

HADRACHA CHOVERET

**BNEI
AKIVA**
UNITED KINGDOM



BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM

Beshalach· The Power of Song



Concrete Concepts·

1. Song is the supreme expression of praise – which is why it's sung after the splitting of the sea.
2. Music carries deep meaning in Judaism.

Bnei Akiva Svivot 5783· Madrichim Pack

Dear Madrichim.

First off, apologies that I couldn't have a new style choveret for you this week. This is a slightly altered earlier choveret, so if there's any questionable content it definitely wasn't me...

The role music plays in our lives is incredibly dangerous – we all know how music can alter moods and experiences, so what does Judaism have to say about it? Let's look through some of the ideas below...

Remember we're here to support you in whatever way we can! Rafi can be contacted at svivot@bauk.org or 0208 209 1319 ext. 4, and I can be contacted at chinuch@bauk.org or 0208 209 1319 ext. 5.

BVCLTVA,
Ben

Week 12· The Power of Song

The Splitting of the Yam Suf

This week's Parasha contains one of the most well-known miracles to have ever occurred: Kriyat Yam Suf, the splitting of the Yam Suf. Bnei Yisrael, straight out of Egypt, find themselves trapped. In front of them lies the sea, and behind them lies the mighty Egyptian army. Understandably Bnei Yisrael were frightened yet Moshe instructed them, "Have no fear! Stand by, and witness the deliverance which Hashem will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you will never see again. Hashem will battle for you; you hold your peace!"



Indeed this happened: "Then Moshe held out his arm over the sea and Hashem drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night, and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split, and the Bnei Yisrael went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left."

Bnei Yisrael responded to this miracle in a beautiful way – they burst into song collectively. Each Shevet and member of Bnei Yisrael came together creating a melodious symphony praising Hashem and His greatness.

The deeper symbolism of song:

Music has a power that is almost unexplainable. You could be walking past a shop and enticed in according to the music they have playing in there. You could be on the train listening to the person next to you hum a tune absentmindedly, and four hours later you will find yourself whistling the same tune. The examples can go on forever, but I'm sure you get the point. Music has the power to evoke the most profound emotions and to awaken memories long put away. It is almost comparable to a key to the soul.

Point to Ponder

🗣️ What is it about music that makes it so powerful?

Indeed the spiritual power of song cannot be overstated, it goes far beyond just 'Az Yashir' which features in our Parasha. Some of the most moving perakim of Tehillim begin with the phrase 'Shir Hama'alot' 'A **Song** of Ascents', and Torah itself is described as a song.

In fact, the last of the 613 mitzvot was to write down the Torah and to recognise it as a song. When you sing something it brings it to life; the static word becomes a dynamic flow of feelings and ideas. This flow is thrilling because, like life, it is continuous. Life is not a series of disconnected events; it is a constant linking of these events into a pattern where everything affects everything else. Life is a rollercoaster. It has no pause button, and as an exciting piece of music or movie, it keeps on moving.

This is recognisable to us every year on Machane. We all get caught up in the ruach of meal-time songs, and all pretend we don't shed a small tear during the slow tisch songs. We get hyped for our Kvutza's kriya and the camp song, becoming caught up in the moment and transcending our usual selves.



The immense power of collective music:

However, there is a staggering difference between a solo and a symphony, between one person teaching a new song and everyone else joining in. Whilst all forms and genre of music are impressive, perhaps the grandest is classical music. There is something unique and breathtaking about seeing a vast orchestra coming together and creating a symphony that is more than just the sum of its parts. This was precisely the beauty of Shirat haYam, the Song by the Sea. It was not just Moshe but rather "Moshe and Bnei Yisrael chose to sing this song to Hashem."



Perhaps this is why Chazal do not recognise the sublime poetry of David haMelech and Yishayahu as 'songs' due to their individual nature.

Furthermore, a the concept of a symphony reflects a much deeper idea. Or haChayim, a biblical commentator, suggests that only after witnessing the miracle of the splitting of the sea could Bnei Yisrael sing. They needed to recognise that Hashem was truly in ultimate control of everything in the world, that He was the Conductor and everything played to His tune, and only then could they sing in praise of Him.

A 'song' must be collective, it must have each and every member of Am Yisrael singing their part. It must be whole and indivisible, like the Torah which is more than just a collection of letters, greater than the sum of its parts. A 'song' must reflect unity recognising G-d's power and mastery of all the 'instruments' of this world.

When we, as a people, can do this, then we will merit to sing a 'Shir Chadash', a new song of Messianic nature.

