

CHAI MITZVAH MIXTAPE PROGRAM: JULY

RESPONSIBILITY



CHAI MITZVAH
Grow Your Judaism

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RESPONSIBILITY



INTRODUCTION:

Teacher and students will learn the sources together; encouraging meaningful personal discussions and intellectual query. The students are then tasked with turning their discussion into a rap. Starter lines are given for help if needed.

PART



PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The texts below were written by Mussar teachers – rabbis who place emphasis on learning about and developing good character. The following sources show the importance they place on the trait of responsibility.



TEXTS:

1. "First a person should put his house together, then his town, and then the world." *Rabbi Yisrael Salanter*
2. "People are accustomed to looking at the heavens and wondering what happens there. It would be better if they would look within themselves to see what happens there." *Kotzker Rebbe*



QUESTIONS FOR CAMPERS:

- What are some of your responsibilities in camp?
- What would be the camp equivalent to your 'house', 'town' and 'world'? How do you prioritize your responsibilities?
- What do you do to prepare for camp?



STARTER LINES: (suggestions)

- 'Who's house!?' no 'who's bunk?!' We keep it funky like two skunks...
- My town is my *Eidah*, the world is...
- When my town gathers around
The whole wide world gonna hear our sound....

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RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS OTHERS

Akhrayut, responsibility, contains the word *akher* meaning 'other'. We are responsible for the other. In fact, much of Jewish law explains the responsibility we have to others. Responsible actions create learned patterns that become part of who you are. This is how you build character traits, and how these traits can grow into soul-traits. As with every trait, you must find the balance between focusing on yourself and on others.



TEXTS:

1. "Spiritual needs are more elevated than material needs, but the material needs of another are an obligation of my spiritual life."
Rabbi Yisrael Salanter
2. Hillel says in *Pirkei Avot 1:14*: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I?"



QUESTIONS FOR CAMPERS:

- How is caring for another essential to our own spiritual lives?
- How do your friends help you and how do you help them? Do you feel that it is balanced?



CHORUS SUGGESTION:

Try this as a call and response. Find a unique melody that people enjoy.

GROUP 1

Am I my brother's – My brother's keeper?!

Am I my brother's – My brother's keeper?!

Am I my brother's – My brother's keeper?!

GROUP 2

TOGETHER: I'm all about my people, I'm all about my people!

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JUDAISM IS GOD'S CALL TO RESPONSIBILITY

We make our own choices every day. The very fact that we have free will to make our choices gives us both power and responsibility. Rabbi Sacks teaches that since we are created in the image of God, then we represent God, and therefore must do so responsibly.



TEXT:

"We believe that we are [made in] God's image, free as God is free, creative as God is creative, on an infinitely smaller and more limited scale to be sure, but still we are the one point in all the echoing expanse of space where the universe becomes conscious of itself, the one life form capable of shaping its own destiny: choosing, therefore free, therefore responsible. Judaism is God's call to responsibility." *Rabbi Jonathan Sacks*



QUESTIONS FOR CAMPERS:

- How do you understand the statement that we are created in the image of God?
- How does Judaism influence your sense of responsibility?
- In what ways do you feel like a responsible person when you partake in Jewish tradition and ritual?



STARTER LINE: (suggestion)

Free will seems chill but the madness is mad real
I choose to rock with ruach and camp zeal...

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THE RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAVE A LEGACY

Abraham, the first Jew, is commanded to 'be a blessing.' Be it philanthropist, counselor, or musician, consider all the blessings you have received from camp and who was responsible for making them happen. You are a part of this legacy that started before you, and you have the responsibility to ensure that it continues and thrives!

For the Teacher: Text 1 focuses on the need to leave a legacy, emphasizing that it is not for you but for the sake of those that come after you. Text 2 emphasizes the reason that you are worthy of leaving a legacy in the first place. Abraham was worthy because his legacy was one of justice and righteousness.



TEXTS:

1. One day, Honi the Circle Maker was walking on the road and saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked the man, "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?"

