

Zionism in Israeli Music – Activities, Ideas and Links to Resources

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Introduction:

HaTikvah, Israel's national anthem, describes the hope of the Jewish people to be free in the Land of Israel. This hope has sustained Jews throughout centuries of exile and persecution, and today it continues to epitomize the hope of the nation for a peaceful life in the State of Israel. The story of HaTikvah parallels the evolution of Zionism (1800s), the waves of immigration (Aliyot), the concurrent development of the Yishuv (1880-1947), Israel's statehood (1948), and the quest to define Israeli identity over the past six decades. The story's most recent chapters culminate in HaTikvah's enactment in Israeli law as the official national anthem in 2004, and within the contents of Israel's newest Basic Law, the Nation-State Law, which passed in July 2018. However, the story does not end with these laws. Israelis continue to cover "HaTikvah" in unique artistic ways that raise new ideas about how the people connect to the land and challenge long held beliefs and values. The activities in this unit are starting points for introducing Israeli music into the classroom as a tool for teaching about Zionism, statehood, Jewish history, challenges and hopes. For an in-depth exploration of the history of the Israeli anthem, consider the online resources below.

Essential Questions:

- The first version of HaTikvah (Hebrew for "The Hope") was published in 1886, and was first sung as an official anthem in the fourth Zionist Congress (1900). Is the hope of the nation, as described in Israel's national anthem, still relevant to Jews today, both in Israel and in the Diaspora?
- What are the issues raised by HaTikvah for Israel's non-Jewish citizens (the Muslim, Bedouin, Druze, Christian populations, etc.) in Israel's Jewish democracy?
- What hopes and desires for the nation's future are expressed by Israeli pop culture today?



This symbol identifies additional suggested activities for expansion and enrichment

Activity 1 – Examining HaTikvah’s Lyrics and History

Provide the lyrics in Hebrew, English and transliteration for students:

Ask students to read the lyrics and analyze themes, word choice, symbolism, etc. Students should consider, “Is the hope of the nation, as described in Israel’s national anthem (first version published in 1886), still relevant to Jews today, both in Israel and in the Diaspora? Is it relevant to you personally?”



For introduction to the function of anthems: In groups, students should examine the translation of HaTikvah, the lyrics to the American national anthem, and an anthem of any other country they choose, and then compare and contrast them. Ask students to reflect on the themes and symbolism in the American national anthem, and that of the third country chosen, and then to consider: “What is the purpose of an anthem in general? What is common among all three anthems? How does HaTikvah differ from the others?”



For historical context: Divide the students into three groups:

Group 1 is to investigate and report on the first Aliyah (BILU) and the immigrants’ hopes and dreams.

Group 2 is to investigate Naftali Herz Imber, the author of the poem on which “HaTikvah” is based, and report on his life, hopes and aspirations, and his influence on Jews in Palestine.

Group 3 is to investigate and report on HaTikvah’s history, where and when it was sung, why it only became the official national anthem in 2004, and what other songs were considered.

Have students present their findings to the class. After groups report on their findings, ask students to consider: “How do historical context, time, venue and place change the way HaTikvah is received? How does the singing change when HaTikvah is performed at memorials and ceremonies as opposed to soccer games and dance clubs? Is it disrespectful to change the anthem? Explore different covers of America’s anthem and how these versions were received” (We suggest bringing commentary on Jimi Hendrix’s version of the national anthem).



For current comparisons: Show online videos (www.youtube.com) of HaTikvah performed in different venues with different artistic styles, and ask students to create their own musical cover of the song.

Cover of HaTikvah by Frankie Perez

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Czcqw0gUma4&feature=related>

Cover of HaTikvah by Marty & Misha Goetz: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrXz8KT0duU>

Cover on the Jerusalem light rail: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEZ6sgBNPio>

Israel Defense Forces Cover: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQCu9kl68Tg>

Acapella Cover: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rvDqu7kHQQ>

HaTikvah sung around the world: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viu48BxOBnA>

Unique Cover of HaTikvah by Neshama Carlebach (modified words to include Israel's Arab Population): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNoNgnr3NhY>



For historical context: Expand the activity to include a comparison between HaTikvah and HaRav Kook's response to its publication with his version. Lesson plan and materials found at: <http://www.lookstein.org/resources/hatikvah1.htm>



For student personalization: Have students prepare online presentations for the class with PowerPoint presentations or using [Prezi](https://prezi.com/). Presentations could describe different covers of the song, various celebrities who sang HaTikvah in public ceremonies over the years, word associations from the lyrics, collages of images and words depicting what it means to them personally, etc.



