

## K1. Me and Myself

### Objectives for Chanichim

1. To understand what self-esteem is from both a Torah and evidence-based perspective
2. To reflect on the importance of having a good relationship with oneself as a foundation for investing in other people
3. To look at ways to improve one's self esteem

#### What is 'self-esteem'?

The opinion we have of ourselves

#### What happens when our self-esteem is good?

When we have healthy self-esteem, we tend to feel positive about ourselves and about life in general. It makes us better able to deal with life's ups and downs.

#### What happens when our self-esteem is bad?

When our self-esteem is low, we tend to see ourselves and our life in a more negative and critical light. We also feel less able to take on the challenges that life throws at us.

*(Adapted from NHS website)*



**Discussion Point: Is it natural for self-esteem to fluctuate? Should a specific mindset always be prioritised? How can your *chanichim* vary between the two without spiralling?**

#### Why is having a healthy self-esteem important?

- 1)
 

לֹא־תִקֶּם וְלֹא־תִטֵּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ  
כְּמוֹד אָנִי ה' (ויקרא י"ט:י"ח)

*You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow **as yourself**: I am the LORD. (Vayikra 19:18)*
- 2)
 

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אָנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וְכִשְׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אָנִי. וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימָתִי (משנה אבות א':י"ד)

*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)*
- 3) *"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. But if I am I because I am I and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you."*  
Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk (Kotzker Rebbe)



Mental Health = A state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities; can cope with the normal stresses of life; can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. In this positive sense, this is the foundation of individual well-being and effective functioning of a community (World Health Organisation 2011)

**Discussion Point: What do you think it means to love your neighbour 'as yourself'? Do you think your Chanichim will expect having a healthy self-esteem to be a Jewish value?**

**How do people achieve healthy self-esteem?**

- ☒ Recognise what you're good at
- ☒ Build positive relationships
- ☒ Be kind to yourself
- ☒ Learn to be assertive
- ☒ Start saying "no"
- ☒ Give yourself a challenge

*(Adapted from the NHS website)*

**יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב, וּקְנֵה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהָיִי דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת.**  
*Joshua ben Perahiah used to say: appoint for yourself a teacher and acquire for yourself a friend and judge everyone favourably*  
*(Pirkei Avot 1:6)*

**הוּא הֵיךָ אוֹמֵר, לֹא עָלֶיךָ הַמּוֹלָאכָה לְגִמּוֹר, וְלֹא אַתָּה בֶּן חוֹרִין לְבַטֵּל כּוֹמֵנָה. אִם לָמַדְתָּ תוֹרַת הַרְבֵּה, נוֹתְנִים לְךָ שְׂכָר הַרְבֵּה**  
*He [Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it; If you have studied much Torah, you shall be given much reward.*  
*(Pirkei Avot 2:16)*

**דְּאָגָה בְּלֵב אִישׁ יִשְׁחַנָּה וְדִבַּר טוֹב יִשְׁמַחָנָה**  
*If there is anxiety in a person's mind let him quash it, And turn it into joy with a good word.*  
*(Proverbs 12:25)*



**דְּאָגָה בְּלֵב אִישׁ יִשְׁחַנָּה רַבִּי אֲמִי וְרַבִּי אֲסִי חָד אמר ישחננה מודעתו וחד אמר ישחננה לאחרים**  
*'If there is anxiety in a person's mind - let him quash it [yashchenna].' Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi: One said: let him put it out of his mind [yasichenna]; and one said: let him talk of it [yesichenna] to others.*  
*(Talmud Bavli, Sota 42b)*

**Discussion Point: How do you think being Jewish affects your ability to achieve a healthy self-esteem? Which of the NHS guidelines do you think these pesukim support?**

**How do I develop a healthy self-esteem without becoming arrogant?**

1. It was said of Reb Simcha Bunem of Pershyscha that he carried two slips of paper, one in each pocket. On one he wrote: בשבילי נברא העולם "for my sake the world was created." On the other he wrote: ואנוכי עפר ואפר "I am but dust and ashes." Reb Simcha would take out each slip of paper as necessary, as a reminder to himself.

2. **אָמַר רַב חִיָּיא בַר אֲשִׁי אָמַר רַב תְּלֵמִיד חָכָם צָרִיךְ שְׂיָהָא בּוֹ אֶחָד מִשְׁמוּנָה בְּשִׁמְיִנִית**  
*Rav Chiya bar Ashi says that Rav says: a Torah scholar must have one-eighth of one-eighth of arrogance*  
(Sotah 5a)

3. **מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם שֶׁהַחַיּוּת בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחַמְלָה, רַבָּה אֶמוּנָתְךָ**

*I give thanks to You living and everlasting King for You have restored my soul with mercy. Great is Your faithfulness.*



**Discussion Point: What does it mean that Moshe was the most humble of all men? How could Moshe himself have written those words?! What is true humility?**

**וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עֲנוּ [עֲנִיּוֹן] מְאֹד מְכַל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה**  
*And the man Moshe was incredibly humble, more so than any person on the face of the earth.*  
(Bemidbar 12:3)

**K1 Concrete Concepts:**

1. Self-esteem means the opinion we have of ourselves
2. Healthy self-esteem is vital for us to be able to invest in other people, Hashem and ourselves.
3. There are lots of Jewish sources about the importance of healthy self-esteem
4. It's important to find ways to improve one's self-esteem, without becoming arrogant

## K2. Me, my family and friends

### Objectives for Chanichim

1. To understand the influence one's family and friends have on a person
2. To think about how much of their identity is shaped by their family and their friends
3. To explore way of investing in family members and friends

### Me and my family

#### 1) A person's family plays a significant role in influencing one's identity.

From a young age we are shaped by the emotions, beliefs and cultural ideals that are manifested by those who raise us.

The concept of heritage is also immensely important in Judaism.

Not only are we impacted by our current family, but also by a strong *mesorah* of ancestors who contribute to the way we are raised today.



2) חֲבוּרָה וּמִשְׁפָּחָה כֶּדֶד הֵן דּוֹמִים לְכַפֵּת אֲבָנִים, אֶת נוֹטֵל מִמֶּנָּה אָבֹן אַחַת וְכוּלָהּ מִתְרוֹעֶעֶת, אֶת נוֹתֵן עָלֶיהָ אָבֹן אַחַת וְכוּלָהּ עוֹמֶדֶת

(בראשית רבה ק"ז)

*A society and a family are like a pile of stones. If you remove one stone, the pile will collapse. If you add a stone to it, it will stand. (Bereishit Rabbah 100:7)*

#### 3) How much of our outlook on life is influenced by our family?

In the *Shema* (Devarim 6:7), when talking about the *mitzvot*, it says וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבִנְיָךְ, *and you shall teach them to your children*. Strictly speaking, the only *halakhic* imperative is to teach your own children, no one else.

