



## **Questions for God**

*"If I Met God," by Hatikvah 6*

### **Recommendations**

This song raises relevant modern-day questions about God's role in the world. It is recommended for settings that encourage students to critically examine and question their own conceptions of God. Please note that this lesson plan has the possibility of leading to very emotional topics, especially if any of the participants have had particularly challenging experience in life, for example a death in the family, etc. Therefore it is very important to make sure that participants understand the importance of respect and create a safe space for expression throughout this lesson.

### **Essential Questions**

- What is my personal concept of God?
- What are my questions concerning the existence and/or purpose of God?
- How are my personal concepts and questions about God similar or different than thoughts raised in popular Israeli music?

### **Objectives**

- To articulate one's personal thoughts or beliefs of God.
- To think critically about God by developing and exploring personal questions.
- To compare and contrast participants' personal beliefs with those of Omri Glickman, songwriter/singer in the band Hativah 6.
- To examine the namesake of *Am Yisrael* and to contemplate the theological implications of this concept.
- To compare and contrast the images of God in Judaism with the images of the Rastafari movement associated with Reggae music.

### **Supplementary Texts:**

Appendix #1	Description of God-metaphors
Appendix #2	Posters of all God-metaphor descriptions (a-h)
Appendix #3	Hatikvah 6 Background
Appendix #4	Lyrics of Hatikvah 6's <i>Efgosh Et Elohim</i>
Appendix #5	Text study worksheet
Appendix #6	Lyrics of Bob Marley's <i>Praise yah Jah</i>
Appendix #7	Overview of Rastafarianism
Appendix #8	Excerpt from an Interview with Hatikvah 6 on God
Appendix #9	Guiding Questions for song comparison activity

## **OPENING ACTIVITY: How do I view God?**

*Goal: To explore and to articulate participants' personal concept of God.*

Open the lesson by reminding students that the topic being discussed has no "absolute" answer and that each person will have his/her own personal interpretation and connection to God. Try to establish a safe space in which participants feel comfortable expressing their opinions and raising challenging questions. Depending on the group, this can be done by trust games, debates or other opening games that will encourage the participants to enter this "safe space."

### **(a) What is God to Me? (For older students)**

Have the participants begin this lesson by creatively expressing their image of God. This can be done through drawing, poetry or just words depending on how comfortable the students feel with creative expression. Give each of the participants a blank piece of paper and have markers, colored papers, scissors, glue, glitter and other materials available. Tell the students to express their personal concept of God on the paper in any way they feel comfortable through drawing, writing, etc. The purpose is to give each participant freedom to be as abstract and creative as possible. There are no "wrong" answers, yet it is important that students be able to explain their work. Even a blank piece of paper is acceptable as long as the student can explain the significance. In a more formal education setting, ask students to write a one page personal metaphor for God as a homework assignment. For example, God is like the ocean.

This is a very broad question that some participants might not have thought about before. The purpose is to allow students the freedom to be creative in their thinking and expound on their thoughts about God. After the participants have finished, please have them share their work with the rest of the participants. This will lead into a natural discussion as students respond to their classmates pieces.

### **(b) Metaphors for God (For younger students)**

This alternative activity enables students to think more broadly about God but with a framework, which will make the concept more assessable. Additionally this activity can be used for older groups that do not want to write but still want to explore God.

### **Human Barometer**

The God Metaphor Worksheet (Appendix #1) outlines different ways of viewing God in more concrete terms so that learners can connect to abstract concepts. This opening activity will expose participants to different ideas of the role of God in the world by asking them to decide if they agree or disagree with different statements about God.

Before the activity begins place a sheet of paper with -5 on one side of the room, a 0 in the middle of the room, and a +5 on the opposite side of the room. Next the leader will read the following statements about God and participants will physically place themselves on the "scale" depending on whether they agree or disagree with each of the statements. If they completely agree they should stand on the 5 and if they completely disagree on the -5, and if they are somewhere in the middle they should place themselves accordingly on the spectrum. Please pick 6-8 of the following statements that are most appropriate to your group of participants.

