement to signify creative, prayer, relevant to a particular time and place)
- Celebration of Shabbat and the Chagim (the Festivals)
- Jewish study as an ongoing lifelong commitment, especially the study of Torah
- Informed decision making – individuality and communally
- A belief in the oneness of God
- The Unity of the Jewish People
- The centrality of the land and State of Israel in Jewish life
- Tzedaka & G'millut Chasidim
- A commitment to the Prophetic tradition and its understanding and vision of Judaism
- Social Justice & a commitment to Peace
- Equality, particularly gender equality in Judaism
- Mutual Care and working co-operatively
- Care for the environment
- As a movement that identifies as feminists, and recognizing our ability to counter the society we live in, Netzer believes that each sniff should actively promote and respect those within our movement and community. Achieving this change is best realized through education in Netzer.
- Inclusivity- Creating celebratory spaces for all participants to express their identity regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race and ability. We reject all forms of discrimination. Furthermore, in line with the Jewish teachings of Tikkun Olam (Repairing the world), V'ahavta L'reiacha Kamocha (Love Your Neighbour), and Chazon Ha'Nevi'im (Vision of our prophets), we are committed to fighting prejudice and discrimination in the world, and aim to be dugma'ot for others to follow.
- Fighting against anti-Semitism, according to the IHRA definition.

We encourage all of our sniffim and our chaverim to be a part of an ongoing process that defines for themselves what each of these values means in their daily lives and in the lives of their community.



## **10. Reform Zionist Community:**

In particular, we recognise the value of communal living and we encourage all movement chaverim to explore the option of living their lives in a strong communal framework. We commit ourselves to being part of the process of supporting and developing both established and new Reform Zionist communities, built on the basis of the values stated above and committed to striving to become communities of intimacy, of purpose, of participation and of communal religious authority.

## **11. Ivrit:**

Recognising that knowledge of Ivrit is indispensable both in the study of Judaism and in unifying the Jewish People and fostering solidarity between Israeli and Diaspora Jews, we commit ourselves to intensifying the use of Hebrew within the movement and to putting greater effort into the teaching of it to our chanichim (participants). The language of our sacred texts and prayers, and of the modern State of Israel, is a symbol of the revitalisation of Am Yisrael.

## **12. Spending Time in Israel:**

In furtherance of the above beliefs, we resolve to ensure that as many of our chaverim as possible come to Israel in the framework of a Netzer programme and that, preferably, as part of that commitment, they spend a serious amount of time participating in a long term programme in Israel. We also encourage all chaverim to spend some serious time in Israel on completion of their time in the movement.

## **13. Hagshama & Activism:**

We, as a youth movement, are committed to being both an educational and an activist movement. We believe in the importance of education as a vehicle for self-development and change and as such a great part of our activities are educational in nature. And yet, we also believe that education and ideological beliefs must be backed up by action. We believe it is both our right and our responsibility to take a stand on the key issues affecting our world and to actively work towards bringing about our particular vision. Furthermore, we encourage the implementation among all movement chaverim of the idea of Hagshama (self-realisation) - that is, the living out of the ideology and values in their everyday lives. We believe that it is important for all Jews to strive to lead meaningful, fulfilled Jewish lives and we strongly encourage all our chaverim to take up this challenge, both in their time in the movement and in their lives after they leave it.

## **14. Geula:**

In conclusion, we believe that the renewal and perpetuation of Jewish national life in Eretz Yisrael is a necessary condition for the realisation of the physical and spiritual redemption of the Jewish people and of all humanity. While that day of Geula (redemption) remains but a distant yearning, we express the fervent hope that Medinat Yisrael, living in peace with its neighbours, will hasten the redemption of Am Yisrael, and the fulfilment of our messianic dream of universal peace under the sovereignty of God. Modern Zionism has achieved so much in such a short time and has in so many ways shown an unparalleled triumph of the Jewish spirit, and yet the path has also been strewn with great

difficulties and a tremendous challenge still lies before us. As it is said: “Lo Alecha Hamlacha Ligmor v’lo atah ben chorin lehibatel mimena.” (It is not your duty to complete the work. Neither are you free to desist from it).<sup>7</sup>

**15. Youth Empowerment** – as a youth movement, we believe that empowering our members and youth leading youth is essential to our philosophy. We believe that youth movements are meant to question the status quo, and that through events such as Netzer Veida, decisions should be left to the active members of Netzer Olami. Through the empowerment of our future leaders, we will see a growth in Hadracha, and passion from all chaverim in the movement.