**Discussion Point:** What do you think 'teaching' means? Is it restricted to 'information', or does it also include a way of living, or a *hashkafa*?



#### 4) חֲנֹךְ לְנֶעַר עַל-פִּי דְרָכֹו גַם כִּי-יִזְקִין לֹא-יִסּוּר מִמֶּנָּה

*Educate the child according to his way; even as he grows old, he shall not depart from it. (Mishlei 22:6)*

#### 5) Families in Tanach

- Yaakov and Esav were very different people, even while in the womb. Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch sees in this the need for them to be raised **differently**, thus he attributes Esav's wickedness to his poor upbringing. This shows the immense influence family has over what sort of a person one ultimately becomes, both from a genetic and environmental perspective.
- The 12 *shevatim* were also a varied group of people; many of them made quite significant mistakes. There is room to say that the family they grew up in did influence who they were as people, yet the different choices they made show that individuality transcends one's circumstantial upbringing.

**Discussion Point:** How has your family influenced you? How *should* your family influence you?

**Discussion Point:** Is the influence your family has on you as *madrichim* the same as your *chanichim's* families will have on them? Should it be, or is it natural for that influence to change with time?

## Me and my friends

*The value of friendship:*

1)

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ  
רֵב, וְקַנְה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהוּי דָן אֶת כָּל  
הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת

(פרקי אבות א,ו)

*Yehoshua ben Perachia says, "Make for yourself a mentor, **acquire for yourself a friend** and judge every person as meritorious."*

(Pirkei Avot 1:6)

2) Rabbeinu Yona says that a person needs three things from a friend:

- 📖 Words of Torah
- 📖 Help with keeping Mitzvot
- 📖 Good advice

As well as looking for a friend who can provide these things, it is important to **be** a friend who can give in these areas as well. Perhaps this is what the *mishnah* in *Pirkei Avot* means when it says to **acquire** a friend. In order to obtain a friend, we need to **invest** in them.

We can see from here that putting time and effort into establishing and maintaining friendships is a Jewish value.

3) Investing in friendships is also a great way to invest in oneself. Studies have shown that valuing friendships is associated with better health outcomes and happiness levels!

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.570839>

We saw in K1 that investing in oneself allows one to better help other people. We now see this idea in reverse: By investing in other people, we also benefit greatly.



**Discussion Point: What ways can you invest in a friendship?**

**Is it better to prioritise investing in a new friendship, or maintaining existing ones?**

*The risks of friendship:*

4) נִתַּאי הָאַרְבֵּלִי אוֹמֵר, הִרְחַק מִשְׁכֵּן רָע, וְאַל תִּתְחַבֵּר לְרָשָׁע, וְאַל תִּתְיַאֵשׁ  
כִּי תִפְרָעֲנוּת

*Nittai the Arbelite used to say: keep a distance from an evil neighbour, **do not become befriend the wicked**, and do not abandon faith in [divine] retribution.*

(Pirkei Avot 1:7)

This Mishnah appears straight after the previous Mishnah about acquiring a friend. This juxtaposition should act as a warning that obtaining friends without thought into their characters or the influence they may have on you can have serious consequences.

**Discussion Point: Have you ever thought about how you make friends, or actively chosen with whom you interact? What would you do if you realised you were being negatively affected? How can we empower our *chanichim* to make good friend choices?**

I'm so frum that two thirds of all my friends are chinuch workers

5) *A true friend is not one who is always carping, critical, and captious. But equally true that a real friend is not one who would never appraise you of your own mistakes, who will hide from you things that are apparent to others but you might not be aware of.*

(Rabbi Norman Lamm, *the silence of Jacob*, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1961)

## Ideas of how to invest in family and friends

Using what you've learned so far, as well as your own knowledge, see what ideas you can come up with of how to invest in your relationships with your family members and your friends:

### Ideas for you:

Family	Friends

### Ideas for your Chanichim:

Family	Friends

## Concrete Concepts:

1. Our family do and should have a significant role in our education and in shaping who we become.
2. It's important to think for oneself and not blame one's mistakes on one's upbringing by default.
3. Investing in the right friends is a Jewish value
4. It's important to consider whether friendships are positive or negative re the effects they have on us.

## K3. Me and my community

### Objectives for Chanichim

1. To explore some of the values pertaining to being part of a Jewish Community
2. To reflect on the effect a community has on an individual's identity
3. To look at ways one can invest in their community

So far, the Chomer has discussed the **formation of identity** in the context of a collection of quite personal relationships: with **oneself**, one's **family** and one's **friends**. Now we'll zoom out and explore the concept of identity as part of a larger group of people. All Jewish communities are different, with their own **nuanced strengths and issues**. However, values we will discuss are universal building blocks towards a community that functions in a way that helps everyone to thrive. It's also important to remember that wherever in the world a Jewish person lives, they are still part of the global Jewish Community, **Am Yisrael**.

#### 1) Community:

א דרך בריתו של אדם-- להיות נמשך בדעותיו ובמעשיו אחר רעיו וחבריו, ונוהג במנהג אנשי מדינתו. לפיכך צריך אדם להתחבר לצדיקים ולישב אצל החכמים תמיד, כדי שילמד ממועשיהם; ויתרחק מן הרשעים ההולכים בחשך, כדי שלא ילמד ממועשיהם.

ב וכן אם היה במדינה שמנהגותיה רעים, ואין אנשיה הולכים בדרך ישרה-- ילך למקום שאנשי צדיקים, ונוהגים בדרך טובים. ואם היו כל המדינות שהוא יודען ושומע שמועתן נוהגים בדרך לא טובה, כמו זמננו זה, או שאינו יכול לילך למדינה שמנהגותיה טובים... ישב לבדו יחידי. ואם היו רעים וחטאים, שאין מניחין אותו לישב במדינה אלא אם כן נתערב עמהו ונוהג במנהגו הרע-- יצא למערות ולחוזים ולמדברות ואל ינהיג עצמו בדרך חטאים

*It is the [natural] way of people to be drawn after their neighbours and friends in their attitudes and actions, and to act in the way the local people act. Therefore, a person needs to become friendly with righteous people and sit by the wise always, in order to learn from their actions. And [a person] should distance themselves from the wicked who walk in darkness, in order not to learn from their actions.*

*So too, if [a person] were to be in a country whose practises are bad, and whose population do not walk an upright path, he should go to a place whose population is righteous, and act in good ways. But if all the countries that he knows or has heard about are acting in ways that are not good, **like in our time**, or if he is unable to go to the country whose practises are good... he should sit alone in isolation. But if [the surrounding population] were wicked and sinners, who do not permit him to live in the same country as [as them] unless he mixes with them and acts in their wicked ways, he should go [and live in] a cave, or a forest, or a desert, rather than act in the way of sinners.*

*(Mishne Torah, Hilkhos Deot, 6:1-2)*

**Discussion Point:** Rambam states clearly that human beings are social creatures, whether we like it or not. Why do you think it's not enough to say 'I will live in X community, but I won't follow in their wicked ways'? Is it possible to remain unaffected?

