

Energy In Wilderness: *Xi B'Midbar* (צ'י בַּמִּדְבָּר) Specialty Track 1

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SUMMARY:	We can invigorate ourselves by learning to harvest the energy that is in the natural world. Qi Gong (Energy flow), yoga, and <i>Hitbodedut</i> (Jewish meditation) will guide us towards discovery (or rediscovery) of our potential while in nature.
TOPIC(S):	Nature Judaism in Nature
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create relationships between campers and the natural world 2. Experience unique ways to connect to the natural world 3. Play with the energy found in and throughout nature/Creation
AUDIENCE:	6-12 grade or older. ~20 people
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Neuron map, Heschel Quote, Rav Nachmun quote.
MATERIALS NEEDED:	10-15 blindfolds (1 for every 2 people),
SET-UP DETAILS:	Outdoors in a natural area, preferably in the forest/woods.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- (5 minutes) Neuron map Introduction
- (15 minutes) Qi Gong
- (5 minute) Martin Buber: I Thou, I It. *Ich und Du*
- (15 minutes) *Hitbodedut*
- (15 Minutes) MEET-A-TREE
- (5 minutes) *Shinrin Yoku*
- (10 minutes) Walking meditation
- (5 minutes) *Shivassana* (Juxtapose of walking meditation)
- (5 minutes) Wolf how

Participants arrive. Stand in circle. Introduce with Abraham Joshua Heschel Quote:
“Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement.get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.”
-Abraham Joshua Heshel

(5 minutes) Neuron map Introduction

What is this? (Hand out pictures). And what does this have to do with what we are going to do today and this summer? We are going to grow this (point to Neuron map) and appreciate this (point to mycelium map).

We have the opportunity to grow our campers into *mensch*s, into appreciators, into earth conscious beings.

“We want to connect to the energy flow.”

“Can you feel that? There it is again! That is energy (*Chi/Qi*) that is zipping and zinging and flitting all around us!”

“We are surrounded by energy. Not coal and oil, but energy that moves around us, from tree to tree, earth to sky, and among us.” (Point to everyone and yourself and all around from treetop to treetop.)

If you are not feeling it, don't worry (*Al tidaog*)! Picture an old radio or t.v. You could not simply turn it on and have it receive the signal you wanted. It had to be tuned. Someone had to adjust the dials to search for the correct waves in order to pick up the signal. We have to do the same things for and to ourselves. We have to tune ourselves to be able to receive the energy/vibration.

Our goal today is to try to experience-feel, this energy. We will try to tap into the Chi to invigorate us and learn to use this to help our campers connect. To do this, first we need to tune ourselves.

(15 minutes) Qi Gong

Is a method to realize, or feel, the energy of the body and how the energy of the universe can affect our body, and vice versa!

First movements are designed to remove negative energy and wake up your Chi, positive energy. Dogs and birds and all wild animals shake themselves vigorously after harsh encounters. They are removing this negative energy. You can do this when you have a stressful conversation/confrontation. Stressful phone call. Get rid of that negative energy! Shake it off like water!

Shake it out! Let's get ready to receive!

When we wake up we are covered in energy. But it's sort of stagnant energy. We want to get ready to receive today's fresh energy. Energy that will help make us productive for the day.

1. Swinging arms following hips.

Stand straight, but relaxed.

Swing arms back to back. Arms should be loose and they tap lightly on stomach/chest and kidneys. This releases negative energy. What is your intention? *Kavannah*? Get rid of old, static, negative energy. Ready yourself to take on new energy. Like *Davening*! You don't just start with Shabbat prayers. We have Kabbalat Shabbat first to get ready for Shabbat. We don't just start *Shacharit*. We do preliminary blessings and warm up.

2. Swinging arms. Imagine throwing that energy into the earth. Throw energy into the earth.

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

Loose arms, joints limp. Arms follow hips. You drop hips, and drop arms. Don't throw arms back, but just let them follow their trajectory. Breath, throw that out too. Whooooo, whooooo.

Chi is like a muscle, the more you use it, the stronger it gets!

Energy flows where the mind goes! If you think about the energy flow from earth and sky flowing into you, your energy flowing into them, then you will be more likely to actualize that flow.

3. Tapping: Tap your head, your face, your temples, below eyes, below nose, cheeks, chin, color bone, sternum, breast plate, ribs.

