



# That's Enough. I Want It Now.

## Topic

Mitzvot and Middot, Passover, Torah

## Grade Level(s)

4<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

## Goals for the Lesson/Activity

### Students will:

- Explore the appreciative outlook of *Dayenu* in contrast to the “I Want It Now” outlook presented by the Torah and by a pop culture icon
- Connect the appreciative outlook and the “I Want It Now” outlook to their own desires
- Weigh whether their own desires merit the imperative to want something now

## Materials needed

- Print-out of [Dayenu](#), 1 for each student (optional)

## Technology needed

- Maccabeats [Dayenu](#) video
- [I Want It Now](#) video
- [What do we want JUSTICE & when do we want it NOW](#) video
- [Canva](#) (or other Venn diagram creator); login required
- [Popplet](#) (optional; available in a browser or app available for iOS)

## Background for Teachers

While explaining the plan for freeing בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*B'nei Yisrael*, the Israelites) from Egypt, God explains that God will perform many signs and wonders with the goal of Pharaoh understanding what the most-powerful God can do while easing the departure of *B'nei Yisrael* from Egypt. This plan seems to work quite well as *B'nei Yisrael* get out of Egypt, cross the יַם סוּף (*Yam Suf*, Sea of Reeds), and sing out in gratitude to God with שִׁירַת הַיָּם (*Shirat haYam*, Song of the Sea). The journeys of *B'nei Yisrael* and their gratitude to God for helping them through the wilderness and into the Promised Land are demonstrated succinctly in the Passover song דַּיְנוּ (*Dayenu*, “It would have been enough for us”), in which each of 15 different steps of the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land is said to have been enough for *B'nei Yisrael*.



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Except that the Torah tells a different story. As soon as they are done singing *Shirat haYam*, *B'nei Yisrael* complain about the bitter waters in Marah (*Shemot* 15:22-25). After another stop at the well-watered Eilim, they head into the wilderness where they complain that they would have preferred to stay in Egypt where they ate bread every day (*Shemot* 16:1-3). Over and over again, *B'nei Yisrael* complain about something as they travel through the wilderness, seemingly unable to remember (or perhaps appreciate) everything that God and Moses have done for them and exhibiting a distinct lack of patience for food, water, and more.

While this lack of appreciation and trust is often met with wrath (e.g. *Bemidbar* 11:1-35), it also does result in *B'nei Yisrael* receiving the items that they so desperately crave (e.g. *Shemot* 17:1-7).

An analog to *B'nei Yisrael's* temperament can be found in an unlikely source: the movie *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (and also in the original book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl). In the movie, the character Veruca Salt is a greedy child who whines a version of "I want it now!," making demands each time she sees something that she wants. It is worth pointing out that Veruca's demanding nature is different from that of *B'nei Yisrael*, who complain to God and Moses when they feel that they are lacking something but do not demonstrate Veruca Salt's petulance, greed, or selfishness. Thus, Veruca Salt and her desire to always have more present a stark contrast to *Dayenu*.

Note: This activity begins with an exercise meant to explore the metaphor of holding one's breath. If desired, it can be adapted to include STEM possibilities by exploring the Mammalian Diving Reflex in the addendum to step 1. This reflex enables mammals to hold their breath for longer periods of time underwater and can even be triggered simply by holding a cool damp washcloth to one's face. For more information about the Mammalian Diving Reflex, see [here](#) and [here](#).

### Description of Activities

1. Have a breath-holding challenge.
  - a. **STEM Option:** Try conducting the breath-holding contest under a few different conditions. Make sure that one of those conditions includes holding a cool damp cloth to one's face. Compare breath-holding times under each condition and explore the Mammalian Diving Reflex.
2. Ask students what the phrase "hold your breath until you are blue in the face" means. When is it used? Why do people do this? What does it demonstrate about a person's willingness to engage with other people?



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3. Show students the “*Dayenu*” and “I Want It Now” videos. Students use Canva to create Venn Diagrams comparing the two videos. Possible areas of comparison include:
  - a. What is the message of the songs?
  - b. What do the facial expressions of the singers indicate? What about the body language?
  - c. How do the choruses compare?
  - d. How do other people in the videos react to the singers?
4. Discuss:
  - a. What is the difference between someone who has a *Dayenu* outlook and someone who has a Veruca Salt outlook?
  - b. Where appropriate, use this discussion as an opportunity to bring up the reality of the journey that *B’nei Yisrael* took through the desert.

**\*For further discussion points to enrich the discussion for older students, see the next page.**

5. Show the “When do we want it? NOW” video.
  - a. Discuss:
    - i. How does this video change your opinion about the two outlooks, if at all?
    - ii. When might there be more reason to have a *Dayenu* outlook? A Veruca Salt outlook?
6. Students work in groups to brainstorm things that they would like and categorize them as:
  - i. “*Dayenu*”—It would be great to have; I am content with everything that came before.
  - ii. “I Want it Now”—I would demand this without trying to negotiate (even though I know deep down that it is important only to me).
  - iii. “When do we want it? NOW”—This is something really important that is worth demanding.
  - b. **Tech Option:** Students use Popplet to create mini-maps as they categorize.
  - c. Students share their sortings with the class.

**\*For further questions to wrap up the discussion for older students, see the next page.**



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## **Enrichment Points for Older Students:**

### **Between steps 4 and 5:**

Ask students how public figures tend to present ideas. Do they look to build consensus? Do they make demands and threaten to hold their breath until they get what they want?

[Note: This discussion has the potential to devolve into attacks and/or defenses of particular public figures. While it might be necessary for students to give specific examples, remember to encourage students to focus on how leaders convey their ideas rather than on the merits of the particular ideas and leaders.]

Discuss: How does a *Dayenu* outlook or a Veruca Salt outlook affect one's ability to lead others?

### **As a wrap-up following step 6:**

Discuss one or more of the following:

- What happens when you insist that you get what you want?
- What happens when you make threats to get what you want?
- When have you threatened to “hold your breath” until you got you wanted?
- What is the difference between staging a meaningful protest and being selfishly obstinate?
- When do you have enough that you are thankful? When do you crave more to the point that you are willing to threaten?
- One difference between the narrative of *Dayenu* and the narrative related in the Torah is that the Torah's version relates how *B'nei Yisrael* reacted in the moment while *Dayenu* offers a reflection on what happened. How can one keep perspective and be appreciative even during difficult times and situations?

## **Differentiation Options**

Knowing that students learn in a variety of ways and modalities, the following options are provided to adjust the above lesson to meet the unique needs of your learners.

### ***For learners who need more assistance***

- Simply ask students what the message of each video is (instead of comparing the videos).

### ***For learners who need extension opportunities***

- In the spirit of “*Dayenu*” and “I Want It Now,” students write the “When do we want it? NOW!” song and create the video for it.
- Students create an Infographic describing the desert demands of *B'nei Yisrael* and God's response to those demands.