

K1. Me, Myself and I. The Values that Shape our Lives



Objectives.

1. To understand and reflect on our own identities.
2. To think about the role of values in our lives and how to articulate them.
3. To consider some Jewish thoughts on identity development and values articulation.

Introduction

Gimmel Machane is dedicated to exploring some of the key debates that shape religious life today. The question of 'What does it mean to be a Jew in the Diaspora?' is one that has always challenged Jews throughout history, however today the challenge is compounded by:

- A. The 21st century presenting unique **challenges to a modern Jewish identity**. Questions of the role of religion, *halakha*, personal autonomy, antisemitism, choice vs. coercion, equality and many more all play a part.
- B. The existence of the State – this fundamentally changes the Diaspora when the 'Homeland' exists.

However, it is not about Jewish life in the abstract – it is specifically about the lives of the chanichim and how they navigate through the challenges and opportunities presented to them. It is important that for every issue that you discuss with your chanichim, you frame it in the 'personal'; what matters is how they relate to and understand an issue.

For the first Kvutza we're going to provide a foundation for understanding how we think about our personal values and how we develop our personal identities. First, we're going to ask, "What is important to me – what do I value and why?" and then we're going to ask, "Who is the 'me' in the first place and how has my sense of self developed?"

Psychological theories of identity development

Stages of Psychosocial development· Erik Erikson 1902-1994 (Germany/USA)

One of Erikson's key aspects of his theory was that each stage had a particular 'crisis'. This means a moment of exploration or conflict between two different forces. In the adolescence stage the two forces are:

- A. Identity Achievement (knowing what roles in society you want to have and it fitting with who you are)
- B. Identity (Role) Confusion (not being sure about yourself or your place in society)



As we grow up from a child to an adult we may begin to feel confused or insecure about ourselves and how we fit into society. As we seek to establish a sense of self, teens may experiment with different roles, activities, and behaviours. According to Erikson, this is important to the process of forming a strong identity and developing a sense of direction in life.

Erikson believed that in each stage of development a person confronts, and hopefully masters, new challenges. The questions one asks from 13–19 years are: Who am I? Who can I be? The adolescent stage features a moment of exploration/conflict between two different forces: **Identity Achievement** (knowing what roles in society you

want to have and then fitting with who you are) and **Identity (Role)**

Confusion (being unsure about yourself or your place in society).

Adolescents ponder the roles they will play in the adult world. This can be challenging since **commitments are being asked for before identity roles have formed**. At this point, one is in a state of 'identity confusion' - mixed ideas and feelings about the specific ways in which we will fit into society—and may experiment with a variety of behaviours and activities. **Bnei Akiva Machane can play a big part in providing a framework for chanichim to safely explore their own identities without having one forced upon them**. Initially, we are apt to experience some role confusion— Eventually, most adolescents achieve a sense of identity regarding who they are and where their lives are headed.

So how exactly are we supposed to go from identity (role) confusion to identity achievement?

Another psychologist called James Marcia refined and extended Erikson's model. He developed 4 stages that people can move back and forth through at different stages of their adolescence and be at different stages for each of the different things that make up our identities.

They are based around two poles:

- A. **Exploration** – How much have you thought or physically tried out the different options/roles available to you?
- B. **Commitment** – To what extent have you committed to one particular option or role out of that many that are available to you?

		Individual has committed to identity	
		Yes	No
Individual has explored identity options	Yes	Identity Achievement	Moratorium
	No	Foreclosure	Identity Diffusion

DISCUSSION POINT 1 - What barriers might there be stopping young people achieving a 'sense of self' and how can we overcome them? What role do we as madrichim play for our chanichim in this process?

Self-Categorisation Theory, John Turner 1947-2011 (UK)

When constructing our **own identity**, humans do not view themselves as **just one thing** (because we are not!). The **self-categorisation theory** describes the way that people see themselves as an individual but also as **part of various groups** and ultimately the **human race** (Big stuff).

It's important that Chanichim develop this awareness of their identity manifesting itself in the context of being part of multiple groups e.g. family, friends, Modern Orthodoxy, Religious Zionism, Jews, Humans etc. **Maintaining one's sense of self in many different contexts can be a challenge, especially for younger people.**

DISCUSSION POINT 2 – What different contexts contribute to your identity?

Valuing the value of valuable values

Values are “**fundamental attitudes** guiding our **mental processes** and **behaviour**,” that, “produce the **belief** that life is **meaningful** and serve as a measure of how meaningful one’s actions are, that is, consistent with that person’s value system” - J. Vyskocilova et al, 2015

Everything we do, every decision we make and course of action we take, is based on our consciously- or subconsciously-held beliefs, attitudes, and values. Ideally, our choices will be made on the basis of the values we hold—the principles and priorities that are important to us. But frequently we are not clear about our own values, or we are not clear about how to translate them into daily living.

DISCUSSION POINT 3 – What are your own values and how you did you come to believe in them?

Formation of values

Inculcation (Teaching through telling):

Inculcation is the instilling of knowledge or values in someone, usually by repetition. This can be through direct explanation, rules, rewards and punishments, symbols, and other methods. There are limitations to this method:

- 1) There is so much diversity in the world around us. We are ultimately left to make our own choices about whose advice or values to follow.
- 2) It often results in a dichotomy between theory and practice. Inculcation frequently influences only people’s words and little else in their lives.

Modelling (teaching through doing/being):

We notice how other people act and how they seem to negotiate life’s many choices. We also notice whether their behaviour matches their stated beliefs. As positive models or negative ones, we each serve continually as models for one another. Like incultation, modelling also has its limitations. The main problem is that people are exposed to so many different models to emulate. How is a person to sort out all the pros and cons and achieve their own values?

Values Clarification (teaching through reflection and thought):

Values clarification is an approach often used in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy that involves identifying someone’s personal value system and creating a hierarchy of values that are important to an individual.

This is done by asking good questions, being a good listener, encouraging self-knowledge, and demonstrating trust in the seeker’s ability to find the answer.

There are many examples of values that people may have. Here are some examples:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 📖 Belief in G-d | 📖 Antidiscrimination |
| 📖 Community | 📖 Egalitarianism |
| 📖 Relationship with Hashem | 📖 Global justice |
| 📖 <i>Chesed</i> | 📖 Environmentalism |
| 📖 Shabbat | 📖 Fun |
| 📖 Following <i>halakha</i> | 📖 Evidence-based thinking |

DISCUSSION POINT 4 – Do you think that your Chanichim will view any of these values as contradicting each other? Which of these views are supported by Judaism?

What does Judaism have to say about it?

There is no one specific Jewish approach to how to achieve our values or how to think about identity. Nor is there really a 'Bnei Akiva' approach: every Chanich/a is different and is going through their own Jewish and Bnei Akiva journey. Our role as Madrichim is to support them through that journey. Instead, Judaism provides a framework within which they can discover their sense of self and identity. Take a look at this excerpt from the choveret on *Lekh Lekha*:

The first command we see Avraham being given is 'Go for yourself' – as Rashi points out, this has to be **for yourself**; not going for God or anyone else. Avraham's life is the life of Chesed, of kindness, of giving of himself to others. Now God commands him that he must do this **for himself** (not for God!) in order to develop his own sense of identity and self, so that he can have a self to be in love with God. In other words, God loves Avraham and therefore wants him to develop into the best Avraham he can.

The following selection of sources and ideas provide some 'food for thought' and can be used as springboards for discussing the issues already covered in the Kvutza.

It is proper for a person to subordinate all of their personal capacities to reason... and to place a single goal before their eyes. That is, they should understand it [the goal] and direct all their actions, movements, and utterances to that end, so that none of their actions are in vain (i.e., not directed to the goal) (*Rambam, Shemona Perakim (Introduction to Pirkei Avot)*).

(שמות כה, יא) מבית ומחוץ תצפנו אמר רבא כל תלמיד חכם שאין תוכו כברו אינו תלמיד חכם(יומא ע"ב:)

"From within and from without you shall cover it" (*Shemot* 25:11). Rava said: Any Torah scholar whose inside is not like the outside, i.e., whose outward expression of righteousness is insincere, is not to be considered a Torah scholar. (*Yoma* 72b)

In the 19th Century, Rabbi Israel Salanter founded the **Mussar Movement**, a school of Jewish thought that emphasised character development and reflection, drawing on ideas presented in much earlier texts such as Pirkei Avot. The general idea is that people have a collection of personal virtues, also known as Middot, which they have a responsibility to hone and improve in order to be the best version of themselves as possible.

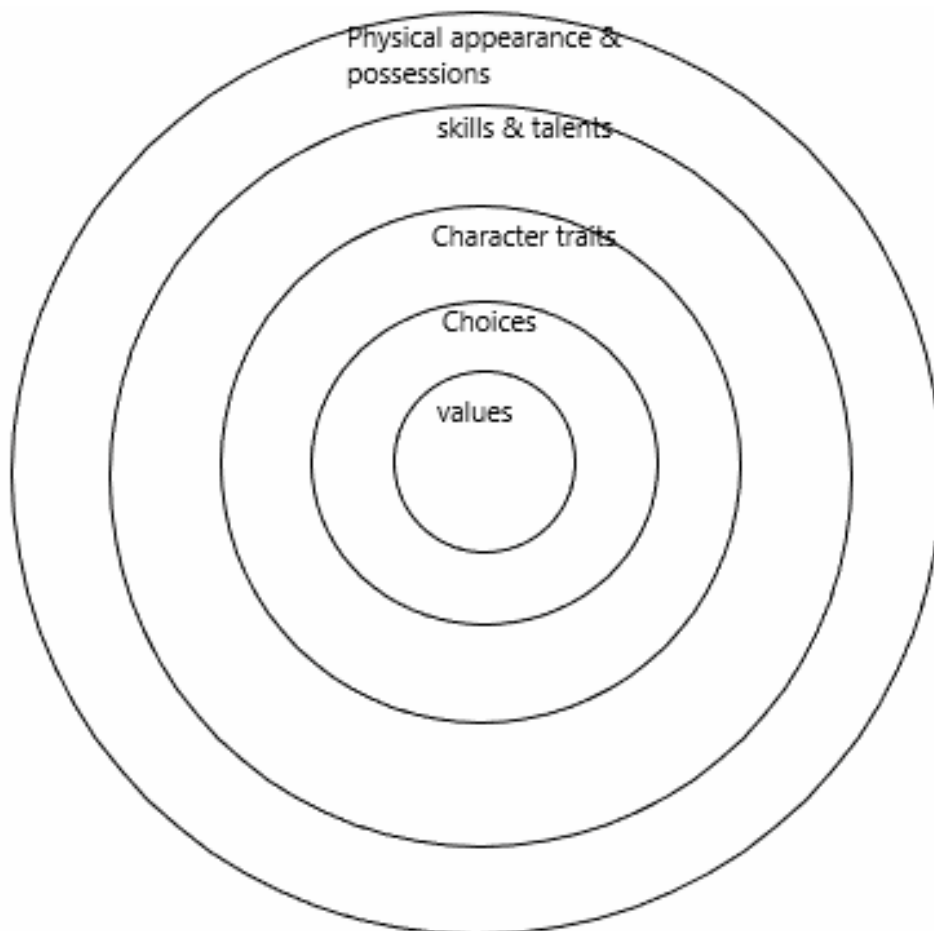
"If I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you. But if I am I because you are you and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you!"
(The Kotzker Rebbe)

Peula idea

Take some time to fill in the following 'identity target'

הוא הִיָּה אֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אָנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וְכִשְׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מֶה אָנִי. וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימָתִי

(14) He [Rabbi Hillel] used to say: If I am not for me, who will be for me? And when I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, then when? (Pirkei Avot 1:14)



Which sections of the target are important to your identity?
Which sections actually define who you are?

Concrete Concepts:

1. Our identities are **constantly evolving**. This is particularly the case for young people, who are still beginning to form their initial sense of identity, both as **individuals** and as part of **different groups**.
2. There are different methods for forming values and it is important to do this in order to be able to navigate life's decisions
3. Hashem expects us to formulate clear values and to be intellectually honest about who we are.
4. Our values and our choices are what truly define who we are.

Gimmel: The Orthodox Jew in the Modern world – היהודי הדתי בעולם המודרני –

K2: Is there more than one way of practicing Judaism? The challenges of truth, cross-communalism and pluralism.

K2. Is there more than one way of practising Judaism? The challenges of truth, cross-communalism and pluralism



Objectives.

1. To understand the halachic and scientific logic that underpins the concept of multiple truths.
2. To gain awareness of different approaches within Judaism.
3. To explore different opinions on religious pluralism.

Introduction

Back in the day, mainstream Judaism was a lot easier to define and far less splintered into factions than it is now. Whilst there were always minority fringe groups who did things differently, the concept of choosing a community based on hashkafic, political and lifestyle preferences didn't exist. However, the 18th Century saw the emergence of the Haskalah (Jewish enlightenment), Chasidism, Mitnagdim, and later on, the idea of Torah Im Derech Eretz.

These groups existed within Am Yisrael throughout the Shoah, and in the latter half of the 20th Century gave rise to many more.

Nowadays, the spectrum of Jews is vast. Many categories of Judaism now exist as umbrella terms with multiple overlapping subcategories, each with their own nuanced ways of thinking. Whatever their background, Bnei Akiva Chanichim will have spent time in environments with a variety of people, practising a range of different lifestyles, each insisting that what they observe is called 'Judaism'.

For this reason, this Kvutza is of particular importance as a way of addressing potential confusion amongst Chanichim about what Judaism actually is, and whether more than one group can be right about this. It also provides the opportunity to facilitate conversations that it is likely Chanichim will already be having, in a way that will hopefully be productive and help them to think reflectively. Enjoy!

1. Multiple Truths: How can more than one person be right?

Let's first look at some Torah sources that discuss whether or not multiple opinions can be correct:

1)
אמר רבי אבא אמר שמואל: שלש שנים נחלקו בית שמאי ובית הלל, הללו אומרים: הלכה כמותנו, והללו אומרים: הלכה כמותנו. יצאה בת קול ואמרה: אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים הן, והלכה כבית הלל. (עירובין י"ג:)

Rabbi Abba said that Shmuel said: For three years Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagreed. These said: The halakha is in accordance with our opinion, and these said: The halakha is in accordance with our opinion. Ultimately, a Divine Voice emerged and proclaimed: Both these and those are the words of the living G-d. However, the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Beit Hillel. (Eiruvim 13b)

Despite the clear conclusion that we follow Beit Hillel, it's interesting to note that the words of Beit Shammai are described as the 'word of the living God', which surely implies that there must be some element of truth in them?

אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים שאלו רבני צרפת ז"ל
היאך אפשר שיהו אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים וזה
איסור וזה מתיר ותוצו כי כשעלה משה למרום לקבל
התורה הראו לן על כל דבר ודבר מ"ט פנים לאיסור
ומ"ט פני' להיתר ושאל להקב"ה על זה ואמר שיהא זה
מסור לחכמי ישראל שבכל דור ודור ויהיה הכרעה
כמותם ונכון הוא לפי הדרש ובדרך האמת יש טעם
סוד בדבר
(ריטב"א על עירובין י"ג)

Both these and those are the words of the living G-d. The French rabbis, of blessed memory, asked how is it possible that both of these are the word of the living G-d, and (yet) one forbade and one permitted? And they answered that when Moshe ascended to receive the Torah, he was shown regarding every matter – 49 reasons to rule it forbidden and 49 reasons to rule it permitted. He asked G-d about this and was told "These words are given over to the Sages of Israel in every generation and the ruling will be as they say" And this is correct and truthful and the reason for it is a secret. (Ritva, Eiruvim 13b)

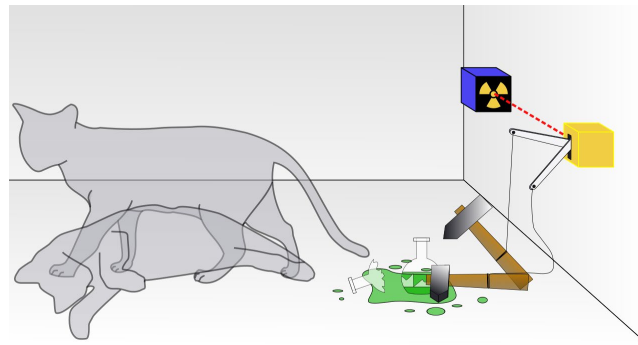


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The Ritva also seems to support the existence of multiple truths. However, it still seems like multiple contradictory opinions all being true is something of an oxymoron. Therefore, let's approach this from a logical perspective.

