

Shoafim

ד'ת"ס

Nesiya 2000 ת"ס

July 10-12, 2000

Cape Cod National Seashore

פירקי אבות
Pirkei Avot

Ethics of the Fathers

Chapter 1

יד. הוא היה אומר:
אם אין אני לי, מי לי?
וכשאני לעצמי, מה אני?
ואם לא עכשיו, אימתי?

14 This was another favorite teaching of his:
If I am not for me, who will be?
If I am for myself alone, what am I?
And if not now, when?

— הלל
Hillel

The Giving Tree

By Shel Silverstein

Leader Instructions: On the first night of your Nesiya, when all campers are ready for bed and in their tents, the counselors should split up and each counselor should get in a different tent. Each counselor should read the following story by Shel Silverstein to the campers. Many of the campers will be familiar with the story. But even if all have heard it, have them get comfortable and listen. Do a dramatic reading of the story. One option, depending on the group dynamic, is to have the campers read. One can be the narrator, one the Tree, and one the Boy. When the story is finished ask the kids what they thought of it. Ask what they thought about different characters. You can even be as general as asking what they thought story was trying to teach. Whatever you do, don't force the discussion. Ask a few questions, and bring up a few ideas, but remember that if they don't want to talk you should let it go. The idea is to have a cozy bedtime reading, and some time with their tent.

Once there was a tree... and she loved a little boy.
And every day the boy would come and he would gather her leaves and make them into crowns and play king of the forest.
He would climb up her trunk and swing from her branches and eat apples.
And the would play hide-and-go-seek.
And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade.
And the boy lover the tree... very much.
And the tree was happy.

But time went by.
And the boy grew older.
And the tree was often alone.
Then one day the boy cam to the tree and the tree said, "come, Boy, come and climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and eat apples and play in my shade and by happy."

"I am too big to climb and play," said the boy. "I want to buy things and

have fun. I want some money. Can you give me some money?"

"I'm sorry," said the tree, "but I have no money. I have only leaves and apples. Take my apple, Boy, and sell them in the city. Then you will have money and you will be happy."

And so the boy climbed up the tree and gathered her apples and carried them away.
And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayd away for a long time... and the tree was sad.
And then one day the boy came back and the tree shook with with joy and she said, "Come, Boy, climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy."

"I am too busy to climb trees," said the boy. "I want a house to keep me warm," he said. "I want a wife and I was children, and so I need a house. Can you give me a house?"

"I have no house," said the tree. "The forest is my house, but you may cut off my branches and build a house. Then you will be happy."

And so the boy cut off her branches and carried them away to build his house. And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away for a long time. And when he came back, the tree was so happy she could hardly speak. "Come, Boy," she whispered, "come and play."

"I am too old and sad to play," said the boy. "I want a boat that will take me far away from here. Can you give me a boat?"

"Cut down my trunk and make a boat," said the tree. "Then you can sail away... and be happy."

And so the boy cut down her trunk and made a boat and sailed away. And the tree was happy... but not really.

And after a long time the boy came back again. "I am sorry, Boy," said the tree, "but I have nothing left to give you- My apples are gone."

"My teeth are too weak for apples," said the boy.

"My branches are gone," said the tree. "You cannot swing on them-"

"I am too old to swing on branches," said the boy.

"My trunk is gone," said the tree. "You cannot climb-"

"I am too tired to climb," said the boy.

"I am sorry," sighed the tree. "I wish that I could give you something... but I have nothing left. I am just an old stump. I am sorry..."

"I don't need very much now," said the boy, "just a quiet place to sit and rest. I am very tired."

"Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could, "Well, an old stump *is* good for sitting and resting. Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest."

And the boy did. And the tree was happy.

the end

Rabbi Simcha Bunam 1762 - 1827

Leader Instructions: This activity is designed to give participants an action to go along with and enforce the delicate balance between responsibility to yourself and responsibility to the world or community. The first section is just a little background on Rabbi Simcha Bunam and may be skipped. The second section is a story about Rabbi Bunam and should be read to the campers. As always, you can ask a camper to volunteer to read. The story may spark some interesting comments. Try and help campers understand the idea of a hasidic story... few words and meanings on many different levels that are usually encrypted. Ask them to try to "crack the code" and see what they come up with for what the story is trying to teach. When the story *By Night* is finished being read and discussed, move on to the last section.

After presenting Rabbi Bunam's teaching the campers will be able to make their own cards. Use index cards and markers and have the campers write the phrase in big letters with drawings on one side of each card. Then fold the cards in half so that each card forms a little book. On the front, campers should decorate their cards, or write an opening to the saying. For example: "I must remember when I'm sad or down, or just burnt out by doing for others..." Then the inside of the card will complete the sentence with "The World was Created for Me." On the back cover campers again may decorate or write a word or phrase that speaks to them about either topic.