**Statements:**

*See Appendix #1 to see full descriptions of metaphors.*

- God expects to receive traditional prayers regularly, as prescribed in the *siddurim* (traditional prayer books).
- God must be treated with a great deal of respect and as a superior.
- God created the world and then stepped back to watch it "tick."
- God believes in the good of mankind, and our ability to make the world a better place.
- God is the voice "on your shoulder" telling you the difference between right and wrong.
- God thinks it is the little things in life that matter - i.e. children laughing, sun shining, etc.
- God prefers people connecting to Him, in their own individual, spiritual ways, instead of through traditional prayer.
- God sees nature as the holiest and most important part of Judaism.
- God thinks people connect best to Judaism when outside, and not in an actual sanctuary/synagogue.
- God created the laws of science and nature and allows them to guide the earth.
- God is nurturing and compassionate.
- God cares about humanity and tries to fix our "big" issues.
- God is there for you and will step in during times of need if you call out.
- God answers prayers through signs.
- God controls everything; humans have no free will.
- God puts everything on this earth with a purpose that humans do not always know or understand.

Once the students have finished the Human Barometer activity have them look at the different descriptions of the God metaphors. Place the eight different description pages (see Appendix #2, a-h) around the room as in a gallery. Allow the students to browse the different options and pick one that fits their notion of God best. Participants may not find *exactly* their definition of God, but encourage them to choose the one closest to their own opinion. In their groups, students will have a chance to describe what about

their opinion may be a bit different from the sign itself. Once the students have made their choice, direct them to sit in these groups and discuss the following questions. If one of the groups turns out to be much larger than the rest, divide them into smaller groups. Ideally, participants will sit in groups of 4-6 students for this discussion.

- 1) Why did you choose this image of God?
- 2) How does this image reflect the role you see God playing in your life?
- 3) What role do you think God in your life?

### **(c) More Active Option**

Instead of having the participants look at the descriptions, another option is to have the students decide which descriptions belong under each metaphor themselves. Divide the students into four groups and give each group a board with two of the metaphors on the top. On the other side of the room/field have buckets with the descriptions buried in rice/sand/dirt/etc. The task of each team is to find the 12 sheets of paper with descriptions and place them on the correct side of the board.

This activity is designed to be a relay race between the teams. One at a time, the team members must race to the other side of the room, find only one piece of paper from the bucket, then run back and place it on the board before the next person can go find the next note. Once the groups have completed the task, have them create a skit or song that will teach the other students about their metaphors. Once all of the eight metaphors have been presented have the students choose which they connect with most and why and discuss this as a large group.

## **SECOND ACTIVITY: If I meet God?!**

*Goal: Students will think critically about God by writing their own questions for God and comparing their questions to those of Omri Glickman, songwriter and singer of HaTikvah 6.*

After the students have shared their own personal interpretation of God, have them write questions they have always wanted to ask God.

*Optional:* Collect the questions from the participants and return them later in the lesson.

Tell the group about Hatikvah 6 (Background in Appendix #3) and explain they will be learning the song *Em Efgosh Et Elohim* (If I Met God). Hand out the words to the song in both Hebrew and English (Appendix #4). Play the song for the participants.

*Suggestion:* A music video with English subtitles that allows the students to see the English words while simultaneously listening to the music can be found on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imjM1KRe--g>).

Once the song is over, have the students read the lyrics out loud by having each student read one of the questions in the song. Take time to explain all of the questions to ensure the participants grasp the larger meaning. If there is time, watch the video a second time. Next, individually have the students compare and contrast their questions to the questions that are raised in the song. In a large group discussion, invite each student to share their question/s and point out which questions from the song they view as similar to their own. Record on the blackboard major themes that appear in their questions.

*Note:* Some of the questions your participants have might not be in the song. Explain to the students that they might have questions that Omri, the lyricist, has not thought about. As you are writing the themes on the blackboard, you can write topics that are brought up in the song in one color and topics that are missing in another color.

If this lesson is being used as the introductory activity to the entire unit, frame the upcoming lessons by informing the participants that some of the questions raised in these songs will be examined more closely in later lessons. If this lesson is the only one being used, allow for this activity to turn into an open theological group discussion. After participants have shared their questions, ask the group what they think the answers might be to a few the questions raised.

### **OPTIONAL TEXT STUDY: What is our Namesake?**

*Goal: To examine the namesake of Am Yisrael, the nation of Israel, and to contemplate the theological implications implied in this term by studying traditional Jewish texts.*

This activity will provide a textual basis for Hatikvah 6's song and invite participants to grapple with the meaning of the name *Yisrael*. Divide the group in to *Chevrutah* (pairs for studying) and ask them to read the passage and discuss the questions found in Appendix #5. Bring the pairs back together and have each pair summarize their discussion.

