

UNIT FOUR:

Songs of Belonging: *Jewish/Israeli Songs*

Student Workbook

A curriculum for Israel Engagement

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Lesson 1:

Classical Poems and Songs

Introduction

In the first unit we explored the different types of connections that the Jewish People have with Israel. Since the Jews were expelled from the Land of Israel in ancient times, they have endeavored to remember and connect to the land in a variety of ways. The Arts in particular have played a major role in the expression of connection to Israel. It has provided an avenue for expression of yearning for the land, through poems, visual arts, music, etc. Even today, while we have the Modern State of Israel, artists worldwide are still expressing their connection to Israel through art.

In the first lesson of this unit, we will learn about 2 poems that were written before the creation of the Modern State of Israel. One is a Psalm from the Bible: **"If I forget you, O Jerusalem"** and the second is a poem from the medieval period written by Yehuda Halevi: **"My Heart is in the East, and I am in the furthestmost West"**.

After analyzing both, we will do a short assignment asking you to reflect on *Hatikva*, the Israeli Hymn which later became Israel's National Anthem, applying the themes of yearning you have studied in class to the hymn.

1. "If I forget you, O, Jerusalem, אם אשכח ירושלים"

The poem, *If I forget you, O, Jerusalem*, is part of Tehillim, Psalm #137, which is attributed to the First Exile, in Babylon, in the 6th century B.C.E. This well-known psalm begins with: *"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion..."* "על נהרות בבל שם ישבנו" גם בכינוי: בזכרנו את ציון".

This psalm has traditionally been used for Jews world-over to affirm loyalty and longing for Jerusalem and The Land of Israel.

2. Read the Psalm itself and the information below and answer the questions that follow :

Read the Psalm, then read the 3 “Did you Know?” facts and answer the questions that follow.

If I forget you, O, Jerusalem

Tehillim (Psalms): 137: 5-6

If I forget you, O, Jerusalem,

Let my right hand wither.

Let my tongue stick to my palate

If I cease to think of you;

If I do not keep Jerusalem in

memory,

Even at my happiest hour.

אם אשכח ירושלים
תהילים פרק קל"ז, ה-ו
אם-אשכחך ירושלהם
תשכח ימיני.
תדבק לשוני לחכי,
אם-ל' א אֶזְכְּרֶכִי:
אם-ל' א אֶעֱלֶה אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם,
על ר' אש שמחתי

Source: <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt26d7.htm>

Did you Know?



Many Jews still recite the complete Psalm #137 daily (save for Shabbat and Jewish Holidays) prior to Grace After Meals (*Birkat Hamazon*).

This excerpt of Psalm #137 is recited at every traditional Jewish, to show that happiness is incomplete as we commemorate the loss of Jerusalem and Exile.

At the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basel in 1903, Theodor Herzl proposed accepting the British offer of Uganda as a temporary Jewish Homeland: this caused an uproar among the delegates, especially those from Eastern Europe, who condemned him for betraying The Land of Israel. At the close of the Congress, raising his arm, as if taking oath, Herzl declared, "*If I forget you, O, Jerusalem*".

Questions:

1. Have you ever heard the expression: *If I forget you, O, Jerusalem?*
(circle one:) Yes / No

2. When is it said?

2. Have you heard any other expressions of loyalty? If so, which?

3. What is the meaning of this Psalm?

4. What kind of connection with Israel does the writer express?

5. What artistic elements has the author used to express his feelings?



2. *My heart is in the East, and I am in the farthest West* לְבִי

(בְּמִזְרָח)

Yehuda Halevi, the great poet, rabbinical authority and philosopher, wrote his famous poem, "My heart is in the east, and I am in the furthest west" at the time of the Muslim domination over Spain, often known as the "Golden Age" of Spanish Jewish civilization.

Read the Yehuda HaLevi poem below, as well as the "Did you know" facts that follow.

My Heart Lies in the East

By: Rabbi Yehuda Halevi

In: Songs of Zion, In Arab Chains (set of 6 poems), Verse 1

My heart lies in the East, while I am in the farthest West.	לְבִי בְּמִזְרַח וְאֲנִי כִּי בְּסוּף מִעֲרָב
How can I sense what I eat and how can it taste sweet?	אֵיךְ אֶטְעֶמָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר אֶכֶל, וְאֵיךְ יִעֲרָב?
How then shall I redeem all my oaths and vows,	אֵיכָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נְדָרַי וְאֶסְרֵי, בְּעוֹד
While Zion is tied in Edom's bonds and I in Arab chains?	צִיּוֹן בְּחֶבֶל אֶדוֹם, וְאֲנִי בְּכַבֵּל עֲרָב?

Source: www.benyehuda.org/rihal/Rihal1_1.html

Did You Know?