A little bit about Rabbi Simcha Bunam...

Simcha Bunam introduced a new trend in hasidism. He set rationality over ecstasy and feeling and designated the study of the Talmud and the Maharal's works as the foundation of hasidism. Study of Kabbala and the secrets of the Torah he set aside, on the ground that no one of his time was proficient in the wisdom of the Kabbala....

A fundamental precept of his hasidic approach was "to walk humbly," to cover up one's devoutness and conceal one's virtues from outsiders, putting on the appearance in public that one did not observe all the commandments. He was not strict about praying at the appointed times. This provoked much opposition from both mitnagdim and disciples of other hasidic rebbes. (*The Golden Tradition*, p99-100)

By Night

Two hours every night, as he lay in bed, Rabbi Bunam would listen to his disciple Mendel, later the rabbi of Kotsk, while he read to him out of the book of Splendor. Sometimes, Rabbi Bunam fell asleep for a little while, and the reading was interrupted. When he awoke, he himself [Rabbi Bunam] resumed it.

But once when he awoke, he said to his disciple: "Mendel, I have been thinking it over: Why should I go on living as I do? People keep coming to me and prevent me from serving God. I want to give up my service as a rabbi; I want to devote myself to the service of God." He repeated this again and again. His disciple listened and said nothing.

Finally, Rabbi Bunam dozed again. After a few breaths, he sat up and said: "Mendel, no rabbi has been permitted to do so, I am not permitted to do it either."

Know where you are...

One of Rabbi Bunam's most famous teachings was a system of reminding one's self who they were. Let's explain... Rabbi Bunam taught that each person should walk around with two cards in his or her pockets. One card should have written on it "I am of ashes and dust" while the other should have written on it "The world was created for me."

One card should be in the left pocket and one card should be in the right pocket. When one finds him or her self depressed, feeling like the world is against them, or that he or she is nothing, then one should reach in to the pocket with the card that has written on it "The world was created for me." This will remind one of the order of creation, that humans were created last and that all the earth has to offer is for humans. But, on the other hand, if one is high on themselves. If one thinks that he or she is on top of the world, or is without responsibility to others. If he or she thinks that the world can be used and

abused without end, then the card that has written on it "I am of ashes and dust" will remind him or her that we are each just a piece of a larger cycle of life. We, like everything else, return to the dust when our time on earth is done.

The answer here as to who we really are, and should be, lies between the two extremes. We cannot be only for ourselves... think always that all was created for us. Nor can we live lives that are only for others. Who we need to be is between the two extremes, just as putting one card in each pocket puts you in the middle, and lets you be both.

Psolet on my plate

OO WA OO WA OO WA OO OO (X2)

Each day I go to breakfast
Put oatmeal in my bowl
Fill up my glass with O.J.
Eat half my jell roll.

Chorus #1

I can't believe I took more than I ate
That's why I have so much psolet on my plate.

Take two bites of an apple
Drop raisins on the trail
Pull breadcrusts off my sandwich
I say it's 'cause they're stale.

Chorus #2:

Each night I ask the stars in the sky (Hey stars,
Why does the food on my plate pile up so high?)

OO WA OO WA OO WA OO OO

But now I'm feelin' happy
I'm peaceful and serene
I'm a ba'al bal tash'chit
Because my plate is clean!

Chorus #3:

It's true! I took no more than I ate
That's why you'll never find psolet on my plate

Words by Adam Berman, Jodi Cohen and Ben Landman
To the tune of "Teenager in Love"

Habitat Song

Chorus

Habitat, habitat, have to have a habitat
Habitat, habitat, have to have a habitat
Habitat, habitat, have to have a habitat
Have to have a habitat to carry on.

The forest is a habitat, a multi-layered habitat
It's where the tallest trees are at,
It's where a bear can scratch her back,
It keeps the ground from rolling back,
renews the aquifers, in fact,
The forest is a habitat that we depend on.

Chorus

The river is a habitat, a flowing, changing
habitat,
It's where the freshest water's at,
for people, fish, and muskrats,
But when the people dump the trash
the river takes the biggest rap,
The river is a habitat that we depend on.

Chorus

The ocean is a habitat, a dark and salty habitat,
It's where the deepest water's at,
It's where the biggest mammal's at,
It's where our future food is at,
It keeps the atmosphere intact,
The ocean is a habitat that we depend on.

Chorus

People are different than foxes and rabbits,
Affect the whole earth with our bad habits,
Better to love it while we still have it,
Or rat-ta-tat-tat, our habitat's gone.

Words and Music by Bill Olliver

ALL GOD'S CRITTERS

Written by Bill Staines.

C

All God's critter's got a place in the choir,

G

C

C7

Some sing low and some sing higher,

F

C

Some sing out loud on the telephone wire,

C

D

C

And some just clap their hands, or paws, or anything they got, now.

