

## Wizard of Oz: Courage Week July 20

**Goal:** To teach our campers to face their fears and to figure out what they love about camp and themselves. This will be introduced in a fun way by connecting it to The Wizard of Oz.

**Location:** Moadon Ilanot

**Introduction** (Sam): We will introduce the different stations (below) and explain what they need to do at each.

**Procedure:** Four groups will be split up into the following rotations: Heart, Brain, Courage, Home

- Heart (Yaara)- Decorate heart-shaped stickers to show what you love/what you're proud of. Everyone will then share what they've written with the group and wear them for the rest of the day. Yaara will also tell an inspiring story that connects to having a good heart. Supplies: Sticky hearts, sharpies
- Brain (Sam) The group will be split in half (10 vs. 10) to play a game of Jeopardy. There will be 3 categories (Ivrit, Liav, and Ramah) and 4 point values available for each category. Supplies: Poster board and list of questions
- Courage (Dana) Fear writing...each camper will write down his/her fear on a slip of paper and place them into a box. One person will then read all of the fears aloud. Anyone else who shares the fear that has just been read will raise his/her hand, showing that it's ok to be afraid of things, and that you are not alone. The fears will then be cast away into the bonfire during Thursday night's medurah. Supplies: Box and fear sheets
- Home (Ashley) Make a candy map of A-side (aka our home) including structures such as the moadon, bunks, bet am aleph, misrad, agam, etc. Supplies: Copies of maps, Liav's tablecloth paper, graham crackers, tootsie rolls, mike 'n ikes, twizzers, frosting (allergies??)-All pareve!

After about 10 minutes at each, Jonathan will come around to tell each group to switch.

**Conclusion** (Ashley): Ashley will explain the significance between Judaism and *The Wizard of Oz* to show how we can apply its relevance on our masot at camp.

**By Rabbi Daniel Bouskila**

It dawned on me that the various characters and motifs in this story share a remarkable similarity to the spiritual and mystical world of Jewish prayer, and our holy day of Shabbat. Our journey begins with the Talmudic teaching that in order to pray properly, one must have full "kavannah," translated as "concentration." Only with kavannah, a deep meditative concentration, can a meaningful and spiritually uplifting prayer experience be attained. We journey from the Talmud to the Kabbalah, where the Jewish mystics seek a more specified definition and understanding of kavannah. The kabbalists speak of two types of kavannah: concentration of our thoughts, and concentration of our hearts. When a person approaches G-d through the medium of prayer, both the intellect and the emotions must be synchronized and focused upon the Divine. In other words, in order to experience G-d, you need brains and a heart, and you have to use them properly.

So far, our journey resembles that of the Scarecrow and the Tin Man, who traveled down the yellow brick road in search of brains and a heart.

But our journey continues. There is an additional challenge that lies ahead. As we seek to synchronize our brains and hearts to create a meaningful encounter with the divine, we are faced with the prospect of the fears and insecurities we all have in coming before G-d. If we stop to think about what it means to actually be in G-d's presence, it is a frightening experience. In other words, in order to approach G-d's throne, we need to find the courage to do so. It takes courage for a human being to ask G-d to forgive his sins and answer his prayers.

So our journey now adds an additional character: the Lion, who traveled down the yellow brick road in pursuit of courage.

The quests for intellectual and emotional kavannah, together with our inner search for courage to stand before G-d, are not easily attained. To help us achieve these goals, the majority of the formal Jewish prayer service is recited in unison, as a community. Every Shabbat in synagogue, we all chant a series of biblical Psalms, Rabbinic prayer compositions and the "Shema Yisrael", all communal prayers designed to build our kavannah and inner strength. In other words, we travel the "yellow brick road of the prayer service" together, much like our friends the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Lion.

Our journey through the prayer service brings us to the "Amidah" prayer. The word "Amidah" means "standing," because we recite the Amidah while standing at attention, with both feet together. The Amidah moves us away from communal prayer, as we now enter the domain of private meditation.

In the movie, the characters entered the wizard's chambers together, but they each approached him individually. If you have ever read the book *The Wizard of Oz*, each character has its own private audience with the wizard.

What about Dorothy and her desire to "go home"?

The climax of the week in Jewish life is Shabbat. Throughout the week, as we race through our lives from one place to another, our spirit yearns for Shabbat, our weekly opportunity to be home with family and friends. When the sun sets on Friday night and the candles shine brightly on our lavishly adorned Shabbat tables, we breathe a sigh of relief with a "there's no place like home" kind of feeling racing through our bodies and embracing our souls. In Jewish prayer, one of the most prominent themes is the "homelessness" of the Jewish nation. Throughout our communal and individual prayers, we express a strong desire to return to the physical and spiritual home of the Jewish nation, the Land of Israel. The multitude of references to Zion and

Jerusalem in our prayers evokes our message to G-d that when we think of Israel, we realize that "there is no place like home."

Hard to believe that sitting with my daughter, watching The Wizard of Oz, I had these spiritual revelations, but it is true. And all of a sudden, just as my thoughts, emotions and inner strengths were prepared to face G-d, I felt my daughter shaking me and saying, "Daddy, wake up! It's time to go to the synagogue." Oy.

<http://www.torah.org/features/firstperson/oz.html>

Second source:

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Rabbi Bouskila also finds allusions to Shabbos within The Wizard of Oz as well.