

What a One-derful World: The Radical Power of Awareness 1 *Specialty Track 1*

AUTHOR(S):	Eliana Light
TOPIC (S)	Spirituality
SUMMARY	This is the opening session of the spirituality specialty track, focused on awareness. It gives participants the opportunity to meet each other, and explore the concepts of awareness as it relates to camp.
GOALS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore the meaning of “awareness,” the benefits of awareness, and how it is particularly potent at camp • To give participants an experience of awareness • To begin to share Jewish spiritual language for awareness
AUDIENCE:	<p>This session is meant for the spirituality specialty track of fellows at Cornerstone. The opening meditation and the Ashrei kavanah are appropriate for campers in middle or high school.</p> <p>The language and science can be incorporated into anyone’s practice.</p>
TIMING:	75 minutes
APPENDICES:	The science of spirituality handout , presentation slides
MATERIALS NEEDED:	N/A
SET-UP DETAILS:	Any location

SESSION TIMELINE:

- 00:00-00:08 Opening mindful moment
- 00:08-00:20 Introductions and norms
- 00:20-00:45 Debriefing the opening
- 00:45-00:60 Science and language part 1: mindfulness and awareness
- 00:60-01:10 Science and language part 2: spirituality
- 01:10-01:15 Closing

SESSION OUTLINE:

00:00-00:08 Opening mindful moment

- Bring everyone in from the waiting room singing a niggun (or [Hinei](#) by Michelle Citrin)
- Welcome everyone- invite them to take a big deep breath in and out
- Invite participants to sit up straight, roll their shoulders back, feel connected to the earth through their seat or through their feet, and allow their eyes to fall to a close or focus on a spot on the floor
- *Continue to follow the pattern of your breath, in and out*
- *When Ya'akov went to sleep on that night, after running away from home, he set a rock on the ground as a pillow, and lay to sleep.*
- *He had a dream, of a ladder, going from heaven to earth. Imagine that ladder. Imagine your body as that ladder, connected to heaven and earth.*
- *Ya'akov awoke, from sleep but also to the present moment. Holiness was here, he said, and I had no idea. How nora, how awesome, is this place.*
- *What makes this place holy, awesome, nora?*
- *As you breathe in, feel your body fill with air. Feel the oxygen go to every cell, right where it needs to go. Feel the incredibleness, the miraculousness, of your breathing body. And on the outbreath, ground yourself right in this moment. Find that nora.*
- *Send yourself some gratitude for showing up here, fully as you are. That is nora.*
- *Now, open your eyes. Look at all the other zoom boxes and send them gratitude for being here. Notice their smiles, feel everyone else's gratitude pouring on to you! That is nora!*
- *This moment, these people in this place at this time, have never existed before. Let us bring our full awareness here. Let us notice the awesomeness of this moment in time. Let us be truly here.*
- Sing niggun again (or Hinei)

00:08-00:20 (depends on number of participants) Introductions and norms

- Take a deep breath in, and out, thanking everyone for their participation
- *We're going to talk about what we just did, but first, let's learn about who is in our track community.*

- Have each person introduce themselves, share pronouns, location, camp and role at camp, and what their intention, kavanah, is for this track. And their favorite sound. (if the group is large, this can happen in breakout groups.)
- Invite folks on a jamboard to share what they need to be successful in this track, creating a brit
- Group together like with like and read through the brit, asking everyone to put up a heart reaction to agree to the brit.

00:20-00:45 Debriefing the opening

- *So, let's go back to what happened at the beginning of the session. Why did we open the session that way? What did you notice? What did you feel?*
- Share those questions in the chat
- Invite people to share in the chat and raise their hands, and discuss what happened. Comment on the themes that arise.
- Ask- what do you associate with awareness? with mindfulness? with spirituality? Have participants share. Notice the similarities and differences. We could do a jamboard depending on the number of participants.
- *When we invite people into the present moment, when we invite them into awareness, we are giving them the opportunity to awaken, just like Ya'akov, to the amazingness that is all around us, to spirit.*
- *Over the next three sessions, we are going to explore that awareness. What is the science behind it? Why does it matter? What makes camp the perfect place to practice awareness? What are our tools of practice? How can we incorporate these tools into our bunks and activities, and into our inner lives as counselors?*

