

שיר תקווה



SONG OF HOPE

# Introduction

Music has long held a place in Israel's public sphere, from the songs of the Levi'ites on the Temple steps in ancient Jerusalem to the Zionist songs of the early pioneers who sang and danced together on the Kibbutz and in the Moshav. Since the War of Independence, each successive era has added new tunes to the national songbook.

Music plays a central role in setting the tone for the Israeli national holidays. As we commemorate Yom HaZikaron each year, we are familiar with the national soundtrack of somber and meaningful songs that has developed over the decades. As the day transitions into Yom HaAtzmaut, the music changes to reflect the celebratory mood. Old Israeli folk music has made a comeback and is joined by the latest trends in pop and hip hop, as Israel's most famous singers and bands perform at special concerts across the country.

This year, in the aftermath of October 7th, music has taken on a significant role in our nation's ongoing response to its trauma. Some new songs express sadness, loss, and pain, while others try to motivate the nation in hopes of better days. Old songs are revisited as we look back nostalgically to simpler times. Thus, we are forming a new playlist, which will be forever associated with this war.

## The Role of the Musician

At first, musicians were challenged by how to respond to the atrocities. Was there even a place for music in a post-October 7th world? Out of our shock, we discovered that when we run out of words, we often turn to sounds – to the songs that can move us and speak on our behalf at times when it is most necessary. Singers and bands lifted the national mood by traveling across the country to perform for soldiers at army bases and evacuated families at hotels and held intimate concerts for the general public. As time went by, more and more musicians began to express their feelings, writing songs that have embedded themselves in Israeli culture and contributing to the healing process – which is still ongoing. Inadvertently, Israeli musicians have found new influence as symbols of something beyond their art or fame.

At Beit Avi Chai, at this time of national crisis we reached out to Israeli musicians and created a series of videos called 'Shir Tikva', featuring a particular musician who talks about their experience since the war broke out and then performs a song of their choice that resonates with them today. Artists were asked to perform covers; to choose songs that were not originally their own. Each episode includes an acoustic performance and an intimate discussion about the comfort and hope that music can offer. Each video can act as a trigger for engaging with our own feelings and thoughts.

As we approach Israel's national holidays this year, we strive to create meaningful spaces for

our students and ourselves; to explore our new reality. This activity is built around an interview with popular Israeli musician, Shai Tsabari, who chose the song "Al Tifchad" - Have no Fear - by Ehud Banai. The activity guide aims to accomplish this through a thoughtful consideration of the role of music during this time, with the understanding that:

- Music is a way to tell a story.
- Music can be a meaningful tool to connect to current events in Israel.
- Curating a soundtrack can be a mindful way for a community to share experiences, values, and hopes for the future.

### Goals:

- Appreciate the power of music as a form of expression.
- Consider how music can be meaningful on different levels.
- Understand the role of music as part of the healing process in the wake of October 7th.

### Materials:

- Computer with projector or screen
- Journals, notebook, or paper and writing implements
- Printed posters of the quotes in Appendix A, placed in different parts of the room
- An app that allows for the creation of a collaborative playlist (optional)
- 2 sticky notes per student

### Note to Facilitator:

- Facilitator scripts are suggestions only. Please make sure to moderate any language or content for the needs of your class.
- Additional themes and activity suggestions can be found at the end of this outline.

The recommended time for this activity is 50-60 minutes.

## LESSON OUTLINE

### Opening (5 minutes)

This year, as we prepare for Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut, we can't help but notice the very different atmosphere that surrounds us. We have witnessed how our world can be forever altered in the blink of an eye. Though everything is fresh and the pain and memories are still raw, we pray that the situation will quickly change for the better.

This activity is built around one of the videos created for Beit Avi Chai's project "Shir Tikva", which invited Israeli musicians to share songs that provided them with inspiration during these difficult days of war and trauma. We are going to watch an interview with Shai Tsabari, a well-known Israeli artist, who chose the song "" – "Al Tifchad" (Have no fear) - by Ehud Banai, originally released in 1992. Ehud Banai is a songwriter, composer, and musician who has made a significant contribution to the contemporary Israeli music scene for decades.

The title of the song, - Al Tifchad - means "Have no fear". In the video, Shai explains why he chose this song, but before we hear his explanation, let's take a moment to think about the title of the song, Al Tifchad. Write your answers in your journal or notebook.

- ❓ What associations does this title inspire in you?
- ❓ What fears do you think people are facing since October 7th?
- ❓ What do you think this song might be about (keep in mind that it was written in 1992)?
- ❓ Would anyone like to share their associations or thoughts with the class?

## Video - Shai Tsabari sings “Al Tifchad” by Ehud Banai

 Play the [interview and performance](#) (10 mins)

Now that we've heard Shai Tsabari perform this song-

- ? What was the song about?
- ? Were any of your guesses correct?
- ? What touched you in this video? How did Shai's performance of the song make you feel?
- ? Was there anything that Shai shared that surprised you?

[Allow a few students to share their responses.]

In his interview, Shai Tsabari reframes the song in two ways. He makes it relevant to Israel post-October 7 and refers to his personal life when he was in high school as well.

Think about the following questions, and then share your answers with the person sitting next to you:

- ? In what way did the song offer reassurance to Shai Tsabari as a teenager? As a friend?
- ? Did you feel that the song carried a personal message for you?
- ? How can one song hold multiple messages?

## Activity and Discussion - The Power of Music (25 mins)

### Quotes (10 min)

Shai Tsabari's interview leaves us with a lot to think about. I have posted two quotes from this interview [Appendix A]. Read each quote, and then stand next to the quote you would like to discuss. We will break into small groups of 3-4 people for a small group discussion.