*Overview of text:* In Genesis 32 Jacob receives a new name after he wrestles with an angel. In this story his name changes from *Yakov* (He will follow) to *Yisrael* (He will struggle or wrestle). Through this name change, the relationship between Jacob and the Divine changes from a passive following to active engagement with the Divine. In modern liberal Judaism, this concept has been applied not only to Jacob but also to the larger Jewish world. The modern belief is that the Jewish people, descendants of Jacob, should also have an active relationship with God. In the song *Em Efgosh Et Elohim* Hatikvah 6 exemplifies this concept by not only asking questions of God, but also personifying him to the point that we can envision actually meeting God.

## **OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITY: God and Reggae**

*Goal: To compare and contrast images of God in Jewish and Rastafari musical cultures.*

While the Rastafari movement inspires Hatikvah 6's music, the group does not profess to be Rastafarian. Instead they view themselves as Israelis who use Reggae music as a platform to express their opinions on Israel and their own lives. Hence much can be learned from the differences that exist between traditional Reggae and Hatikvah 6's music.

Jah (the Rastafari name for God) is a common theme in Reggae music; the use of God in Reggae lyrics sparked the idea for *Em Efgosh Et Elohim* in fact. In order to see the similarities and the differences between Hatikvah 6's concept of God and that of the Rastafari movement, the following activity will compare and contrast the lyrics of *Em Efgosh Et Elohim* with the lyrics of Bob Marley's *Forever Loving Jah*.

### **(a) Listening**

Play Bob Marley's *Forever Loving Jah* without the lyrics. After listening to the song ask for the students' initial reactions to the song. Invite them to share similarities and differences they hear between *Forever Loving Jah* and *Em Efgosh et Elohim* from the previous study. Hand out the lyrics to both songs, Appendices #3 and #5, and play both songs again, asking the group to follow along with the words.

### **(b) Small Group Activity**

Divide the group in half and have each group analyze one of the songs. Hand out Appendix #6 to the *Forever Loving Jah* group and Appendix #7 to the *Em Efgosh Et Elohim* group. Each group should read the background information and consider what image of God is shown in the song. Hand out Appendix #9 which contains guiding questions to help the groups consider the role God plays in each song. Once the groups have finished, ask them to write one sentence that encompasses the role God plays in the song. If there is time, this sentence should then be visually expressed on a sheet of blank butcher paper.

### **(c) Group Discussion**

Invite the groups to present their sentences to each other and "teach" the information they learned to the other group. After the sharing, discuss this question: In what ways do you think Hatikvah 6's and Judaism's attitudes towards God are similar to and different from the Rastafari movement? You can either do this as a group brainstorm and list these on a chalk/whiteboard or ask the groups to come up with their own lists and then share with the other group as they just did with their sentences. Discuss and analyze the overlapping concepts and the differences between the two lists.

*Note on the differences:* Bob Marley's lyrics praise Jah, implying that it is through praising Jah that the world will be better. Hatikvah 6 questions God's purpose and challenges God with very human struggles and questions. This is an example of liberal Jewish engagement with God, questioning all of God's acts; whereas the Reggae lyrics talk about and praise God, not necessarily requiring active engagement. Hatikvah 6's song lyrics proudly display the liberal Jewish concept that each person must have his/her own individual relationship with God. This is made most clear in Omri's quote from the interview with Hatikvah 6 found in Appendix #7: "I believe in my own personal God and I think that is the most important thing, not to have ownership on God like religions do. There are so many sorts of God, which is okay, but everyone should have his own personal relationship with God. Sometimes I talk to Him, I am angry at Him, I question Him, and sometimes I need Him."

## **APPENDIX #1 - Description of God-metaphors**

*Bold descriptions used in the Human Barometer Activity*

### 1. Master of the Universe

- God is the head of Judaism, creator of the universe and the Torah.
- God uses Rabbis as middlemen between Him and the people.
- **God expects to receive traditional prayers regularly, as seen in the *siddur* (formal prayer book).**
- God is referred to as the Almighty, Powerful, and *Avinu Malkeinu*.
- **God must be treated with a great deal of respect and as a superior.**
- God believes life should be lived according to the commandments of the Torah, and those who don't follow the commandments should be punished.