4. Circle dance. Connecting to the Chi. Up is heaven, down is earth. Eyes closed and the tongue to roof of mouth.

5. Right to left. Harvesting energy.

Top hand energy from sky. Bottom hand energy from earth.

Prana tube. Hitting all chakras. Recharging all chakras with earth and sky energies. This recharges your energy!

Shake it out! Let's get ready to receive!

(5 minute) Martin Buber: I Thou, I It. *Ich und Du*

I and Thou express two possible perspectives.

I-Thou is when you recognize the uniqueness of the being/object you are speaking/interacting with.

I-It is when you treat the object you are interacting with as other.

The interesting thing is that you can have an I-Thou relationship with a rock. You can have an I-It relationship with your mother or father or sibling. Example: Waiter in the restaurant.

Let's go meet some of our companions. Walk away from here. Go find a Thou! Not the two legged. But the ones with roots, or wings, or six legs!

Welcome them. Introduce yourself. Ask if you can join them. Talk to them. Picture your energy flowing to the Thou, and picture their energy flowing to you. This happens in a series of concentric circles. Your energy flows to it, its energy flows to you, really through.

Remember, if this feels weird, that is actually ok! It should feel weird because in our culture we have been taught not to do this. But doing this is the first step in a paradigm change. To recognize that the way our society has behaved over the last 100-200 years needs to change. And, if you still feel silly doing this, this is still ok. Think about how much fun your campers will have learning to talk to trees/plants/animals (we will do a little more talking to animals later).

(15 minutes) *Hitbodedut*

Read this quote (or identify someone in audience to read the quote). Don't reveal who said it until the end.

Master of the universe, grant me the ability to be alone;
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day among the trees and grass;
Among all growing things—and there may I be alone, and enter into prayer,
To talk with the One whom I belong.

May I express there everything that is in my heart,
And may all the foliage of the field all grasses, trees, and plants,
Awake at my coming,
To send the powers of their life into the words of my prayer—
So that my prayer and speech are made whole
Through the life and the spirit of all growing things,

Which are made as by one transcendent Source.
 May I then pour out the words of my heart before Your presence
 Like water, O Lord, and life up my hands to You
 In worship, on my behalf, and that of my children. -Rav Nachmun of Bretslev

WOW! Powerful words. Can you imagine who said those words?
 Was it a Chinese shaolin meditation expert?
 Was it an Indian Guru/swami?
 Nope! It was -Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772 - 1810)

He introduced the idea of *Hitbodedut*. Comes from Hebrew word *Lehitboded*. Which means to cause oneself to be alone. The idea of meditation is not only an eastern idea. Very Jewish. Also Native American. Also... Many of our prophets, if not most, received prophecy through meditation. Solomon and David wrote/received psalms while listening to or playing the harp. Music was a major source of prophecy. Many consider Bob Marley a modern prophet.

Activity:

Find your spot. This might be high, low, in a tree, on a rock. Go there and exist. Ask permission of the things around you to be there. 'Buberize' it!

(15 Minutes)

MEET-A-TREE

Objectives:

1. To develop tactile, olfactory and other senses.
2. To foster the development of a personal relationship with nature.
3. To build a community of learners with a shared experience
4. To enhance trust amongst campers.
5. To introduce the tree as a symbol present in Jewish law, tradition and thought.

Type of activity: Game

Source: Adapted from Joseph Cornell

Time: 10-20 minutes

When to play: Day

Where to play: Outside

Age level: 7 years and up

Players needed: 6-20 (or more)

Materials needed: Bandanas are optional, area with trees

Sequencing: Nature walks. Web-of-life. Build-A-Tree.

Procedure:

Activity: Have participants pair off and give each pair a blindfold. Blindfold one of the pair. The sighted camper leads his/her partner to a tree that interests him – he should lead his/her partner to the tree in a very indirect way. **This responsibility is huge. Make sure the sighted camper takes care of their sight-impaired partner. There is a Jewish value here, and it comes from Leviticus 19:14, “do not place a stumbling block before the blind.” THIS IS A HUGE SAFETY ISSUE!** The blindfolded camper explores the tree, trying to imprint the tree’s characteristics in his/her mind so he’ll be able to find the tree again. Encourage the camper’s exploration by suggesting that he: feel for plants growing on or around it, feel for signs that animals use the tree, feel how thick the bark is, put his/her arms around the tree, smell the tree, etc. Once the blindfolded camper feels he knows the tree well, the sighted partner will lead him back to the starting place. Encourage campers to take a different route back, stepping over imaginary rocks, ducking under pretend branches, etc. – make it a fun challenge for the blindfolded camper to find his/her tree. Once back at the starting point, remove the

blindfold and the camper tries to find the tree with his/her eyes open. Then have the partners switch roles.

