

וכשאני לעצמי מה אני?

The Jewish Mandate to See Beyond Ourselves

Study Guide

The Issue

The concept “survival of the fittest” emphasizes the animalistic inclination for each human to take care of their own needs. As babies and infants we have needs that must be met and we cry, whine and fuss until attended too. It takes time to develop a sense of the “other” – to understand that there are others in the world that also have needs, to learn to share and that relationships are a balancing act of giving and receiving.

More broadly, we must learn the rather simple lesson of consequences – positive and negative – to our actions. In Pirkei Avot 4:1 Ben Zoma teaches:

איהו מכבד, המכבד את הבריות

“Who is respected? One who respects creations.”

We enjoy the fruits of God’s creation when we are respectful to other people (family, friends, strangers), to other animals and to the environment. When we are disrespectful we suffer negative consequences – poor interpersonal relationships, poverty, war and a damaged ecosystem.

The Essential Question

How do we come to learn that the world is bigger than we are? How do we realize that we're not “the only one”?

Judaism has so much insight to offer about the importance of our developing a sense of “the other.” We can answer this question by exploring the mitzvot handed to us through Torah, corresponding Jewish thought of the Talmud, other texts ... and of course stimulating conversation.

Seeing Beyond Ourselves at Camp Ramah

Jewish summer camp is the perfect environment to help children and young adults answer this essential question. At camp we are placed in a variety of relationships with staff members, peers, colleagues and new and old friends. We are also given the opportunity to live in a [somewhat] natural environment and to take care of our natural resources.

Hanhallah Shabbaton 2010

Our weekend together will provide us with the opportunity to answer this essential question through a series of *sichot* designed and led by ... you! Working in *chevruta*, you will each be assigned a perspective to this question and be sent a toolkit of resources and guiding questions that will help you plan a *sicha/peulah* for your colleagues. As educational theorist Howard Gardner teaches, please remember that there are a variety of learning styles that educators must address through their teaching, including:

1. Linguistic (verbal, lecture, reading)
2. Logical/Mathematical (problem solving)
3. Rhythmic/Musical (learning through sound and rhythm)
4. Kinesthetic (movement)
5. Spatial (using patterns and space)
6. Interpersonal (learning with others)
7. Intrapersonal (learning from self-reflection)

Feel free to use visual aids, quotations, games, drama and/or handouts and text sheets, and to be creative in planning your time. Below you will find a template program plan for those of you relatively new to teaching.

Please take this seriously and come prepared! Be sure to contact your partner(s) in a timely manner using the contact information on your study guide. Should you be interested in using a discussion guide, page or two from your reading, piece of text, etc. feel free to e-mail me (zach@ramah.org) so that I can be your copy service.

Subtopics will be broken down as follows:

Topics	Significance	Leaders
Honoring Your Parents & Teachers	We learn from our responsibility to others from the relationship we form with our parents. This is transferable to the relationship formed between Rosh and madrichim/moomchim and between madrichim/moomchim and chanichim.	Zach
Sibling Rivalry	We learn from our responsibility to others from biblical incidents of sibling rivalry. This is transferable to so many relationships formed at camp.	Andrew Belinfante & Rebecca Schatz
Caring for Those in	There is a Jewish imperative to care for	Maya Cohen, Justin

Need	those in need. Easier said than done. How can we instill this value in Ramah'niks and what do they gain from giving?	Hellman & Tamar Resnick
<i>Bal Tashchit:</i> Protecting the World	There are several mitzvot/teachings about the way we care for the environment. This is critical for the future of our natural resources, but also for developing a sense of responsibility.	Myra Meskin & Adam Titcher
Food Glorious Food	Eating is a way for us to get what we need – satiation, nourishment, yummy feelings. How does eating also teach us that the world is bigger than we are?	Rabbi Dan
<i>T'fillah:</i> An Acknowledgment of Something Bigger	As Jews we engage regularly in t'fillah, one of the most transparent expressions of there being "something bigger" than us.	Amy Mendelsohn, Erika Resnick & Ethan Stern

Sample Program Plan

- I. Educational Objectives
 - A. What do you want to communicate through your program?
 - B. What should the participants walk away knowing after it is completed?

- II. Set Induction (Introduction)
 - A. Preparation for your topic, setting the mood and engaging the learner
 - B. Can be a way to bridge the gap between the known and the unknown (your discussion)

- III. The Lesson/Discussion/Activity
 - A. Present Material
 - B. Allow for Exploration
 - C. Ask Questions to Ensure Understanding

- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Connection to Camp?

***This is but a basic lesson plan. You are encouraged to take these elements and bring them to life through a simulation, game, chevruta discussion, etc. Be creative – this discussion should be a model for camp.*