Listen to the bass it's the one on the bottom,
Where the bullfrog groans and the hippopotamus
Moans and groans with a big to do,
And the old cow just goes moo.
(chorus)

The dogs and the cats they take up the middle,
The hummingbird hums and cricket fiddles,
The donkey brays and pony neighs,
And the old coyote howls.
(chorus)

Listen to the top where the little bird's singing
On the melody with a high note ringing,
And the hoot owl hollers over everything,
And the jay bird disagrees.
(chorus)

Extra sources

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? ...If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and people- all belong to the same family.

This Shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred, and you must teach your children that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories... The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandparents. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children... that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. If we spit upon the ground, we spit upon ourselves.

This we know; the earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth. All things are connected. We are kin after all... **(Ted Perry, 1970, Speech often attributed to Chief Seattle, 1851)**

And the Eternal, God, took the Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and to keep it. **(Genesis 2:15)**

“Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says ‘Have you ever seen a wild beast or bird that possesses a craft? And none the less they sustain themselves without care, and were they not created to serve me? But I was created to serve my Maker. does it not follow that I should receive my maintenance without care? But I have performed my actions in evil and have forgone my support [and I have forfeited my right to support].’” (Mishna Kiddushin 4:14)

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria said, If there be no [study of the] Law there is no good conduct, if there is no good conduct, if there be no good conduct there is no [study of the] Law; if there be no wisdom there is no fear [of God], if there be no fear [of God] there is no wisdom; if there be no

understanding there is no knowledge, if there be no knowledge there is no understanding; If there be no flour there is no Torah, if there is no Torah there is no flour. (Mishna Avot 3:21)

He used to say, all who's wisdom is greater than his deeds, to what is he similar? To a tree who's branches are many, and who's roots are few, and the wind comes and uproots and overturns it on to its face, as it is said:(Jeremiah 17:6) "For he shall be like a juniper tree in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, a salt land and not inhabited." But all who's works are greater than her wisdom, to what is he similar? To a tree who's branches are few, and who's roots are many, that even if all the winds that are in the world come and blow on it, there is no moving it from its place. As it is said:(Jeremiah 17:8) "And she shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out its roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but its foliage shall be green; and shall not be anxious in the year of drought, neither shall it cease from yielding fruit." (Mishna Avot 3:22)

He who buys grain in the market, to what is he similar? To a child who is cut off from his mother, and although it is taken to homes of wet nurses it is not satisfied. And he who buys bread in the market, to what is he compared? To a man who digs his own grave - a wretched, precarious existence. But he who eats of his own produce is like a child reared at his mother's breast. (Avot d'Rabbi Natan 30:6/29a)

... the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there were no people to till the soil... (Genesis 2:5)

Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai said:

Three things are equal in importance: earth, Humans, and rain. Rabbi Levi said: And these three each consist of three letters (in Hebrew), to teach that without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, earth cannot endure; while without either, humans cannot exist. (Midrash Genesis Rabbah 13.3)

BLESSINGS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Upon eating fruit of the tree:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who creates fruit of the tree.

Upon eating fruit of the ground:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי האדמה

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who creates fruit of the ground.

Upon smelling fragrant trees or shrubs:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא עצי בשמים

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who creates fragrant trees.

Upon smelling fragrant herbs or plants:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא עשבי בשמים

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who creates fragrant plants.

Upon seeing wonders of nature including, lightning, shooting stars, high mountains and a sunrise:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, עשה מעשה בראשית

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, source of creation.

Upon hearing thunder or seeing a storm:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שכחו וגבורתו מלא עולם

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who's strength and power fills the universe.

Upon seeing exceptionally beautiful creatures:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שככה לו בעולמו

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who has such in the world.

Upon seeing exceptionally strange creatures:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, משנה הבריות

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who differentiates creatures.



BLESSINGS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Upon seeing the ocean:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שעשה את הים הגדול

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who made the great sea.

Upon seeing a rainbow:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, זוכר הברית, ונאמן בבריתו, וקים במאמרו

Blessed are you God creator of the universe, who remembers the covenant, is faithful to it, and keeps Your promise.

Upon doing or seeing something for the first time:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who grants us life, sustains us and helps us reach this day.

Upon rain or good news:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, הטוב והמטיב

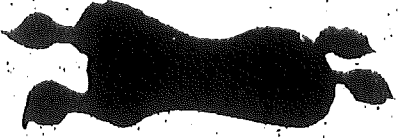
Blessed are you God, creator of the universe, who is good and does good.



BAR / BAT MITZVAH תורנו תב/תג

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah means becoming a son (*bar*) or daughter (*bat*) of "the commandment" (*mitzvah*). Traditionally understood as a time of taking on Jewish responsibilities, *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah* is a time to ask yourself: What responsibilities do I have? To whom am I responsible—myself, my family, my community, other creatures, the land, the Creator of all? Your *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* is a time to reflect on your place in the world around you.