### 2. Clock Maker

- **God created the world and then stepped back to watch it tick.**
- God set life in motion, but human beings have control over their own decisions.
- God listens to prayers but rarely intervenes in noticeable ways.
- God tinkers in the world, fixing little things here and there, but never fully repairing people/the world.
- **God believes in the good of mankind and their ability to make the world a better place.**
- God sees the Torah as a way of communicating with mankind, like an instruction manual.

### 3. Jimminy Cricket

- **God is the voice on your shoulder telling you the different between right and wrong.**
- God views the world in a spiritual and magical way.
- **God believes it is the little things in life matter - eg. children laughing, sun shining, etc.**
- God displays his presence on Earth through major miracles.
- God taps into the abstract, touchy/feely aspects of religion as opposed to concrete ideas.
- **God prefers people connecting in their own individual, spiritual ways, instead of through traditional prayer.**

### 4. Mother Earth

- **God sees nature as the holiest and most important part of Judaism.**
- God favors those who respect and take care of the earth.
- God focuses on spirituality in nature instead of prayer in *siddurim*.
- God created nature to grow and progress in cycles and put mankind on earth to enjoy it.
- God is very receptive to prayers and responds through nature or signs.

- **God thinks that people connect best to Judaism when they are outside, not inside, an actual sanctuary/synagogue.**

5. Bill Nye the Science Guy

- Science is God; it is based only on rationale and there is no spiritual component.
- The world came about through the Big Bang and life continued through evolution.
- There are concrete reasons behind every event; there is no such thing as fate.
- **God set the laws of science and nature and they guide the earth.**
- Humanity causes things to happen and change; there are no miracles.
- God does not respond to prayer.

6. Bubbe

- **God is nurturing and compassionate.**
- God is easy to talk to about problems, but does not respond well to anger or loud voices.
- God takes pride in creation of mankind.
- **God cares about humanity and tries to fix their “big” issues.**
- God acts as motivator and supporter.
- God gives clear directions for how to live your life; it is up to you to follow.

7. Operator

- God is always just a “phone call away.”
- **God is there for you and will step in during times of need as you call.**
- God created everyone with a unique spark.
- God will not fix things for you, but gives you tools to fix things yourself.
- **God answers prayers through signs.**
- God is more lenient in terms of following the commandments; God will answer the call no matter where it comes from.

8. Puppeteer

- **God controls everything – humans have no free will.**
- God has a greater plan: everything happens for a reason.
- God listens to prayers, but everything is already set forth.
- **God puts everything on this earth with a purpose that humans do not always know or understand.**
- God does not trust humanity to have the ability to do good, therefore everything is predetermined by God.

## **Master of the Universe**

- God is the head of Judaism, creator of the universe and the Torah.
- God uses Rabbis as the middleman between Him and the people.
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- Science is God; it is based only on rationale and there is no spiritual component.
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## **Operator**

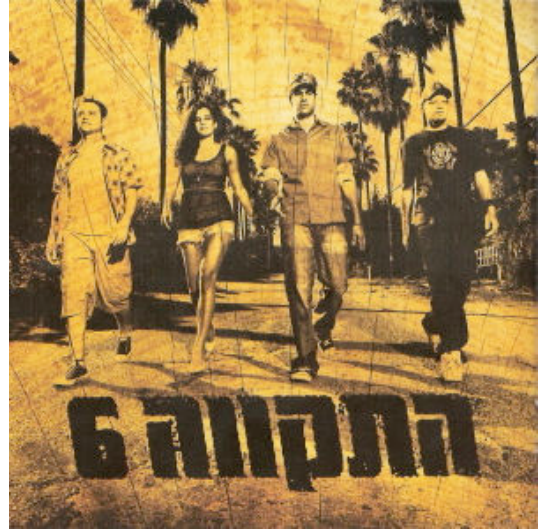
- God is always just a “phone call away.”
- God is there for you and will step in during times of need as you call.
- God is more lenient in terms of following the commandments; God will answer the call no matter where it comes from.
- God will not fix things for you, but gives you tools to fix things yourself.
- God created everyone with a unique spark.
- God answers prayers through signs.