For connections to Jewish life: Explore with students: where are these Jewish national hopes and desires reflected in Jewish life? Examine specific examples in Jewish prayer, ritual, holidays, Tanakh, text, etc.

Online Resources for the history of the song:

<http://www.jr.co.il/pictures/stamps/jrst0431e.jpg>

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/hatikva.html>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/hatikvah/>

<https://israeled.org/hatikvah-officially-declared-national-anthem/>

Activity 2 – Exploring the Challenges of a Jewish Democracy

What are common characteristics of Jewish people that distinguish them?

In groups, ask students to brainstorm common characteristics of Jewish peoplehood and generate a list. Then, ask them to reach a consensus: they should identify and rank what they believe are the most important five characteristics. [Expect responses such as: belief, prayer, calendar and holidays, language, connection to Israel, reading the Torah, food, etc.] Compare the groups' results. Ask students: "Does one need all, some, one or none of these characteristics in order to belong to the Jewish people?"

Israel is a Jewish democracy – what does that mean in reality? What are the characteristics of a Jewish democracy?

Examine the passages in Israel's Declaration of Independence that define its democracy. What are the rights of citizens as anchored in law by this document?

"The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion; will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; will be based on the precepts of liberty, justice, and peace taught by the Hebrew Prophets; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of race, creed, or sex; will guarantee full freedom of conscience,

worship, education, and culture; will safeguard the sanctity and inviolability of the shrines and Holy Places of all religions; and will dedicate itself to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

In what way does Israel's Jewish character distinguish it from other democracies? Discuss with the class. Ask students to surmise how Arab and other non-Jewish minority citizens feel about the Israeli anthem. Does translating it into Arabic mitigate the feeling that it does not apply to all citizens?



For exploring multiple perspectives: Have students simulate the debate that took place in the Knesset in 2003, in which, as Knesset members, they take sides on the issue of whether to officially enact HaTikvah as Israel's national anthem.



For exploring challenges of pluralism in democracy: Have students discuss whether Arab Israeli Knesset members should have to sing HaTikvah in the Knesset or whether they should have to stand while Jewish Israeli Knesset members sing it. Ask students, "Should there be a separate anthem for Arab Israelis?" As an added challenge, ask students to compare this issue in other countries. Which have changed their national anthems and why? What has the debate been like in the United States? Should there be new versions to be inclusive of future populations or is an anthem a picture of a country in its first moments of independence?

Online Resources:

Israeli Arabs feel left out of anthem: <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4397079,00.html>

Israeli-Arab Member of Knesset refuses to sing HaTikvah: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Israeli-Arab-MK-Id-rather-die-than-sing-Israeli-anthem-517831>

Arab Members of Knesset walk out of their swearing-in ceremony during the singing of HaTikvah: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-mks-walk-out-on-anthem-during-knesset-swearing-in-ceremony/>

Excerpt from As'ad Ghanem's Journal Article in 2016: Israel's Second-Class Citizens: Arabs in Israel and the Struggle for Equal Rights

As'ad Ghanem is an Israeli Arab academic. He has published 14 books and numerous articles about ethnic politics in divided societies, including about ethnic divisions and Arab-Jewish relations in Israel.

“And then there is the fact that Israel defines itself along ethnonationalist lines that exclude the Arab minority- from a national anthem that famously describes the yearning of a Jewish soul for a homeland in Zion to a flag that displays a Star of David. In these ways, the Israeli government has maintained the dominance of the Jewish majority and denied Arabs genuine equality.”

Activity 3 – Exploring Zionism in Modern Israel’s Pop Culture

Compare the hope expressed in HaTikvah to the hope of current mainstream Israeli musicians as expressed by Subliminal and Tact (Israeli rappers and musicians).