- ★ Alternatively, the facilitator may assign the students into groups and assign each group one of the quotes to discuss. Hand each group a copy of the quote and the discussion questions. Allow 6-8 minutes for discussion, and then regroup as a class.

## Music can... (5 min)

Music is certainly a powerful tool. Let's wrap up this part of the activity by sharing what music means to you. You have each been given a sticky note. Write a sentence that begins with the words "Music can..." on your sticky note, and place it on the wall in the classroom. After you have posted your note, take a walk around and look at your classmates' notes. Choose one of your classmates' notes that resonates with you, and stand next to it.

[Allow some students to share their selection and why they chose it.]

## Playlist (10 min)

During this activity we have had the chance to meet Shai Tsabari and hear a little about his thoughts and feelings since October 7th. We touched upon the fears that people have experienced since the war began. We zoomed in on the impact of music and its ability to explain things when we struggle to find the right words.

Like Shai, maybe some of us here also have found that things have changed for us over the last months. Maybe things matter more to us now or matter differently - whether they be friends and family, our Jewish identity, or our relationship with Israel. Think about how this Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut will feel different from past experiences.

- ? What song do you feel is appropriate to mark Yom Hazikaron or Yom HaAtzmaut this year? Add your song to the class playlist.**

[You may want to set up two separate playlists, one for each Yom, or set up one mixed playlist. Students can be involved in this decision as well.]

## Conclusion: (5 min)

The last thing Shai Tsabari says before singing is that sometimes the music can help you disconnect from the moment, from the pain and difficulty and have hope:

[Share the quotation:]

**“And for just a moment you can see a shore of hope in the distance, the glimmer of a lighthouse”**

Music can indeed help us raise ourselves out of the situation and offer us something positive to hold on to. That is why this project was called “Shir Tikva” - a song of hope.

- ? What gives you hope right now? Write your answer on our class 'mentimeter' to form a collage of hope.**

## APPENDIX A

# "MUSIC HAS THE POWER TO EXPLAIN THINGS EVEN WITHOUT WORDS"

*Shai Tsabari*

- In what ways do words allow us to express ourselves? In what ways do they limit our expression?
- How can things be explained without words? Isn't this a contradiction?
- Can you think of a time when you felt that music could explain things without words?

**"SINGING IS MY  
LITTLE PRAYER  
SOMETIMES YOU SING  
IN ORDER TO REMIND  
YOURSELF WHAT  
REALLY MATTERS"**

*Shai Tsabari*

- In what ways is singing like prayer?
- Do you think there is something religious or spiritual about music?
- What do you think Shai Tsabari means when he talks about things that “really matter”?
- Can you share some examples of things that matter to you?

## APPENDIX B

### I. Lyrics Activity

We can continue engaging with the song chosen by Shai Tsabari by looking at the lyrics in translation.

A copy of these lyrics can be found in Appendix C.

Educators may choose to study the text as a group or in pairs, and analyze its meaning with some guided questions.

- ❓ **Ehud Banai wrote this song for his father, who was in the hospital. Which lines relate directly to this reality?**
- ❓ **In what ways could the lyrics be interpreted metaphorically? Give three examples.**
- ❓ **Shai Tsabari describes different layers of meaning that the song holds. Which aspects of the song are specific to an individual? Which can be appreciated by everyone? Think about the melody, the instruments, and the lyrics. How do these elements work in different ways to create meaning?**
- ❓ **If you could add another two lines to this song, what would you add?**

For further discussion, the facilitator may wish to consider the observations below:

### 2. Mood Music Activity

This activity continues from the interview with Shai Tsabari and his comment about the ability of music to explain feelings without words. Music allows us to tap into feelings and express our mood.

In pairs or small groups, make a quick list of emotions (for example: anger, joy, fear, surprise, loneliness, etc.)

Share these together as one large group and choose two that will be the focus of the activity.

Back in small groups or pairs, give everyone 5 minutes on their phones' music apps to find as many songs as they can, that match each of the moods.

Come back together and have each group or pair play a short part of their songs for each mood.

Ask the group how they felt about the choice of songs.

- ❓ **Did everyone manage to capture the mood?**
- ❓ **What was it that made a song 'fit' the mood? (Examples of answers: the sound, the instruments, the artist, the song title, the 'color of the music', etc.)**

## APPENDIX C

### LYRICS TO SONG

Have no fear,  
you are not alone,

אל תפחד  
אתה לא לבד

it was just a little jab,  
a sudden and quick shock.  
You did lose control for a moment  
you weren't careful enough  
and now warning bells  
ring in your head.

היתה זו דקירה קטנה  
זעזוע פתאומי ומהיר,  
נכון, איבדת שליטה לרגע  
לא היית מספיק זהיר,  
ועכשיו פעמוני אזהרה  
מצלצלים בראשך

You want to forget,  
to start from scratch.

אתה רוצה לשכוח  
להתחיל מהתחלה

So believe, that if you spoiled it,  
you can also fix it. Yes, yes.

אז תאמין שאם קלקלת  
אתה יכול גם לתקן, כן, כן.

Have no fear,  
you are not alone.

אל תפחד  
אתה לא לבד.

If the fear returns,  
I will come to hold your hand,  
I will always be close to you,  
to hug you if you tremble.

אם יחזור שוב רגע הפחד  
אבוא להושיט לך יד  
תמיד אהיה קרוב אליך  
לחבק במקרה שתרעד

Now warning bells  
ring in your head,  
you want to forget,  
to start from scratch.

עכשיו פעמוני אזהרה  
מצלצלים בראשך  
אתה רוצה לשכוח  
להתחיל מהתחלה

So believe that if you spoiled it,  
you can also fix it.

אז תאמין שאם קלקלת  
אתה יכול גם לתקן, כן, כן.

Have no fear,  
you are not alone.

אל תפחד  
אתה לא לבד.