#### **Sources:**

The following are the sources for the quotes and phrases used in the platform.

1. A phrase from Genesis 15:18
2. A phrase from Exodus 19:6
3. A phrase from Exodus 19:6
4. A phrase from Isaiah 42:6
5. David Ben Gurion, from The Call of The Spirit, 1951/52
6. From Rashi’s commentary on Leviticus 26:37
7. From Pirkei Avot, (Sayings of the Fathers)

#### First Amendment to the Ideological Platform of Netzer Olami

#### **Netzer and the World Union for Progressive Judaism**

Whereas Netzer Olami is an ideologically independent youth movement, representing Reform Zionism and providing education from a progressive Jewish perspective to all young Jews who wish to join in the process of Tikun.

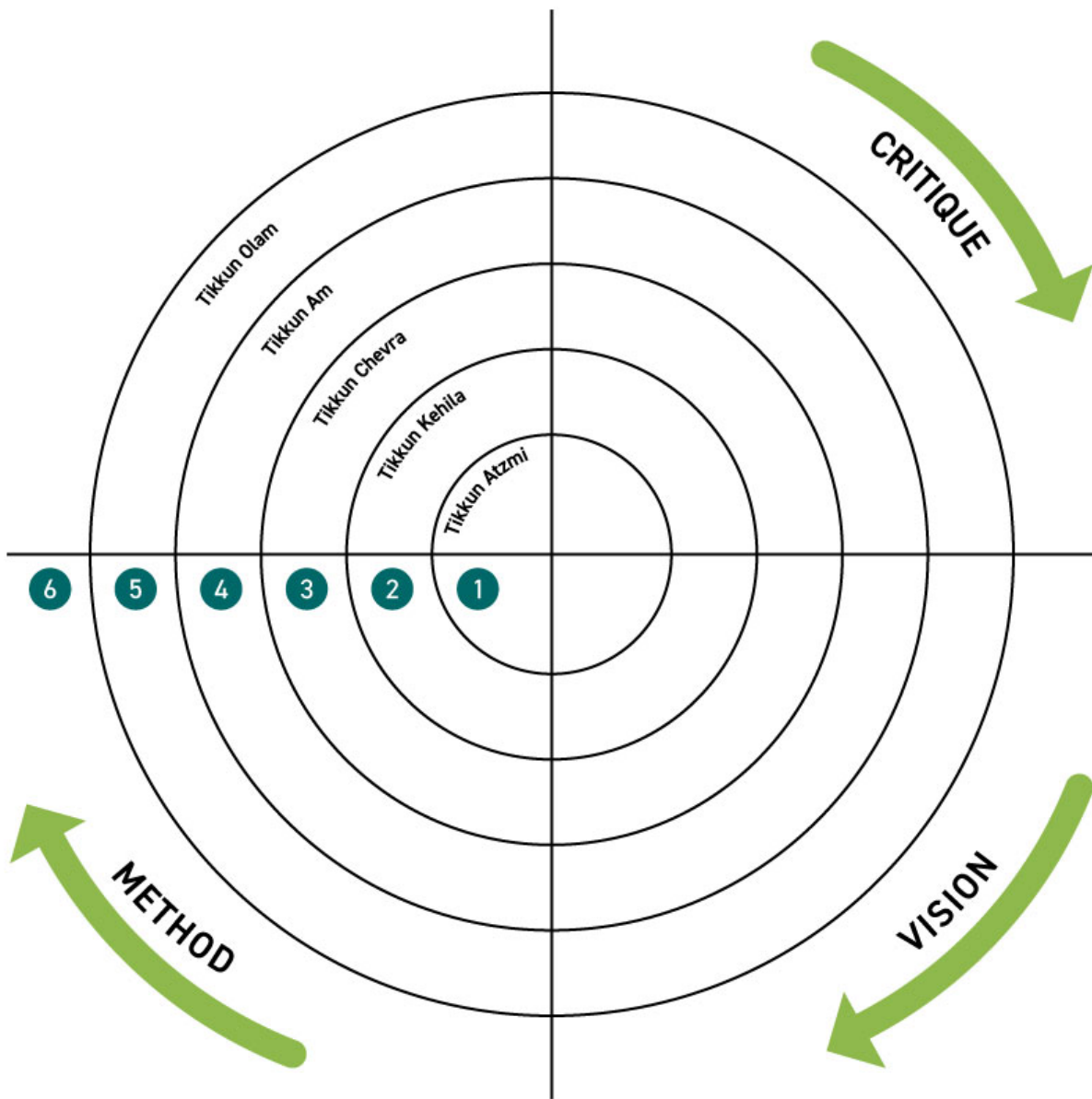
Whereas Netzer Olami strives to represent progressive Judaism within Am Yisrael and particularly the Zionist movement, and at the same time spread the message of Zionism and the importance of Jewish Nationhood within the Reform movement.