Schrödinger's Judaism?



'Schrödinger's cat' is a thought experiment designed by Erwin Schrödinger in 1935, as a way of understanding (actually, originally ridiculing) some quite complicated parts of quantum physics. The concept is that a cat is placed in a box with a very small radioactive source that may or may not decay at any moment. If it does decay, this will ultimately kill the cat. However, at any point, until the box is opened, the cat can be considered to be 'both alive and dead'. Hence, we see a theoretical illustration of multiple truths.

Quadratic equations

1) $3x^2=48$
 $x^2=16$
 $x=4$ or $x=-4$

2) $x^2+6x-12=0$

$$x = \frac{-6 \pm \sqrt{84}}{2}$$
 $x=1.58$ (3sf) or $x=-7.58$ (3sf)

Quadratic equations are a mathematical example of multiple answers being equally correct, despite being sometimes extremely different.

What is important to remember, however, is that we're not living within the microcosm of a thought experiment, or even an equation. In life **we have to make choices**, and this is what the halakhic system does for us. However, the concept of multiple truths can assist us in times of emergency or suffering, where we may be able to rely on more lenient halachic opinions. This logic also paves the way for the concept of *Asei Lecha Rav*.

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יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה וְנִטַּי הָאַרְבֵּלִי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֵם. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה אָמַר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רֵב, וְיָקִיף לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהָוִי דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת.

*Joshua ben Perahiah and Nittai the Arbelite received [the oral tradition] from them. Joshua ben Perahiah used to say: **appoint for thyself a teacher and acquire for thyself a companion and judge all people favourably.** (Pirkei Avot 1:6)*

DISCUSSION POINT 1 – Do you think that the concept of multiple truths is compatible with Jewish values? What do you think are the benefits and difficulties associated with the theory of multiple truths?

Consider the following analogy, which originates in a Buddhist text from around 500BC:



A group of blind men heard that a strange animal, called an elephant, had been brought to the town, but none of them were aware of its shape and form. Out of curiosity, they said: "We must inspect and know it by touch, of which we are capable". So, they sought it out, and when they found it they groped about it. The first person, whose hand landed on the trunk, said, "This being is like a thick snake". For another one whose hand reached its ear, it seemed like a kind of fan. As for another person, whose hand was upon its leg, said, the elephant is a pillar like a tree-trunk. The blind man who placed his hand upon its side said the elephant, "is a wall". Another who felt its tail, described it as a rope. The last felt its tusk, stating the elephant is that which is hard, smooth and like a spear.

What does this parable teach about the nature of truth? None of the men are wrong, but none of them has achieved the whole truth. They have a subjective experience of the truth. There may be an absolute truth out there, but due to our situational conditions, we cannot attain comprehensive sight of **all** of it.

On a halakhic level, too, there may be multiple acceptable ways of ruling the *halakha* based on a particular verse, but after the Sanhedrin vote on it, one truth is selected for legal practise. (Or, in Torah Umadda terms: The wave-function of the quantum halakha is collapsed by the vote of the supreme legal authority.)

2. Different approaches to Judaism

Having established the presence of multiple truths, can these ideas be applied to Judaism? Within the spectrum of Judaism, there are many **denominations**. It is likely that the majority of Chanichim will already have had **some level of exposure** to at least some of these groups and their ways of thinking. It is **important for Chanichim to be aware that these groups exist** in order to respond to potentially **conflicting ideologies** in an **intellectually honest** way. It is also important to differentiate between those that fall within the realms of halakhic Judaism, and those that do not. (It's equally important to note that these groups and splits didn't really occur in the Sephardi world, where being Jewish was less complicated by social factors.)

Approaches to Ashkenazi Orthodox Judaism – 'Pluralism'

Chasidic Judaism

Founded in the 1740s by the **Baal Shem Tov**, a key value of Chasidic philosophy was that everyone should be able to access spirituality and have a relationship with Hashem. This drew on Jewish mysticism and focused greatly on davening to Hashem with large amounts of joy. This contrasted greatly with the scholarly and elitist approach that was prevalent in Eastern Europe at the time. Chasidic Judaism soon developed into multiple dynasties which are led by a Rebbe, including Ger, Satmar, Lubavitch and Breslov. Nowadays, Chasidic Jews are bracketed under the umbrella term of 'Chareidi', meaning ultra-Orthodox, even though they were not originally ideologically similar, strictly speaking.



Yeshivish/Litvish

A type of Chareidi Judaism, they are heirs of the mitnagdim (literally "opponents") who rejected the rise of Chasidic Judaism in Europe. These Jews traditionally emphasized the intellectual aspects of Jewish life, particularly rigorous Talmud study for men. 'Yeshivish' derives from the word yeshiva, or religious seminary. (For some fun, because I'm a linguist: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yeshivish>.)

Modern Orthodox

Modern Orthodoxy builds on the ideas of Torah im Derech Eretz (Rav Hirsch) and Torah Umaddah (Rav Soloveitchik and Rabbi Lamm). Although there are many forms of Modern Orthodoxy (see K3), the idea underpinning all of them is to contribute to wider society and embrace modernity whilst adhering strictly to Halakha.

DISCUSSION POINT 2 – Do you think it's important to commit completely to one of the above approaches, or is there value to not committing, but taking positive ideas from each?

Non-Orthodox Approaches – Cross-Communalism

Some movements outside of Judaism consider themselves to be within the umbrella term of 'Progressive Jews'. They include Reform, Conservative/Masorti and Liberal Judaism. Each of these groups deviate, to different degrees, from the historically Jewish approach to halakha, with a focus on contemporary causes and sometimes a rejection of traditional Jewish values in favour of societal progress, hence the word 'progressive'. (For more information about the enlightenment and the origin of Reform Judaism, see the Bet Base Chomer.)

3. So can religious pluralism exist?

Religious pluralism: attitude or policy regarding the diversity of religious belief systems co-existing in society.

According to Lord Rabbi Sacks z'l, the concept of religious pluralism outside of the realms of Orthodoxy is problematic:

"Within Judaism... Orthodoxy, Conservatism, Reform, and Reconstructionism are regularly portrayed as the four Jewish denominations. Those who think in these terms see such a description as just that: neutrally descriptive. But it contains a momentous hidden premise. It imports pluralism into Judaism. And this itself is an accommodation to secularization. Orthodoxy does not, and cannot, make this accommodation. It recognises pluralism along many axes. It recognises at least some other faiths as valid religious options for non-Jews. It recognizes, within Judaism itself, different halakhic traditions: Ashkenazi and Sephardi, for example, or Hasidic or Mitnagdic. Beyond halakhah, it legitimates a vast variety of religious approaches: rationalist and mystical, intellectual, and emotional, nationalist and universalist, pietist and pragmatic. But it does not recognize the legitimacy of interpretations of Judaism that abandon fundamental beliefs or halakhic authority. It does not validate, in the modern sense, a plurality of denominations. It does not see itself as one version of Judaism among others."

Although it is not possible to reconcile these progressive movements with Judaism, it is important to differentiate between Progressive 'Judaism' and Progressive Jews.

Cross-Communalism: The idea of being welcoming to all Jews, regardless of religious affiliation.

Whilst we may disagree with some people's approach to Judaism, it is vital that we respect the people themselves. We know that the second Beit Hamikdash was destroyed because of Sinat Chinam, baseless hatred within Am Yisrael, and the Chafetz Chaim explains that the reason we are still in Galut today is because we are *still* expressing hatred towards one another, particularly with hateful speech. It is therefore a nuanced but necessary approach to value the Jew even if we don't agree with the approach to Judaism.

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Non-Orthodox Tisha B'Av Service at Western Wall Crashed by Religious Right-wingers

The takeover was organized by an extreme right-wing group, known as Liba, which has been trying to prevent a revival of the Western Wall deal



Judy Maltz
Follow
Jul 17, 2021

Hundreds of right-wing, Orthodox Jews, mostly teenagers, barged into the prayer plaza reserved for egalitarian services at the Western Wall on Saturday bent on disrupting the annual Tisha B'Av megillah-reading held by the Conservative movement at the Jewish holy site.



DISCUSSION POINT 3 – Has anyone ever implied that your approach to Judaism is not legitimate? How did this make you feel? When hearing about a Jewish Tragedy that's occurred Chas Veshalom, do you feel differently if the people affected belong to the same Jewish group as you?

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Peula ideas.

- Give your Chanichim lots of quadratic equations to do! Tell them that they are only allowed to pick one answer for each and point out that different people have arrived at equally right answers. Use this as a springboard for a discussion about multiple truths.

- Film analysis – Fiddler on the roof!

Show these videos to your Chanichim in order. Feel free to cut to the important bits as they're a bit long, unless you are a FOTR super fan like some of us! The chup is that with each daughter's

request, Tevye is forced to open his mind that much more. This is a positive thing, until his beliefs are pushed too far. Use this as an opportunity to discuss pluralism vs cross-communalism with your Chanichim and ask them what they think of the phrase, 'If I bend that far I'll break.'



Concrete Concepts.

- More than one approach can be true, but this is limited to those that fall within the realm of halakha.
- There are many different approaches to Judaism, with each believing that theirs is the 'right' one. As halakhic Jews, we accept **pluralism** within halakhic movements but not with non-halakhic ones.
- It is vital that disagreeing with someone's approach does not translate into a lack of respect or hatred for that individual – this is the essence of **cross-communalism**.

K3. Modern Orthodoxy



Objectives:

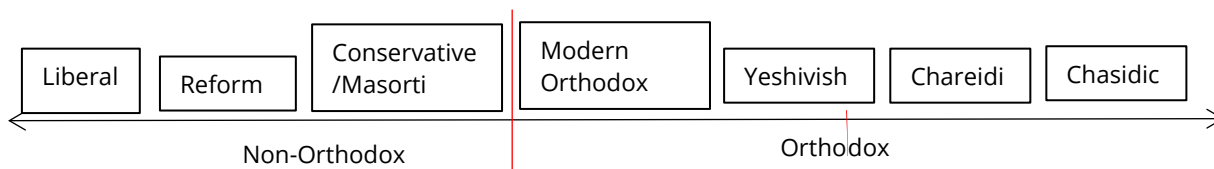
1. For the Chanichim to gain a better understanding of Modern Orthodox Judaism
2. To be aware of important Traditional Jewish Philosophers and their approach to the concept of 'Torah U'Madda'
3. To look at ways to apply Modern Orthodox values in one's life

1. What is Modern Orthodoxy?

Bnei Akiva identifies as a Modern Orthodox Jewish youth movement defined as the synergetic relationship between the modern world and Torah values/Halacha, as prescribed by the Rabbinic head of the Movement. (Bnei Akiva UK Constitution, A5)

Essentially, Modern Orthodoxy is the idea that halakhically observant Jewish people should engage with cultural, academic and scientific aspects of their surrounding society and through this serve Hashem in the most ideal way. If done correctly, academic study and cultural engagement should greatly **enhance** one's relationship with Hashem.

Many of us have (erroneously) grown up seeing Judaism as a spectrum on which all approaches can be placed. Perhaps it looks something like this:



As well as being very oversimplistic, this model also generates assumptions that are probably incorrect;

- 1) That Modern Orthodoxy is at the centre of the spectrum
- 2) That Modern Orthodoxy is a compromise between the values on either side of it

Addressing point 1, it is important to note that, if asked, a large proportion of Jews believe that they are 'middle of the road' when it comes to their level of observance.

Regarding point 2, ideological Modern Orthodoxy is not a compromise, but rather the ideal way of living one's Torah life. If you're compromising somewhere, then you're probably not doing it right...

In his Chamesh Derashot, Rav Soloveitchik* defines a 14th Ani Ma'amin that he believes ought to be added to the existing 13 mapped out by the Rambam:

"I believe with complete and perfect faith that this Torah is given to be observed, realized and fully carried out in every place and in every time, in all social, economic and cultural frameworks, in every technological circumstance and all political conditions".



Madrachim Chomer
SUMMER MACHANE 5783

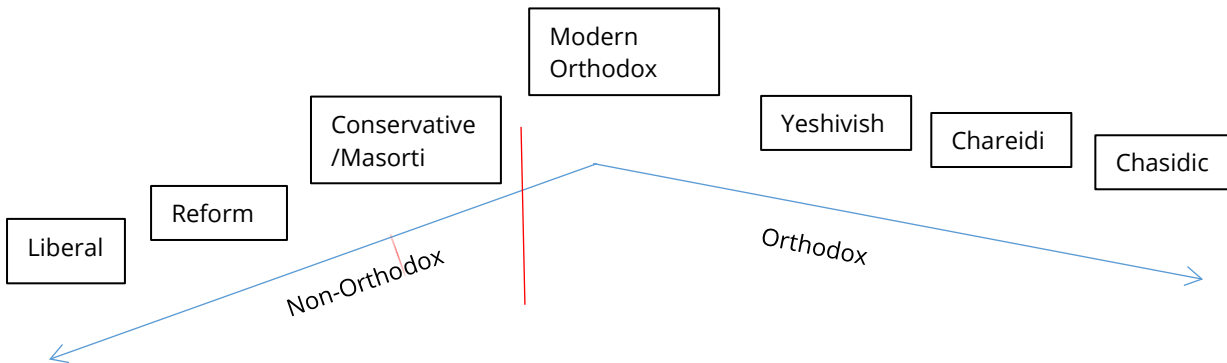
Gimmel: The Orthodox Jew in the Modern world – היהודי הדתי בעולם המודרני

K3: Modern Orthodoxy

This statement of Rav Soloveitchik explains the Modern Orthodox approach and why it is so important. The argument is that the founders of the other groups on the above spectrum did not totally believe in this ani ma'amin. On one hand, progressive movements usually involve altering aspects of Torah observance. On the other hand, more ultra-orthodox approaches also disregard the idea that the Torah can be observed in any cultural framework and every technological circumstance, if they reject the outside world and the positive advances it brings. Therefore, Halachic Modern Orthodoxy is the only approach that fully commits to this idea.

At this point it is worth reminding ourselves that we are comparing approaches to Judaism, not the Jews themselves. Modern Orthodox Jews are no better or worse as individuals than any other Jews.

However, when looking purely at different philosophical approaches to Judaism, perhaps the spectrum ought to look more like this:



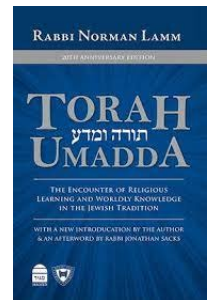
DISCUSSION POINT 1 – Do you identify as Modern Orthodox? Why? Is the way you view Modern Orthodoxy the same or different to the discussion above?

***Spotlight on Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik**
Also referred to as 'the Rav', Rav Soloveitchik (1903-1993) is seen as a prominent figure in the establishment of Modern Orthodoxy in America. He was Rosh Yeshiva of the Rabbinical School in Yeshiva University and gave the first ever Talmud shiur at Stern College for Women. His major works on Modern Orthodoxy include *The Lonely Man of Faith*, *Halachic Man* and *Halachic mind*.



2. Torah UMadda

"Torah, faith, religious learning on one side and Madda, science, worldly knowledge on the other, together offer us a more over-arching and truer vision than either one set alone. Each set gives one view of the Creator as well as of His creation, and the other a different perspective that may not agree at all with the first ... Each alone is true, but only partially true; both together present the possibility of a larger truth." (Rabbi Norman Lamm Z"l)



The concept of Torah U'Madda is a philosophical development of Modern Orthodox ideology. In his book (called Torah U'Madda), Rabbi Norman Lamm outlines 6 different models that are summarised very briefly below.

Rationalist Model

Based on the teachings of the Rambam, this model says that we can only even begin to understand Hashem through His actions, therefore, it is necessary to study metaphysics, mathematics and the sciences as a prerequisite to Torah study. Just as one studies art and thereby comes to know the artist, so one studies the world and comes to know God. The Rambam says in *Hilkhot Teshuva* (10:6) that love of God is contingent upon knowledge of God.

Cultural Model

Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch came up with the concept of 'Torah im Derech Eretz'. The idea is that all aspects of one's life should relate to Torah and therefore one should embrace education and culture. Rav Hirsch especially believed in embracing Western culture but always maintaining strict adherence to Halakha. He did not necessarily believe in an intellectual union between 'Torah' and 'Science', but rather believed in an integration of Jews into wider society.

Mystical Model

Rav Kook talks about two different categories: Kodesh and Chol. Both are related to each other. The Chol is necessary in order to supplement and support the Kodesh. Rav Kook later clarifies that really, nothing is completely profane or secular, in fact the foundation of the holy of holies comprises both the secular and the profane. So there is no such thing as chol- only the holy and the not-yet holy, existing on a spectrum.

The Instrumentalist Model

In this model, Madda is thought of as a '*hekhsher mitzva*', the preparation for a *mitzva*. Madda gains its significance from making a *mitzva* possible/enhancing it. In this model, whilst Torah always has innate holiness, nature/physicality never attains that level but can attain instrumental value. Just as physical acts like eating or drinking can be elevated, for example, by berakhot, secular studies can aid in Torah study and the performance of mitzvot, like understanding physics to make a shabbat lamp. The Vilna Gaon

encouraged his disciples to translate the masterpieces of secular knowledge into Hebrew so that they could be used to enhance Torah learning.

Inclusionary Model

The word 'Olam' meaning world is related to the word for hiddenness, 'he'elem', because the world is a disguise of God. Therefore, studying science could be considered to be a lesser form of Torah study. Based on the teachings of R' Chaim Volozhin, the idea is that Madda, if studied correctly, almost constitutes a 'Textless Torah'. However, this does not mean that one can fulfil the obligation to learn Torah by revising for a chemistry exam, nor can Birkat Hatorah be recited on this. These are still reserved for text-based Torah.

Chasidic Model

A big concept in chasidic thought is the concept of Avoda BeGashmiut - serving Hashem with our very physicality. In this philosophy, Avodat Hashem is not only expressed through the official means of Talmud Torah and Mitzvot, but also through means of the attitude of connecting every menial physical act you do to Hashem. Avoda Beruchniut, the regular Halachic means of worshipping Hashem, and Avoda Bagashmiut, are both legitimate ways of worshipping God. There is only a small step from Avoda Bagashmiut to Torah U'Madda, from worship through physicality to worship through intellectuality. If Chasidut can find holiness in eating, why not in studying the chemistry of carbohydrates and physiology of digestion?

DISCLAIMER: In the humble opinion of this chinuch worker, Rabbi Lamm has oversimplified certain aspects within these different models, and sometimes made distinctions that aren't as clear in their original proponents. For a deep conversation about the position of Rambam and the subtle nuances between the various models, please come and find me!

DISCUSSION POINT 2 – How does the way you live your life incorporate Torah UMadda? With which aspects of these models do you identify?

Practical application of Torah UMadda

Risks of Torah UMadda and Modern Orthodoxy

The values explained above are complex and nuanced. Some people may find the philosophical and intellectual nature of these Hashkafot inaccessible (your job as Madrichim is to try and make them accessible to your Chanichim!). Maintaining the correct balance between Torah and everything else is also a very difficult task and requires large amounts of motivation and self-reflection. It can also be exhausting at times! Many people find it difficult to constantly reconcile everything secular they learn with Torah values, or to maintain strict halakhic observance whilst also integrating with modern society, and therefore minimising either the Torah or the Madda in their lives.

So why are people Modern Orthodox?

Despite the challenges, many people see Modern Orthodoxy as the most intellectually honest way to live. If done correctly, a Modern Orthodox lifestyle can be exciting, engaging, fulfilling (and fun!), and gives rise to a better relationship with Hashem.

How can we infuse our lives with Modern Orthodox Values?

The following are some specific examples. Encourage your Chanichim to try and think of their own that are specific to their lives.

- Make sure you set aside time for *tefilla* and *Talmud Torah* every day and adhere to it with the same commitment as you have for your academic timetable.
- When you learn academic subjects, relate what you're learning back to Hashem e.g. After learning about the digestive system read through the bracha of Asher Yatzar with renewed appreciation!
- Don't disregard secular concepts of morality on the basis of them coming from a different source- see if they can fit into Torah values (but not the other way around).
- Read Torah U'Madda!

קבל את האמת ממי שאומרה

Accept the Truth from Whomever says it (Rambam, *Shemona Perakim*).

DISCUSSION POINT 3 – Do you think Modern Orthodoxy expects too much of people? Do you think a MO lifestyle is the most ideal one? Why do you think a motion was passed in Velda 5778 to make Bnei Akiva officially a Modern Orthodox Movement?

Peula ideas

- 📖 Real life wordle: Do this with words related to Modern Orthodoxy and Torah Umadda. Then use the whole thing as a mashal for the idea that there can be lots of different approaches that all arrive at the correct answer, so too with Torah Umadda
- 📖 Science fair: Plan some fun science experiments with your Chanichim and then relate them to Torah.
- 📖 Literature: Take excerpts from great works of literature and use them to connect to an inspiring tefilla or praise of Hashem.

Concrete concepts

1. Modern Orthodoxy is essentially the synthesis of the modern world with Torah, but never at the expense of the latter.
2. There are many different philosophical approaches to Modern Orthodoxy.
3. Living a truly Modern Orthodox life can be challenging, but also very rewarding.

K4. Jewish Education



Objectives:

1. To familiarise our Chanichim with sources about Jewish education.
2. To encourage Chanichim to reflect on the nature of the Jewish education that they have received.
3. To encourage Chanichim to think about how they will educate in the future.

Introduction

This Kvutza is going to look at Jewish Education and will be split into **3 parts**. The first will look at sources for Jewish education and a brief history into some Jewish schooling. The second will focus on Jewish schools and their education philosophies, while the third will look at Bnei Akiva's approach to Jewish education.

1. History of Jewish Education

The Mitzva to teach Torah comes from a Pasuk in the Shema:

וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם לְבַנְיֵיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְיֹשֶׁבְתְּךָ וּבְיָסוּדְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ

Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. (Devarim 6:7)

This is elaborated on in Bava Batra 21a:

שְׁבִתְחֵלָה מִי שֵׁישׁ לוֹ אָב מְלַמְדוֹ תּוֹרָה מִי שְׁאִין לוֹ אָב לֹא הָיָה לְמַד תּוֹרָה מֵאִי דְרוּשׁ וְלִמְדַתֶּם אֲתֶם וְלִמְדַתֶּם אֲתֶם הִתְקִינוּ שֶׁיְהוּ מוֹשִׁיבֵין מְלַמְדֵי תִינוּקוֹת בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם מֵאִי דְרוּשׁ כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תּוֹרָה וְעַדִּיין מִי שֵׁישׁ לוֹ אָב הָיָה מְעַלּוֹ וּמְלַמְדוֹ מִי שְׁאִין לוֹ אָב לֹא הָיָה עוֹלָה וְלִמְד הִתְקִינוּ שֶׁיְהוּ מוֹשִׁיבֵין בְּכָל פֶּלֶךְ וּפְלֶךְ וּמְכַנְיִסִין אוֹתָן כָּבֵן שֵׁשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה כָּבֵן שְׁבַע עֶשְׂרֵה וּמִי שְׁהָיָה רַבּוֹ כּוֹעֵס עָלָיו מִבְּעֵיט בּוֹ יֵצֵא עַד שֶׁבָּא יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן גַּמְלָא וְתִיקֵן שֶׁיְהוּ מוֹשִׁיבֵין מְלַמְדֵי תִינוּקוֹת בְּכָל מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וּבְכָל עִיר וְעִיר וּמְכַנְיִסִין אוֹתָן כָּבֵן שֵׁשׁ כָּבֵן שְׁבַע (בבא בתרא כ"א).

Initially, whoever had a father would have his father teach him Torah, and whoever did not have a father would not learn Torah at all. The Gemara explains: What verse did they interpret homiletically that allowed them to conduct themselves in this manner? They interpreted the verse that states: "And you shall teach them [otam] to your sons" (Deuteronomy 11:19), to mean: And you yourselves [atem] shall teach, i.e., you fathers shall teach your sons.

They instituted an ordinance that teachers of children should be established in Jerusalem. The Gemara explains: What verse did they interpret homiletically that enabled them to do this? They interpreted the verse: "For Torah emerges from Zion" (Isaiah 2:3). But still, whoever had a father, his father ascended with him to Jerusalem and had him taught, but whoever did not have a father, he did not ascend and learn. Therefore, the Sages instituted an ordinance that teachers of children should be established in one city in each and every region [pelekh]. And they brought the students in at the age of sixteen and at the age of seventeen.

But a student whose teacher grew angry at him would rebel against him and leave. This state of affairs continued until Yehoshua ben Gamla came and instituted an ordinance that teachers of children should be established in each and every province and in each and every town, and they would bring the children in to learn at the age of six and at the age of seven.

(Bava Batra 21a)

In Mishnaic times, Yeshivot were the main place for Torah study. The Talmud itself was composed largely in the yeshivot of Sura and Pumbedita in Babylonia, and the leading sages of the generation were taught there. Until the 19th century, **young men generally studied under the local rabbi**, who was allocated funds by the Jewish community to maintain a number of students. Meanwhile, in certain places – especially Eastern Europe – girls received their Jewish and Hebrew education at home and were often illiterate in Hebrew.

In the 19th century, public education was made compulsory in most of Europe, and in order to maintain educational control over the Jewish children, Jewish schools became a reality. Rabbis who pioneered Jewish day schools included **Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch**, whose school in Frankfurt served as a model for numerous similar institutions. Meanwhile, **Sarah Schenirer** opened the first Jewish girls' Beis Yaakov school in Krakow in 1918.

In the UK, Jewish schools have also been around for many centuries, including **JFS** which was established in 1732, whilst **Hasmonean** was established in 1944. There was also a Jewish boarding school in Oxfordshire called **Carmel College**, founded in 1948, which closed in 1997 as the number of pupils going to Jewish day schools rose. More recent Jewish secondary schools in London have included **Immanuel**, **Yavneh College** and **JCoSS**, whilst there are plenty of schools with a more ultra-orthodox hashkafah (worldview), including **Menorah**, **Beis Yaakov** and others in Stamford Hill. In Manchester, **King David** combines two schools, one with pupils of different religious levels, and one with two sections of the school called **Yavneh Boys** and **Yavneh Girls**, separate from the main King David mixed part.

Since the 1950s, the number of Jewish pupils in Jewish schools in the UK has increased dramatically – by approximately 500%. During the same period, the number of Jewish schools has also increased dramatically – by 400%. Both the number of Jewish schools and the number of Jewish pupils in these schools have almost doubled since the mid-1990s. Furthermore, these increases have taken place against the backdrop of a declining Jewish population for much of this period – from approximately 410,000 in the 1950s to an estimated 300,000 today. These graphs, from the Jewish Policy Research in November 2016, explain this further:

Figure 1. Jewish pupils enrolled in Jewish schools in the United Kingdom, 1954-2015

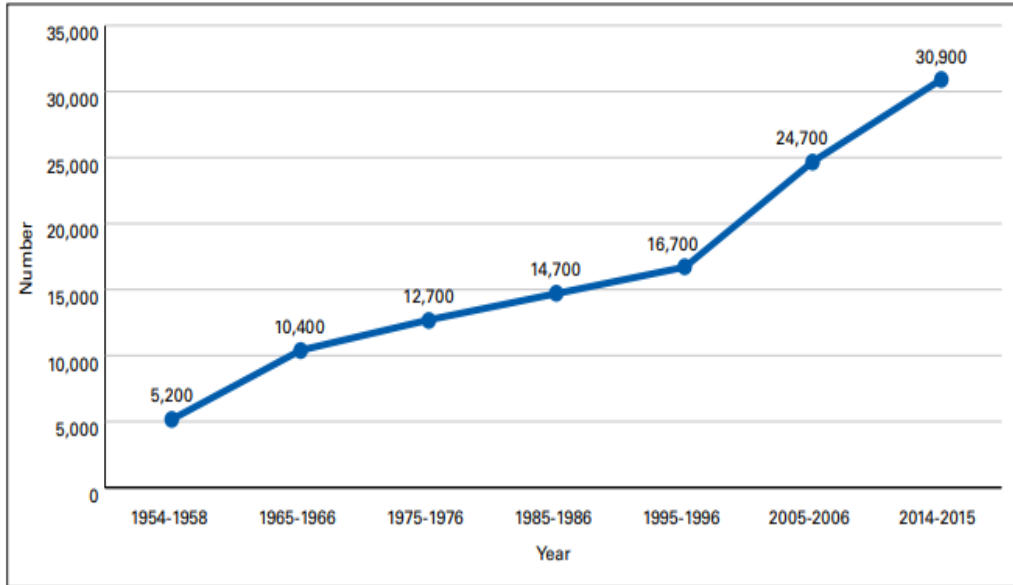
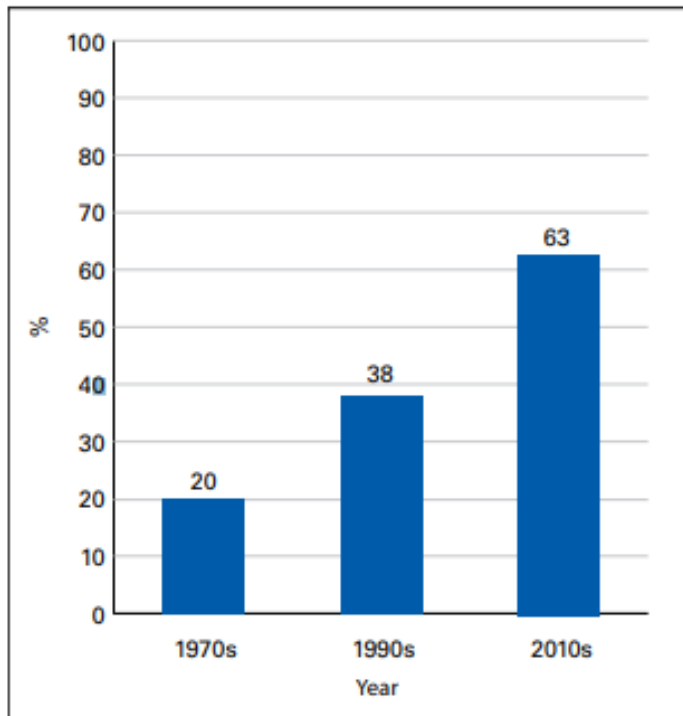


Figure 3. Proportion of school-aged Jewish population in the United Kingdom educated in Jewish schools



DISCUSSION POINT 1 – Do you think that Jewish Children going to Jewish Schools is always a good thing? What are some benefits and drawbacks?

2. Jewish Schools Today

There is a lot to talk about when it comes to Jewish schooling today, and this is something that your chanichim will hopefully have a lot of opinions on. This will include chanichim who do not go to Jewish schools, and who will be able to share where their Jewish education comes from.

In this section, we take a look at some of the challenges facing Jewish schools in the UK today.

1. Education philosophy

Both historically and today, there are multiple education philosophies which teachers and educators apply to their careers. We will focus on two extremes:

1. **Utilitarian:** This means that education is done to produce a workforce. Everything a child is taught is to enable them to get a career and give back to society in the future.
2. **Essentialism:** This means that education is the good within itself. There exists a body of knowledge that is the heritage of all people, and it is up to teachers and educators to give this over to the children.

Obviously, most teachers hold somewhere between these two opinions, but how far along the spectrum they are will vary from person to person.

We can apply the same line of thought to Jewish education in the following way:

1. **Utilitarian Jewish approach:** All Jewish education is to enable children and young adults to be able to practice Judaism in the future. For example, primary schools teach children how to say kiddush and bentsching in the hope that for their future Shabbat meals, they will do this for their own families.
2. **Essentialism Jewish approach:** Jewish education is a good within itself. Jewish educators aim to teach Jewish studies in an attempt to make people love the subject and feel inspired by their religion and heritage. This might be the approach used when teaching Jewish topics that aren't always seen as so 'relevant', like the laws of *korbanot*.

A lot of parents send their children to Jewish schools because they want their children to know how to 'do Jewish things' in the future, like going to shul, reading Hebrew or even just 'marrying in.' Therefore, the parents often want the school to be taking the utilitarian approach. This does happen more in primary schools, but in secondary schools, there are often far fewer opportunities to 'learn how to live Judaism', and more focus on teaching textual topics or Jewish history.

This includes most secondary schools being closed on Succot and not much time devoted to Yom Ha'atzmaut, as missing lessons is seen as a problem. This means that the pupils receive more of an essentialist education, clashing with what a lot of the parents want.

Conversely, in recent years, many Jewish Schools have seen the emergence of the informal education department. This manifests differently in different institutions, and can involve anything from the HIPE team at Hasmo, Aish at KDHS, the Yavneh College Informal Education Team or JIEP at JFS. Think Shabbatons, Israel trips, Poland trips, lunch and learns etc. This recognition of a separate focus on experiential learning is relatively new.

DISCUSSION POINT 2 – What approach do you think Jewish schools should take? If you went to a Jewish school, do you think the balance was right? What would you like to have seen more of?

2.Exposure

A common way of comparing Jewish education in schools is by looking at the amount of exposure the pupils receive to topics outside the remit of their own hashkafa. This can include:

- Exposure to other thought processes within their own denomination.
- Exposure to people who don't 'fit the historically traditional mould', e.g. LGBT+
- Exposure to other denominations of Judaism.
- Exposure to other religions.

Charedi schools usually have the least amount of exposure and are often very fixed in their views and don't deviate from the norm. This can include not teaching about other faiths or other people within their faith; an approach that can be seen by some as being very 'one-track minded'.

This also links to the debate about separate boys' and girls' schools, and the Jewish education taught in each of them. Often, the boys will be taught more Gemara, while the girls will focus more on Tanakh and texts that are seen as more applicable for women. This has led to discussions on whether this approach is the right one. It has also caused problems in co-ed schools where boys and girls are taught different things in their Jewish studies classes, especially King David Manchester, according to their OFSTED 2019 inspection. This followed from OFSTED winning their appeal against the Al-Hijrah school in Birmingham who had a policy of segregating boys and girls in the same school.

On the flipside, there are certain schools which have an aim of exposing the children to as many denominations and faiths as possible. This means that they will focus some of their religious studies lessons on learning about other faiths and won't always have a denomination that the school follows. This will include JCOSS in Barnet, who 'embrace diverse approaches to Jewish belief and practice that coexist comfortably within our school' and whose 'students learn about and from the whole spectrum of Jewish beliefs and practices.'

Recently, it became a requirement for pupils doing Religious Studies GCSE to learn about another faith, something that some schools have embraced wholeheartedly, whilst others haven't. Some schools will no longer do the GCSE and have turned to an alternative qualification where this is not a requirement.

DISCUSSION POINT 3 - How much exposure do you think there should be to other faiths, denominations and ways of thinking for pupils in Jewish schools? Is more exposure good or bad? Do you think this could change with age?

3. Jewish educators

A third criticism of Jewish schools is about the teachers and educators themselves. Young Jewish studies teachers are often former madrichim, which has some advantages, e.g. they have recently worked with kids the age that they are teaching. However, too often these teachers don't know the difference between being a madrich/a and being a teacher, and this means that discipline can be a problem. It also means that the teachers can be less focused on teaching a curriculum, and more focussed on giving the kids a Jewish experience or allowing them to not learn in the way they tend to in other lessons in school. This can be both an advantage and a disadvantage.

Education in Bnei Akiva

Typically, we think of school as providing 'formal education' and Bnei Akiva as providing 'informal education'. The importance of the latter type was expressed by Gandhi:

"It is a gross superstition to suppose that knowledge can be obtained only by going to schools and colleges. The world produced brilliant students before schools and colleges came into being. There is nothing so ennobling or lasting as self-study. Schools and colleges make most of us mere receptacles for holding the superfluities of knowledge. Wheat is left out and mere husk is taken in. I do not wish to decry schools and colleges as such. They have their use. But we are making altogether too much of them. They are but one of the many means of gaining knowledge".

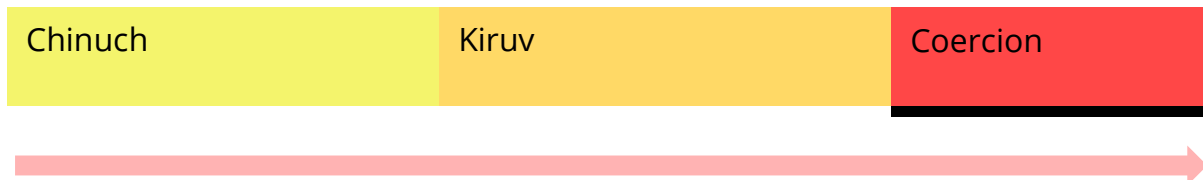
The key differences between these two are expressed in this table:

FORMAL	INFORMAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal education is classroom-based, provided by trained teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal education happens outside the classroom, in after-school programmes, community-based organisations, museums, libraries, or at home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, classrooms have the same kids and the same teachers every day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After-school programmes or youth movements are often drop-in, so attendance is inconsistent, as is leadership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can assume that classroom-based teachers have a certain level of training in educational philosophy, teaching strategy, classroom management, and content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth leaders, by contrast, vary in experience and knowledge of teaching techniques, content expertise, and group management. (That's why we have H-Course!)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School programmes offer a more regimented and disciplined kind of environment, where activities are formal and more restricted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many kids who feel disenfranchised at school blossom in an informal setting. Real learning can happen in a setting where kids feel less intimidated or more comfortable than they do in a formal classroom.

There are also key differences between Jewish and general informal education. General informal education is often about learning a skill or improving one's skills, especially life skills. It is rarely about ultimate identity or character education. Jewish informal education is inherently about affecting the lifestyle and identity of Jews. **Informal Jewish educators are inherently shapers of Jewish experience and role models of Jewish lifestyle**, as opposed to the good general informal educator who isn't focussed on shaping identity or group loyalties. Informal Jewish education is aimed at the personal growth of Jews of all ages. It happens through the individual's actively experiencing a diversity of Jewish moments and values that are regarded as worthwhile. It works by creating venues, by developing a total educational culture, and by co-opting the social context. It is based on a curriculum of Jewish values and experiences that is presented in a dynamic and flexible manner. As an activity, it does not call for any one venue but may happen in a variety of settings.

However nowadays, it is possible that the role has changed slightly. With far more of our chanichim at Jewish schools, they are offered some other informal Jewish education at school, which Madrichim used to do. In addition, the topics taught on some of the younger machanot are often taught at school too. It is also possible that through more chanichim going to Jewish schools, they have come to

'resent their Judaism' more than previous chanichim. This could make it harder for the Madrichim to get them to daven three times a day for example, as in the chanichim's heads, their holiday is their 'break from davening'. This may mean that going forward, BAUK may have to reconsider their education with regards to what they teach and how they approach different structures.



What is the definition of the above categories and where is the line of what is acceptable for BA Madrichim to attempt to do?

DISCUSSION POINT 4 – What do you think your role is with regards to Jewish education? Do you think it is significantly different to Madrichim of 10 years ago? Why?

Peula Ideas:

- Present the above spectrum to your Chanichim and come up with lots of examples of things that Jewish educators could do. Ask them to place them where they think they go on the spectrum.

Some ideas include:

- Giving a shiur about the spiritual benefits of keeping shabbat
- Compulsory tefillah on Machane
- Telling a Chanich that if he doesn't keep kosher, he'll go to Gehinom
- Confiscating non-kosher food that a Chanicha brought on Machane

Add your own!

Concrete Concepts

1. The structure of the Jewish education system changed throughout history, to adapt with the needs of the generation
2. There are various approaches to modern day Jewish Education
3. The role of Bnei Akiva Madrichim in Jewish Education is also evolving

K5. Israel and the Diaspora



Objectives:

1. To consider the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora and examine four models of that relationship.
2. To think about our role as young Jews currently living in the Diaspora and our responsibility towards both Israel and the Diaspora.
3. To discuss 3 possible pillars on which to build a new relationship between the Diaspora and Israel

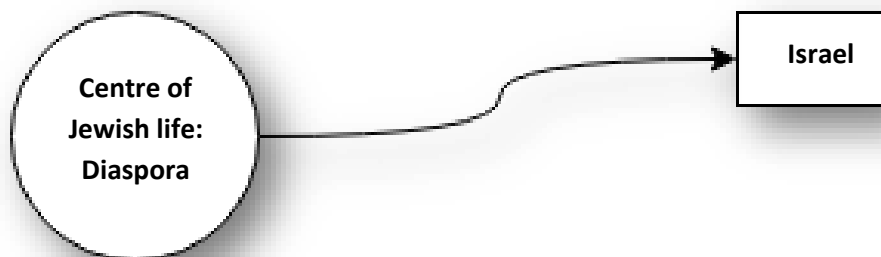
Introduction

In K1 we talked about how Gimmel Machane is dedicated to exploring some of the key debates that shape Diaspora life today. The question of 'What does it mean to be a Jew in the Diaspora?' is one that has always challenged Jews throughout history. This Kvutza is going to look at the challenge that is presented by the existence of the State of Israel to the idea of the Diaspora and the identity of Jews living in it.

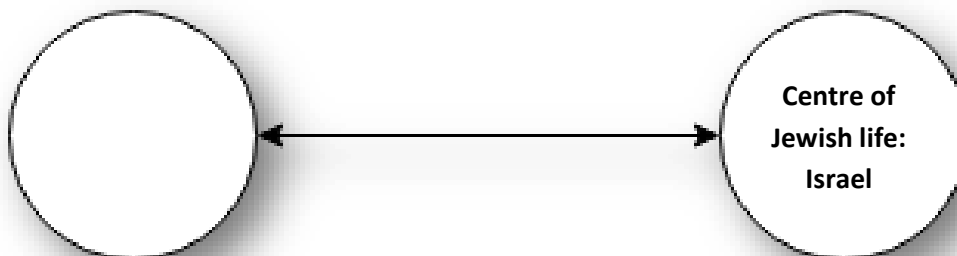
(Reminder: Diaspora refers to "a scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographic local". For us it means the communities and people living outside of Israel. It specifically sets up a relationship and connection between people in Israel and people outside of Israel).

David Ben-Gurion (Israel's first Prime Minister) was known to have said that the 'greatest challenge to the state of Israel was the continued existence of a thriving, strong diaspora'.

For a long time the relationship was relatively simple¹: You had almost the whole Jewish population creating communities, living their lives and generally getting on with things wherever they were living whilst always maintaining some connection and perspective towards their ancient homeland – Israel. The centre of Jewish life was outside of Israel. Picture the relationship like this:



However once the State of Israel was established and especially today this relationship has changed, there is no longer one single centre of Jewish life but two:



¹ This is a recurring theme throughout the Gimmel chomer – things were relatively simple and now they're not! In reality things have always been complicated, they were just complicated in different ways.

Discussion Point 1 – How do you think your chanichim should view their relationship with Israel? How can you get them to think about it?

Today there are three key models of the relationship:

1. Peripheral
2. Negative
3. Outdated

We're going to look at each model and then see if we can develop a fourth one.

Peripheral:

Consider the following person – let's call them Rachel.

Rachel is a poster child for Jewish education in almost all respects. She went to JFS, was very involved in her youth movement growing up, she teaches in her local cheder and is studying Geography at University of Birmingham where she is very involved in her J-Soc. She's checked off all the boxes we set up for young British Jews.

But she isn't interested in Israel.

"I just don't need Israel," Rachel says. "I have a rich Jewish life in every respect. I love Shabbat, I love my community, I have a great Jewish social life, and many Jewish and non-Jewish friends. I enjoy studying Jewish texts – especially Mishnah and I find meaning in many of the ritual elements of Jewish life. It's not that I have anything against Israel – I just don't need it. I have a perfectly rich Jewish life without it".

Rachel's relationship with Israel is a peripheral one. If we were to picture her model of the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel the arrow leading from the Diaspora to Israel is pretty faded, and it certainly isn't leading back from Israel to her.

Negative:

Consider the following person – let's call them Avi.

Avi is a Masters student in philosophy, studying in Israel for the year as part of his course. He is taking classes in Bar Ilan University, and while he enjoys the studying, he doesn't seem to talk much to his Israeli classmates. When asked "Avi, whom do you feel you have more in common with – these Israelis in your class - who are, after all, fellow Jews, also studying philosophy – or a group of non-Jewish Brits?". Avi's response is "The British non-Jews, of course! I have nothing in common with these Israelis."

Avi's relationship with Israel (and indeed Israelis) is a negative one. He doesn't see any connection between him and Israel. If we were to picture his model of the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel it wouldn't exist.

Outdated:

Consider the following person – let's call them Abigail.

Abigail is working towards an undergraduate degree in Jewish education. She is smart, thoughtful, dynamic Jewish educator-to-be. Part of her course is a 3-week seminar in Israel. In an orientation session before the trip, going over packing-lists with the group Rachel quiets down everybody for an important announcement: "We shouldn't just take our own stuff. We need to take something with us from the UK to give to Israelis. I think we should all go out and buy a few pairs of socks, and when we get to Israel, we'll give them to an organisation there that gives out clothes to the poor".

Abigail's relationship with Israel is outdated. In the 1950s through to the 1970s the Diaspora's relationship with Israel was all about funnelling money, goods and support to the struggling state. Today that relationship has shifted to investment, partnership and supporting Israelis themselves to make change rather than 'doing it for them'. Consider if Abigail would make the same announcement if she were travelling to Paris or New York, both of which have pockets of poverty? If we were to picture her model of the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel it would have a massive, thick arrow from the Diaspora to Israel and none coming back from Israel to the Diaspora.

Discussion Point 2 - What do you think of these three archetypes and models? Do you agree with how they have been categorised (Peripheral, Negative, and Outdated)? How else might you have categorised these relationships? Are there other models that you think might be missing and what are they?

Note: We're going to look at some other models of relationship between Israel and Diaspora later in the Kvutza and some key thinkers and text that express them. So don't get too frustrated that it's quite simplistic so far.

Sociologists Steven M. Cohen and Charles Lieberman called this last model the 'mobilization narrative': from the 1950s through to the 1970s the State of Israel was depicted as a **fledgling, struggling state-in-the-making**; a despised but heroic David surrounded by a series of genocidal Goliaths; a refuge for Jews ejected from the developing world; a country struggling with enormous economic problems and in need of immense political and philanthropic support from the Diaspora. Whether or not this was true it was tremendously powerful in **mobilizing the Diaspora communities in support for Israel**. Today in sections of the community it continues to hold sway, however in many areas it has started to break down. A new relationship is needed to replace it.

One response to this breakdown in the relationship between Diaspora Jews and Israel is to simply blame Diaspora Jews for not being Zionist or Jewish enough – for not caring enough. Many people think that the weakening relationship is located entirely in the Diaspora context and due to its dwindling sense of Jewish particularism (being part of a distinct people). However, it takes two to tango. In the 'Israel education' scene there is a famous and evocative phrase to describe a relationship with Israel: 'hugging and wrestling' – it talks about the balance between how much does one love (hug) Israel and how much does one criticise (wrestle) Israel. However, this approach still locates the main problem with the Diaspora – it's about how they relate to Israel.

We need to go further and broaden the horizons of what a Diaspora-Israel relationship might look like:

“(Religious) Zionism must reframe the issue of connection with Israel from being a one-sided problem, in which one party simply needs to love the other party more strongly, to being a maturing, dialogical relationship, in which both partners have work to do in order to improve the relationship.”

We're going to now look at a fourth model that is built around four key pillars:

The fourth model claims that the Diaspora-Israel relationship should be based around a series of **conversations** about the **complexities** of each society. In these conversations, participants should be **empowered** to dialogue and disagree with each other about a variety of issues.

These are the three pillars:

1. Complexity
2. Conversations, i.e. dialogue.
3. Empowerment

Question for Madrichim: Why do you think blaming one side of the relationship might not be a good idea? What does claiming mutual responsibility do to affect the perspective of each side to the other participant in the relationship? Can we think of other examples where mutual responsibility rather than blaming is important?

Three Pillars of a Relationship

1. Complexity:

Any parent who has a baby knows what simple love is. Your relationship with your baby is simple. You love her and provide for her. A parent's relationship with an adolescent child is much more complicated. You still love them, but you sometimes disagree with them – and they with you. You try to find ways to have these disagreements become educative and nurturing, rather than debilitating and alienating. You can collaborate with them and build ideas together. You can sometimes find each other infuriating and frustrating; yet you still try to remain in loving-dialogue. The aim of the parent during the teenage years is to try and understand the complex person that their child is becoming. By acknowledging that there are many different, sometimes even contradictory facets of this young person the relationship is likely to become more equal and understanding. It's a much more complicated kind of love – but probably a much richer kind of love.

The same is true for the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel. It is important that both sides acknowledge the complex realities of the other's society and communities. And to express that complexity with a love, a love that isn't simple but a love that is mature. Let's just focus on this term 'love' for a moment. It's very easy to get into a tangle over what it means to 'love Israel'. There is an important feminist philosopher of education called Nel Noddings who takes the term love and suggest that perhaps we should use the word 'caring' instead (she wasn't talking about Israel but it applies equally for our Kvutza). Here is how she defines the term:

"The analysis of caring reveals the part each participant plays. The one-caring (or carer) is first of all attentive. This attention, which I call 'engrossment' is receptive; it receives what the cared-for is feeling and trying to express. It is not merely diagnostic, measuring the cared-for against some pre-established ideal. Rather, it opens the carer to motivational displacement. When I care, my motive energy begins to flow towards the needs and wants of the cared-for. **This does not mean I will always approve of what the other wants, nor does it mean that I will never try to lead them to a better set of values**, but I must take into account the feelings and desires that are actually there and respond as positively as my own values and capacities allow." (*Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education, 1984*)

There are a couple of key things to take away from this quote:

- Engrossment: Teachers and madrichim should not expect to go about their business without being attentive to who their students or chanichim are, what they are thinking and what their world is. So too Jews in the Diaspora or Israel should be attentive to the thoughts and desires of the other, to their arts and culture, to their political and sociological realities, and to everything that makes them, them.
- Motivational displacement: This means that both sides need to consider the needs, wants and desires of the other and to not consider their own first. To literally displace their own motives.²
 - Caring is not a relationship of hierarchy but one of a purer, simple desire to be in a relationship with the other.
 - Caring also opens the door to **conversations** and to **empowered** action.

2. Conversations:

Anyone who has ever studied Gemara knows that it is a cacophony of conversations; it is home to a plurality of voices that often vehemently but lovingly disagree with each other. When teaching a section of Gemara or indeed any part of our Jewish tradition (*masoret Halakha*) any good educator is going to try and bring those different voices into conversation with each other. You saw in K2 how so many arguments in the Gemara are left open-ended, without conclusion. There is a fancy education theory term for these sorts of conversations – they are 'educative'. John Dewey described how they are likely to lead to growth and to the desire for future similar experiences of conversation. They are 'more-ish'. They are fascinating. They are divergent, rather than convergent; they lead in all sorts of possible directions.

The very existence of the State of Israel opens up similar conversations about Judaism and Jewishness that were simply unimaginable just decades ago. It is the only place on earth where Judaism and Jewishness play themselves out in a national-sovereign-public setting. It challenges us to think about what Judaism looks like when lived as the majority. And on the other hand the experience of most

² If you want you can discuss what motives towards the chanichim you bring as a Tzevet to Machane. Do they differ to the motives (reasons) of the chanichim coming to Machane? Example: Education vs. Fun. How might this idea of motivational displacement effect how we act as madrichim towards our chanichim? Whose motives/needs come first?

Diaspora Jews today in an accepting, multi-cultural society that welcomes them (mostly) with open arms is also something that was unimaginable just a few decades ago. This experience also challenges us to think about what it means to live amongst people who are not unlike ourselves, to think about how to be a minority amongst other diverse minorities. Our task as madrichim is to both invite our chanichim into these conversations but to keep them powerful, educative, and open-ended.

Our fourth model of the relationship is **an invitation to both sides to engage in significant, honest, constructive, caring conversations about and with each other about the State and the Diaspora, and the lives of Jews in both of them.**

3. Empowerment:

If caring can lead to good conversations, then caring together with conversations can lead to empowerment. Caring opens the door to action which when combined with passion and sometimes even anger *demands* action. A relationship built on caring and conversations can be a highly empowering relationship. Perhaps the best way to think about this sort of empowerment is through 'intervention':

An intervention is a deliberate process by which change is introduced into people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours. The overall objective of an intervention is to confront a person in a non-threatening way and allow them to see their negative behaviour, and how it affects themselves, family and friends. It usually involves several people who have prepared themselves to talk to a person who has been engaging in the negative behaviour. In a clear and respectful way they inform the person of factual information regarding the behaviour and how it may have affected them. They then invite that person into a conversation about their behaviour.

A relationship that involves intervention is when both sides **empower themselves and each other to talk candidly about how each other's actions affect them.** They express how much they care for the other person and that's why they are intervening. It allows both sides to express their possible upset, frustration or hurt without walking away or sweeping it under the carpet, and to do it in the context of a caring, complex relationship.

This is exactly the model of a mutually complex and empowered relationship that's expressed through respectful and caring conversations that can exist between the Diaspora and Israel.

Discussion Point 3 – Do you think that being on University Campuses in the UK puts a strain on one's ability to do this? What about the influences of social media?

Key Thinkers:

Remember how we said we would come back to some other models of the relationship? Well one model that we haven't talked about is one that, whilst it's not one that Bnei Akiva

endorses, it is an important aspect of some people's Religious Zionism. The model is called 'Shelilat HaGola' which means the denigration of exile/Diaspora. Its approach to the relationship is not to talk about how good Israel is but how bad the Diaspora is. Some examples are:

Shelilat HaGolah – Negation of Exile/Diaspora:

1. Sifrei (43 of Sifrei on Devarim) – The Mitzvot done in the Diaspora don't really count, they're only for practice!

"Even though I am about to exile you from the Land (of Israel) to a foreign land, you must continue to be marked there by the commandments, so that when you return they will not be new to you. A parable: A king of flesh and blood grew angry with his wife and sent her back to her father's house, saying to her, "Be sure to continue wearing your jewellery, so that whenever you return, it will not be new to you." Thus also the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, "My children, you must continue to be marked by the commandments, so that when you return, they will not be new to you."

So basically, according to this source, for someone who lives outside of Israel, the mitzvot are just for practice, so that we know what we're doing when we live in Israel again – that they won't be 'unfamiliar'. Now this source is pretty shocking – can it really be that mitzvot can be of greater or lesser value depending on where one fulfils them? Surely the command doesn't change i.e. if I'm supposed to keep Shabbat should it really matter where I am whilst keeping it?

The Ramban in his commentary on Vayikra 18:25 quotes this Sifrei and takes it very seriously. Indeed many people in Israel in the Religious Zionist community view this approach as the normative model. Needless to say that many people living in the Diaspora point to a Gemara in Kiddushin 36b that says that "Any commandment that is not dependent on the Land (of Israel) must be performed outside of the Land, and any of them that is dependent on the Land is not performed except for in the Land." And if you remember from K2 when it comes to Aggadah (Sifrei is a type of Aggadah) we're much more free in agreeing or disagreeing with what is said, so practise or not – you decide!

Peula ideas.

- 🗨️ Tell the Chanichim that they've been appointed as the new 'Diaspora Jewish Committee.' They have to draft a 'constitution' with key principles by which they think Jews outside of Israel should live. Make posters! Campaign!
- 🗨️ Have a debate about whether one can be a Religious Zionist without making Aliyah. Use this to start a discussion on what it means to be a 'Religious Zionist'.

Concrete Concepts.

1. There are many different models of the relationship between Diaspora Jews and Israel, some more productive than others.

2. Jews currently living in the Diaspora have responsibility towards both Israel and the Diaspora.
3. Complexity, conversation and empowerment are 3 pillars via which we can build a more positive relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry

K6. Gender equality and Judaism



Objectives:

1. To enhance the way that we view the Jewish narrative of the roles of both women and men.
2. To gain awareness of the opportunities and barriers faced in Judaism on the basis of one's gender.
3. To develop positive methods of improving people's access to Torah and Judaism, regardless of their gender.

Introduction

Your Chanichim have grown up in a unique era of Judaism for many reasons. Over the past 50 years, the landscape of women's opportunity and involvement in Judaism has shifted immensely in some ways but not in others. This has all been occurring in parallel and sometimes in symbiosis with multiple waves of secular feminism. In this Kvutza we'll look at a Jewish perspective on gender, focusing specifically on the manifestation of Avodat Hashem for each gender. We will then look at ways of improving gender equality on Machane.

This Kvutza addresses issues that can be personal, emotional, complex, and sometimes difficult. In order to gain from it, it's important that you summon all of your powers of empathy and listening skills as you are likely to be sitting in a room with people who have very different thoughts and opinions surrounding this topic.

Two equal variations of human

The following is from Massekhet Sotah:

דריש ר"ע איש ואשה זכו שכינה ביניהן לא זכו אש אוכלתן (סוטה י"ז).

Rabbi Akiva taught: If a man [ish] and woman [isha] merit, the Divine Presence rests between them. (The words ish and isha are almost identical; the difference between them is the middle letter yod in ish, and the final letter heh in isha. These two letters can be joined to form the name of G-d spelled yod, heh.) But if they do not merit reward, the Divine Presence departs, (leaving in each word only the letters alef and shin, which spell esh, fire.) Therefore, fire consumes them. (Sotah 17a)



אשה



איש

As well as being a nice vort about marriage, this Gemara demonstrates a point that we sometimes take for granted. On hearing the words 'Ish' and 'Isha', we might assume that the ivrit word for woman is just the word for man but with an extra amendment. This concept that men are the default human being is prevalent in many aspects of wider society, from medical textbooks, to the world of sports, to the way that Jewish educational events are advertised. However, what we see through this linguistic example, is that 'ish' and 'isha' both contain the same root with a different letter, showing that the concept of ikar and tafel should stick to the realms of hilchot brachot and has no place in gender roles.

To paraphrase Eurythmics and Aretha Franklin, next to every great man and woman are lots of other great men and women!

The implication here is also that both genders can achieve holy things, but essentially only if we work together. A frequent and incorrect assumption made about those who campaign for gender equality is for some reason that this means some sort of women versus men situation. Actually, this ought to be the complete opposite (the clue's in the word 'equality'). The truth is that increased and broader opportunity for both genders benefits everyone.

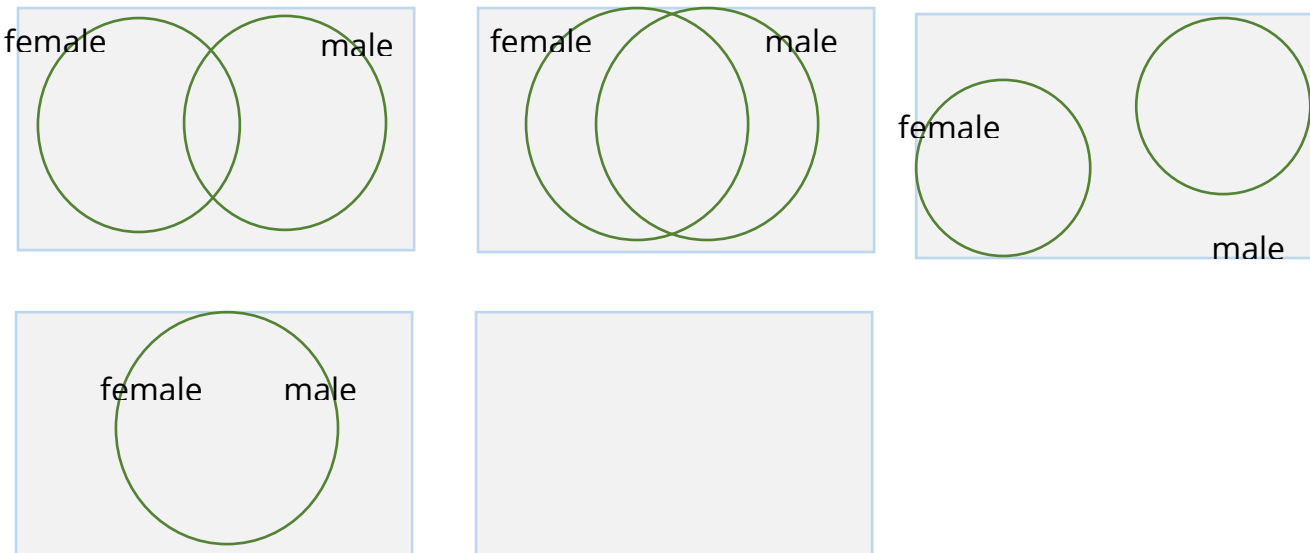
The Gemara records an opinion that brings out this equality:

דָּאָמַר רַבִּי יִרְמְיָה בֶּן אֶלְעָזָר: דּוּ פְּרָצוּפִין בְּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּאָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן, שְׁנָאָמַר: "אָחֹר וְקָדָם צָרְתָנִי". (ברכות ס"א.)

As Rabbi Yirmiya b. Elazar said: The holy One, blessed be He, created two faces (i.e. male and female) of primordial human, as it says 'backwards and forwards have you fashioned me'.

However, unfortunately unhelpful and potentially damaging narratives about both genders are often inflicted on Jewish youths from a young age, leaving both males and females feeling insecure and limited by their gender, as well as suspicious and disrespectful of the opposite gender.

DISCUSSION POINT 1 – Can you think of any positive narratives of your, or the opposite gender that you've been told through the Jewish education system? What about negative?



DISCUSSION POINT 2 – Which of the above Venn diagrams do you think most accurately portrays the characteristics of men and women? What about skills? Feel free to draw your own on the blank diagram.

1. Barriers to spiritual growth

Within the context of Judaism, sexist stereotypes, incidents, and expectations often do more than just hurt people's feelings. They **put up**

fences between an individual and experiences and opportunities that help them to grow closer to Hashem. Let's take a closer look at some examples, as well as acknowledging some exciting steps forward that have taken place in recent years.

Access to Torah learning opportunities

א בשלושה כְּתָרִים נִכְתְּרוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל--כְּתַר תּוֹרָה, וְכְתַר כְּהֵנָה, וְכְתַר מַלְכוּת: כְּתַר כְּהֵנָה--זְכָה בּוֹ אֶהְרֹן... כְּתַר מַלְכוּת--זְכָה בּוֹ דָּוִד... כְּתַר תּוֹרָה הָרִי הוּא מִנְּחָ וְעוֹמֵד וּמוֹכֵן לְכָל, שְׁנֵאמַר "מִוְרְשָׁה, קֵהֶלֶת יַעֲקֹב" (דְּבָרִים ל"ג,ד): כָּל מִי שִׁירְצָה, יָבֹא וְיִטַּלָּךְ.
ב שָׁמָא תֵאמַר שְׂאוֹתָן הַכְּתָרִים גְּדוּלִים מִכְּתַר תּוֹרָה, הָרִי הוּא אוֹמֵר "בִּי, מַלְכִים יִמְלְכוּ; וְרִזְנִים, יַחֲקִקוּ צָדֵק. בִּי, שָׂרִים יִשְׂרוּ" (משלי ח, טו-טז). הָא לְמַדְתָּ, שְׂכַתְרַת הַתּוֹרָה גְּדוּל מִכְּתַר כְּהֵנָה וְכְתַר מַלְכוּת. [ב] אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים, מִמְזַר תַּלְמִיד חֲכָמִים קוֹדֵם לְכוֹהֵן גְּדוּל עִם הָאָרֶץ: שְׁנֵאמַר "יִקְרָה הִיא, מִפְּנִינִים" (משלי ג, טו)--יִקְרָה הִיא מְכוֹהֵן גְּדוּל, שְׁנִכְנַס לְפָנָי לְפָנִים ל.

