

- 1 - Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to acclaim him as king.
- 2 - Jeroboam son of Nebat learned of it while he was still in Egypt; for Jeroboam had fled from King Solomon, and had settled in Egypt.
- 3 - They sent for him; and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam as follows:
- 4 - "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke which your father laid on us, and we will serve you."
- 5 - He answered them, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away.
- 6 - King Rehoboam took counsel with the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. He said, "What answer do you advise [me] to give to this people?"
- 7 - They answered him, "If you will be a servant to those people today and serve them, and if you respond to them with kind words, they will be your servants always."
- 8 - But he ignored the advice that the elders gave him, and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.
- 9 - "What," he asked, "do you advise that we reply to the people who said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father placed upon us'?"
- 10 - And the young men who had grown up with him answered, "Speak thus to the people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, now you make it lighter for us.' Say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins."
- 11 - My father imposed a heavy yoke on you, and I will add to your yoke; my father flogged you with whips, but I will flog you with scorpions."
- 12- Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, since the king had told them: "Come back on the third day."
- 13 - The king answered the people harshly, ignoring the advice that the elders had given him.
- 14 - He spoke to them in accordance with the advice of the young men, and said, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father flogged you with whips, but I will flog you with scorpions."
- 15 - (The king did not listen to the people; for the LORD had brought it about in order to fulfill the promise that the LORD had made through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.)
- 16 - When all Israel saw that the king had not listened to them, the people answered the king: "We have no portion in David, No share in Jesse's son! To your tents, O Israel! Now look to your own House, O David." So the Israelites returned to their homes.
- 17 - But Rehoboam continued to reign over the Israelites who lived in the towns of Judah.

וַיֵּלֶךְ רְחֹבָאֵם שְׁכֵם כִּי שָׁכַם בָּא כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַמְלִיךָ אֹתוֹ:
וַיְהִי כִשְׁמֹעַ יִרְבְּעָם בְּן־נֹבֵט וְהוּא עֹדֵנוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר בָּרַח מִפְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה
וַיָּשָׁב יִרְבְּעָם בְּמִצְרַיִם:
וַיִּשְׁלַחוּ וַיִּקְרְאוּ־לוֹ וַיָּבֹאוּ [וַיִּבְּאוּ] יִרְבְּעָם וְכָל־קֵהֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּדְבְּרוּ אֶל־רְחֹבָאֵם
לֵאמֹר:
אֲבִיךָ הִקְשָׁה אֶת־עַלְנוֹ וְאֹתָהּ עָתָה הִקְלֵ־מֵעֲבֹדֶת אֲבִיךָ הַקָּשָׁה וּמַעַלְלוֹ הַכְּבֹד אֲשֶׁר־
נָתַן עָלֵינוּ וְנַעֲבֹדְךָ:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם לָכוּ עַד שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים וְשׁוּבוּ אֵלַי וַיִּלְכוּ הָעָם:
וַיִּזְעַץ הַמֶּלֶךְ רְחֹבָאֵם אֶת־הַזְּקֵנִים אֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ עֹמְדִים אֶת־פְּנֵי שְׁלֹמֹה אֲבִיו בְּהִיתוֹ חַי
לֵאמֹר אִיךָ אַתֶּם גּוֹעֲצִים לְהַשִּׁיב אֶת־הָעָם־הַזֶּה דְבַר:
וַיִּדְבֹר [וַיִּדְבְּרוּ] אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר אִם־הַיּוֹם תְּהִי־הָעֲבֹד לָעַם הַזֶּה וְעַבְדְּתֶם וְעַנִּיתֶם
וַדְּבַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם דְּבָרִים טוֹבִים וְהָיוּ לְךָ עֲבָדִים כָּל־הַיָּמִים:
וַיַּעֲזֹב אֶת־עֲצַת הַזְּקֵנִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲצֹהוּ וַיִּזְעַץ אֶת־הַיְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר גָּדְלוּ אִתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר
הָעֹמְדִים לִפְנָיו:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם מָה אַתֶּם גּוֹעֲצִים וְנֹשִׁיב דְּבַר אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דְּבַרוּ אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
הִקְלֵ מִן־הָעֶל אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן אֲבִיךָ עָלֵינוּ:
וַיִּדְבְּרוּ אֵלָיו הַיְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר גָּדְלוּ אִתּוֹ לֵאמֹר כֹּה־תֹאמַר לָעַם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דְּבַרוּ אֵלַיךָ
לֵאמֹר אֲבִיךָ הַכְּבִיד אֶת־עַלְנוֹ וְאֹתָהּ הִקְלֵ מֵעַלְנוֹ כֹּה תִדְבֹר אֲלֵיהֶם קִטְנֵי עֵבֶה
מִמִּתְנֵי אָבִי:
וְעָתָה אָבִי הָעַמִּים עָלִיכֶם עַל כְּבֹד וְאֲנִי אוֹסִיף עַל־עַלְכֶם אָבִי יִסֹר אֶתְכֶם בְּשׁוֹטִים
וְאֲנִי אִיִּסֹר אֶתְכֶם בְּעִקְרָבִים:
וַיָּבֹאוּ [וַיִּבְּאוּ] יִרְבְּעָם וְכָל־הָעָם אֶל־רְחֹבָאֵם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר
שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי:
וַיַּעַן הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־הָעָם קָשָׁה וַיַּעֲזֹב אֶת־עֲצַת הַזְּקֵנִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲצֹהוּ:
וַיִּדְבֹר אֲלֵיהֶם כַּעֲצַת הַיְלָדִים לֵאמֹר אָבִי הַכְּבִיד אֶת־עַלְכֶם וְאֲנִי אוֹסִיף עַל־עַלְכֶם
אָבִי יִסֹר אֶתְכֶם בְּשׁוֹטִים וְאֲנִי אִיִּסֹר אֶתְכֶם בְּעִקְרָבִים:
וְלֹא־שָׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הָעָם כִּי־הִיְתָה סִבָּה מֵעַם יְהוָה לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת־דְּבָרוֹ אֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד אַחֲתָיָה הַשִּׁילֹנִי אֶל־יִרְבְּעָם בְּן־נֹבֵט:
וַיָּרָא כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לֹא־שָׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲלֵיהֶם וַיָּשָׁבוּ הָעָם אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ דְּבַר י לֵאמֹר
מִה־לָּנוּ חֶלֶק בְּדוֹד וְלֹא־נִחְלָה בְּבִן־יִשְׁרָאֵל עָתָה רְאֵה בֵיתְךָ דָּוִד וַיֵּלֶךְ
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאַהֲלָיו:
וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וַיִּמְלֶךְ עֲלֵיהֶם רְחֹבָאֵם:

A discussion on Peer Pressure based on Melachim 12:1-17

Some Textual Questions to ask Chanichim:

- What is the significance of Shechem as a place in Tanach?
- Why had Yerovoam fled from Shlomo?
- What do you gather about the political climate in Israel from pasuk 4?
- What is the difference between the two sets of advice that Rechavam gets? Do you notice any differences between what the youths tell him to say and what he actually says?
- Pasuk 15 is very strange – what should we make of the broader spiritual picture here? How does that feed in to the peoples response in pasuk 16 and 17?
- Why do you think it refers to Rechavams friends as “the young men who had grown up with him”?

Some General Questions to ask Chanichim:

- How old do you think Rehoboam was during all this? Everyone take a guess before finding out.
- What ideas about masculinity are presented in pasuk 10? Do they still apply today? How do you think peer pressure changes depending on single gender or mixed crowds?
- Can you think of other incidents in Tanach that teach us lessons about peer pressure? (e.g Yosef, Pinchas)
- How do you think peer pressure changes with age?
- What other factors are going on in this story except for peer pressure that make the outcome so negative? (e.g king struggle for power, rebellion, prophecy and destin...etc)

Some Personal Questions to ask Chanichim:

- Has there ever been anything you’ve done because of peer pressure that you regret?
- Are there any positive redeeming qualities to peer pressure?
- What can your madrichim on camp do to make peer pressure less unhealthy?
- How does peer pressure often feed in to our relationships with our parents and siblings?
- How do you define “friend”? what is a true friend?

Some Interactive Resources:

Experiment – Conduct the Solomon Asch conformity experiment on one person in the group.

Youtube – “Peer Pressure Psychology – How Group Think Happens”

Spoken Word Artist – Joinel Jeune, Negative Peer Pressure, Slam Poem

Movie – What lessons does Pinnocchio teach us about peer pressure? Can you see any deeper meaning behind the transformation from puppet to real boy? How does the theme of lying come in?

Social Media – How does social media feed into peer pressure? What does the art below represent? Perhaps have chanichim scroll through some of their social media and look for examples.