So, we expect our Bogrim to join the adult movement (WUPJ) once they graduate the Youth Movement and to stay active within it both in the Diaspora, as long as they are there, and in Israel, if they choose to make Aliyah, with the purpose of strengthening the adult body and in order to spread Netzer’s message to a wider audience.

# Netzer Olami Ideology Pillars



# The Concentric Circles of TikKun Diagram



**Critique:** how we see it | **Vision:** how we would like to see it | **Method:** how we can achieve our vision

	<b>CRITIQUE</b>	<b>VISION</b>	<b>METHOD</b>
<b>Tikkun Atzmi</b> Perfect yourself	Assimilation, distant from tradition, not realising potential, not acting in accord with own values, apathetic	Self-actualisation, Jewish learning, spiritual & moral development, consideration of aliyah	Education, dugma ishit (lead by example), spiritual moral & personal development
<b>Tikkun Kehilah</b> Perfect your community	Lack of commitment purpose & wider vision, passivity & indifference, alienation, religious dependency	Communities living according to reform Zionist values – intimacy, involvement, purpose, religious authority	Building & strengthening reform Zionist communities, challenging our community
<b>Tikkun Chevra</b> Perfect society	Polarised views of society, failure to deal with Jewish power in line with Jewish ethics.	Pluralist religious society embodying Progressive Jewish values.	Strive for pluralism, involvement in societal issues according to our values, influence others (individual & communal dugma)
<b>Tikkun Am</b> Perfect the Jewish people	Dispersion, fragmented, divided	Israel/ diaspora relations, pluralism in Israel, nationalism in diaspora, aliyah nimshecht (living out a Reform Zionist life in Israel)	Reform Zionist education in diaspora, encourage spending serious time in Israel, encourage aliyah nimshechet, work with all of Jewish people
<b>Tikkun Olam</b> Perfect the world	Poverty, oppression, war, racism, human rights etc.	Justice, equality, peace, dignity of all humans	Being a light unto the nations, involvement in local national and international campaigns/ causes

# The Netzer symbol



**The Magen David** | The 'Shield of David' has come to be used in modern times, as a universal symbol of Jewish national identity. As Jewish symbols go, it does not have a particularly ancient background and seems to have been first associated with Judaism in the late Middle Ages. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Magen David was adopted by the Zionist Movement as the Jewish national symbol and it has come to be recognized as a general symbol of Judaism, appearing also in religious contexts. Today, the Magen David is the central element of the flag of the State of Israel and, in many ways, is symbolic of the unity of Am Yisrael.



**The Menorah** | One of the oldest of Jewish ornaments and symbols, the Menorah is first mentioned in the book of Exodus where it is stated that its design was inspired by a revelation from on high. The seven branch Menorah was used in worship in the Temple in Jerusalem. When the Temple was destroyed, it became the central symbol of Jewish religious expression. Today, the Menorah appears prominently on the coat-of-arms of the State of Israel, as well as being a part of every symbol used by the Progressive movement world-wide. The Menorah, moreover, symbolizes light and all the special association we have with light.



**'Alei Netzer'** | The leaves of Renewal and Redemption. The leaves are symbolic of the 'new shoot' referred to in Isaiah 11:2, as well as representing the central Jewish religious theme of the prospect of redemption. They are also symbolic of the 'fresh approach' created by the Progressive Movement, as well as the continued vitality of Netzer itself.



**Netzer** | The name of the movement, the Hebrew word 'Netzer' means a new shoot, a twig, a new growth, and is to be found in Isaiah 11:2: "... And a new shoot shall grow forth from his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord."