"*Banu Choshech Legaresh*" LESSON PLAN

by David Micley

LESSON AT A GLANCE

Students will read and discuss the lyrics of the Hanukkah song *Banu Choshech*, then watch a video that features the lyrics as its soundtrack. Students will then discuss how the message of the lyrics and the video are different and how Hanukkah, rather than focusing on the defeat of the Greeks, focuses on the miracle of the Menorah lights.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read the chorus lyrics of *Banu Choshech* in Hebrew and English.
- Students will watch and critique a video.
- Students will understand that, rather than glorifying war, Hanukkah celebrates the oil miracle and the good we bring into the world.

ACTIVITY: GLORIFYING LIGHT, NOT WAR

1. Distribute song lyrics for *Banu Choshech* (available below). Have two students read the song—one reads the song in Hebrew (or transliteration), the other reads it in English translation.

Ask students if any of them recognize the song and the story it refers to. Mention that it refers to Hanukkah, if none of the students do. Ask students:
How do the song lyrics make you feel?

2. As a class, watch the following video:
http://mediamidrash.behrmanhouse.com/watch.php?VID_ID=_kqK3s_7lG8. Now guide a discussion which encourages students to be critical of the video.
How do the pictures in the video make you feel?
How do the song lyrics make you feel now that they are accompanied by the photos?
What overall feeling does the video create? What do you think is its intended message?
Is there a contrast between the meaning of the song and the sense of the video?
The discussion should be guided toward critiquing the video for glorifying war.

3. Conclude the lesson by explaining that Judaism does not glorify war. While we have a right and obligation to defend ourselves, war is a responsibility that is to be taken seriously and not celebrated like a sporting event. You can reference the following Jewish text, which is God's accusation against the angels who celebrated the drowning of the Egyptians:

MEGILLAH 10b The Holy Blessed One said: "My children are drowning in the sea and you want to sing?"	מגילה דף י עמוד ב אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא מעשה ידי טובעין בים ואתם אומרים שירה.

Explain that the main celebration of Hanukkah is not focused on the defeat of the enemies, but rather on the reclaiming of the Temple and the miracle of the oil, which is what the *Banu Choshech* song is really about. Fighting and destroying evil through force is necessary, but our celebrations move beyond that to glorify our relationship with God and the good we can bring into the world.

4. As a class, sing *Banu Choshech* together using the lyric sheets.

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Banu Choshech Song Lyrics

Hebrew:

בָּאנוּ חוֹשֶׁךְ לְגָרֵשׁ
בְּיָדֵינוּ אוֹר וָאֵשׁ
כָּל אֶחָד הוּא אוֹר קָטָן
וְכֻלָּנוּ אוֹר אֵיתָן
סוּרָה חוֹשֶׁךְ הָלְאָה שְׁחוֹר
סוּרָה מִפְּנֵי הָאוֹר

Transliteration:

Banu choshech legaresh
Biyadeinu ohr va'esh
Kol echad hu ohr katan
Vekulanu ohr eitan.
Surah choshech hal'ah shchor.
Surah mip'nei ha'ohr.

English Translation:

We come to chase the dark away.
In our hands are light and fire.
Each individual light is small.
But together the light is mighty.
Flee, darkness and night.
Flee before the light.

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