## **Puppeteer**

- God controls everything – human's have no free will.
- God has a greater plan, so everything happens for a reason.
- God listens to prayers, but everything is already set forth.
- God puts everything on this earth with a purpose that humans do not always know or understand.
- God does not trust humanity to have the ability to do good therefore everything is predetermined by God.

## **APPENDIX #3 – Hatikvah 6 Background<sup>1</sup>**

Hatikva 6 (English: Hope 6), is a young Israeli Reggae band started in Ramat Hasharon, Israel. Hatikva 6 plays dancehall and roots styles with Hebrew, English, and French lyrics. While Reggae in Israel is a fairly young industry, Hatikva 6 has already been recognized through major performances all over the country at the large musical festivals. They have been compared to Matisyahu, a Jewish reggae artist, for the universality of their music. The band consists of Omri Glikman (lead singer and guitar), Shelly Glikman (keyboard & vocal), Michael Guy (bass) and Ron Linial (drums).



Much of their music is directly tied to the social, political, and religious aspects of Israeli life, marked by tension due to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the diverse religious demographics in the country. Songs such as *Elohim* ("God", in Hebrew) and *World War X* are songs in which these themes are apparent.

The band's name originated from the street address of Omri and Shelly, the sibling pair in the group. During their visit to Jamaica they discovered that "Hope" was also the name of Bob Marley's street in Kingston, Jamaica, and felt that this connection was fitting for their band name.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatikva\\_6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatikva_6)) and band's homepage ([www.hope6.net/](http://www.hope6.net/))

## APPENDIX #4 – Hatikvah 6 Song Lyrics

### If I Met God

(Chorus)

If one of these days, I'll meet God, Allah, Ja-Ja, God,  
Dieu, the King of all Kings,  
I'll check if he has a secretary who collects the notes  
and if there is any treatment to the ones who ask?  
If one of these days I'll meet God escorted by his  
bodyguards - the angels,  
I'll check if there in the clouds, it's like here on earth,  
there are no safe places.

Is the thunder your voice?  
Is the moon your houses' light?  
Are we all alone in the universe?  
Do you know where we land after death?  
Is heaven your private property or not?  
From where do you get all this inspiration in your  
hands?  
Have you ever been worried that people will live here  
without you?  
Is there any point praying?

(Chorus)

Do you have answers to every clarification and  
questions?  
Are you mad at everyone who becomes non-religious?  
Do you have the ability to make any wish come true?  
What sounds stronger, I wish or "in-sha-allah" (Arabic)?  
Between all the living and the dead are you here or up  
there?  
Between all the preachers and the kidnapers, here or  
up there?  
Is there Mrs. God, or love that you passed by?  
Where do we come from, from the ape or from up  
there?

Fooling questions such as?  
"What did you do last night"?  
Are you also being careful from the Sun's beams?  
Are you also resting in Shabbat?  
Are there many more like you, or you're the only one?  
Which one is stronger, a synagogue, a mosque or a  
church?  
Mr. Rabbi, the muezzin, or a nun?  
To whom do you turn to in difficult times?  
Who is your God, God?

(Chorus until end)

### אם אפגוש את אלוהים

(פזמון)

אם ביום מן הימים, אפגוש את אלוהים  
את אלה, ג'ה ג'ה GOD, DIEU, או מלך המלכים  
אבדוק אם לו פקידה אשר אוספת ת'פתקים  
היש כל יחס למבקשים ?  
אם ביום מן הימים, אפגוש את אלוהים  
בליווי מאבטחיו המלאכים  
אבדוק אם כמו אצלנו גם שם בעננים  
כבר אין מקומות בטוחים

האם הרעם הוא קולך? או הירח אור ביתך ?  
האם אנחנו לבדינו ביקום כולו ?  
אולי אתה יודע היכן נוחתים אחרי המוות ,  
האם גן העדן הוא רכוש פרטי שלך או לא ?  
מניין כל ההשראה הזו שבידך ?  
האם חששת אי פעם שיחיו כאן בלעדך ?  
היש כל טעם לתפילה ?

(פזמון)

האם לך תשובות לכל בירור ושאלה ?  
האם אתה כועס על כל אדם שחזר בשאלה ?  
היש לך יכולת להגשים כל משאלה ?  
ומה נשמע חזק יותר הלוואי או אינשאללה ?  
בין כל החיים לבין כל המתים - אתה כאן או שם למעלה ?  
בין כל המטיפים לבין כל החוטפים - כאן או שם למעלה ?  
האם יש גברת אלוהים או אהבה שכך חלפה לה ?  
מן אין אנו באים - מן הקוף או מנמלה ?

שאלות שטותיות כמו "מה עשית אמש ?"  
האם גם אתה נזהר מפני קרני השמש ?  
או שגם לך יום מנוחה ביום שבת ?  
האם כמור עוד רבים או שאולי אחת ?  
מי חזק בית כנסת, או מסגד או כנסייה ?  
האם כבוד הרב המואזין או גברת מזירה ?  
למי פונה אתה ביום של רגעים קשים ?  
מיהו אלוהיך – אלוהים?

(פזמון)

## **APPENDIX #5 – Text Study**

### What is our Namesake?

In Genesis 32, Jacob receives a new name after his midnight encounter with an angel. In this story, his name changes from Yakov (he will follow) to Yisrael (he who struggles). In Hebrew the Jewish people are called *Am Yisrael*, literally meaning the people of Yisrael. This name is important because it directly connects the Jewish people to Jacob and his twelve sons. The following text study will examine the passage in which Jacob's name changes and what impact this switch might have on the Jewish people.

#### **Directions**

Open your Bible to Genesis 32:14-33. If you are comfortable, read the passages in Hebrew; if not use the translation of your choice. At this point in Genesis Jacob is about to return to Canaan to make amends with his brother Esau after stealing his birthright. He is worried about his brother's reaction and decides to send a few gifts ahead of him with his servants and divide his family into two groups for security reasons.

Answer the following questions after finishing the whole passage:

- 1) Why did Jacob's name change?
- 2) In this passage Jacob's name changes from Yakov<sup>1</sup> to Yisrael.<sup>2</sup> What differences do you see between the literal meanings of these two names? What larger significance might this imply in terms of Jacob's relationship with God?
- 3) In what ways do you think this name change applies to *Am Yisrael*, the descendents of Jacob? What might it mean in terms of the Jewish people's relationship with the Divine?
- 4) How do you think it affects your own personal relationship with God?
- 5) Returning to the song, in what ways does Hatikvah 6 embrace this concept in the lyrics of *Em Efgosh Et Elohim*?

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<sup>1</sup> The name comes from the Hebrew root *La'akov* (Ayin, Koof, Vet) meaning to follow. Therefore, this name literally means "he will follow."

<sup>2</sup> The name comes from the Hebrew root *Lisrot* (*Sin, Resh, Hey*) meaning to struggle and *El* (Aleph, Lamed) meaning God. This literal name means "he will struggle/wrestle with God"

## **APPENDIX #6 – Bob Marley Song Lyrics**

### Forever Loving Jah

Bob Marley

(Chorus)

We'll be forever loving Jah;  
We'll be forever loving Jah!

Some they say see them walking up the street;  
They say we're going wrong to all the people we meet;  
But-a we won't worry, we won't shed no tears:  
We found a way to cast away the fears,  
Forever, yeah!

(Chorus)

So, old man river, don't cry for me;  
A-have got a running stream of love you see.  
So, no matter what stages - oh stages -  
Stages - stages they put us through,  
We'll never be blue  
No matter what rages, oh rages,  
Changes - rages they put us through,  
We'll never be blue: We'll be forever, yeah!

(Chorus)

'Cause only a fool lean upon -  
Lean upon his own misunderstanding, oh ho, oh, yeah!  
And then what has been hidden  
From the wise and the prudent  
Been revealed to the babe and the suckling  
In everyt'ing, in every way, I say, yeah!

(Chorus)

'Cause just like a tree planted - planted by the rivers of water  
That bringeth forth fruits - bringeth forth fruits in due season;  
Everything in life got its purpose,  
Find its reason in every season,  
Forever, yeah!

(Chorus)

## **APPENDIX #7 – Overview of Rastafarianism<sup>1</sup>**

The Rastafari movement is a monotheistic religious movement that developed in Jamaica in the 1930's. Similar to Christians, they believe in God as a trinity; the major difference being that they believe the former Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I, was the second coming of Jesus Christ on earth. In addition, they believe that Jesus Christ was black, and that dominant white Christian society (referred to as "Babylon") depicts him as white in order to assert the authority of white people over all other peoples. They refer to God and Haile Selassie I as Jah or Jah Rastafari.