Roleplay – There are great “peer pressure scenario cards” or “thinking cards” online.

SLAM Poetry – **Bronz Youth Poetry SLAM 2013, Ethan Metzger** – This is one of the best videos for chanichim to see. It is about the notion of brainwashing and the dynamic between peer pressure and family life.

Short film – “A mother struggles with bullies who torment her disabled daughter.” *This is an extremely harrowing movie and NOT APPROPRIATE at all for younger chanichim.* It shows the extremely negative consequences of peer pressure

Article = Jewish Journal – “Teenagers talk Candidly about drinking.”



Other sources and quotes to bring into discussion:

Pirkei Avot:

- Rabbi Eliezer said “Let the Honour of your friend be as dear to you as your own.” (2:10)
- Yehoshua ben parachia would say “appoint for yourself a Rav, *acquire* for yourself a friend and judge all men with the scale weighted in their favour (1:6).
- Rabbi Yochanan said to them go forth and observe what is the evil way that man should distance himself from? Rabbi Eliezer said a bad eye. Rabbi Yehoshua said a bad friend. Rabbi Yossi said a bad neighbour. Rabbi Shimon said one that borrows and does not repay. Rabbi Elazar said a bad heart (2:9)

Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:

In “Hamalch haGoel” we say “veyidgoo larov” - literally may you fishify yourselves. As Jews we need to be able to swim upstream against where everyone else is going. As we know, the very word “Hebrew” or “ivri” comes from being on the other side of the river to everyone else just like Avraham Avinu.

+ Rabbi Norman Lamn drasha on inverted nuns in Bahalotecha

Popular Maxim of R’Nachman Chassidim:

“Hu bemaaseh sheloh veani bemaaseh sheli” – this literally translates as he is for his work and I am for my work.

Roy Disney:

“Its not hard to make decisions once you know what your values are.”

Charles D Hayes:

“Of course peer pressure has a strong positive component. It provides the social cohesion that allows the very development of communal affiliation. But peer power as an extrinsic force is a lot like radiation – a little goes a long way.”

Quotes: “When you say yes to others make sure you aren’t saying no to yourself.”

“Be yourself in a world constantly trying to make you everyone else.”

A Related Story: The Positive Side of Peer Pressure

Back in the day, the popular kids wore popcorn tops. My mother wouldn’t let me buy one. With good reason. It was a style that would not have flattered me.

But I didn’t let up. All my friends were wearing popcorn tops. I had to have one or . . . what? Looking back at that small moment from my life of 52 years, I struggle to understand what my sense of urgency, back then, was really about. I think of those years as a kind of crucible, a refining process in which all my efforts would or would not succeed. I would get out of the process what I put into it. That’s why I felt so driven, so emotional. It felt like a race. It was a race.

As a mother of many children, I have watched my kids struggle with these same feelings as they reach that stage of their lives. Remembering how I felt about that popcorn top and about so many other issues back then, I am always empathetic. I never tell my children they are being ridiculous. I never tell them they are placing importance on unimportant matters. Because I remember how that felt: I remember that urgency.

We tend to think of peer pressure as a bad thing with bullying, drug abuse, and purging just a few of its associated social ills. Despite the negative connotations we accept the phenomenon of peer pressure as a fact of adolescent life. It works like this: those deemed popular in teen social circles by the society of their peers set off a chain of imitative behavior in those less popular. The kids on the lowest rung of the popularity ladder may engage in risky behavior or wear unflattering fashions (think popcorn tops) with an eye toward becoming as socially successful as the peers they strive to imitate.

Ergo, we have teens who smoke because the popular kids smoke and they want to be like them: be socially successful. But what if we could direct this type of social influence, this peer pressure, to encourage appropriate and positive behaviors? After all, it’s clear that teens affected by peer pressure want something positive: they want to be successful, popular. Shouldn’t we at least try to channel the urgency of peer pressure toward something that benefits our young?

And if this were at all possible, should this not be a goal for classroom teachers to work toward—directing that energy in a beneficial direction? Teaching was never supposed to consist of one sole purpose: imparting dry facts of knowledge, but was always meant to be about mentoring and molding young minds toward excellence. How then, can teachers use peer pressure to best advantage in the classroom? How can we direct that imitative behavior to be about imitating the best and brightest behavior in the classroom?

Varda Epstein, “The Positive Side of Peer Pressure” – Jerusalem Post