Discussion Ideas:



- ❏ In a religion of the spoken and written word, what place does Music have?
- ❏ What is your favourite Shabbat song?
- ❏ How is it that sound can conjure up an era? - What songs remind of events in your life? Why is the Camp Song so important?
- ❏ How important is the place of music in Judaism? How does a Tisch differ from regular davening, from Limmud Torah. How does singing on Friday night, or Hallel enhance the spiritual effect? Does it just make us feel good and give us the chills? Is there more to it than that?

Activity Ideas:



- ❏ Articulate – with songs! Prepare some cards in advance and participants must hum the tunes written on the cards. No singing or words allowed at all, it must be hummed! All the usual rules of Articulate apply.
- ❏ Same as above, but instead of humming, see who can convey the tunes while gargling with water.
- ❏ Run your usual activities in groups, and get the groups to come up with a song or chant about themselves. Use this to springboard into a discussion about how the song can capture their essence.

Random Games Corner

Over here each you'll find random games that we've compiled from the days of old. The titles are a bit weird and they're mostly just for fun but you never know when they might connect to an educational message!

Donut - Suspend a doughnut from a string and watch as they try to eat with no hands.

Dreidel - Spinning Sevivons/Dizzy Dreidels – Two competitors spin on the starting line for 30 seconds before racing each other to the opposite wall

Adman - Adman (a classic, with local variants and customs all over) – Sitting in a circle each position has a name, customarily along the lines of Adman, Superman, Spiderman, Batman, 1, 2, 3, etc. The final position is Shmerel. Each person must call someone who is not next to them and who did not just call them (Adman calling Spiderman, Spiderman calling 2, etc.) If someone is out, they become the Shmerel (everyone chants Shmerel! Shmerel!) and everyone moves up a seat. They take the name of the seat they are moving into. The aim is to be Adman. (Tenuous link to heroes and the Maccabees, maybe make Maccabee the first position.)

SLAP HAND TAG

TYPE: Active Play in a large room The group is divided into two teams. Each team stands in a line facing the other team. The first player from team A runs across to team B, and slaps the hands of three players. The third player he slaps must chase him back to team A's line. If he gets tagged, he becomes team B's prisoner and stands behind the player who tagged him. If he doesn't get tagged, the player from team B becomes team A's prisoner and stands behind the player he was chasing. Play continues with the first player from team B, then the second player from team A, etc. If a player who becomes a prisoner has his own prisoners, his prisoners are freed and return to their own team. The game ends when one team loses all of their players. Variation: Stop the game after a certain time limit; the team with the most prisoners wins

QUESTION BASEBALL

TYPE: Moderate The players are divided into two teams. Four chairs are arranged in the formation of a baseball diamond (see diagram). A chair is placed in the pitcher's position and the leader sits in that chair. The leader "pitches" questions to the first player (who is seated at home plate). If the player answers correctly, he advances one base. If he answers incorrectly, he is "out." The next player does the same. If he answers correctly both he and the player on base advance one base. If he answers incorrectly, he is "out" and the player on base stays where he is. When a team has scored three outs, the next team is "up at bat." One point is scored for each player who advances to "home plate." At the end of five "innings" the team with the most points, wins.

NASI--NASI #1

TYPE: Quiet Play in a circle One player is chosen to be the "Nasi" and the player to his left becomes the "Chamor." The object is to become the Nasi. Players begin by: 1) Slapping their hands on their knees 2) Clapping their hands 3) Snapping their right hand 4) Snapping their

left hand On the right snap, the Nasi says his name (the Nasi and the Chamor substitute "Nasi" and "Chamor" for their real names, everyone else uses their real names). On the left snap, he says another player's name and so on. Anyone who does not keep up the beat or fails to respond to his turn moves to the Chamor's seat and everyone shifts over to take up his now vacant seat. Variation: Instead of calling a person always by his own name, the seat in which he sat in during the beginning of the game assumes his name. Therefore, when players shift position they also change their names to that of the person who first sat in that seat. Slap--Clap--Snap, Nasi--Snap: Joe Slap--Clap--Snap: Joe--Snap: Rivka Slap--Clap--Snap: Rivka--Snap: Chamor, etc.

SHOE FETCH

TYPE: Relay Five players from each team take off their shoes. The leader then takes the shoes and puts them in another room. At the signal, the players run to the other room, put on their shoes, and run back. The first team whose players return, wins

TWENTY QUESTIONS

TYPE: Shtick The group must guess some object that the leader has picked by asking "yes" or "no" questions. But there is one catch; actually, the leader has not picked anything. He answers "yes" or "no" depending on how the last word in the question ends: consonant = "yes"; vowel = "no," or vice versa. See how long it takes the group to catch on. Variation: Send one player out of the room. While he is out tell the group the trick. When he returns tell him he has twenty questions to guess an object that the group has picked. See how long it will take him to catch on.