While the movement is a religion, many Rastas refer to it as a "way of life" and an ideology. There are three prominent Rastafari movements, but the largest encourages one to find faith and inspiration within oneself. The name Rastafari pays homage to their messiah Haile Selassie I and comes from the Ethiopian words *Ras Tafari*: Tafari is Haile Selassie I's given name and Ras is a title for nobility.

The term "Babylon" is used to signify the rejection of Western society due to its history of oppressing and enslaving Africans. Rastafaris believe that Zion, intending to mean Africa, is the original birthplace of mankind and the movement embraces various Afrocentric attitudes on both social and political issues.

Today, the Rastafari movement is most often associated with Reggae music and its most famous singer/songwriter Bob Marley. Reggae music is used as a vehicle to voice issues with Babylon and as a medium for praising Jah.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted and abridged from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rastafari>

## **APPENDIX #8 – Excerpt from Interview with Hatikvah 6<sup>1</sup>**

*What inspired you to write the song "Em Efgosh et Elohim?"*

**Omri:** The idea of writing the song came up when Shelly and I were in Jamaica. Jamaica had a really big musical impact on us. We were there for almost a month and we came back with a whole different vibe and energy - inspiration. Our musical direction was more specific after Jamaica, something like really spoke to us in all of the shows we saw there. So the idea of *Em Efgosh et Elohim* was born there, definitely. God is something that occupies me personally all of the time. I always have questions I ask myself - I guess only I can answer. We got lots of responses after that song - people wanted to answer all those questions because religious people say that there is an answer for every question in the song. And it was very interesting to hear or stop and say (to them) I don't think you have the right answer for me. People think that there are answers for every question asked - but the most important thing is to ASK the questions. That is what the song is all about. It's not to receive what you get from around you or what you are learning at school or from your parents. The most important thing is to see that larger picture and ask questions - if you are just fed the information, it's not real.

*Do you see a direct connection between reggae music and God?*

**Shelly:** I think the source where reggae came from, their whole [Rastafarian] culture, is based on believing in God. I think that is the first connection that we see. And that is what makes us think about it and sing about it.

**Omri:** Definitely the Rastafarians and Reggae music is a movement. They have Jah, God, [embodied in] Haille Selassi, the Ethiopian emperor in the 1950's. The whole Rastafarian movement is based on that and on the Reggae music... As Shelly said, that is the source of everything. One of the reasons I fell in love with Reggae was the lyrics - the message made me think about Jah and God issues and all the issues related to "Babylon" - so many interesting things, simple and deep, at the same time.

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<sup>1</sup> For the entire interview with Hatikvah 6 see ([omanoot.tumblr.com/post/358112697/hatikva6](http://omanoot.tumblr.com/post/358112697/hatikva6))

*Reggae music traditionally praises God, yet in this song, you question God. Do you see contradiction or collaboration between these two ideas?*

**Omri:** I think it is important to praise your own Jah. I believe in my own personal God and I think that is the most important thing, not to have ownership on God like religions do. There are so many sorts of God, which is okay, but everyone should have his own personal relationship with God. Sometimes I talk to Him, I am angry at Him, I question Him, and sometimes I need Him. We have on our new album another song about God about how when you have no other options you turn to God. So for me it's the same as all other relationships - sometimes you question somebody, sometimes you are his best friend and, eh, that's us. That's human nature.

*What was the point of bringing up different names for God in this song?*

**Omri:** Like I said, to accentuate the differences between all religions, that everybody sees Jah in a different way or talks to Him in a different way. That's what we are talking about. Why must there be a separation? Or there should be a separation because it is personal - it's a personal connection or a personal relationship. Using the different names points out the differences and the visions of everyone.

## **APPENDIX #9 – Guiding Questions for Song Comparison Activity**

### **Guiding Questions**

- 1) Who is the narrator of the song?
  - 2) What is the message they are trying to get across?
  - 3) How does God figure into this message?
  - 4) Based on the role God plays in the lyrics, what larger conclusions can you draw about the songwriter's attitudes towards God?
  - 5) How do you think the songwriter views God?
- 

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- 5) How do you think the songwriter views God?