

## **Jewish Identity in the Diaspora**

As American Jews, we recognize the broad context of what it means to be a Jew that has assimilated into society. However, that assimilation is a different experience for every Jew and Jewish community. Creating communities in foreign lands while longing for another has a specific impact on the cultural identity of each individual and each community. In this program, we will be exploring how different communities around the world thrived or did not thrive, what practices they lost or kept, and how the diaspora affect their identities.

The region would be split up into groups, whether that be breakout rooms or based on name tags. No group would be larger than ten people, and the group leaders would rotate between the groups. Each group leader would be assigned a Jewish community throughout the diaspora. Some examples include the Jewish communities of Berlin, Amsterdam, Baghdad and surrounding areas, Buenos Aires, Curacao, Casablanca and surrounding areas, and New Delhi, as well as many more.

These groups would examine what Jewish practices were kept, which were lost, how they were adapted and why. They would discuss the impact that surrounding secular communities had on the Jews, and how that is similar or different to today. The goal of this program is to help MARites connect with their Jewish identities, and to realize that they are not alone. Living as a Jew in the diaspora can be lonely, not having a connection to where you come from or knowing where cultural practices originated. Learning about other communities that have been through the same thing and created something from nothing can make us feel less lonely, and that is what community is about.