**Discussion Point:** What do you think about the fact that Rambam, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, writes that no known country conducts itself in a way that is upright? Has this changed since his time?

### **Shemirat Halashon**

A common misconception about the value of not saying Lashon Hara is that it's just a set of nice guidelines that we don't really need to take that seriously. This could not be further from the truth! There are **31 mitzvot in the Torah that pertain to not speaking badly about other people.**

Not only is this a serious halakhic issue, just like keeping Shabbat, kosher etc., but every time we stop ourselves from saying Lashon Hara, we prevent someone from experiencing large amounts of potential anguish. Sounds worthwhile to me!

**Discussion Point: Do you think 14–15-year-olds care about not saying Lashon Hara? How can we encourage Chanichim of this age to work on their *shmirat halashon* in a way that relates to them?**

### **Dan L'chaf Zechut**

Within any community that lives by a set of values, there is a risk of creating an atmosphere that people feel is judgemental. It is important to remember that if this does happen, it is an unfortunate side effect and is **not** a Jewish value. It is also something that we all have the power to improve!

The Rambam (*Sefer Hamitzvot* 177, *Kitab al-Siraj* to *Avot*), says that all things being equal, one has a halakhic obligation to judge others favourably.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe added to this, saying that one should speak only of the positive attributes of other Jewish people. Is this really possible?

How many times have you seen an individual's reputation become ruined based on one bad thing they have done? With the emergence of cancel culture, it is clear that human beings have the cognitive ability to extrapolate from one aspect of a person to inform their entire impression of them. Therefore, it must also be possible to judge someone entirely based on one good thing that we know about them. Why don't you try this next time you catch yourself judging someone harshly?

2) *The reason our generation remains in exile is due to the sin of Lashon Hara (Chafetz Chaim)*

וְאֵלוּ הֵן שְׂאִין לֵהֶן חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא  
אֲלֵא נִכְרְתִים וְאוֹבְדִין... הַמְוִינִים  
וְהַאֲפִיקוֹרוֹסִין וְהַכּוֹפְרִים בַּתּוֹרָה... וְשׁוֹפְכֵי  
דָּמִים וְבַעֲלֵי לְשׁוֹן הָרַע...

*And these are the ones who have no portion in the world to come, rather they are simply cut off and perish: ... heretics, epicureans, those who deny the Torah... murderers, 'owners' of Lashon Hara...*

*(Mishne Torah, Hilkhot Teshuva 3:6)*

What do you think it means to be an 'owner' or 'master' of *Lashon Hara*? This list not a great group of people to be in!

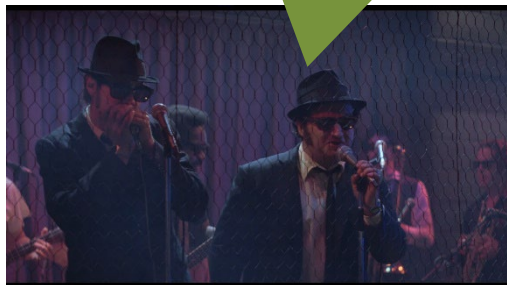
**Discussion Point: Is communal pressure a positive or negative factor in personal development? Is there benefit to having an agreed communal standard?**

**Discussion Point: Do you think that young people are put off being part of Jewish communities where people struggle with being *dan l'chaf zechut*? How can you as *madrachim* stop this from happening?**

4) *It is incumbent on the Rabbis of the communities, on the leaders of the Jewish people, to abandon these labels that don't belong on human beings; to abandon [the label of] "orthodoxy" once and for all; to embrace a Judaism that believes that we're all brothers and sisters, and we're all part of the same community. Because the danger of holding on to these labels is so terrible and so devastating... In our desire to hold on to "orthodoxy" ... we've eliminated 11 million of our brothers and sisters from being part of our community... You did something wrong? That's OK - it's a problem, but you're still part of my community, my family. I expect you still at the Pesach seder, I still expect you at the synagogue on Yom Hakippurim! I still love you and I still want you, because my love towards you is unconditional!*  
*(Rabbi Yonatan Halevy - 'Abandoning Orthodoxy')*



Gemillut chasadim!  
*Gemi- Gemillut chasadim!*



There is a Gemara in *masekhet Sotah* (14a) that describes acts of Chesed as ways to emulate Hashem. The idea is that in order to connect with Hashem, who is completely different from us, we can but emulate his characteristics as they appear to us (See first chapter of *Derech Hashem* and Rambam's *Dalalat al-hā'irīn*). This is called *Imitatio Dei* in the fancy Latin terms people are wont to use for these things.

**Discussion Point: Do you think experiencing unkindness acts as a helpful catalyst to generate kind people? Can you think of examples of *chesed* that might not feel so enjoyable?**

### Chinuch/Hadracha

A vital part of investing in your community is through education. Think about how much your formal and informal education impacted you when you were growing up. Your Chanichim are nearly old enough to be Madrichim themselves in Sviva. Your job is to instil within them a sense of responsibility and commitment to the informal education of the next generation.

It says in *Pirkei Avot* (4:1):

בן זומא אומר, איזהו חכם, הלומד מכל אדם

*Ben Zoma says, who is wise? Someone who learns from everyone*

A community that has education as an inherent value is a sustainable one. This is something that everyone should have a stake in: just because your Chanichim are young, that doesn't mean they can't get involved in communal Chinuch. Also remember that you are likely to learn a lot from them if you listen to what they say!

### Chesed

- It says in *Pirkei Avot* (1:2): the world stands on 3 things: Torah, *avodah* and the one BA forgot: ***gemillut chassadim*, 'acts of kindness'**.
- Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis *zt"l* explains that true *chesed* does not involve giving from a limited pot. Rather, the more one treats other people with kindness, the more they have to give. How cool is that?

וְגַר לֹא-תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצְנֶנּוּ כִּי-גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

*You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress them, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

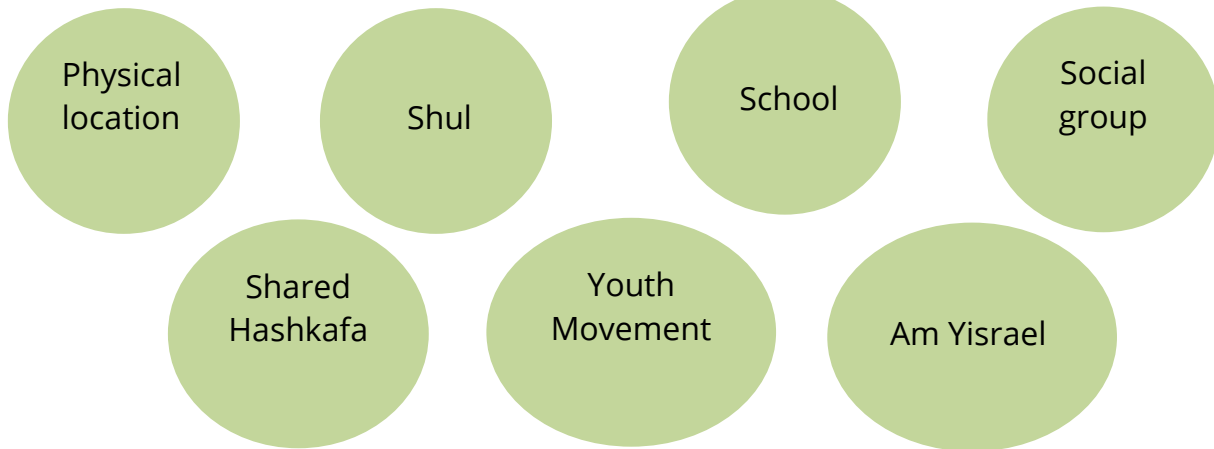
כֹּל-אֶלְמָנָה וְיָתוּם לֹא תַעֲנוּן:

*You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan.*

*(Shemot 22:20-21)*

- We see that it is a Torah value to look out for the vulnerable members of the community. At the time the Torah was given, this was a particularly progressive concept.
- There are many reasons why someone could be seen as 'vulnerable' in a Jewish community today. One of these is being different in any way. Our decision as members of a community to treat people with kindness can actually establish whether someone is made to feel like they are vulnerable at all.

## What counts as a community?



**Discussion Point: Which of these do you view as your community? How big a role does each part play?**

ותניא כל עיר שאין בה עשרה דברים הללו אין תלמיד חכם רשאי לדור בתוכה בית דין מכין ועונשין וקופה של צדקה נגבית בשנים ומתחלקת בשלשה ובית הכנסת ובית המרחץ וביהכ"ס רופא ואומן ולבלר (וטבח) ומלמד תינוקות משום ר' עקיבא אמרו אף מיני פירא מפני שמיני פירא מאירין את העינים

*And it is taught in a beraita: A Torah scholar is not permitted to reside in any city that does not have these ten things: A court that has the authority to flog and punish transgressors; and a **charity fund** for which money is collected by two people and distributed by three, as required by halakha. This leads to a requirement for another three people in the city. And **a synagogue**; and a bathhouse; and a public bathroom; a **doctor**; and a bloodletter; and a **scribe** to write sacred scrolls and necessary documents; and a ritual slaughterer; and a **teacher of young children**. They said in the name of Rabbi Akiva: The city must also have varieties of fruit, because varieties of fruit illuminate the eyes.*

*(Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 17b)*

This Gemara outlines some requirements of a Jewish community. Are these similar to what we would expect a Jewish community to consist of today?

## Am Yisrael: An International Community

We spend a lot of time refining our own personal hashkafa, sometimes at the expense of valuing our place as part of Am Yisrael. Judaism is a religion, an ethnicity, and also a 'people'. This means that any Jew has a unique connection with any other, regardless of their differences.

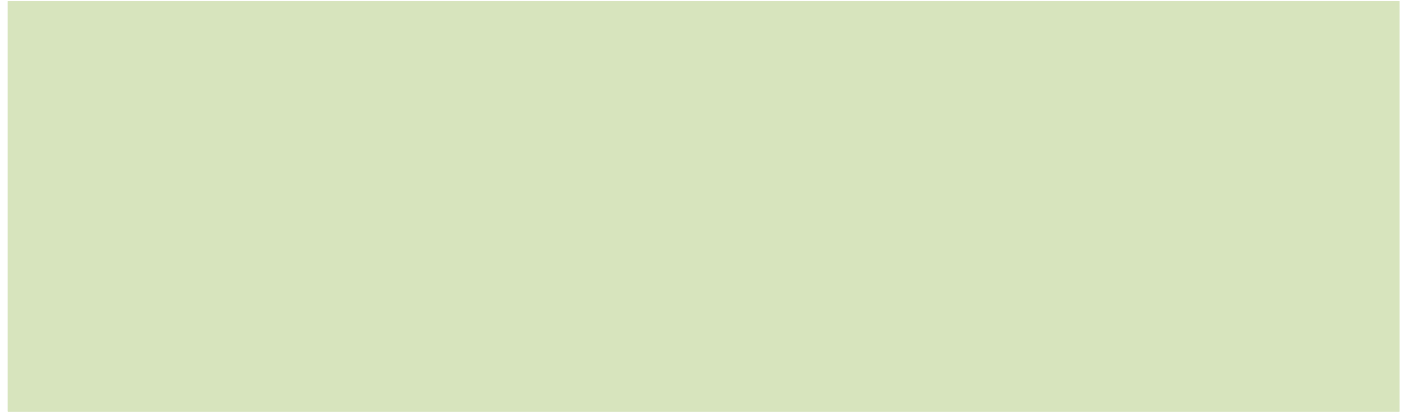
The Ritva writes in his commentary on a *gemara* in Rosh Hashanah (29a) that

כל ישראל ערבין זה לזה

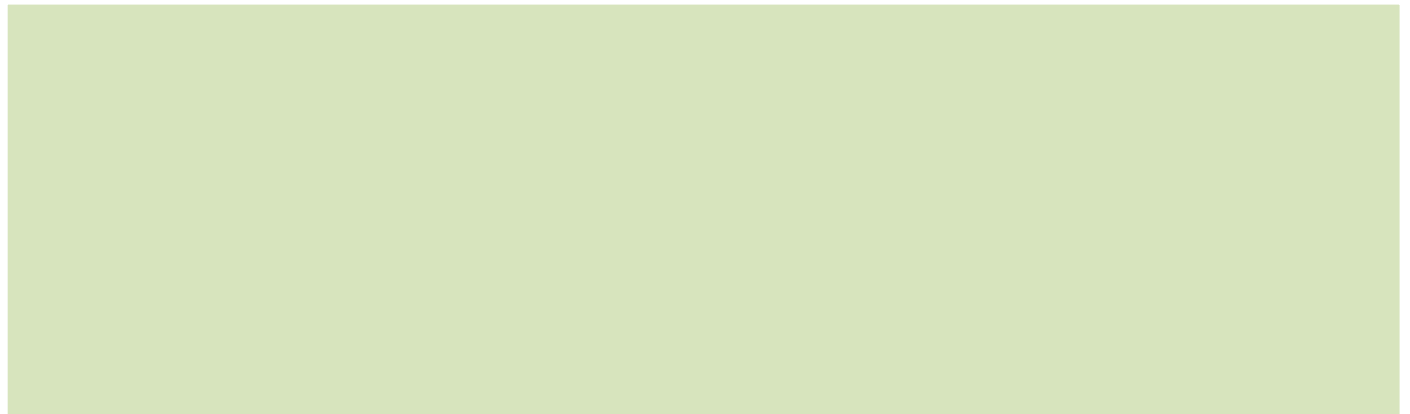
*All Jews are responsible for each other*