Subliminal: “Tikva” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ruI9liCHBQ>

[The song was first performed for Israeli soldiers in the celebrations for Israel’s 55th year of independence. The lyrics present a harsh Israeli reality of war, terrorist attacks, loss and disillusionment as the promises of peace from past generations have not yet materialized. This reality is juxtaposed with the hope of the Jewish people, as expressed in HaTikvah, to live in the land of Israel as a free people. The rapper asks for strength and courage to endure hard times in the ultimate quest for peace in the land.]

Tact: “Flowers in the Barrel”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBnGbgJWsyM>

[Since the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip and the daily barrage of rockets fired from Gaza into the southern region of Israel, this version of “Flowers in the Barrel” has become increasingly relevant. The singers revisit the idyllic hope generated by the original version of the song (see below). The lyrics first invoke the innocence of the 1960s, immediately followed by a depiction of current warfare, personal loss, and grief. The authors explicitly convey a message that “it is forbidden to give up.” The call is to unite and galvanize around the original dream of Jewish hope rather than to abandon one’s home for a better reality. The lyrics end with the idyllic vision of peace from the original version, maintaining the hope for peace for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel.]

The original recording of “Flowers in the Barrel” by Lehakat HaNachalim: singing to troops in Sinai in 1970

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwvAywMw93M&t=53s>

[Written during the War of Attrition (1967-1970), the song conveys an idyllic outcome of war with soldiers returning from war to Tel Aviv, being showered with flowers. The poem uses symbols of the seasons and landmarks in the Land of Israel to paint this rosy picture of hope for the immediate future. The song became symbolic of the times, and has since gained popularity, becoming an Israeli hit for all generations.]



For experiential exploration of past and present themes: Have students watch the YouTube clips and practice singing/performing the song for a school performance, or create a cover of their own to record and post on the website. Lyrics to the following versions (in Hebrew and English) provided below. Ask students to discuss whether Zionism is merely the fulfillment of the Jewish dream to establish a Jewish state, the “hope” to accomplish that reality, or whether Zionism’s goal is to establish the state **and** have it accepted by all nations as a rightful objective of the Jewish people.

Hope (Subliminal and the Shadow)

I saw how many they went
 Too many of them did not return
 Friends separated, houses broken,
 tears of families spilled
 Buds of people flowers that didn't flower
 The hope in our heads, the love in our hearts,
 the dream in our spirits so we continue in our path.

The silence has disappeared for it, again sounds of war
 Another soldier returns, wrapped in what?
 In the flag of the country
 Blood and tears absorbed by the land
 And another shocked mother is left with just a picture
 The hope is locked in the heart, the strong nation will
 not fold over
 Because the SOB that can stop Israel has not yet been
 born.

Give me the hope to accept what there isn't
 The strength to change what there is.

Come let's continue, our life is in front of us
 It's not late because tomorrow is a new day
 The dream will perish if we lose the hope
 So reach out to love.

You promised a dove, in the sky there's a hawk
 Brother, poisonous twig pricks, this is not an olive branch
 Living in a dream, everybody talks about peace
 But they shoot, oppress, pull, squeeze the trigger
 In a world of suicide attacks, the people are still talking
 Living in an illusion of righteousness,
 they widen the rift in the nation.

אני ראיתי כמה הם הלכו
 יותר מדי מהם לא חזרו
 חברים נפרדו, בתים נשברו
 דמעות של משפחות נשפכו
 ניצנים של אנשים, פרחים שלא יפרחו
 התקווה בראשנו, אהבה בנפשנו
 החלום ברוחנו אז לעד נמשיך בדרכנו

נעלמה לה הדממה, שוב קולות
 המלחמה
 עוד חייל חוזר עטוף במה? בדגל
 המדינה
 דם ודמעה נספגים באדמה
 עוד אמא המומה, נשארה לה רק תמונה
 תיתקווה בלב נועל, עם חזק לא נתקפל
 כי לא נולד הבן זונה שיעצור את ישראל