Rabbi Yehuda Halevi lived from about 1075/80-1141

Rabbi Yehuda Halevi was a Hebrew poet, philosopher and religious authority who lived in Muslim Spain in the Middle Ages. He is perhaps most generally famed as the author of the Kuzari, but within his own generation and throughout history he is primarily renowned as a distinguished rabbi.

Rabbi Yehuda Halevi's is often called the Rihal, an acronym from the letters in his title and name: resh, yod, heh-lamed: ר-י-ה"ל

Discussion Questions:

- To whom is this poem dedicated?
- What is the message of this poem?
- What are the similarities and differences to Psalm #137?
- Do you recognize any expressions in it?
- The Hebrew text is pointed (vocalized), so that you can see the play on similar sounding words – take a look and see which they are!
- This poem was written by Yehuda Halevi, during an era of flourishing Jewish culture. Where was he located and how do you think he felt about it based on this poem?
- How do *you* feel about this poem?
- Does this poem enhance your sense of belonging to Israel? If so, how, and if not, why not?



3. Assignment: Hatikva

Hatikvah, a poem written by Naftali Zvi Imber, was originally composed as “Tikvatenu” in 1878, but was then revised to the more known version “Hatikva”. Tikvatenu was first adapted as Hatikva in 1987, and official voted as the World Zionist Organization’s anthem during the First Zionist Congress in 1897.

In this assignment, we will learn about the way the Hatikva was written and compare it to the other poems we have learned about.

Read Hatikva and the information provided below. Then answer the questions that follow.

“The Hope”, Hatikva, התקווה

As long as deep in the heart	Kol od balevav penimah	כל עוד בלבב פנימה
The soul of a Jew yearns,	Nefesh yehudi homiyah	נפש יהודי הומיה
And towards the East,	Ul'fa'atei mizrach kadimah	ולפאתי מזרח, קדימה
An eye looks to Zion,	'Ayin letzion tzofiyah.	עין לציון צופיה
Our hope is not yet lost,	Od lo avdah tikvateinu	עוד לא אבדה תקותנו
The hope of two thousand years:	Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim	התקווה בת שנות אלפים
To be a free people in our land,	Li'hyot am chofshi be'artzeinu	להיות עם חופשי בארצנו
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.	Eretz tzion vi'Yrushalayim	ארץ ציון וירושלים

Learn to sing Hatikvah (optional) and listen to a recording here:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts%20About%20Israel/State/The%20State>



Did you Know?

Hatikvah was sung slightly differently in the Diaspora, and the format was only unified later, as the anthem of the State of Israel, when it was adopted for all official and informal occasions. Legislation formalizing **Hatikvah's** status as Israel's National Anthem along with the other symbols of State, was not passed by the Knesset until November 2004.

Another candidate considered for the Zionist anthem in 1897 was Psalm #126, the **Shir Hama'alot** that is recited before Birkat Hamazon (Grace after Meals) on Shabbat and Jewish Holidays, which speaks of the Return to Zion and was sung by the famous Chazan (Cantor), Yossele Rosenblatt. Even after the adoption of Hatikva as the official anthem, Shir Hama'lot continued to be sung on public occasions as well.

A recording of Rosenblatt's Shir Hama'alot can be found here:

<http://www.chazzanut.com/rosenblatt/rosenblatt-shir-hama'alot.mp3>

The words to Shir Hama'lot can be found here:

http://zemirotdatabase.org/view_song.php?id=112

A third, but much later candidate for the anthem was the poem **Emunah**, proposed by Rav Kook, and based on *Hatikvah* itself.

The words to the poem can be found here:

http://www.zemirotdatabase.org/view_song.php?id=152

It can be heard here:

http://www.lookstein.org/resources/al_jolson_hatikvah.mp3

More about Naftali Herz (Zvi) Imber, 1856-1909

Naftali Herz Imber was born in Zloczow, Poland; he spoke and composed poetry in a number of languages. Imber traveled to the Land of Israel in his twenties and was deeply inspired by the pioneers. He then composed several poems - including the nine verses of his longer poem, *Tikvateinu*, which were later adapted as *Hatikvah*.

Imber only lived for a few years in Israel, following which he moved to England, then America, where he died in New York. In 1953, Naftali Imber's remains were reburied in Jerusalem, in the young State of Israel.

Questions:

1. What does *Hatikvah* mean to people you know?

2. Explain the meaning of *Hatikvah*, by going back to some of its sources and inspirations (Yehuda HaLevi and Psalm #137).