The idea is that as Jewish people, we're not all individual blobs bouncing around the world. We have a responsibility to look after each other and to set up communal structures where people can be the best they can possibly be.

## How can we invest in our community?



## How can we invest in Am Yisrael?



## Concrete Concepts

1. Humans are inevitably influenced by their surroundings
2. A Jewish community with positive values acts as a catalyst to develop positive Jewish identities
3. *Shemirat halashon*, being *dan l'chaf zechut*, *chesed* and *chinuch* are some of the important values that help a Jewish Community to function healthily
4. We are all members of *Am Yisrael*, which comes with a lot of responsibility

## K4. Me and my Country

### Objectives:

1. To learn about the significance of Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael to the Jewish people
2. To evaluate how Religious Zionism fits into our identity
3. To consider what practical Religious Zionism means for a Jewish person living in the UK

### The Significance of Eretz Yisrael to the Jewish People

*"Eretz Yisrael is not a peripheral matter, an external acquisition of the nation; it is not merely a means toward the goal of the general coalescing of the nation, nor of strengthening its material existence, nor even its spiritual existence. Eretz Yisrael is an independent unit, bound with a living attachment with the nation, bound with inner segulot (unique capabilities) with the nation's existence."*

*(Rav Kook, beginning of Orot)*

ארץ ישראל איננה דבר חיצוני, קנין חיצוני לאומה רק בתור אמצעי למטרה של ההתאגדות הכללית והחזקת קיומה החמרי או אפילו הרוחני. ארץ ישראל היא חטיבה עצמותית קשורה בקשר חיים עם האומה, פנימיות עם מציאותה. חבוקה בסגולות.

וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ, וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרַיִךָ לְדֹרֹתֶם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם, לִהְיוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹקִים, וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרַיִךָ: וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרַיִךָ אֶת אֶרֶץ מִגְרֵיךָ, אֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, לְאַחֲזֹת עוֹלָם, וְהִיִּיתִי לָהֶם אֱלֹקִים:

*I will establish My covenant between Me and you and between your offspring after you, throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant, to be Hashem to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and your offspring after you the land of your sojourns – the whole of the land of Canaan – as an everlasting possession; and I shall be Hashem to them. (Bereshit 17:7-8)*

אף על פי שאני מגלה אתכם מן הארץ לחוצה לארץ היו מצויינין במצות שכשתחזרו לא יהו עליכם חדשים

*Even though I am exiling you from the land [says God], distinguish yourselves in [performing] mitzvot in order that, when you return, they should not be as new things to you.*

*(Ramban, Vayikra 18:25)*

לאחזות עולם. וְשֵׁם אֱהִיָּה לָכֶם לֹא-לֵהִיִּם, אֲבָל הִדָּר בְּחוּצָה לְאֶרֶץ דּוֹמָה כְּמִי שְׂאִין לוֹ אֱ-לוֹה:

*And [in the Land] I shall be God. But one who dwells outside the Land [of Israel] is like one who has no God."*

*(Rashi to Bereshit 17:8)*

**Discussion Point:** What do these sources say about our observance of *mitzvot* in *chutz la'aretz*?

Rav Kook explains that it is great to love the Land for its physical factors, although this is not as good as loving it for its spiritual factors, as the Gemara was perhaps implying.

ובאשר חבת הארץ מחולקת היא לפי מעלת האנשים והכרתם, כי יש שמחבב ארץ הקודש בשביל סגולותיה היקרות, וצמא מאד לרצות אבניה ולחונן עפרה (תהלים קב, טו) כדי לקיים המצות התלויות בארץ, ובשביל התכלית העליונה הנמצאת בה לכלל ישראל ולכלל העולם במעלתם הרוחנית.

ויש מי שמחבב ארץ הקידש וישתדל בישובה ובדירתה, בשביל שמכיר בה התכלית של המנוחה החומרית לכלל ישראל, שהוא גם כן דבר טוב ונשגב, ובכל זה לא בא עד המעלה הראשונה למי שמכיר יסוד התכלית העליונה שבחבת הארץ.

*Regarding loving the Land, we can divide it into two reasons based on a person's spiritual level and awareness. There are those who love the Holy Land for its beloved and special [spiritual] qualities, and they yearn greatly "to take pleasure in her stones and love her dust" (Tehillim 102:15), in order to fulfil the mitzvot which can only be done in the Land, and for its lofty value which we find within it for the Jewish People and the entire world on a spiritual level.*

*There are also those who love the Holy Land and try to settle it and live there because they recognise its value as a physical safe haven for the Jewish People, and this reason is also good and exalted, even though it doesn't reach the same level as the first because it does not take into account its special spiritual qualities as a reason to love the Land.  
(Ein Aya, Brachot 6:40)*

Let's also have a look at our very own constitution:

**From the Bnei Akiva Constitution:**

A2 Bnei Akiva espouses the ideology of Torah va'Avodah, as a means of unifying Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, and Torat Yisrael.

A3 Torah va'Avodah reflects the desire to be actively involved in the rebuilding of Medinat Yisrael, bringing Torat Yisrael into fruition.

A4 Bnei Akiva's educational framework shall encompass its three fundamental principles, namely: Am, Eretz, and Torat Yisrael.

אמרו חכמים: ישיבת ארץ ישראל שקולה כנגד כל המצוות שבתורה

*The sages say, Dwelling in the land of Israel is like all of the Mitzvot in the Torah  
(Tosefta Avoda Zara 4:3; Sifrei Re'ei 53)*

Eretz Yisrael is a fundamental part of Bnei Akiva's ideology, yet sometimes we take this for granted. It is worth pausing for a moment to consider the powerful reasons behind the Hashkafa of Religious Zionism

**Discussion Point: Do you think that your own understanding of why we value Eretz Yisrael is deep and developed enough to be able to communicate to *chanichim*?**

**Discussion Point: After 2000 years, why do we need a state now?**

## The Significance of Medinat Yisrael to the Jewish People

Now that we've discussed the importance of Eretz Yisrael, you might question the need for it to be Jewish-run. Why specifically is it so important to have a Jewish State in the land of Israel?

