

# Sharim v'Sharot Young People's Seventh Jewish Song-Writing Contest

Guidelines – 2013

Through the Seventh Young People's Jewish Song-Writing contest, Sharim v'Sharot Foundation is offering an opportunity for young people to express their thoughts and feelings about Jewish life. Music reaches beyond boundaries and connects generations, one to another. With the creation of songs, applicants will share their talents with the Jewish community and demonstrate that Jewish music can always be an important part of one's identity.

What is the Sharim v'Sharot Foundation?

The Sharim v'Sharot Foundation (from Ecclesiastes 2:8, Hebrew for "People of Song"), is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in the State of New Jersey that sponsors a four-part *a cappella* choir as well as other projects. Our mission is to perform the music of the Jewish people at the highest possible level, so that our love of Jewish music is conveyed to our audiences. We also aim to educate the public about the Jewish people, so they may appreciate the passion and value within the rich tapestry of Jewish experience. We serve the entire Jewish community, spanning Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist institutions. Sponsored by Rider University's Hillel, Sharim v'Sharot is an independent choir. We meet in Lawrenceville, New Jersey throughout the year. Our members are students and professionals of all ages, living throughout central New Jersey and the Greater Delaware Valley.

**Who is eligible to enter?**

Jewish children, ages 8–17 and amateur young adults ages 18–24, residing or attending school in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware, are eligible. For purposes of this contest, we use the definition of "Jewish" as it appears in the Birthright Israel Program: Eligible individuals are those recognized as Jewish by the Jewish community or by one of the recognized denominations of Judaism; or if either parent is Jewish or the applicant does not actively practice another religion.

**How is a Jewish song defined?**

A Jewish song is a song in English, Hebrew, Yiddish, or Ladino, that contains one or more of the following properties of text and music:

A. Lyrics are taken from *Tanakh* (Torah, Prophets, Writings), the *Siddur* (Prayer Book), the *Machzor* (High-Holiday Prayerbook), other Jewish liturgical texts, and texts of Jewish poets or other written materials if written about events, people, places, customs, observances, or issues of importance to the Jewish people.

B. For this year's contest, songs may be sung in Hebrew or English. If using the Hebrew, songs that are notated should use transliteration. (Musical notation, like Romanized text, moves from

left to right. Hebrew text, however, moves from right to left. Therefore Hebrew songs are almost always written as transliteration.)

C. Melody contains pitch and rhythm and can be repeated by other performers. Sorry, no rap songs accepted. Lyrics must be taken from the texts cited below.

D. The musical work has, at minimum: a beginning, a contrasted section, and an ending section.

E. Songs submitted may have, but are not required to have, harmonies (chords) indicated. Chords may also be written in a piano accompaniment which should appear below the notated melody line. Or, chords may be written alphabetically above the notated melody, such as: C, Am, G<sup>7</sup>, etc.

F. NO choral arrangements will be accepted this year. We ask only for songs (text with melody and optional chords)!

### Who chooses the lyrics of the song?

This year, Sharim v'Sharot has selected song lyrics, and the theme is "America Founded on Jewish Precepts." Please choose among the three texts listed below. **Use these as actual lyrics or as the basis for your own lyrics.**

**Text #1:** Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive in the land which the Eternal your God gives you. (Deuteronomy 16:20)

צדק צדק, תרדור--למען תתנה ונרשפת את-הארץ, אשר-יי אלהיך נתן לך.

*Tsedek, tsedek tir'dof—I'ma'an tih'yeh v'yarashta et-ha'arets, asher-Adonai Elohekha notein lakh.*

Let justice roll on like a mighty river, righteousness like a never-ending stream. (Amos 5:24)

ויגל כמים, משפט; וצדקה, כנחל איתן.

*V'yigal kamayim, mishpat; uts'daka, k'nahal eitan.*

Righteousness raises a nation to honor. (Proverbs 14:34)

צדקה תרומם-גוי

*Ts'daka t'romeim-goy.*

**Text #2:** Proclaim liberty throughout the land, for all of its inhabitants. (Leviticus 25:10)

וקראתם דרור בארץ, לכל-ישביה

*Uk'ratem d'ror ba'arets, l'khol-yosh'veha*

How good and how pleasant it is when neighbors live in unity. (Psalm 133:1)

הִנֵּה מֵה-טוֹב, וּמֵה-נִצְעִים -- שֵׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם-יָחַד.