Discussion: There are a variety of discussions that can ensue once the group is back together again.

1) Each camper can lead the group to his/her tree to showcase something unique about it. 2) Ask campers to talk about what senses they used to explore their tree. 3) Ask campers to talk about what methods they used to figure out which tree was theirs once they opened their eyes – memory of their path, smell of the area, feeling plants around the tree, etc. 4) Begin a conversation about the roles of trees in the environment – are there characteristics of their trees that help them understand those roles – nook used as a dwelling place for animals, leaves as the place of conversion of carbon dioxide to oxygen, roots holding the soil in place, etc.? 5) Do the campers notice anything Jewish about the

trees? Introduce examples of trees as symbols in Jewish law, tradition and thought (examples can include *Bal Tashchit*, *eitzim*– the “trees” on which the Torah scroll is rolled, JNF and planting trees in Israel, etc).

Why do we call the Torah *Etz Haim* in Hebrew?

(5 minutes)

Shinrin Yoku

Shinrin Yoku What is *Shinrin Yoku*

In Japanese *shinrin* means forest, and *yoku*, although it has several meanings, refers here to a “bathing, showering or basking in.” More broadly, it is defined as “taking in, in all of our senses, the forest atmosphere.” The program was established to encourage the populace to get out into nature, to literally bathe the mind and body in green space, and take advantage of public owned forest networks as a means of promoting health.

(10 minutes)

Walking meditation

1. So, to begin this period of walking meditation, first of all let's simply stand. Just stand on the spot, being aware of your weight being transferred through the soles of your feet into the earth. Being aware of all of the subtle movements that go on in order to keep us balanced and upright.
2. And then you can begin to walk at a fairly slow but normal walking pace, and in a normal manner. We're not going to be changing the way that we walk; we're simply going to be aware of it.
3. Keep your in attention in the soles of your feet, being aware of the alternating patterns of contact and release; being aware of your foot as the heel first makes contact, as your foot rolls forward onto the ball, and then lifts and travels through the air. Be aware of all the different sensations in your feet, not just a contact in the soles of your feet but the contact between the toes, the feeling of the inside of your shoes, the fabric of your socks, and let your feet be as relaxed as you can.
4. Become aware of your ankles, knees, hips, pelvis, stomach neck and head.
5. Become aware of your feelings.
6. Next I'm going to ask you to stop. Come to a natural stop, you don't need to freeze, just come to a natural state of stopping. Do this now. What is it like to not be in motion?
7. What are you thinking about? What energy are you feeling? Rested? Motion? Edgy? Fluid?
8. Next, come back and form a circle.

Questions to start a conversation:

Does anyone want to share?

What is walking?

What is movement? Anyone able to feel individual bones/joints? Why

How did it feel on your feet?

(5 minutes)

Shivassana (Juxtapose of walking meditation)

Pose of the dead. Find a place to lay on the ground. Lay down and do not expect anything. Do your best to turn off your mind. Settle/sink into the ground. Make no muscles. Relax your feet, ankles, hips, pelvis, stomach etc. into the ground. Let's stay here for a few minutes.

Slowly, turn yourself back "on." Wiggle your toes. Wiggle your fingers. Take a deep breath. Roll onto your right side and slowly sit up in a cross-legged position. In traditional yoga you say 3 Oms. I always change this to 3 Shaloms. Let's do this now.

Stand up. Modeh Ani
Let's find a *hevruta* partner.

How can you take this back to your camp? Come up with
The Who, What, When, Where.

We come back together. Examples: Open discussion. How could you/will you use this at your camp?

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

5 minutes

Bringing it back to camp.

Hevruta up with someone you don't know.

How do you bring this program back to your camp? Who do you run it with? What aspects of the program do you use? Where does this happen? When? Is this something camp can use?

(5 minutes)

Wolf howl

Best experience of my life: Calling wolves. We get to take all this positive energy that we have "found" and spew it back into the universe. It's the same idea as blowing a shofar, with the proper *Kavannah!*

So, let's howl! Relax your shoulders, your neck. Say everything that is good that you have in you and let that be a blast from your soul!

Echad, Shtieem, Shalosh!

AAAAWHHHHOOOOOOOO!