*"Jews have lived in almost every country under the sun. In four thousand years, only in Israel have they been a free, self-governing people. Only in Israel are they able, if they so choose, to construct an agriculture, a medical system, an economic infrastructure in the spirit of Torah and its concern for freedom, justice and the sanctity of life. Only in Israel can Jews speak the Hebrew of the Bible as the language of everyday speech. Only there can they live Jewish time within a calendar structured according to the rhythms of the Jewish year. Only in Israel can Jews live Judaism in anything other than an edited edition. In Israel, and only there, Jews can walk where the prophets walked, climb the mountains Abraham climbed, lift their eyes to the hills that David saw, and continue the story their ancestors began."*

*"Without a land and state, Judaism is a shadow of itself. In exile, God might still live in the hearts of Jews but not in the public square, in the justice of the courts, the morality of the economy and the humanitarianism of everyday life."*

(Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l)

## The Law of Return

When the State of Israel was established, one of the laws that was created alongside it was the automatic acceptance of anyone Jewish (later amended to include anyone with one Jewish grandparent) as an *oleh/ah*. This is an example of the State of Israel facilitating the return of *Am Yisrael* to the Jewish ancestral homeland – wow!

וְצָרִיכָה אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהִיטָב בְּנוֹיָהּ וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹשְׁבִים עָלֶיהָ מְסֻדָּרִים בְּכָל סְדְרֵיהֶם, מְקַדְּשׁ וּמְלַכּוֹת, כְּהִנָּה וּנְבוּאָה, שׁוֹפְטִים וְשׁוֹטְרִים וְכָל תַּכְסִּיסֵיהֶם, אִזּוּ חִיָּה הִיא תּוֹרָה שְׁבַעַל פֶּה בְּכָל זֵיו תְּפָאֲרָתָהּ

(אורות התורה א:ג)

*"It is needed for Eretz Yisrael to be built and for all of [Am] Yisrael living in it, with every organization in order and running smoothly: mikdash and kingship, priesthood and prophecy, [halakhic] judges and police. Then the Oral [experiential] Torah lives in all its splendour and glory."*

(Orot HaTorah 1:3)

*It has been pointed out that the existence of the state makes possible the fulfilment of two great aims of Torah: the Ingathering of the Exiles and the building of a just society. The achievement of these ends will require all the dedication and ingenuity that all Jews everywhere are capable of, and we hope that their accomplishment may initiate the Messianic era. Yet it is imperative to recognize the basic truth that the religious significance of the State of Israel is not limited to its being the instrument for the attainment of religious ends or even to its being a stage in the process of redemption as we pray for it to be.*

***The epic of Israel reborn spells out the renewal of the crown of our God not only for us but for others as well!***

*Two tasks face us now. One applies to Jews everywhere. It is to cultivate the understanding that true faith requires the mobilization of all our intellectual, spiritual and physical resources for the security and the upbuilding of the state and the people of Israel. To let down our guard, to underestimate our enemies or to overlook the immense obstacles — economic, social, political and military — which beset us is not only dangerous folly but it is above all a betrayal of our witness. The crown of G-d has been entrusted to us for safekeeping and we dare not foist the job on anybody else, even the Almighty Himself! The shape of Israeli society for generations to come is being determined now. It must and it can be permeated with Torah, not starry-eyed otherworldly faith but the kind of unswerving trust in the God of Israel which opens our eyes to see and to bear witness to His awesome deeds.*

(Rabbi Nachum L. Rabinovitch)

## What does being a Religious Zionist living in the UK practically mean?

### Can Religious Zionism be part of my identity if I don't make Aliyah?

Adopting the words 'Religious Zionist' as part of your identity can feel like a commitment to making Aliyah. This perception can feel quite daunting for people. Let's explore whether being a Religious Zionist is conditional upon making Aliyah, and whether there is more to this ideology than 'just' living in Israel.

*The Rambam considers the settlement of our Holy Land an essential foundation [of our faith]. His statement teaches that the existence of the entire holy nation is bound to the settlement of the land to such a degree that the entire nation would dissolve if the Jewish People would cease to exist in Eretz Yisrael, G-d forbid... Eretz Yisrael is the heart of the Jewish nation and its life-giving force.*

*Now, given that the Rambam values settling the land so much that he considers it the soul of the Jewish nation, how can any intelligent person entertain the thought that according to him there is no mitzvah nowadays to settle the land and that it is even forbidden to do so? The fourth rule that the Rambam sets down in Sefer HaMitzvot is: Commandments which encompass the entire Torah are not to be counted. Now, settling in Eretz Yisrael is an extremely precious mitzvah. It is the sum total of all other mitzvot, and it encompasses the entire Torah... Therefore it is not included in the enumeration of the mitzvot, for only particular mitzvot are counted, and this mitzvah is a general one.*

*(Rav Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal, Eim HaBanim Semeicha)*

Making Aliyah is an intrinsic Jewish value, according to many opinions. However, if you don't yet live in Israel and haven't decided if you want to yet, there are plenty of ways that you can and should express your religious Zionism.

Here are some general concepts to remember when approaching the sugya of Eretz Yisrael, wherever you happen to live:

- 1) When things come from Eretz Yisrael or remind us of Eretz Yisrael we should be excited.
- 2) When we arrive in Israel, we should be excited.
- 3) Eating the fruits of Eretz Yisrael.
- 4) Not speaking negatively of Eretz Yisrael (the first people to do that condemned themselves and their entire generation to die in the desert...)
- 5) Donating money to Eretz Yisrael

'Did you know it's a *mitzva* to walk 4 amot in Israel?' – Rosh of Gimmel Winter 5783



**Discussion Point: What other reservations might your *chanichim* have to committing themselves to the ideology of Religious Zionism? How can you approach them?**

*The first piece of advice I would give is to make Israel an integral part of your life. The obvious way to maintain that connection is to visit, as often as you can. This will remind you what you love about Israel, how it makes you feel and enable you to store up those experiences which will tide you over whilst you are away. Unfortunately travel opportunities are not as common at the moment but thankfully in today's technologically advanced world we can still "stay in touch" with Eretz Yisrael. You can choose to visit its sites virtually or join online learning programs with leading Israeli institutions, sit opposite the Kotel cam in your lunch break or "hang out" with your friends and family that are there – do whatever you can to maintain that connection and help retain your familiarity with the land.*

*My next piece of advice would be to watch what narrative you use when discussing Eretz Yisrael. We are all very good at making jokes about the culture, talking about how different it is there and how no one knows how to queue. But how often do we talk in a positive way? Whilst these types of conversations may be easier to have than to actually discuss and get to grips with deeper feelings and emotions that we may have (I can almost hear the gasp that I even suggested this). Talking about Eretz Yisrael in an upbeat way will have a massive impact on your mindset towards it. Unfortunately, we are not short of sources for anti-Israel conversations so if you have a positive relationship with it, let's focus on that! (Rabbanit Sarah Kenigsberg, Rabbanit Shlichah Emerita)*

## Israel and antisemitism

**Zionism = The belief that the Jewish people have the right to self-determination in their national homeland, Israel.**

When people try to claim that this right does not exist, it can have a profound impact on one's identity. This is because antizionism is antisemitism, a form of racism.