The man replied, "Seventy years." Honi then asked the man, "And do you think you will live another seventy years and eat the fruit of this tree?" The man answered, "Perhaps not. However, when I was born into this world, I found many carob trees planted by my father and grandfather. Just as they planted trees for me, I am planting trees for my children and grandchildren so they will be able to eat the fruit of these trees." *Taanit 23a*

2. (17) Then the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? (18) Abraham will become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. (19) For I know him; that **he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just**, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him." *Genesis, Chapter 18*



QUESTIONS FOR CAMPERS:

- Do you have the responsibility to leave a legacy in camp?
- What do you have to do to leave your legacy in camp?
- What kind of legacy do you want to leave in your life?



STARTER LINE: (suggestion)

- It's growing slowly like the leaves on Honi's tree
But my destiny is to leave a legacy...

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RAPPER ACTIVITY: VIDEO - HAVDALLAH RAP.

Find someone who can sing the dai dai dai of Havdallah and others rap over it like this:

Havdalah Rap

As our second soul leaves,
Seasonings breathe,
Light leaves the eve speechless,
Last dance with Queen Sabbath, while the stars are still beneath us
Turn Up!
HaShem what is HaShem?
Smaller than any blossom,
Bigger than any Big Bang
It's awesome and if you want some
Find a Darshan til you are one
are we all one or perhaps some?
How to know which problem is really worth solving?
And are we all in?
Put your fingers in the light until the light revolves them
A moment of solemn
As our Second Soul goes Ghost
Now let's ride out on Golom



QUESTION FOR CAMPERS:

- As Shabbat leaves, and you enter the next week, what are you responsible for, and returning to?

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SOURCES:

1. **Rabbi Yisrael ben Ze'ev Wolf Lipkin**, also known as **Yisrael Salanter** (November 3, 1809 – February 2, 1883), was the father of the Mussar movement. The nickname Salanter was added to his name since most of his schooling took place in the town of Salant (now Salantai, Lithuania).
2. **Menachem Mendel Morgensztern**, better known as the **Kotzker Rebbe** because he came from the town of Kotzk, lived from 1787 to 1859). He was a Chassidic rabbi and leader, well known for his down-to-earth philosophies and sharp-witted sayings. He appears to have had little patience for false piety or stupidity.
3. **Ta'anit** is a volume (or "tractate") of the *Mishnah*, *Tosefta*, and both *Talmuds*. In Judaism these are the basic works of rabbinic literature.
3. **Rabbi Jonathan Henry Sacks** is a British Orthodox rabbi, philosopher, theologian, author and politician. He served as the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth from 1991 to 2013. Described by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as "an intellectual giant," Rabbi Sacks is a frequent contributor to radio, television and the press both in Britain and around the world.
4. **Hillel** was born (according to tradition) in Babylon in 110 BCE, and died 10 CE in Jerusalem. He was one of the most important Jewish religious leaders in history. Hillel is associated with the development of the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*. Renowned within Judaism as a sage and scholar, he was the founder of the school known as the House of Hillel, and of a dynasty of leaders of the Jews living in the Land of Israel until roughly the fifth century of the Common Era.
5. **Pirkei Avot**, which translates to English as "Chapters of the Fathers," is a compilation of the ethical teachings and maxims passed down to the Rabbis, beginning with Moses and onwards. Because of its contents, the name is sometimes given as "Ethics of the Fathers."

Chai Mitzvah was originally created as a way to engage adults in a Jewish journey throughout their lives. Chai Mitzvah teen program materials provide teens, who are in a time of personal discovery, with a way to move forward with their personal Jewish journeys. It is our hope that Chai Mitzvah will serve as a catalyst and ignite deeper Jewish engagement and continued growth into the 21st century.

Chai Mitzvah is an unaffiliated, non-profit independent 501(c)3 corporation, funded through donations and grants. Please consider sponsoring a Chai Mitzvah program in your community or making a gift today.



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