During your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony, you will have the opportunity to speak to your family and your community about your vision of what being a responsible Jewish adult means. Express your concern and caring for the Earth. Talk about why you believe protecting the Earth is an important, Jewish thing to do!



IDEAS FOR BAR / BAT MITZVAH SPEECHES:

- Talk about the ecology of your *Torah* portion. In what natural setting does your portion of the *Torah* or *Hafarah* take place? In what landscape does the story unfold? What season is it? How do the people in your portion relate to the natural world around them? Are there any commandments given that involve human relationship to the natural world? What does the *Torah* teach about our relationship to the environment, to the Land of Israel, to animals? Ask your rabbi to help you. See [Torah and Flora](#) (resource list).

- Talk about what it means to fulfill the commandment *Lo vadah ul'shomrah*, to till and tend, to serve and protect the Earth (Genesis 2:15). Use some of the references in the Resource list to research Jewish traditions on the environment and talk about what keeping those traditions means today. Pick one thing that you can do for the Earth and explain how it is a Jewish commitment. See the previous section, "Jewish Principles for Caring for the Earth," for some ideas.

- If there are any holidays in your *Torah* portion, talk about how those holidays are connected to the cycles and rhythms of the Earth, and how that connection is meaningful to you. See *Seasons of Our Joy* (Resource list).

- Talk about *Shabbat* as an environmentally caring practice—a time when we do not interfere with the cycles of the world but choose to limit our actions and appreciate the world on its own terms. See *The Sabbath* (Resource list).

- Talk about how working to solve environmental problems is an important part of *Tikkun Olam*—repairing the world.

MITZVAH PROJECTS:

Mitzvah means "good deed" as well as commandment. Perhaps at the time of your *Bar/Bar Mitzvah* you would like to do a project that helps to solve one of the problems that concerns you. Here are a few ideas:

Involve your synagogue youth group in protecting the Earth.

- Clean a park in your neighborhood.
- Plant trees.
- Write letters to government officials.
- Arrange a field trip to a nature center.

Join Operation Noah by adopting an endangered species or habitat. Operation Noah is a campaign created by COEIL to involve the Jewish community in protecting endangered species and their habitats. Research what you and others can do to help and talk about it in your speech. (See Resource List.)

Become a recycling watchdog! Make sure your family, synagogue, and school recycle. If they don't, help them learn how. (See "Getting Started: Basic Principles of Environmental Caring.")

PREPARING FOR YOUR BAR OR BAT MITZVAH...

The months before a bat/bar mitzvah can be frenetic for both parents and teenagers. It may help to keep this thought in the back of your minds: you are all about to set out on a spiritual journey, a search for nothing less than the ultimate source of meaning in your lives.

MEDITATION

(for *B'nai mitzvah*)

... רצון מלפניך ...
Yehi ratzon milfanecha...

May it be Your will that as I study and review Torah, turning it and turning it and making it my own, I will find everything in it

RITUAL

To keep perspective during the months before a bar or bat mitzvah, set a moment aside on the day your preparations officially begin: this might be when you receive a date for the bar or bat mitzvah, or on the day tutoring or classes begin. On index cards, parents and their children can write down one sentence which will be a reminder to them of one spiritual goal they might attain during this year of intense study and preparation. Post the index cards on the refrigerator, and keep on track by consulting the cards often.

נאשה ונשמע.

Na'aseh v'nishma.

we things, later we understand.

(continued on next page)

PREPARING FOR YOUR BAR OR BAT MITZVAH...

(continued)

BLESSING

(For parents and children, after posting the index cards)

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם.
Barukh atah, Adonai elohimenu melekh ha'olam
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok
b'divrei Torah.

We praise You for the mitzvot which make our lives holy and for the mitzvot of studying the words of Torah.

May the words of Torah be sweet in our mouths and in the mouths of all Your people so that we, our children, and all the children of Israel may come to love You and study Torah for all the right reasons.

TEACHING

ה' אלהינו אמר.

Adonai elohieichem emet.

I, the Lord, am your God. (*Numbers 15:41*)
 Yehudah ben Tema taught at thirteen — you gain responsibility for the mitzvot. (*Pirkei Avot 5:23*)

Ben Hay-Hay taught the reward is proportionate to the effort. (*Pirkei Avot 5:25*)

The sages...said, "One should always engage in the study of Torah, even if not for its own sake, for one who begins thus will end by studying for its own sake. Hence, when instructing the young... we teach them to serve God out of fear or for the sake of reward, till their knowledge increases and they have attained a large measure of wisdom. Then we reveal to them this mystical truth, little by little, and train them by easy stages till they have grasped and comprehended it, and serve God out of love." (*Maimonides, The Book of Knowledge, chapter X5*)