Don't believe me? The following is one of the examples given in the IHRA definition of antisemitism:

- 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.

**Discussion Point: What will your *chanichim* think about this point? Have recent events affected the way they may perceive the existence of the State of Israel, or its actions?**

*The November 1947 United Nations vote to bring Israel into existence was a momentous reversal of imperialism. It gave back to the Jewish people the home taken from them by empire after empire. Israel was the only non-artificial creation in the Middle East after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The rest – among them Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Yemen – were artificial creations that hadn't been states before, which is why most of them still exist in a condition of ethnic, religious and tribal strife. Only Israel had previously existed as a nation state.*

*That's the unbreakable connection between Israel and the Jewish people. The connection between Israel and Judaism is equally ancient and fundamental. It is more than just as Robert Frost said, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." Read the Hebrew Bible and you'll see immediately that it isn't about the salvation of the soul. It's about creating in the holy land a society based on the biblical ideas of justice, welfare, the sanctity of life – and caring for the stranger "because you know what it feels like to be a stranger."*

*-Rabbi Sacks*



## Israel and Jewish identity

*Fourth, the Beloved knocks in the heart of the youth which is assimilated and perplexed. The period of hester panim in the 1940s brought confusion among the Jewish masses and especially Jewish youth. Assimilation increased, and the urge to flee from Judaism and the Jewish people reached its apex. Fear, despair, and ignorance caused many to forsake the Jewish community and "climb aboard the ship," to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord (Jonah 1:3), just as Jonah sought to flee G-d's presence. A seemingly unstoppable tidal wave stood over us and threatened to destroy us. Suddenly, the Beloved began to beckon to the hearts of the perplexed, and His beckoning, the establishment of the State of Israel, at least slowed the process of flight. Many who were once alienated are now bound to the Jewish State with ties of pride in its mighty accomplishments. Many American Jews who were partially assimilated find themselves beset by hidden fear and concern for any crisis that the State of Israel is at the time passing through, and they pray for its well-being and welfare even though they are far from being totally committed to it. Even Jews who are hostile to the State of Israel must defend themselves from the strange charge of dual-loyalty and proclaim daily and declare that they have no stake in the Holy Land. It is good for a Jew when he cannot ignore his Jewishness and is obliged to perpetually answer the questions "Who are you?" and "What is your occupation?" (Jonah 1:8), even when extraordinary fear grips him and he does not have the strength or fortitude to answer with true pride, "I am a Jew, and I fear the Lord, the G-d of heaven" (Jonah 1:9). The unrelenting question of, "Who are you?" ties him to the Jewish people.*

*The very mention of the name Israel is a reminder to the fleeing Jew that he cannot escape from the community of Israel in whose midst he has been enmeshed from birth. Everywhere we turn we hear the name "Israel." When we listen to a radio station, when we open a paper, when we participate in a debate on current events, we encounter the question of Israel; it is always a topic of public concern.*

*(Rav Joseph B Soloveitchik, Kol Dodi Dofek, The Six Knocks)*

## Concrete Concepts:

1. Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael are intrinsic to the Jewish people and their serving of Hashem in the ideal way
2. Making *aliyah* is a huge part of Religious Zionism, but there are other actions that one can take before *aliyah* to show affiliation and support, and cultivate one's religious Zionist identity
3. When anti-Semitism manifests as anti-Zionism it can have an impact on our Jewish identity and mental health

## K5. Me and the world

### Objectives:

1. To learn about the responsibilities Jewish people have to the rest of the world
2. To reflect on the interactions Jewish people have with non-Jewish people
3. To consider what initiatives one should take in order to contribute towards making the world a better place



Now that we've explored our obligations to ourselves, our families, our friends, the rest of *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael*, it's time to look at things even more broadly. Being a human being and an inhabitant of the world is not something to be taken lightly. There are over 8 billion individuals living on the planet and Hashem has chosen you to be one of them! Jewish people make up about 0.2% of the world's population, yet we are expected to make a big impact. With many people worldwide still living in poverty, it's important to realise that privilege comes with responsibility.

Let's look at some key Jewish values that are often misinterpreted, and explore what they mean in an Orthodox context:

### Creation of Adam

Although not intended in a literal sense (and the *pesukim* themselves hint to the fact that there were people besides Adam), the Torah presents humanity as the descendants of one individual – Adam. Why would Hashem do so? Perhaps to teach that all human beings are created equal, with no one able to claim better genealogical pedigree!

**(N.B.** This is NOT the same as *tzelem elokim*, a frequently misunderstood and misrepresented concept. Yes all humans are created equal, but not all reach the level of *tzelem elokim*.)

**Discussion Point: How can you use the idea of the creation of Adam to educate your *chanichim* about racism and prejudice?**

### Or Lagoyim

1) אָנִי ה' קָרָאתִיךָ בְצַדִּיק וְאֶחָזַק בְּיָדְךָ וְאֶצְרְפֶּךָ וְאֶתְנַחֵן לְבְרִית עִם לְאֹר גּוֹיִם:

*I the LORD, in My grace, have summoned you, And I have grasped you by the hand. I created you, and appointed you. A covenant people, a light of nations (42:6)*

2) וַיֹּאמֶר נִקְל מְהִיֹּתְךָ לִי עֶבֶד לְהִקִּים אֶת־שִׁבְטֵי יַעֲקֹב (וּנְצִירֵי) וְנִצְוֹרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשִּׁיב וּנְתַתִּיךָ לְאֹר גּוֹיִם לְהִזוֹת יְשׁוּעָתִי עַד־קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ:

*For He has said: "It is too little that you should be My servant in that I raise up the tribes of Jacob. And restore the survivors of Israel: I will also make you a light of nations, That My salvation may reach the ends of the earth." (49:6)*

3) וְהָלְכוּ גּוֹיִם לְאוֹרְךָ וּמְלָכִים לְנֹגַהּ יְרֻחֶךָ:

*And nations shall walk by your light, Kings, by your shining radiance. (60:3)*

**Discussion Point: What new understanding of 'or lagoyim' do these *pesukim* give you? What might your *chanichim* think that this term means?**

### **Tikkun Olam**

The expression *tikkun olam* is first used in the Mishnah in the phrase '*mip'nei tikkun ha-olam*' ('for the sake of *tikkun* of the world') to indicate that a practice should be followed not because it is required by Biblical law, but because it helps avoid social chaos.