With three crowns Israel were crowned: The crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood and the crown of kingship. The crown of priesthood – Aharon merited... the crown of kingship – David merited... the crown of Torah – behold it is set down, waiting, prepared for all, as it says 'an inheritance [for] the congregation of Ya'akov' (Devarim 34:4); anyone who wants, should come and take it.

Perhaps you may say that the other crowns [of priesthood and kingship] are greater than the crown of Torah – [but] behold, it says: 'Through me [i.e. Torah] kings rule, and [through me] governors establish righteous laws; through me, officers hold office' (*Mishlei* 8:15-16). Thus you have learned that the crown of Torah is greater than the crowns of priesthood and kingship. The sages said: a bastard Torah scholar takes precedence over an ignorant high priest, as it says: 'It [Torah] is more precious than jewels [Heb. *peninim*]' (*Mishlei* 3:15) – meaning, Torah is more precious than the high priest, who entered the holy of holies (Heb. *lifnai v'lifnim*). (*Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Talmud Torah* 3:1-2)

The above excerpt from Rambam, which is culled from numerous Rabbinic sources, paints a very positive, meritocratic view of Torah study. However, for a large proportion of history, certain groups have been denied the opportunity to education – both Jewish and otherwise – for various societal reasons. Typically, women's education was undervalued and seen as unnecessary, or even unbecoming for a woman. This attitude has had negative ramifications for both men and women, as we shall see.



Whilst individuals such as Sarah Schenirer pioneered great improvements in women's Torah education, there still remains as stigma surrounding text-based learning, particularly the Talmud, to this day. Some women are often

Spotlight on: Sarah Schenirer

Sarah Schenirer lived in Poland (1883-1935). She was a schoolteacher and a pioneer for girls' Torah education, eventually founding the Beis Yaakov Movement. She spoke to multiple prominent Rabbis at the time and essentially changed the way that women learning Torah was perceived. See *Shabbat Lashem Vayakhel-Pekudei* for more!



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told that their brains aren't made for intellectual study, or repeatedly have their motivations for learning questioned. On a more basic level, the vast majority of contemporary English Jewish Sefarim, articles and Divrei Torah are written as if they're only talking to men, using the word 'he' whenever talking about a person. This makes women feel **less connected to what they're reading** and like it does not apply to them. Many high level shiurim and Torah resources are also simply not available to females. Most Jewish high schools in the UK put girls at a disadvantage from a young age by not providing them with enough textual skills to learn independently, which is less often the case with boys.

Bonus video: <https://www.shela-he.org/> - This is an organisation that allows women to 'claim their own personal part of Torah' by... paying money to men to study in Kollel and not get jobs, thus the Torah learning is in their merit. Scroll to the videos, click 'watch more' and watch the first video there. It's very problematic, suggesting that not only can women not learn themselves, but that their **greatest personal achievements are through men's learning**.

On the other hand, men are sometimes expected to have very Gemara-heavy learning schedules, which is great for those who find they can engage with this, but very **difficult for those who find other forms of Torah study more accessible or inspiring**. This also creates a stigma around learning other forms of Torah for a lot of men, creating barriers between many individuals and their Avodat Hashem. As women's learning in other areas of Judaism increased, some sought to portray those areas women were studying as 'less serious' than the areas still mainly in the purview of men. For example, 'Chumash-Rashi is for girls' – quote from a Rabbi at Hasmonian Boys school. Some males feel **intense pressure** to appear externally studious, sometimes at the expense of a genuine spiritual connection to Torah.

Tefilla and experiential spirituality

אִיזוֹ הִיא עֲבוֹדָה שֶׁהִיא בְּלֵב הָיִי אוֹמֵר זֹו תְּפִלָּה

What is the service of the heart? You must say this is referring to prayer (Ta'anit 2a)

Tefilla is one of the most frequent, powerful, and personal ways that we serve Hashem. Whilst men and women (according to some) have different obligations for *tefilla*, **both communal and private tefilla are essential values for all Jews**. The fact that men have to daven with a minyan can create a **positive social environment** and a sense of achdut that is often very **motivational**. However, this can prevent men from connecting to the individual and deeply spiritual nature of prayer, and this is not always something that is prioritised in male-only environments. Additionally, **men who prefer to daven privately** may find it difficult to grow in their *tefilla*. After lockdown ended, many men did not return to shul, preferring instead to daven at home at their own pace – which is often portrayed as not living up to the standard.

On the other hand, women are often encouraged to see *tefilla* as a **private and spiritual activity**, which can be very positive. However, this can create a sense of **isolation and of not feeling part of a larger group**.



Let's take a look at the actual laws of prayer:

טו כוונת הלב כפיצד: כל תפלה שאינה בכוונה, אינה תפלה; ואם התפלל בלא כוונה, חוזר ומתפלל בכוונה. מצא דעתו משבשת ולבו טרוד--אסור לו להתפלל, עד שתתישב דעתו. לפיכך הבא מן הדרך, והוא עיף או מצר--אסור לו להתפלל, עד שתתישב דעתו: אמרו חכמים, שלושה ימים, עד שינוח ותתקרב דעתו, ואחר כך יתפלל.

טז כפיצד היא הכוונה--שיפנה לבו מכל המחשבות, ויראה עצמו כאלו הוא עומד לפני השכינה; לפיכך צריך לישוב מעט קדם התפלה, כדי לכוון את לבו, ואחר כך יתפלל, בנחת ובתחנונים. ולא יעשה תפלתו כמי שהיה נושא משאוי, משליכו והולך לו; לפיכך צריך לישוב מעט אחר התפלה, ואחר כך יפטר. חסידים הראשונים היו שוהין שעה קדם התפלה, ושעה אחר התפלה, ומאריכין בתפלה שעה.

15 In what was is *kavana* [an essential part of *tefilla*]? Any *tefilla* that is not done with *kavana* is not *tefilla*. If one prayed without *kavana*, one repeats and prays with *kavana*. If one found their mind to be all muddled, and their concentration distracted – it is forbidden for them to pray, until their mind settles. Therefore, one who arrives after travelling and is tired or troubled – it is forbidden for them to pray, until their mind settles. The sages said: three days [are required] until one is rested and calmed, and after that should one pray.

16 What does *kavana* [in *tefilla*] look like? One must turn one's heart away from all thoughts and see themselves as if they are standing before the *shekhina*; therefore, one must sit a little before *tefilla*, in order to focus one's heart, and after that pray, gently and with personal supplication. And one should not 'perform' their *tefilla* as if they were bearing a burden, then throwing it off and leaving; therefore, one must sit a little after prayer, and after that leave. The original attuned individuals would wait for an hour before *tefilla*, and an hour after *tefilla*, and prolong their *tefilla* for an hour. (*Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Prayer 4:15-16*)

DISCUSSION POINT 3 – Do you think shuls nowadays are conducive to fulfilling this requirement of *tefilla*? Do you think the reaction would be different if a man said he didn't want to daven in a *minyan*, in order to have *kavana*, compared to if a woman said that?

Many shuls are very **male-centric** in structure. There's never a guarantee that a shul will actually have a women's section and it's common for women who turn up to shuls at any time other than shabbat morning to have the **awkward experience** of a mechitza being put up upon their arrival.

It is worth noting that different females have different attitudes towards mechitzot. Some women enjoy having a space where they can daven more privately without interruption or distraction. However, others find it humiliating and degrading, **especially when the Ezrat Nashim is not afforded the same Kavod as the Men's section**. Examples of this are sitting in a cramped, cornered off section at the back, a gallery that does not allow women to see or hear the service properly, or in some cases being made to sit in an entirely separate room. While mechitzot remain halakhically mandated, there are ways to make them a more welcoming space for women.



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Arriving near the beginning of a service can also be quite a dehumanising experience, as some men use language such as 'we only have eight people, just need two more'. Not counting in a minyan does not render one an inanimate object! One chanicha of mine once arrived at shul on Friday night before there was a minyan – as she stepped through the doors, she watched the faces of the nine men drop, and one said 'oh.'

2. Steps forward

Here are some recommendations, based on the testimony of real Bogrot and Bogrim, as well as evidence in literature, that will help to make Machane, BA, Judaism and the world a better place for both men and women.

In general life

- Make sure to use inclusive language. Alternate between 'he' and 'she' in articles you write, or just say 'they'.
- Talk to your friends and colleagues about your experiences and listen when they tell you about theirs.
- Be empathetic! If someone tells you they feel they are being treated a certain way because of their gender, believe them.
- Don't stigmatise people who say they are feminists; ask them what they actually mean before making assumptions.
- Learn the real definition of feminism: **the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state** (Cambridge dictionary).

On BA Machane

- Call out any sexist behaviour or language from any Chanichim, **regardless of whether they are the same gender as you**. This includes but is not limited to ranking other chanichim/ot by appearance, jokes about women not being allowed to be eidim, 'Laddish' culture, making fun of boys for having higher voices or being smaller, and derogatory comments about menstruation.
- Make an active effort to take females and males equally seriously.
- Think about the language you are using when talking about leaders. Do you tell females that they could be a future Mazkira or call them legends as much as males? Do you talk about a 'madrich' or a 'sgan' without acknowledging the female versions of the words?
- Do whatever you can, within the realms of halakhic guidance to make *tefilla* as positive for both genders as possible. If in doubt, ask the Rav!
- Challenge gender stereotypes!
- Encourage Chanichim and Chanichot to have a cohesive approach to serving Hashem and not see each other as two opposing 'teams'. (No boys vs girls tochniot please!)



Organisations and resources

<https://www.deracheha.org/> - Deracheha is a relatively new organisation, set up to be a resource for women to learn text-based Torah and practical *halakha*, mostly from other women

<https://www.yoatzot.org/home/> - *Yoatzot Halakha* are female experts in halachic areas that pertain specifically to women and their health.

<https://www.chochmatnashim.org/> - Chochmat Nashim is an orthodox organisation dedicated to counteracting the erasure and discrimination of women in Judaism

<https://mizrachi.org.uk/programmes/sbm/lul> - Lilmod U'lamed is a female educator program run by BA, Mizrahi and the United Synagogue.

<https://shows.acast.com/the-fruminist> - Frum feminist podcast with lots of exciting guests!



DISCUSSION POINT 4 – Have you personally experienced something in your Jewish life that would have been different if you were of the opposite gender? Have you encountered gender-based discrimination in Jewish settings?

Peula Ideas

- Try out the Venn diagram activity from above with your Chanichim. Use it to prompt an interesting discussion
- Play 'agree or disagree' where you read out statements and one side of the room is 'agree' and one side is 'disagree.' However, the room should be treated as a spectrum so depending on how much each Chan agrees or disagrees with a given statement, they should place themselves accordingly in the room. Choose statements such as:
 - I feel like I am usually taken seriously in BA
 - My Torah learning is seen as valuable
 - I think that it is possible to achieve gender equality in Judaism
 - Men and Women are inherently different
 - Men and women should have different roles in Judaism
 - I have never noticed any sexism on Machane

Add in your own and ask people to justify where they are standing.



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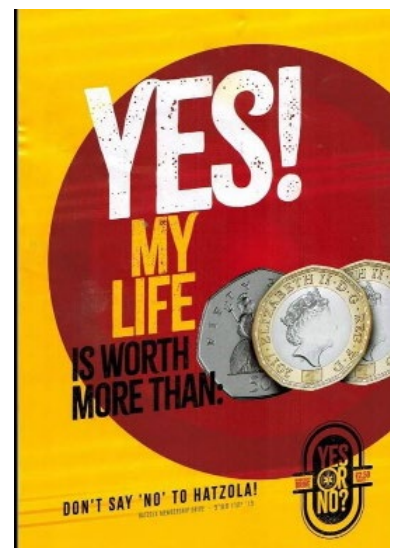
Gimmel: The Orthodox Jew in the Modern world – היהודי הדתי בעולם מודרני -
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Concrete Concepts:

1. Men and Women are two equally important and capable categories of human
2. More opportunities for women in Judaism will accommodate greater development of avodat Hashem.
3. Empathy and consideration are key.
4. Great strides forward have taken place in recent years, but there is still more the Jewish community can do, within the halakhic framework, to improve Jewish women's experiences and access to Torah.

Addendum. Women's Publicity in the Jewish Community, and The Erasure of Women.

In many circles in the Orthodox world, it has become increasingly acceptable to erase women's presence from documentation. This is usually done in the form of removing someone from an image, but there are other forms, such as not including women's names on wedding invitations. I was once at a wedding where the married couple were referred to as 'The Chatan Ya'akov Doniel, and the Kallah'. A few examples (sourced from Chochmat Nashim) of women being blurred out can be seen below. These include blurring out, not printing, replacing women with dolls and 'activists' blacking out their faces on posters.





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Another related issue is the type of advertising that caters to women in the Jewish community. Along with what we mentioned above about women's learning, the advertising and publicity entrenches damaging stereotypes about what Jewish women should be aspiring for. Some examples include:

MAKOR HACHAIM
מקור החיים

Sponsored Anonymously
For the merit that all the children of our community should grow on their path of Torah & Mitzvos

PESACH PARENTING WORKSHOP
SUNDAY MARCH 14, 2021
WITH WORLD RENOWNED EDUCATOR
RABBI DOV BREZAK

FOR MEN "Make This the Best Seder Ever!" 5:30-6:30pm followed by Mincha/Maariv	FOR WOMEN "Cleaning for Pesach Raising Children & Staying Calm?!" 8:00-9:00pm
--	--

\$18 per couple or \$10 per individual
LIVE at Makor HaChaim 17815 Ventura Blvd #21
Masks & Covid guidelines will be observed
www.makorhachaim.com 818.793.3805

3x

This year, she's in seminary in Israel. Next year, she's in shidduchim!

Concerned she's growing in more way than one?!
Tell her about Slim Trim!

Exclusive in Israel! Slim Trim is the only studio in Israel that uses high-stream exercise machinery to accelerate weight-loss.

The 30-minute program fusing our high-stream heated cabin and heated exercise bike offers you the full range of cardio exercise, muscle-building and toning.

We've added new devices

Across from Rav Shefa

- 30 minutes = 3 hour workout
- 10 years experience
- Attractive group rates for seminary girls!
- On-site dietician





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Finally, often women’s education is presided over entirely by men – a situation the reverse of which would be unthinkable. Granted, living at the start of women’s education, where you had scholars of the calibre of Rav Soloveitchik teaching the first generation of female students at Stern, that was one thing. But now, why not have the many educated women educating other women? As the midrash says, ‘Avraham would convert the men and Sarah would convert the women’. These male-led women learning events often stereotype the style of advertising and content that will appeal to women. Take a look at the genuine poster (on the left), and the parody (on the right).



K7. Antisemitism



Objectives:

1. To understand what antisemitism is, why it exists and the **different ways it can manifest**.
2. To recognise the impact of antisemitism on our lives, both **practically** and **emotionally**, as well as looking at ways to cope with this.
3. To reflect on how antisemitism impacts our **Jewish identity**.

Antisemitism-what is it?

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." – IHRA

The following is from the IHRA website:

Antisemitism may be manifested in many ways, ranging from expressions of hatred of or discrimination against individual Jews to organized pogroms by mobs, state police, or even military attacks on entire Jewish communities. Although the term did not come into common usage until the 19th century, it is now also applied to historic anti-Jewish incidents.

Over this Kvutzah we're going to look at some of the 'classic' types of antisemitism and some of the possible causes of antisemitism and what we can do about it.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

**DISCUSSION POINT 1 – Which of these examples do you think happen more often?
How do you think people outside of the Jewish community respond to these examples?
Have you ever witnessed or experienced any of these forms of antisemitism?**

Impact of antisemitism

Antisemitism can have a range of effects on the way Jewish people live their lives. Examples of this include practical, psychological and spiritual implications.

Practical

People who grow up in Jewish communities around the UK often grow accustomed to the large amount of security that surrounds Jewish institutions, events and even prominent individuals. It's become normal for school children and their parents to have to present security passes in order to gain access to their own school, for entry to any large communal event to involve passing through a body scanner and to have shul security rotas, as well as paid guards.