3. What can you tell about the style of *Hatikvah* (in comparison to the other poems)?

4. Complete the following:
(a) When I sing *Hatikvah*, I feel:

- (b) When **we** sing *Hatikvah*:

5. What does *Hatikvah* mean to you, now that you have studied it?



Lesson 2:

Modern Inspirations

Introduction

During the first lesson, we studied two classic poems written in the First (Babylonian) and Second Diaspora, and a more recent classic. As we mentioned at the beginning of the lesson, throughout our history Hebrew poets have always expressed their yearning for The Land of Israel. Since the establishment of the State of Israel, composers and artists from Israel and the Diaspora have continued to express their feelings for Israel and highlight the importance of the Jewish People's bond and connection with the land.

In this lesson we are going to learn about some poets and songwriters whose work has appeared since the establishment of the State of Israel.

1. Matisyahu: "Jerusalem", 2006

Matisyahu, a contemporary composer, wrote the song "Jerusalem", in English (not Hebrew!) To explore the song, we will also be referencing Psalm #137.

Instructions:

1. Listen to, and study the song "Jerusalem" by Matisyahu.
2. Read the "Did you know?" facts about Matisyahu.
3. Answer the questions that follow.

For copyright reasons, we cannot reproduce the text, but it is available online, as follows:

Official Copies:

Download and play for fee:

www.amazon.com/Jerusalem-Darkness-Comes-Light-Version/dp/B0013G0MSK/ref=sr_f2_2?ie=UTF8&s=dmusic&qid=1222080577&sr=102-2

Purchase:

www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ISBN=B000BYCOD6/theamericanisraeA/

Youth (album):

Video http://matisyahuworld.com/wp_view.asp?c=2&p=10296&who=1

Listen & watch animation - most of the first verse: text, clear audio.

www.teachertube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=771a7a1863678f85198d&page=1&viewtype=&category

Did You Know?



Matisyahu was born Matthew Paul Miller and has achieved fame as an American reggae musician.

Internationally renowned for blending traditional Jewish themes with reggae and rock sounds into his original compositions, **Matisyahu** sings on stage wearing traditional Chassidic garb. He is religiously observant and does not perform music on *Shabbat*.

Matisyahu was a member of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, a sect of Chassidic Judaism. He recently left them to join mainstream Chassidism, where he has become particularly interested in the Karlin sect.

More on: www.matismusic.com



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<http://www.flickr.com/photos/17965328@N00/62270623>

Questions:

1. Find the expressions that Matisyahu borrowed from Psalm #137.

2. Why do you think he made these references?

3. What are the similarities and differences between this song and Psalm 137?

Similarities: _____

Differences: _____

4. What ideas did Matisyahu add, beyond those present in Psalms, \ and why do you think he did so?

5. Psalms 137, Yehuda Halevi, Imber's and Matisyahu's songs were all written by Jews living in the Diaspora. How do you feel about these poems? _____

6. Do these poems enhance your sense of belonging to Israel? If so, please explain how; if not – why? _____



2. Modern Israeli Songs

In this part of the lesson, we will be looking at two modern Israeli songs written by Ehud Manor, one of Israel's most famous composers. The first, "An Israeli Song" was performed by Shlomo Gronich, while the second, "I have no other country" was performed by Corinne Allal.

Instructions:

1. Read the information below about Ehud Manor
2. Listen to, and study the song, "An Israeli Song" by Shlomo Gronich.
3. Answer the questions that follow.

About Ehud Manor, 1941-2005:

For over 40 years, Ehud Manor was a lyricist and composer of over 1,200 Israeli songs. Manor's song themes relate to his vision of Israel, his friends and family, his hometown of Binyamina, as well as current events.

He collaborated with leading singers and musicians, providing some of Israel's best-known popular and classic modern songs, as well as a Eurovision Song Contest winner. He was awarded the Israel Prize in 1998 for his contribution to Israeli song, and received an honorary doctorate in 2001 from Bar Ilan University.

Song Selection, Musical Collaborations:

<http://www.hebrewsongs.com/artists-ehudmanorsonglist.htm>

Song A:**An Israeli Song (Shir Yisraeli)**

Words: Ehud Manor, Music: Shlomo Gronich

The song integrates different styles of music. It is sung along with an Ethiopian Israeli girls' choir called "Mak'helat Sh'va".

English Translation

Your snow and my rainfall,
Your wadi and my river
Finally meet on an Israeli beach.

With all the dreams and the longings,
With all the memories, good and bad,
In a new/old song,
that celebrates the wonders,
How good it is, and how pleasant.

With a Greek step and a Polish accent,
With a Yemenite twirl and a Roman violin,
Who am I? Who am I?
Yes, me! My God, Dear God –
an Israeli song.

Your valley and my mountain,
Your forest and my desert,
Finally meet in an Israeli landscape.

With all the dreams and the longings,
With all the memories, good and bad,
In a new/old song,
that celebrates the wonders,
How good it is,
and how pleasant.

My "lamed" and your "chet",
My "ayin" and your "reish"
Finally meet with an Israeli drum beat.