תן לי תיתקווה לקבל מה שאין
 את הכח לשנות מה שכן

בואו נמשיך, החיים לפנינו
 לא מאוחר כי מחר יום חדש
 החלום יגווע אם נאבד את התקווה
 אז הושיטו יד לאהבה

הבטחתם יונה, ברקיע יש עיט
 אחי, סרפד רעיל עוקץ זה לא עלה של
 זית
 חיים בחלום, כולם מדברים על שלום
 אבל יורים, לוחצים, מושכים, סוחטים
 תיהדק
 בעולם של פיגועים אנשים תמימים עוד
 מדברים
 חיים באשליית הצדק, הם מרחיבים
 בעם את הסדק

Pass madness every day in order to survive
Don't want to live in order to fight,
Sub fights in order to live
Plant hope, sends out roots
Shield in my body for the dream
so it won't be shattered to splinters
Enough, enough with the hurt, enough with the
tears
A year that the land bleeds not sleeping and why?

Give me the hope to accept what there isn't
The strength to change what there is.

Come let's continue, our life is in front of us
It's not late because tomorrow is a new day
The dream will perish if we lose the hope
So reach out to love

G-d, give me the hope to accept what there isn't
Give me the courage to try to fix the world.

Come let's continue, our life is in front of us
It's not late because tomorrow is a new day
The dream will perish if we lose the hope
So reach out to love

עובר טירוף יומיומי כדי לשרוד
לא רוצה לחיות כדי להילחם
סאב נלחם כדי לחיות
נוטע תקווה, משריש שורשים
מגן בגופי על החלום שלא יתנפץ לרסיסים
די, מספיק עם הכאב מספיק עם הדרמה
שנה שהאדמה מדממת לא נמה, ולמה

תן לי ת'תקווה לקבל מה שאין
את האומץ לנסות לתקן

בואו נמשיך, החיים לפנינו...

אלוהים, תן לי ת'תקווה לקבל מה שאין
תן לי את הכח לשנות את מה שכן
תן לי את האומץ לנסות לתקן את העולם

בואו נמשיך, החיים לפנינו...

FLOWERS IN THE BARREL (Remake by Tact)

The sun will stand still between Gaza and Rafah
the moon will whiten over the peak of Hermon
flowers in the barrel and girls on the watchtower
loads of soldiers will return to town.

How good it is that you came home
took a bath,
put the kid to sleep,
he waited for you, asked where dad is
he did not know you went
to bring the peace
the sun stands still in Giv'on and the moon in the
Ayalon valley
dreaming of this place
the day we'll stop fighting there
and we'll start breathing there
fast like a water spring
the surviving and liberated
pull relations pull relations pull
joy and smile love and innocence
liberation of two nations
from slavery to freedom
girls on the watchtower instead of soldiers
flowers in the barrels instead of shells
I dreamt of the day, woke up in tears
listen and I'll let you see.

The sun...

Enough crying little sister,
wipe your eyes dry
I stand by your side,
I hold your hands

השמש תידום בין עזה לרפיח
ירח ילבין על פסגת החרמון
פרחים בקנה ובנות בצריח
ישבו לעיר חיילים בהמון

כמה טוב שבאת הביתה
עשית אמבטיה, השכבת את הילד
לישון
הוא חיכה לך, שאל איפה אבא
לא ידע שהלכת להביא את השלום
שמש בגבעון דום וירח בעמק איילון
חולם על המקום הזה
ביום שנפסיק בו ללחום ונתחיל בו
לנשום
מהר כמעין המתגבר ומשתחרר
גורר יחס גורר יחס גורר
שמחה וחיוך אהבה ותמימות
שחרור שני עמים מעבדות לחירות
בנות על הצריח במקום חיילים
פרחים בקנים במקום פגזים
חלמתי על היום התעוררתי בדמעות
תקשיבו ואתן לכם לראות

השמש תידום בין עזה לרפיח...