As well as sometimes being an inconvenience and demonstrating significant inequalities that antisemitism can bring, this security takes a large financial toll. The government pays for much of this but recognising the need for Jewish people to protect themselves and their communities, the **Community Security Trust** (CST) was created in 1994. CST's mission is to

- Promote good relations between British Jews and the rest of British society by working towards the elimination of racism, and antisemitism in particular.
- Represent British Jews on issues of racism, antisemitism, extremism, policing and security.
- Facilitate Jewish life by protecting Jews from the dangers of antisemitism, and antisemitic terrorism in particular.
- Help those who are victims of antisemitic hatred, harassment or bias.
- Promote research into racism, antisemitism and extremism; and to use this research for the benefit of both the Jewish community and society in general.
- Speak responsibly at all times, without exaggeration or political favour, on antisemitism and associated issues.

Emotional

Antisemitism, like any form of discrimination can **negatively impact the mental health of those experiencing it**. Sometimes we wonder whether what has happened was or wasn't antisemitism and this can be exacerbated when others try and persuade us that we've got it wrong. This is particularly common when it comes to antisemitism within the context of Israel. Often we might feel lonely or frustrated, especially when we are exposed to antisemitism through social media.

Other experiences that can cause emotional distress include reading about antisemitic incidents and noticing worrying patterns of behaviour from those around us.

The children's mental health charity, *Young Minds*, provides the following recommendations for what do to if racism is negatively affecting one's mental health:

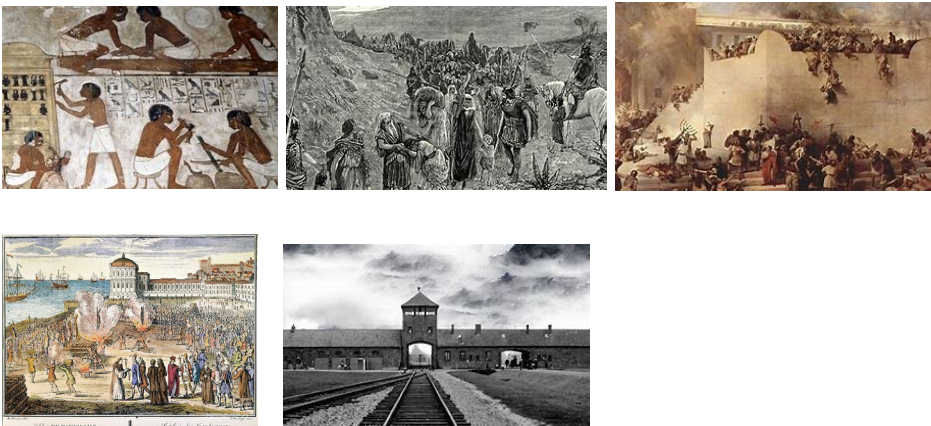
1. Speak to someone you trust, sharing only what you feel comfortable with

2. Speak to a GP if you are experiencing symptoms that might be indicative of poor mental health
3. Learn your rights and how to report abuse e.g. report to CST, police etc
4. Find supportive groups and communities e.g. Bnei Akiva!
5. Take part in activism to create change. It's worth noting that a particularly powerful way to do this is to also campaign for other discriminated groups, for example Uyghur Muslims and Kurds in Turkey and Iraq
6. Remember not to put pressure on yourself- it is not your responsibility to fix racism.
7. Clean your social media feed by blocking accounts and muting words that are offensive. All social media channels have ways you can report abusive behaviour.

A Jewish Approach

וְהִיא שְׁעִמְדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלֶבֶד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, אֶלֶּא שְׁבָכַל דּוֹר וְדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מֵיָדָם.

And it is this that has stood for our ancestors and for us; since it is not [only] one [person or nation] that has stood [against] us to destroy us, but rather in each generation, they stand [against] us to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, rescues us from their hand. (Pesach Hagadda)



The concept outlined in Vehi Sheamda at first glance may seem quite chilling and miserable. The prominence of antisemitism throughout Jewish History is brought to the surface as a painful reminder that the Jewish people have sustained heavy losses both physically and spiritually throughout history.

However, the real theme brought forward is that of resilience and commitment to the Torah and our Emunah in Hashem. The Jewish people have always stood up against all odds and continue to fight against all forms of hatred and discrimination. However, we must remember our past in order to move forward.

DISCUSSION POINT 2 – Notice how the CST's mission, whilst focusing on antisemitism, also acknowledges the need to end all forms of racism.

Can you think of times when antisemitism particularly affected your life? How do historic and contemporary antisemitism impact your relationship with Hashem, if at all?

How much does antisemitism define the Jewish experience?

Antisemitism is a key part of Jewish history, however what's not clear is whether it should be a key part of Jewish culture. Perhaps, if we go with the Vehi Sheamda narrative, we should accept that antisemitism is an intrinsic part of the Jewish experience. However, we're still hopeful that we can eradicate antisemitism as much as possible and all know that there is so much more to the Jewish experience than just being discriminated against. There is also something ideologically challenging about being defined by our oppressors when we have the Torah, halacha, morals, minhagim, Jewish music, Jewish food and so much more that all contribute to what Judaism is and how it manifests. On the other hand, for those people who are descended from survivors of the Shoah, or have grown up hearing about it, this is likely to have contributed to their Jewish identity.

DISCUSSION POINT 3 – How much should Jewish museums focus on the Shoah and antisemitism? How should we educate our Chanichim about antisemitism? What can we do as Jewish youths to minimise antisemitism if anything?

Peula ideas:

- Antisemitism: Make your own board and cards all to do with antisemitism (tried and tested)
- Guess the antisemitic experience: Ask all the madrichim to write down an antisemitic experience they've had and the chanichim have to match the story to the Madrich/a
- Day at the museum: Ask your Chanichim to make a blueprint of a Jewish Museum in groups. Discuss how much they have dedicated to antisemitism and what other topics they've addressed.



Concrete Concepts

1. Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities

2. Antisemitism can have a large impact on people's lives and wellbeing
3. We should work to end antisemitism, but not define our entire Jewish identity based on its presence

K8. The Value of Giving



Objectives.

1. To think about how our attitude when giving impacts the physical action of giving.
2. To look at three different ways about our obligation to others and to discuss the exact nature of our responsibility towards other people.
3. To consider the balance between our responsibility towards different people and groups in the world and Jewish people.

Introduction

There is a general obligation to give 'Tzedaka' in Jewish law (Rambam Sefer HaMitzvot – Positive Commandment 195). As a nation whose mark is chessed (see Gemara Yevamot 79a), our commitment to others is a distinction we carry with pride. Our duty to society, both as Jews and as human beings, and our obligation to those less fortunate are of great significance to us as individuals and as a people. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (34:1) quite literally says that the desire to act charitably is a trait that characterizes us as the descendants of Avraham Avinu.

In this Kvutzah we're going to look at the different levels of giving, giving and getting vs giving and taking, tzedaka, extreme poverty and how we can affect and change others through all of this.

שמעון הצדיק היה משיגרי כנסת הגדולה. הוא היה אומר, על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים:

Shimon the Righteous was one of the last of the men of the great assembly. He used to say: the world stands upon three things: the Torah, the Temple service, and the practice of acts of piety. (Avot 1:2)

Gemilut chasadim, acts of loving kindness, are not merely acts of charity, but any act that helps another person in their time of need (visiting the sick, comforting the mourner, welcoming guests). The rabbis teach that these acts are even greater than giving charity, for a person gives charity with their money, but these acts are performed with money and by the person's own body.

The greatest gift we can get in our lives is not when someone gives us something back in 'exchange' for us giving something to them, but the greatest gift is the ability to give!

I need to be a giver for me not for you

Discussion point 1- what do you think our initial reaction to giving should be? Is there such thing as a selfless good deed?

Our initial mental reaction for every situation should be 'how can I give in the situation in front of me?' However, multiple obstacles can get in the way:

- We get nervous that we will be taken advantage of before it has even happened.
- What will actually happen if we give and they don't give back? Detrimental effects?
- Would you rather give and be gracious or create another transactional relationship?
- In Judaism, through spiritual eyes the opportunity comes after the action. Don't wait for the 'ability' to give to come to you causing you to then give. You have to

start to give first with whatever you have then the opportunities will come flying to you.

Discussion point 2 - What is the highest level of giving?

Jewish thinkers and poskim throughout history have wrestled with the exact nature of the obligation to give Tzedaka. We're specifically interested here in how they wrote about the scope of the obligation and how to work out who to give to first. The next few sources outline who outweighs who, time, perspective, and location.

Mishnah Torah, Rambam - Gifts to the Poor 7:13

A poor relative takes precedence over all people; the poor of your household before the poor of your city; the poor of your town before the poor of another town; as it says: 'to your brother, to your poor, and to your needy in your land' (Deuteronomy 15:11)

עני שהוא קרובו, קודם לכל אדם; ועניי ביתו, קודמין לעניי עירו; ועניי עירו, קודמין לעניי עיר אחרת: שנאמר "לְאָחִידָ לְעִנְיָךְ וּלְאֲבִינְךָ, בְּאַרְצְךָ" (דברים טו, יא)

In this source the Rambam sets out a series of concentric circles of obligation based around location. Those physically closest to you take precedence over those further away. The responsibility extends outwards from the individual to all other people.

Do you agree that we can categorise the Rambam here as being based of location? Does the first line of the source ("poor relative takes precedence over all people") fit with the rest of the source – maybe my poor relative might live in the next town? Think about how this might have changed from then (1200 CE) to today.

Let's look at the next source:

2: Yad, Rambam - Gifts to the Poor 9:12

A person who dwells in a city for thirty days is forced to give tzedakah to the Kupah (community fund that feeds the resident poor with a weekly food allocation) with the rest of the residents of the city. If one dwelt there three months they force that person to give to the Tamhui (public soup kitchen for any hungry person). If one dwelt there six months they force that person to give tzedakah for clothing to clothe the poor. If one dwelt there nine months they force that person to give tzedakah for the burial fund which provides all the burial requirements for the poor.

מי שישב במדינה שלשים יום כופין אותו ליתן צדקה לקופה עם בני המדינה, ישב שם שלשה חדשים כופין אותו ליתן התמחוי, ישב שם ששה חדשים כופין אותו ליתן צדקה בכסות שמכסים בה עניי העיר, ישב שם תשעה חדשים כופין אותו ליתן צדקה לקבורה שקוברין בה את העניים ועושים להם כל צרכי קבורה

In this source the Rambam creates a different mechanism to define the obligation: time. The more time you spend in a place, the more you owe to that place and its community. This can be because of two reasons:

- a. Personal benefit – if you belong to a community, you use its services, you make friends, have favours done for you etc. – it naturally follows that you also owe something to that community. A key part of collective living is that everyone contributes to the wellbeing of those in the group. The longer you live there, the more you have benefited and become part of the group, the more you owe.
- b. Awareness – it makes sense that if you're travelling through a city that you aren't expected to solve its long-term problems. However the longer you live there the more aware of the problems you become and once you become aware of a problem – you are expected to try and do something about it. This source actually sets out a very natural progression of integration into a community. If you move into a new area – it takes time to really get to know what's going on there.

This presents us with the next step of why today the existence and awareness of extreme poverty around the world presents a particular challenge: with the establishment of global communication (social media/internet etc) the scope of what we are aware of drastically increases. We only need to scroll through a news feed to see examples of tremendous suffering and poverty in places far-away from us physically, but now much closer to us cognitively. Communities are no longer defined by physical locations but are much broader and loosely defined.

Discussion point 3 - What communities, if any, are you a part of that aren't physical? Are there groups online that you get support and support others in? Think about your chanichim – how might you teach them about this idea of 'non-physical (digital) community'?

Our last source is a really beautiful piece from Rav Kook written in his typically flowery and artistic style. It's quite long so if you're pressed for time focus on the **bolded** bits of text.

3: Rav Kook, Orot Hakodesh II, p. 444 (Four-fold Song)

There is one who sings the song of his own life, and in himself he finds everything, his full spiritual satisfaction.

There is another who sings the song of his people. He **leaves the circle of his own individual self, because he finds it without sufficient breadth, without an idealistic basis.** He aspires toward the heights, and **he attaches himself with a gentle love to the whole community of Israel.** Together with her, he sings her songs. **He feels grieved in her afflictions and delights in her hopes.** He contemplates noble and pure thoughts about her past and her future, and probes with love and wisdom her inner spiritual essence.

There is another who reaches toward more distant realms, and he goes beyond the boundary of Israel to sing the song of all human beings. His spirit extends to the wider vistas of the majesty of man, generally, and his noble essence. **He aspires toward man's general goal and looks forward toward his higher perfection.** From this source of life, he draws the subject of his meditation and study, his aspiration and visions.

Then **there is one who rises toward wider horizons, until he links himself with all existence, with all God's creatures, with all worlds, and sings his song with them.** It is of one such as this that tradition has said that whoever sings a portion of song each day is assured of having a share in the world to come.

And then there is one who rises with all these songs in one ensemble, and they all join their voices. Together, they sing their songs with beauty, each one lends vitality and life to the other. They are sounds of joy and gladness, sounds of jubilation and celebration, sounds of ecstasy and holiness.

The song of the self, the song of the people, the song of man, the song of the world, all merge in this person, at all times, in every hour.

And this full comprehensiveness rises to become the song of holiness, the song of God, the song of Israel, in its full strength and beauty, in its full authenticity and greatness.

The name "Israel" stands for shir-el, the song of God. It is a simple song, a twofold song, a threefold song, and a fourfold song. It is the Song of Songs of Solomon, Shlomo, which means peace or wholeness. It is the song of the King, in whom is wholeness.

In this source Rav Kook introduces our last mechanism for thinking about the obligation towards others: Perspective. Here Rav Kook acknowledges that different people have different capabilities and interests. Some of us only have the ability to think about ourselves and our most immediate needs, others can go slightly further to a community, to a city or to a whole country. Others however can go even further and concern themselves with all of humanity, others can go further still and extend their perspective of what is relevant to them to the whole world and everything in it. Then there is the last person who is able to keep all perspectives present within them at the same time! Whilst Rav Kook doesn't seem to condemn those who don't reach that far, he does clearly set up a hierarchy where it is infinitely more preferable to be able to "rises with all these songs in one ensemble".

This presents us with the next step of why today the existence and awareness of extreme poverty around the world presents a particular challenge: Rav Kook's hierarchy seems to suggest that we should be **equally concerned with all of humanity as we are with ourselves or our nation.** When there is poverty in our communities and poverty around the world and in a world where it is incredibly easy to give money or time to alleviate suffering and poverty, it can be especially challenging to work out the correct balance.

With all three of these spheres of obligation (location, time/awareness, perspective) in mind it is clear that the challenge of poverty today is a complex one. There are no easy solutions to the challenge. What we can do though is keep trying to find the right balance, keep trying to come up with a solution.

Next Step – What’s actually going on and what about helping just Jewish people?

There are two key questions:

1. What is the situation today?
2. Is there a Halachic obligation to help 'non-Jews'? (Our immediate response might be "well, even if there isn't a specific law – we should do it anyway". We're going to briefly see the debate around this).
4. More than 3 billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day and an estimated 1.3 billion live in extreme poverty, making do with \$1.25 or less daily.
5. 1 billion children worldwide are living in poverty. According to UNICEF, 22,000 children die each day due to poverty.
6. 805 million people worldwide do not have enough food to eat. Food banks are especially important in providing food for people that can't afford it themselves.
7. More than 750 million people lack adequate access to clean drinking water. Diarrhoea caused by inadequate drinking water, sanitation, and hand hygiene kills an estimated 842,000 people every year globally, or approximately 2,300 people per day.
8. In 2011, 165 million children under the age 5 were stunted (reduced rate of growth and development) due to chronic malnutrition.
9. Around 1 billion people entered the 21st century not knowing how to read and write.



