

The Month of Elul

the Month of Slichot and Mercy

Slichot are said at night before sunrise and include songs (piyutim) and requests.
Take a look at and listen to the songs and answer the following questions:

Try and guess which community the song is from?

How does the song make you feel?

The piyutim is a song of request. What do you think is said in the piyut?

Did you know?

We learn about music and songs from Tanach (the Bible) too! The first example is Yuval whom, we are told, played a stringed musical instrument and pipe organ. After the Exodus from Egypt, we read that the people of Israel sang a song by the sea and Miriam the prophetess, accompanied their singing on a drum, expressing happiness and thankfulness at being saved. King David played a stringed musical instrument before King Saul. During the time of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Levites would sing and play instruments- according to tradition, during the saying of the Shir Hamaalot psalms that appear in the book of Tehillim-Psalms. We are told that when the Jewish people were exiled from Jerusalem they were so deeply mourning that they couldn't sing a song of Zion.

According to the paragraph, which famous songs appear in Tanach?
 When were they sung?

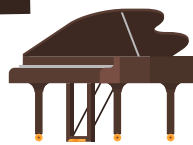
What musical instruments can you hear?
 Circle your answer(s)



Trumpet
Egypt



Oud
Middle East



Piano
Italy



Guitar
Turkey and Greece



Violin
Western Europe

What do the instruments that you circled have in common?
 What countries do they come from?



Did you know?

Piyutim are songs that express feelings and requests, happiness, sadness, and prayer. Once the Jewish people were exiled around the world, they began composing liturgical songs (Piyutim) – some as a part of the prayer services and as requests, and others connected to the life cycle and the Jewish yearly cycle: weddings, happy events, Bar Mitzvahs. Each Piyut is unique and reflects the country it was composed in, through the writing style, tune and musical instruments used to accompany it. Together the piyutim connect the Jewish people to the entire Diaspora.

What do you think the different tunes and musical instruments in piyutim teach us?

The month of Elul is a time to stop and look deep into ones heart. Write a request or personal desire for the new year.
You can, if you wish, write in the style of a piyut

Did you know?

"Piyutim are written like songs – short, rhyming lines, sometimes acrostic – which means that the first letter of each line is bolded and together the bolded letters make up words- sometimes the name of the song writer, sometimes the Aleph Bet, or a message."