*Hinei ma-tov, uma-na'im—shevet ahim gam-yahad.*

**Text #3:**

***The Poetry of Howard Schwartz, from The Library of Dreams: New and Selected Poems 1965–2013, BkMk Press, to be published Fall 2013. (Used with kind permission of Howard Schwartz.)***

**LANGUAGES**

Everything  
has its own language—  
a star sends its message at the speed of light,  
although it may take centuries  
to reach us.

A tree is not as silent  
as you may think.  
When the wind sways its branches,  
the tree sighs  
in its own language.

The sea speaks  
in its own tongue,  
reciting the poems of the tides  
the full moon  
calls forth.

Even the dead,  
who have been speechless so long,  
have their own language,  
and when their silence calls out to us,  
we listen.

*based on Deep calls unto deep; Psalms 42:8.*

**ORACLE OF THE OIL**

When every shadow and every echo  
have disappeared,  
pour a little oil  
into the hollow of your hand,  
enough to form a small mirror.

Soon  
worlds will come into being  
and disappear,  
a sea of stars

taking root in your hand.

Look closely  
before the mirror grows dark:  
if you can see the face  
of the full moon  
you will be blessed—

if all you can see  
is a circle,  
you will wander in exile  
until it's time  
to return—

if the mirror has grown dark,  
close your eyes  
before it's too late  
and consult the seer  
within.

### **WIND CHIMES**

They play  
when the spirit moves them,  
rousing you.

Somewhere  
the moon has not been eclipsed,  
somewhere  
there are stars left to count.

Even now  
the wind draws its breath  
back and forth,  
inventing this music  
for the first time

and the last.

### **GATHERING THE SPARKS** (for ages 13–17 and 18–24 only)

Long before the sun cast a shadow,  
before the word was spoken  
that brought the heavens  
and the earth  
into being,  
a flame emerged  
from a single,  
unseen point,

and from the center of this flame  
sparks of light sprang forth,  
concealed in shells,  
that set sail everywhere,  
above  
and below,  
like a fleet of ships,  
each carrying its cargo  
of light.

Somehow,  
no one knows why,  
the frail vessels broke open,  
split asunder,  
and all the sparks were scattered  
like sand  
like seeds  
like stars.

That's why we were created—  
to search for those sparks  
no matter where they have been hidden,  
and as each one is revealed,  
to be consumed  
in our own fire  
and reborn  
out of our own  
ashes.

Someday,  
when the sparks have been gathered,  
the vessels will be restored,  
and the fleet will set sail  
across another ocean  
of space,  
and the word will be spoken  
again.

**A BLESSING** by Danny Siegel (Used with kind permission of Danny Siegel)

May your eyes sparkle with the light of Torah,  
And your ears hear the music of its words.  
May the space between each letter of the scrolls  
Bring warmth and comfort to your soul.  
May the syllables draw holiness from your heart,  
and may this holiness be gentle and soothing  
to you and all God's creatures.  
May your study be passionate,

And meaning bear more meanings  
until Life itself arrays itself to you  
as a dazzling wedding feast.  
And may your conversation,  
Even of the commonplace,  
Be a blessing to all who listen to your words  
And see the torah glowing on your face.

based on *Brachot* 17a and *Eruvin* 54a

### **How do applicants enter the contest?**

A. Go to [www.SharimvSharot.com](http://www.SharimvSharot.com), between December 21, 2012 and March 14, 2013, download and print out the Jewish Young People's Song-Writing Application Form. Enter according to age group. Only one entry per applicant is allowed. The only place an applicant's name should appear is on the application; do NOT put the applicant's name directly on the submitted music. Submissions with names on scores and/or recordings MUST be disqualified.

1. K'tanim 8–12 years old on the date of submission of entry.
2. Garinim 13–17 years old on the date of submission of entry.
3. G'dolim 18–24 years old (amateur musicians only) on the date of submission of entry.