Poverty is still a big problem in the world today, as you can see from the numbers. This is in spite of the progress that we can see around us. The good news is that in 2010, only 18% of the world's population was living way below the poverty line as compared to 36% in 1990. It's a small victory, but the progress is slow. The problem with poverty is that the causes are extremely complicated with different factors contributing to the problem. Ending it requires more than just economic growth. "Developed" countries with strong economies still have a significant number of people who are struggling to survive. There is no 'silver bullet' for ending poverty.

One of the key problems when talking about poverty is the question of how it is measured. The state of poverty is not the same for everybody. A person may be earning \$3 a day but their financial capability still needs to be compared to the rest of the population (what can they actually buy with those \$3?). So, a poor person in the US has a different poverty level than a poor person in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Halachic obligation to help 'non-Jews':

If we think that today the existence and awareness of extreme poverty around the world presents a particular challenge to our ethic of Tzedaka, we must ask if, with 3 billion people living in poverty, our obligation to alleviate poverty extends to 'non-Jewish' people?

So from the outset it is important to state that the Halacha has a clear-cut obligation to give Tzedaka to both Jewish people and 'non-Jewish' people. However, the reason given as to why that obligation exists can lead to some fascinating discussions:

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 34:3

<p>We should also support and clothe the non-Jewish poor together with the Jewish poor because of 'darchei shalom'.</p>	<p>מְפָרְנִין וּמַלְבִּישִׁין עֲנִיֵי עוֹבְדֵי אֱלִילִים עִם עֲנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִפְּנֵי דַרְכֵי שְׁלוֹם</p>
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This phrase 'darchei shalom' has two very different meanings:

3. For the sake of peaceful relationships: Whilst living as neighbours with 'non-Jewish' people it makes sense to not antagonise them by seeming to only care about ourselves. Therefore, we need to help alleviate their poverty too.
4. Ways of peace: The Torah is interested in creating a world full of peace and kindness (shalom and chessed). Of course, we should care for poor people who aren't Jewish – they too are part of the world that we are trying to create.

The Rambam actually goes to great lengths to avoid the first meaning of the phrase darchei shalom when he discusses this issue. He seems to want to guard against any attempt to look upon moral actions towards 'non-Jews' as grounded exclusively in purely pragmatic considerations calculated to secure the peace of the Jewish community:

Mishnah Torah, Rambam, Laws of Kings and Wars, 10:12

<p>Our Sages have commanded us to visit their sick and bury their dead along with Jewish dead, and sustain their poor along with the poor of Israel is for the "sake of peace", since it says, "God is good to all, and His mercies extend upon all his works" (Tehillim 145:9) and it says, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Mishlei 3:17).</p>	<p>אִפְלוּ הָעַכְוִ"ם צִוּוּ חֻכְמִים לְבַקֵּר חוֹלֵיהֶם וּלְקַבֵּר מֵתֵיהֶם עִם מֵתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְפָרֵנֶס עֲנִיֵיהֶם בְּכֹלל עֲנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּנֵי דַרְכֵי שְׁלוֹם. הָרִי נֹאמֵר (תְּהִלִּים קמ"ה, ט) "טוֹב ה' לְכֹל וְרַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו". וְנֹאמֵר (מִשְׁלֵי ג, יז) "דַּרְכֵיהָ דַרְכֵי שְׁלוֹם וְכָל נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שְׁלוֹם"</p>
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By linking the pursuit of peace with the divine attribute of compassion the Rambam suggest that what is involved in the 'ways of peace' is an overriding religious imperative. The Rambam actually uses the same verse in Tehillim as evidence that the cultivation of compassion is one of the ways to emulate God in becoming ethically perfect!

Peula ideas.





Madrichim Chomer SUMMER MACHANE 5783

Gimmel: The Orthodox Jew in the Modern world – היהודי הדתי בעולם מודרני

K8: The Value of Giving

- Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-ijM02m_Hg United Nations Sustainable development goals. Ask your Chanichim if they think these are achievable and what they think they can do to help achieve them.
- Ask your Chanichim to write out a 'giving plan' for themselves for the rest of machane, focusing on what they personally will do to ensure that they are giving as much as they can. They can keep this to themselves as it is a personal list.

Concrete Concepts

1. Giving is something that human beings gain a lot from
2. We have a responsibility to give to the world around us as much as we can.
3. It is important to help non-Jews as well as Jews



K9. Hadracha 101



Objectives:

1. To develop hadracha skills with a view to being Sviva Madrichim
2. To gain awareness of different methodologies of delivering educational content
3. To learn some quick tips and tricks

Introduction

In this Kvutzah we're going to look at some ways to think about three of the really essential questions for Bnei Akiva:

- What is the purpose of Sviva/Kvutzah?
- How do we think creatively when planning programs?
- How do chanichim learn from the programs that we do?

For the first question there are really two obvious answers (the difficulty comes in the nuances of those two answers. The purpose of any program that Bnei Akiva runs is:

1. **Socialisation:** A general term for the many different ways and processes by which children come to be able to function as members of their social community – understanding implicitly what is required/expected of them to be a part of that community. Specifically done (mostly) through non-formal methods i.e. everything that we do on machane that isn't saying "do this or do that" – everything that we model to our chanichim.
 - Understanding what it means to be a part of the Bnei Akiva community.
1. **Education:** The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university. The imparting of information, concepts and ideas to our chanichim.
 - Synonyms: teaching, schooling, tuition, tutoring, instruction, pedagogy, andragogy, coaching, training, tutelage, drilling, preparation, guidance, indoctrination, inculcation, enlightenment, edification, cultivation, development, improvement, bettering.

For this Kvutzah we're only really going to look at number two "education" so just remember that there is a whole other aspect of what it means to be a Madrich/a that we're not talking about.

DISCUSSION POINT 1 – What role does a game play in the process of your chanichim learning?

Key thing to know: a basic game is at the most 10% of the process of learning for our chanichim. It is what happens during and, importantly, after where the learning takes place. In the next two sections we're going to find out more about this.

Multiple Intelligences or "thinking with different boxes"

In this section we're going to look at the theory of Multiple Intelligences developed by Howard Gardner. Howard Earl Gardner (born July 11, 1943) is an American developmental psychologist and has written hundreds of research articles and thirty books that have been translated into more than thirty languages. He is best known for his theory of multiple intelligences, as outlined in his 1983 book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*.

The nuts and bolts of the theory is not too important for us (although I do recommend some further reading of his work). What is important is that it **provides us with a framework of how to develop diverse and interesting peulot and programming**. And this is key to creating an experience/program for our chanichim that makes it more likely that learning will take place.

So what exactly is the theory:

Gardner argued that the contemporary (in his time) model of what should be considered 'intelligence' was outdated because it did not match up with the everyday experiences of students and educators around the world. He wrote that instead of defining intelligence as "as a single general capacity for conceptualization and problem solving" it should be understood as seven different fundamental intelligences (and then added 2 more later):

	Intelligence	Description
1	Mathematical - Logical	The ability to organize thoughts sequentially and logically
2	Verbal - Linguistic	The ability to understand and express ideas through language
3	Bodily - Kinaesthetic	The gaining of knowledge through feedback from physical activity
4	Musical	Sensitivity to tone, pitch and rhythm, and the ability to reproduce them
5	Visual - Spatial	Capacity to think in images and pictures, to visualize accurately and abstractly
6	Interpersonal	Capacity to detect and respond appropriately to the moods, motivations and desires of others
7	Intrapersonal	The ability to access one's own feelings
8	<i>Naturalistic</i>	<i>The ability to understand and be in tune with one's relationship with the natural environment</i>
9	<i>Existential</i>	<i>Sensitivity and capacity to tackle deep questions about human existence</i>

DISCUSSION POINT 2 – Do any of these describe you and the way you interact with the world? Which of these 9 things do you think you're good at/bad at, prefer/dislike?

So how do we actually use this in practise:

The key part of Gardner's theory for us is as a framework – a prism to use when planning our activities. Gardner claims that one of the central messages of his theory that educators should take away is the need to:

- a. Individualise: Understand the needs and interests of your group of chanichim (students) and create programming that suits each one of them.
- b. Pluralise: Create a program that allows for **all** chanichim to engage with the content in a **variety** of ways.

Whenever planning a program ask yourself: have I included within this enough opportunities for my chanichim to engage with what I want them to learn in more than one way. Consider each intelligence as a box that you need to fill with one aspect of your peulah/program. Now this doesn't mean there needs to be equal emphasis on all the different boxes or that you need to fill all 7 (9). What it does mean is that you should be trying to hit at least one more.

Important things to note:

1. Gardner's theory is controversial. There hasn't been a clear way to test his claims and if there is no way to test it, it will remain a theory.
2. It's connected to a teaching method called 'Multiple Learning Styles (MLS)' that is widely considered to either be a. the best thing for education ever or b. a load of complete nonsense. The MLS theory claims that individuals only learn in one of the 7 ways and therefore we need to really differentiate the way that we educate.

For us these two points are less relevant:

- What's important is that regardless of its veracity it provides us with another way to think about our programs, and the more ways we are thinking about our programming the better.

The Cycle of Learning or "mirrors and windows"

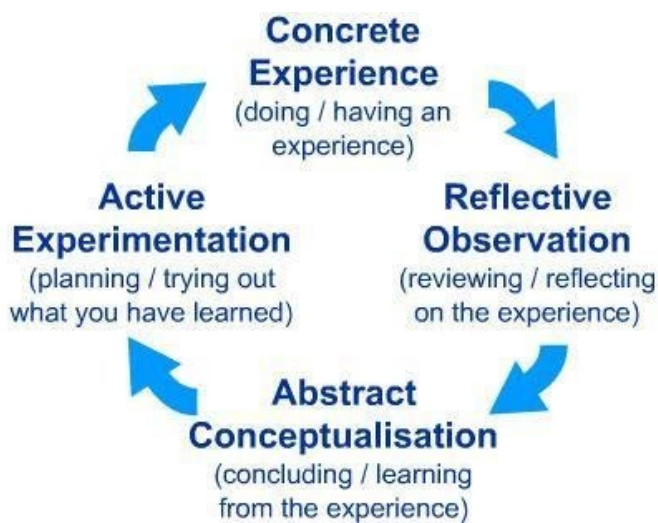
David A. Kolb (born 1939) is an American educational theorist that developed a framework that is an incredibly useful tool for us as Madrichim.

Picture your standard Kvutzah or Peulah. At what point does 'learning' take place?

Kolb was troubled by the same question. He saw many, many programs of 'experiential learning' (learning through experience) where not much was being learned. He came up with a four-part cycle of learning that included:

1. **Concrete Experience** (a new experience or situation is encountered).
2. **Reflective Observation** of the new experience.
3. **Abstract Conceptualisation** (reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept).
4. **Active Experimentation** (the learner applies the new idea to the world around them to see what results).

Or as an image:



At Bnei Akiva we actually already do number 1 really well and number 2 somewhat well. We create really amazing experiences for our chanichim. We then sometimes provide really great spaces and opportunities for the chanichim to reflect on those experiences. **Think about this step as a mirror** – we hold up a mirror to our chanichim to

encourage them to look inwards and process the experiences that they've just gone through. However the next step is where it can get quite hard. **Think of step 3 – conceptualisation as a window** – a window that the chanichim can use to develop new concepts to understand themselves and the world around them. Crucially, and this is why it's hard, Kolb argued (as do we at BA) that the educator or madrich can't impose their own window on the student or chanich. The whole point of the process is for the learner to do it themselves at a time, place and in a way that is relevant to them.

DISCUSSION POINT 3 – What might 'imposing our windows on chanichim' look like? How can we avoid doing it?

Making a NAOMIE plan

Planning models are designed to show clear evidence of all the considerations that you take when you plan a piece of youth work. As more and more authorities look to promote careful planning of work with young people, it is good to have sound knowledge and experience of using planning models.

The framework requires evidence of you identifying the:

Needs -of the Chanichim and Peula as a whole

Aims-What is the end goal?

Outcomes- What specific changes will happen?

Methods- Describe the piece of work that you intend to do. Explain it in simple terms that other people will be able to understand having not participated.

Implementation- How long will it take? What resources will you need?

Evaluation-How will you consider whether you've met the outcomes? How will you consider changes?

Of a piece of work/project that you **intend** to do.

It will clearly show, in an easy-read format, that you have taken all these into consideration when planning projects.

Tips and Tricks

Rafi Cohen, Svivot and Hadracha Director 2018-2019 (5778/9), wrote the following Tips and Tricks:

A: The Doughnut Effect

You are the jam; the chanichim around you are the dough. You need to keep them quiet and involved. Sit opposite your co, this ensures that you can have good eye contact and communication with them and that you can control as many chanichim as possible. Just try to control your half of the room, if everyone tries to control the room then no control will be established.

At other times, e.g. davening this becomes even more vital as you control the chanichim around you, ensuring they remain engaged, and if you allow talking in your area (particularly if you instigate the talking) then the whole room descends into CHAOS.

B: Disneyland Effect

Ensure things are prepared, with lots of eye-catching cool symbols. Everything can be spruced up with a bit of preparation. Make things colourful – if

everything is black and white and drab then your group will be black and white and drab. Everything benefits from a little bit of Disney, even discussions can benefit from having quotes and bullet points.

C: Dealing with different types of chanichim

Let's get to know some of the chanichim who will be taking part in the activities you create. As you never really know what you're going to get, let's meet the group from hell, and think about what the best way might be to deal with them...

Wallace The Waffler

Wallace doesn't understand the concept of thinking before talking. The consequence of this is that he doesn't know when he should just stop. He just goes on and on and on and on....

Anastasia the Attention Seeker

To Anastasia, the world is a stage and she think she's the only actor around. She constantly tries to attract attention by doing a whole lot of things that always distracts the group and infuriate you. Because she is so concerned to be noticed, Anastasia doesn't notice what anyone else is trying to do and that includes you trying to take the group.

Noel Know It All

Bless him, Noel knows everything. Not only is he highly knowledgeable on the topics you want to talk about, but he also finds it rather difficult to accept anyone else's point of view, including yours.

Shaun the Shy One

Shaun loves coming to BA and he does have lots of friends in the group. However, Shaun is extremely shy, and he is obstinate that he is not ever going to talk in kvutza. Trying to involve him makes him even more self-conscious...

Naomi Not Interested

Whatever topic you are talking about, Naomi just isn't interested. She has done it before, she knows all about it or she has got no desire to be educated about it.

Lionel & Lillian Love Birds

These two suffer from a bad case of over-active hormones. They are inseparable causing trouble when you want to split people into groups and they gaze lovingly into each other's eyes, not listening to you.

Dalia Destructive

Dalia comes to BA with one aim: to muck up your meeting. She'll undermine you at every turn.

DISCUSSION POINT 4 – How quick are we to judge and label Chanichim? How can we be more empathetic towards Chanichim such as those mentioned above and help them, without sacrificing the experience of other members of the group?

D. Running Discussions

What is the role of a madrich/a in a discussion? – FACILITATOR!

Hopefully the discussions will be about an interesting topic, but you as the madrich/a still need to sell it well.

Introduction:

Start off with an exciting trigger – never introduce with “ok guys we’re now going to have a discussion about x”. Make it as natural as possible, springing from something which came up in the game or earlier on in discussion.

Throughout:

Don't let the discussion go too off topic – be in control and prod in directions which you want to be considered.

Create things – quotes, topics, pictures... when things are discussed put them down to give the discussion a bit more structure and remind the chanichim that this is a productive time.

Ensure that all chanichim are getting involved, perhaps ask a question to somebody who hasn't yet got involved, monitor whether chanichim are interested in this part or whether it needs to be pushed forward to something else.

Make sure that it is always pitched at the right level with all chanichim able to get involved.

Finishing it off:

Once the various topics have all been touched upon, remind the chanichim how this fits into everything else which has gone on, which leads nicely on to the next thing.

Peula ideas.

Surprise! There are no peula ideas as this kvutza is all about Hadracha! Therefore, this is your chance to show off your snazzy skillset to your Chanichim and impress them with your creative vibes and charisma. You've got this!

Concrete Concepts.

4. Your Chanichim are about to become sviva madrichim!
5. There are different methodologies of delivering educational content
6. It is important to not label chanichim as difficult