00:45-00:60 Science and language part 1: mindfulness and awareness

- *What is mindfulness? Ask for definitions in the chat. When the mind and body are connected. Being present without judgement.*
- *What is awareness? Ask for definitions in the chat. When we are noticing and experiencing what is going on right now- not the past or the future.*
- *Why does this matter? When we are in the past or future, it can lead to distress:*
 - *Negativity bias (our memories favor unpleasant experiences)*
 - *Comparative thinking (our minds naturally compare, contrast and categorize)*
 - *Self-judgement (we come up short by comparing our worst with other peoples' best)*
- *Does this happen to you? Happens to me all the time! I think about what I could have done differently, or worried about the future. The only true happiness comes from being connected to the present moment.*
- *Being connected to the present, actually noticing what is going on in us around us, helps us more fully enjoy what is happening! It helps us feel more deeply, to recognize our true emotional state, so we can self-regulate. It can help us feel*

grateful for the present, help us to see it as a gift, help us cultivate feelings of awe and wonder, if we are invited into it.

- *Why is this particularly potent at camp? Discuss, touching on*
 - *Intentional community*
 - *Communal living*
 - *No screens*
 - *the beauty of nature*
- *We can work on these practices at camp so that our campers can tap into them once they leave*
- *We have language for this in our siddur, which is full of invitations into the present moment.*
- *Ashrei (put the text for Ashrei in the chat.)*

אַשְׁרֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵּיתָךְ עוֹד יִהְיֶה לְךָ סֵלָה:

ashrei yoshvei veitecha- od yehalelucha selah.

sitting in your house, i am content. it will always be enough.

- *Take a deep breath in, and out. Now on the outbreath, I want you to sigh like something terrible has happened, like you're so annoyed! Uggggh.*
- *Well that felt good, but I'm not sure that's gonna last. So let's try a different sigh, this time as if you are in your happy place, where you most want to be. Ahhh.*
- *That ahh, of contentment, that is the ahh of Ashrei. Ashrei yoshvei veitecha. Happy are those who yoshev, who can sit where they are. Who can be present.*
- *Sing Ashrei.*
- *I invite you to take a deep breath, roll your shoulders back, and close your eyes. Sometimes we aren't where we want to be. Sometimes we aren't at camp. But we can call upon the spirit of Ashrei at any time. We can choose to focus on now. Not the past, or the future, but right now. Can you make this moment, right here, where you most want to be?*
- *Sing Ashrei once more.*
- *Debrief what just occurred- What did you notice? What did you feel?*

00:60-01:10 Science and language part 2: spirituality

- *This track is the spirituality track, but we haven't really discussed it yet. So share in the chat- what is spirituality to you?*
- *Mention the science of spirituality handout. Your role is really important here!*
- *We're going to do an exercise Dr. Miller learned from Gary Weaver, a school psychologist, and has done with thousands of students. It is for you.*
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- *I invite you to be present in your space. Feel your feet flat on the floor. Roll your shoulders back. Sit up tall like Jacob's ladder, connected to heaven and earth. allow your eyes to fall to a close or focus on a spot in front of you, and start to follow the pattern of your breath.*
- *Imagine a set table before you. Invite to your table anyone, living or deceased, who has your best interest at heart. Who you know cares about you unconditionally.*
- *Ask them if they love you.*
- *Now to your table invite your higher self, the part of you that is more than your accomplishments or your mistakes, the eternal part of you, your n'shamah, your Divine spark and Divine breath. Ask you if you love you.*
- *Now invite all-that-is, or g?d, or the universe, however you want to describe that which is greater than yourself. Ask if they love you.*
- *This is your council. And you can ask them, what do I need to know? What do you have to tell me?*
- *And when you are ready, you can come back.*

01:10-01:15 Closing

- Reflect for yourself and write somewhere- what is an aha moment from today you'd like to remember? What is a question you have?
- In our next session, we're going to dig deeper into awareness and how to incorporate it into our work at camp.
- Until then, see if you can bring some more awareness to your life- maybe when eating, trying to sleep, waking up, etc. How does it change the experience?
- Bring an orange tomorrow :)
- End with niggun or whichever song we did to open

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

The Ashrei kavanah is great for older elementary, middle, and high schoolers.
The set table meditation would be great for staff.