With all the dreams and the longings,
With all the memories, good and bad,

Hebrew Text

השלג שלך
והמטר שלי
הוואדי שלך
והנהר שלי
נפגשים סוף סוף
בחוץ ישראלי
עם כל החלומות והגעגועים
עם כל הזיכרונות
הטובים והרעים
בשיר חדש ישן
שמאחה את הקרעים
הנה מה טוב
הנה מה טוב
ומה נעים.
במקצב יווני עם מבטא פולני ...
בסלסול תימני עם כינור רומני ...
מי אני? מי אני?
כן אני! אלי אלי!
שיר ישראלי.

העמק שלך
וההר שלי
היער שלך
והמדבר שלי
נפגשים סוף סוף
בנוף ישראלי
עם כל החלומות והגעגועים
עם כל הזיכרונות
הטובים והרעים
בשיר חדש ישן
שמאחה את הקרעים
הנה מה טוב
הנה מה טוב
ומה נעים.
ה- "למד" שלך
וה- "חת" שלי
ה- "עין" שלי
וה- "ריש" שלך
נפגשים סוף סוף
עם תוף ישראלי
עם כל החלומות והגעגועים
עם כל הזיכרונות

In a new/old song,
that celebrates the wonders,
How good it is,
and how pleasant.

הטובים והרעים
בשיר חדש ישן
שמאחה את הקרעים
הנה מה טוב
הנה מה טוב
ומה נעים

Play the song for the students: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezvz6CNQr94>

Questions:

1. Do you recognize any of the text in this song? Yes / No
 - a. If yes, where is it from and what does it mean to you?

2. What are the main ideas expressed in this song? _____

3. What is the main message and vision? _____

4. Are there any additional messages, as well? _____

5. Do you identify with the message(s) in the song? Yes / No

6. Why do you think the composer decided to integrate them into this song? Yes / No

7. Compare Gronich's song and Matisyahu's. What are the similarities and differences?

Similarities: _____

Differences: _____



Song B:***I have no other country, Ein Li Eretz Acheret***

Words: Ehud Manor, Song: Corinne Allal

English Translation:

I have no other country
 even if my land is aflame
 Just a word in Hebrew
 pierces my veins and my soul -
 With a painful body, with a hungry
 heart,
 Here is my home.
 I won't be silent because my
 country
 has changed her face.
 I will not give up reminding her
 And sing in her ears
 until she will open her eyes

Hebrew text:

אין לי ארץ אחרת
 גם אם אדמתי בוערת
 רק מילה בעברית חודרת
 אל עורקי אל נשמתי
 בגוף כואב
 בלב רעב
 כאן הוא ביתי.
 לא אשתוק כי ארצי
 שינתה את פניה
 לא אוותר לה אזכיר לה
 ואשיר כאן באוזניה
 עד שתפקח את עיניה

Listen to a version of the song here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy2qjrnds6g&feature=related>

Questions:

1. Try to identify the main ideas in the song and describe the author's state of mind.

2. Make a comparison between this song and the first one by Ehud Manor: what are the similarities and differences between them?

Similarities: _____

Differences: _____

3. What emotions do you hear in the performance, or find in the text?

4. What main message do you hear or read?

5. Which issues (of those explored in this program) does it address?

6. Do you identify with the ideas, feelings and nuances? If yes, why and how, if not, why not?

7. What do the two Manor compositions share with the Matisyahu song? In what ways are they different?

Similarities: _____

Differences: _____



8. Which of the three songs speaks to you most – and why?

4. Homework Assignment: Poetry of the Heart

Note: This homework assignment is part of the Israel Contest

Instructions:

This assignment has 2 parts. Part 1 is to be completed by each student independently. Part 2 may either be completed independently or in groups of up to 3. Read the instructions and then decide if you will be doing Part 2 independently or in a group. Students who choose to work in groups should “sign up” with the teacher (You will have to schedule to work on the project as a group after school).

Part 1

Instructions:

*This part of the assignment is to be completed independently.
You must cite any online or offline references.*

1. Select one of the songs or poems that we have studied in class, or choose a song you feel expresses longing for, or belonging to, Israel. Print it out.
2. On a separate sheet of paper, explain why you chose this song and how you connect to it.
3. Below the text of the song title, describe the way this song/poem was written and add information about the author, and his or her work.

Part 2

This part may be completed either independently or in groups of up to 3. Students who work in pairs / groups of three need to explain how they collaborated/divided the work.

Think how to express the meaning of your song or poem in a creative and original way, using one of the following options: a collage, Power Point Presentation, mime, creative dance, etc. Draft an outline plan and begin working on your creative presentation.

OR:

Set down the messages and ideas you would like to convey and compose your own song lyrics. Would you set it to a known tune or create your own?