“Lior Liebling Lifts Our Spirits”

**QUOTES & QUESTIONS**

“As she davened with Lior during those High Holy Days in 2003, Trachtman felt renewed, and she soon learned that others felt the same way.”

What does it mean to feel renewed?

In what ways did Lior help Trachtman feel renewed? In what ways does Lior help others feel a similar sense of renewal?

“I love davening,” says Lior, grinning widely. “It gives me energy; it gives me power, it makes me strong.”

Why does Lior love davening?

In what ways can *tefillah* give a person energy?

In what ways can *tefillah* give a person power?

In what ways can *tefillah* help a person feel strong?

Have you had a *tefillah* experience in which you felt similar to Lior? If so, what was it like? If not, what makes it difficult for you to find energy, power, and strength in *tefillah*?

“People with disabilities can find a place in the Jewish community,” says Lior’s dad. “And it’s not just that we’re being nice to include them; they can be strong contributors.”

Do you know someone with a disability? In what ways does this person contribute to the community in which he or she lives?

In what ways can we learn from people who are different from us?

**ACTIVITY: AND I REALLY MEAN IT**

1. On the board, write the following verse:

   **Pirkei Avot 4:1**

   Who is wise? One who learns from all people.

   Either in personal journals or as a class discussion, explore the meaning of this text.

   What does “wise” mean in this quotation?

   In what ways is learning from others “wise”?

   Share examples from your own experiences in which you learned from others. What was this like? How did it change the way you think and/or look at the world?

2. Read the article on page 4 of the magazine as a class, and discuss the Quotes & Questions. Then, explore the ways in which the text on the board relates to Lior and his story.

   What can we learn from Lior?

   How can learning about him make us wise?

3. Now students will have a chance to apply the lessons learned from Lior by writing meditations/kavanot that they can recite before they pray. Lior’s presence and participation in services helped the people around him to experience the prayers more deeply and to hope for continued renewal of their religious lives. Kavanot (meditations) are another way to focus and deepen one’s approach to prayer and to inspire hope. Study the following Jewish texts:

   **Psalms 27:14**

   Hope in God. Be strong and God will give you courage.

   Hope in God.

   What does it mean to hope in God?

   How do we express that hope in God?

   How does strength lead to hope?

   How can *tefillah* give a person strength and courage?

   **Siddur, Adon Olam**

   Into God’s hand I shall entrust my spirit, when I go to sleep—I shall awaken! With my spirit shall my body remain. God is with me; I shall not fear.

   One of the times that this prayer is recited is before going to sleep. Why is bedtime an appropriate time to say it?

   In what ways is this *tefillah* an expression of hope?

   How does this *tefillah* inspire power and strength?

   Try saying these words before going to sleep at night. How do they make you feel?

4. Ask the students to use these texts to assist them in writing kavanot, meditations that are used before praying or before reciting a particular prayer. Encourage them to be creative and thoughtful; they may want to share their thoughts with a partner before beginning to write.

5. Finally, ask some students to share their meditations/kavanot with the class. Alternatively, if the class has *tefillah* together, students can take turns sharing their thoughts at these times, to help encourage their classmates to find strength and hope in the prayers.

6. To extend the lesson, provide time and materials for students to enhance their kavanot with calligraphy or decoration that will contribute to their effectiveness as aids before prayer. Mount them on construction paper and laminate them. Have students recite them before services. Explore other approaches to creating the proper mindset for Jewish prayer, such as a few moments of silence before beginning, quietly singing a *niggun* (melody), making and hanging a *mizrah* or *shiviti* to indicate which direction is east (the direction of Jerusalem), and study. Instructions for making a *mizrah* are available at babaganewz.com/teachers.