B. Mail all materials to:

Sharim v'Sharot

P.O. Box 5102

Trenton, NJ 08638

### **What should be submitted?**

Submit either A or B described below. (You may also submit both A and B.) You *must* submit C and D.

A. Entrants are encouraged, but not required, to submit an original musical score. The score must be for one singer with notated lyrics and melody.

Put the song title on the score. Chords are appreciated but not required. Piano accompaniment or other instruments or vocals are appreciated but not required.

**DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE SCORE.**

B. Entrants are encouraged, but not required, to submit a recorded performance, sung on a CD format.

Put the song title on the CD. If you are submitting a CD,

**DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE RECORDING.**

C. Entrants are required to submit printed lyrics on separate sheet.

Put the song title on the page, and cite the source of the lyrics.

**DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE PAGE.**

D. Entrants are required to complete and submit the Contest Entrance Form found on [www.sharimvsharot.com](http://www.sharimvsharot.com). This is the **ONLY** item upon which the entrant **SHOULD WRITE** his or her name.

### **What is the deadline for all submissions?**

All submissions must be postmarked by March 14, 2013.

### **How will the submissions be processed?**

A non-judge will pick up all submissions from the post office box and assign an alphanumeric label to all materials in the package. The Application Form will also receive the same label and will be filed away. In this way, the judges will not know the identities of the contestant. For example, if Sara Cohen is 11 years old on the date of postmark, when the package is received, her name will not appear on any of her creative materials. The number K-1 (K'tanim #1) will be recorded instead.

If K-1 is chosen as the winner, we will then ask to see the list of contestants and look for the identity of K-1. Song materials containing contestants' names will be automatically eliminated from the contest.

### **Who will judge the contest?**

The contest will be judged by professional Jewish educators, Jewish music educators, and Jewish musicians, Cantors, and/or Rabbis. All decisions of the judges are final. If a judge has a child residing in the Mercer County–Bucks County area, he or she shall not be allowed to serve as a judge in the age category of his or her children.

### **When will contest winners be announced?**

A presentation to the contest winners will be made on Sunday, May 5, 2013 during Sharim v'Sharot's Thirteenth Anniversary Concert on Sunday, May 5, 2013 at 3 PM, to be held at Rider University's Bart Luedeke Student Center's Auditorium

### **Are there prizes?**

Yes, winners in each category will receive a \$72 check and a certificate. Honorable mention may be given at the discretion of the judges. Each parent/guardian of children ages 8–17 and each applicant age

18–24 will be asked to sign a statement giving permission for Sharim v'Sharot to perform the song at the May 5<sup>th</sup> concert.

**Will materials be returned?**

All materials become the property of Sharim v'Sharot and cannot be returned. The composers will, of course, retain copyright ownership of their musical work. We suggest that applicants keep copies of scores and CDs for themselves. The Biblical texts used in this contest are in the public domain. This year, poets Danny Siegel and Howard Schwartz have graciously allowed their selected poems to be used in Sharim v'Sharot Young People's Seventh Jewish Song-Writing Contest. In all cases, Mr. Siegel and Mr. Schwartz retain copyright ownership of their poems. Any subsequent published, written or recorded use of their work, must involve their permission.

**Will the winning songs be performed?**

The winning song in each category may be performed at the discretion of Sharim v'Sharot on May 5<sup>th</sup>. If performed, either the Sharim v'Sharot Choir will perform the song, as a solo, or, as a choral composition. Any musical arrangement of the submitted work will be made by Dr. Elayne Grossman or her designee.

***No choral compositions will be accepted for the 2013 competition.***

**How will authenticity be assured?**

Each child and parent or guardian will sign a statement that the song was written by the child alone, not the parent or guardian.

**To whom may questions be addressed?**

You may address your questions to Dr. Elayne R. Grossman, Conductor and Music Director of Sharim v'Sharot. Use the e-mail link on the Foundation's website: [www.SharimvSharot.com](http://www.SharimvSharot.com).

Please Note:

**Applicants may ask Dr. Grossman questions about their song or about song-writing in general.** Dr. Grossman is the facilitator of the contest and not a judge. Therefore, she may serve in an advisory capacity. Thanks for your interest and Good Luck!