

Taking Time for Yourself: Meditating in Nature

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SUMMARY: You know how to pray, what to say, and perhaps most importantly, how to listen. In this session we will concentrate on listening to nature and how nature can both positify (yes, new word meaning to make positive!) and amplify our inner voices. This meditative experience is designed to help us embrace and enhance the few moments of quiet and alone time we find at camp (and life!)

GOALS: Learn new skills for Jewish meditation, practice listening to nature, and value quiet alone time

AUDIENCE: No limits, open

TIMING: 45 minutes

MATERIALS: None

SET-UP: Outdoors, preferable somewhere with trees and a big view

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – Introduction to quiet in nature
- 00:05-00:10 – Introduction to meditation
- 00:10-00:25 – *Hitbodedut* – Defining the Shema
- 00:25-00:37 – *Hitbodedut* – Sitting in silence and practicing the Shema.

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:05 Introduction: Name, camp, pronoun, experience being quiet in nature

00:05-00:10 Hectic days at camp deserve to be processed quietly at night to prepare for the next day of *meshugas* (Yiddish for craziness)! According to the Jewish calendar, day begins as dusk turns to darkness. *Hitbodedut* is the practice of Jewish meditation. We will use these models, *Meshugas* and *Hitbodedut*, to help connect our minds and bodies to the rhythm of nature. Meditation is our guide to observing, and listening, to the flow of the day. Together we will practice a few types of meditation that can attune us to the flow through listening to nature and our inner voices.

- Starting/ending your day/meditation in gratitude. Practice is just that, a practice that will grow and expand and change your time. Like lifting weights, practicing piano, etc.
- “I am grateful for...”
- Introduce Martin Buber, I-Thou. Asking permission for space and beings to be there and treating them as a loved one!

00:10-00:25

Hitbodedut-Defining the Shema: re-examining what we take for granted.

Hear Israel, the Great One Who Is our God, The Great One Who Is Oneness.

Walking meditation: Walking towards sunset/away from sunset. East to west/west to east.

- Scan ground many times, being repetitive, will help your thoughts come out. Sounds boring, but that is when the mind starts to come untethered by the body.

00:25-00:37

Hitbodedut, sitting in silence and practicing the Shema.

- *Hitbodedut* (self-isolation, from Hebrew verb *L'Hitboded*, to cause oneself to be alone, *hitpa'el*, reflexive type of Hebrew verb), a style of prayer first popularized by Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, is the act of open, spontaneous, and direct communication with God, and is accessible to all, regardless of how deeply one is engaged in Judaism. By removing the potential pretense and awkwardness of reciting prayers others have written in Hebrew and Aramaic, *hitbodedut* lets us speak our minds and hearts, embrace our vulnerability, and open ourselves to what the universe has to offer.
- Rabbi Nachmun recommended we pray at night. He also recommended that we pray in a field of grasses, flowers and trees to let their energy enliven our requests and prayers!” WOW! We have those things right now. How can we take advantage of this by letting the energy of this place and space flow through us as we pray?

00:37-00:45 – Conclusion

Debrief session:

- Any observations that you'd like to share?

CORNERSTONE RESOURCE



- How do you think Buber used *Hitbodedut*?