

**Hashivenu VeNashuva
Tisha B'Av Peulah**

Notes and Instructions for Discussion Leader:

1. This is a discussion-based peulah focusing on the imagery of "Hashivenu VeNashuva" in three different Jewish texts. You might want to go through the texts in the order given on this write up but feel free to take your group wherever and play it by ear.
2. There are two primary educational goals to this peulah: A) Examining the relationship between God and us that Hashivenu VeNashuva describes and B) Comparing and contrasting what we are asking to be "returned" to in each text.
3. Although your group might reach different conclusions (which is fine) this peulah is designed to guide participants to the understanding that the texts ask for a return to God's favor and the type of righteous life that accompanies that (Eicha), Torah and Jewish text (liturgy), and the land of Israel (Al Kol Eleh), respectively. The interconnectedness of these three things we wish to return to can then be explored. The prompts below will likely be most useful if you are able to draw the significance of each of these three things out of the relevant text. However, there's nothing wrong with going off book.
4. Each section has a suggested time you should spend on it. The last section includes some of the big picture questions so you should allot more time to that.
5. In the course of this peulah, have participants read each text aloud before discussing.

Eicha 5:16-21

15 min

****The focus here is on v. 21 with the rest in there for context so you may want to read the context verses in English before doing v. 21 in Hebrew and English****

1. Why does the text include both a plea for God to return us and for us to be returned? Is this just a redundancy?
2. What type of relationship between God and us is being imagined in this text? Ruler? Partner? Etc.
3. Are there any things in your lives that you feel you want to return to (people, experiences, states of mind, etc.)? Could you get back to those things on your own or would it take the help of someone or something outside of you?
4. What specifically are we asking to return to in this text?
5. What does the returning in this text have to do with Teshuva (repentance)? Note that Teshuva is from the same word as Hashivenu.
6. What does the double use of "return" say about Teshuva?

Torah Service Liturgy

10 min

****Q 3 might need to be altered depending on the group's conclusions about what we are asking for a return to in each text****

1. What are we asking to be returned to in this text?
2. How might we need help to return to the thing this text asks for a return to?
 - a. Push for both concrete and more abstract answers to this question.
3. Some of this text is taken directly from Eicha, to what extent is the meaning of the verse taken from Eicha changed by being put in this new context?
4. How is a return to righteousness and God's favor related to a return to Torah and Jewish study?
5. Can we have one type of return without the other?
6. What would each of those returns look like independently of one another?

Al Kol Eleh**20 min**

1. What are we asking to be returned to in this text?
2. How might we need help to return to the thing this text asks for a return to?
 - a. Push for both concrete and more abstract answers to this question.
3. In this song, the Hashivenu VeNashuva part is referenced but not directly quoted. What parts of the original quote were left out and why might the author have chosen to make those changes?
4. What is the significance of making this reference singular as opposed to plural (Return me vs. Return us)? Why might the author have chosen to make that change?
5. What do the changes the author makes say about our desire to return to Israel vs. our desire to return to God vs. our desire to return to Torah and Jewish study?
6. Do these three things that we want to return to always go together? What do they have in common and where do they diverge?
7. Looking at these three things we might want to return to, how much does that desire resonate with each one of you individually? Do you feel that desire in your own life?
 - a. You may want to go around and have each participant say something on this question as a closing exercise.