די לבכות אחות קטנה, נגבי את
העיניים
אני תומך לצידך, מחזיק לך תידיים
כולם בסוף מתים, חשוב לי שתדעי
שלמרות שהוא נפל חלל נשאר בליבי

everyone dies at the end,
it's important to me for you to know
that even though he fell a void stays in my heart
again brothers fall like leafs in autumn
and it's easiest to get up and leave
so they say "change your place change your luck"
but there's no hiding from your fate
so we stayed here and built a house
we believed in doves, peace, olive branches
and stood at the anthem, served in the IDF
and buried soldiers, sat & cried in shiv'ah
fell to our knees and again up on our feet
when out of bullets we used our hands
enough, our weapon broke waiting for peace
I'll stop dreaming this when my heart stops to be
quiet.

After 56 years of defense over the house
the dove almost lost hope
and the olive branch is in my mouth
but we're here to remind everyone
that it's forbidden to give up on today
we need to interweave our folded hands
and together we'll turn dream into reality.

Flowers in the barrel and girls on the watchtower
loads of soldiers will return to town.

שוב אחים נופלים כמו עלים בשלכת
והכי זה קל זה לקום לעזוב ללכת
הרי אומרים שנה מקום שנה מזל
אך אין להסתתר מיד הגורל
אז נשארנו לנו כאן ובנינו לנו בית
האמנו ביונה בשלום עלה של זית
ועמדנו בהמנון ושירתנו בצבא
וקברנו חיילים ובכינו בשבעה
נפלנו לברכיים ושוב על הרגליים
כשאזלו הכדורים נלחמנו בידיים
די נשבר לנו הזין לחכות לשלום
אני אפסיק על זה לחלום עד שליבי
יידום

אחרי חמישים ושש שנים של הגנה על
הבית
כמעט ואבדה התקווה ליונה ובפיה
עלה של זית
אבל אנחנו כאן להזכיר לכולם שאסור
לוותר על היום
צריך לשלב יד ביד וביחד נהפוך
למציאות את החלום

פרחים בקנה ובנות בצריח
ישבו לעיר חיילים בהמון

Flowers in the Barrel (original)

When the spring goes to sleep, the pallor is aroused
On the fields of fire the last battle will end
And a wonderful morning from the valley to the hill
Then will rise in music and joy

The sun will stand still between Gaza and Rafah
The moon will whiten the peak of the Hermon
[mountain]
Flowers in the barrel and girls in the turret
Will return to the city the soldiers in mass

A single little girl with laurels in her hand
To the white city [Tel Aviv] will set out in songs
And on a flattered soldier will put a yellow-weed in the
lapel
And the skies are so clear

The sun will stand still between Gaza and Rafah
The moon will whiten the peak of the Hermon
Flowers in the barrel and girls in the turret
Will return to the city the soldiers in mass

The soldiers to the city will arrive as a large crowd
With young girls and song, with golden flowers
And all which knew grief and mourning
Will no longer know fall [of autumn leaves] and battle

כשאביב נרדם יעור בחיוורון
בשדות האש ייתם הקרב האחרון
ובוקר נהדר מן הבקעה להר
אז יעלה בזמר, ברון.

השמש ידם בין עזה לרפיח,
ירח ילבין על פסגת החרמון
פרחים בקנה ובנות בצריח
ישובו לעיר חיילים בהמון.

ילדה אחת קטנה ובידה זרים,
לעיר הלבנה תצא אז בשירים,
ולחייל נרגש תשים סביון בדש,
והשמיים כה בהירים.

השמש ידם בין עזה לרפיח,
ירח ילבין על פסגת החרמון
פרחים בקנה ובנות בצריח
ישובו לעיר חיילים בהמון.

החיילים לעיר יגיעו בעם רב,
עם נערות ושיר ועם פרחי זהב,
וכל אשר אתמול ידע מכאוב ושכול
לא עוד ידע שלכת וקרב.

The sun will stand still between Gaza and Rafah
The moon will whiten the peak of the Hermon
Flowers in the barrel and girls in the turret
Will return to the city the soldiers in mass

השמש ידם בין עזה לרפיח,
ירח ילבין על פסגת החרמון
פרחים בקנה ובנות בצריח
ישבו לעיר חיילים בהמון



Kenneth W. Stein, President



Kenneth W. Stein, President

פרחים בקנה