*Tikkun olam* means 'repairing the world' and expresses the Jewish desire to improve the world. This refers to the way we treat other people, creating a just society, improving health and helping people to reach their potential. It also refers to a duty to take care of the environment.

One example of this is the *shemitta* year. It says in Shemot:

וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע אֶת-אֲרֶצְךָ וְאִסַּפְתָּ אֶת-תְּבוּאָתָהּ:

*Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield;*

וְהַשְּׁבִיעֹת תִּשְׁמְטֶנָּה וְנִטְשָׁתָה וְאָכְלוּ אֲבִינֵי עַמּוֹךְ וְיִתְרֹם תֹּאכַל חַיֵּית הַשָּׂדֶה כִּוְרַתְעֶשֶׂה לְכַרְמְךָ לְזִיתָךְ:

*but in the seventh you shall let it rest and lie fallow. Let the needy among your people eat of it, and what they leave let the wild beasts eat. You shall do the same with your vineyards and your olive groves.*

This is an example of allowing the natural ingredients in the soil to be replenished in order to invest in its quality for future years.



The concept of **stewardship** is not just one of those RS GCSE words we all learn (although not in my case, as I dropped it. There's only so much Rabbi Sliw I can take...). It means that Hashem has given us a responsibility to look after all of His creations. An example of this is in *Bereishit*:

וַיִּקַּח ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיְנַחֵהוּ בְּגֵן-עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ:

*The LORD G-d took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and take care of it.*

(*Bereishit* 2:15)

It also says in *Sefer Tehillim* (24:1),

לַדָּוִד כְּזִמְרוֹר לַה' הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ תִּבְּל וַיִּשְׁבֵּי בָּהּ:

*The earth is the LORD's and all that it holds; the world and its inhabitants.*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרְדוּ בְדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם 4) וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱ-לֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱ-לֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבִּשְׁהָ וּרְדוּ בְדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיַּיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׂת עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

*And God said, 'Let us make man in our nature and in a way that resembles us, that he may have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and the animals, and over all the land, and all the reptiles that crawl over the land.'*

*And God blessed them and said to them 'Be fruitful and increase and fill the world and subdue it. And have dominion over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air, and over all living things that crawl over the land.'*

As human beings, we clearly have a large responsibility to look after the world. But we are also creators, like God (#imitatiodei – look back at K4 in case you forgot), and we are charged with developing the world too.

מַעֲשֵׂה שְׂשָׁל טוּרְנוֹסְרוּפוֹס הִרְשַׁע אֶת רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, אִיזוּ מַעֲשִׂים נְאִים, שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אוֹ שֶׁל בֶּשֶׂר 5) וְדָם. אָמַר לוֹ: שֶׁל בֶּשֶׂר וְדָם נְאִים. ... אָמַר לוֹ: לָמָּה אַתֶּם מוֹלִין. אָמַר לוֹ: אֲנִי הֵייתִי יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁעַל דְּבַר זֶה אַתָּה שׂוֹאֲלָנִי, וְלִכְךָ הַקְּדוּמָתִי וְאִמְרָתִי לְךָ, שְׂמוֹעֵשָׂה בְּנֵי אָדָם נְאִים מִשֶּׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. הִבִּיא לוֹ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא שְׂבָלִים וְגַלְסָקָאוֹת, אָמַר לוֹ: אֵלּוּ מַעֲשֵׂה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְאֵלּוּ מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם. אָמַר לוֹ: אִין אֵלּוּ נְאִים יוֹתֵר מִן הַשְּׂבָלִים

*It once happened that Turnus Rufus the wicked asked Rabbi Akiva, 'Whose creations are more pleasant, those of God or those of human beings?' He replied, 'Those of human beings are more pleasant.' [Turnus Rufus] said to him, 'Why are you circumcised?' [Rabbi Akiva] replied, 'I knew that this was what you were asking about, which is why I got there first and said that the creations of human beings are more pleasant than those of God.' [Rabbi Akiva] brought stalks [of grain] and cakes, and said to him 'These [stalks] are the work of God, and these [cakes] are the work of humans. Are not these [cakes] more pleasant than the stalks?'*

*(Midrash Tanchuma, Tazria 5)*

**Discussion Point: What do you think is the balance that needs to be struck between responsibility towards maintaining the world, while also having dominion over it and harnessing it for our needs as human beings? (Hint: It's somewhere between 'scorched earth' and voluntary human extinction.)**

### ***Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayyim***

The prohibition of causing suffering to living animals is indicative of how we're supposed to have compassion for animals. This *pasuk* in *Shemot* (23:5) introduces us to this concept:

כִּי־תִרְאֶה חֲמֹר שֶׁנֶּאֱדָךְ רִבֵּץ תַּחַת מְשָׁאוֹ וְחִדַּלְתָּ מֵעֲזֹב לוֹ עֲזֹב תַּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ:

*When you see the donkey of your enemy lying under its burden and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless raise it with him*

What's particularly interesting is that the obligation to relieve an animal of suffering is brought up in the context of an animal belonging to one's enemy. If we even have to treat this animal with kindness, how much more so all other animals!

The Gemara in Bava Metzia (32a) uses sources including this one as evidence for saying:

מדברי שניהם נלמד צער בעלי חיים דאורייתא

*From the statements of both of these tanna'im it can be learned **that the requirement to prevent suffering to animals is by Torah law.***

The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 452) explains that causing pain to an animal is the root of the Torah prohibition of 'Ever min Hachai' (taking a limb from a living animal). The implication seems to be that one who acts towards animals with cruelty is essentially training themselves to become a cruel person, in addition to the pain caused to the animal.

**Discussion Point: What practical scenarios can you think of where *tza'ar ba'alei chayyim* may come up? Could *foie gras* be violating this prohibition?**

## Vegetarianism

The topics of vegetarianism (and veganism) and Judaism is a complex one. If you are interested in developing your knowledge of the topic further, please consult some of the resources referenced in the Senior Tzevet Handbook. For now, here are some summary points:

- Adam and Chava were originally vegetarian (see *Bereishit* 1:29)
- After the *mabul*, Noah and his descendants were given permission to eat meat – possibly in order to make a clear distinction between them and animals (see *Bereishit* 9:1-7)
- In *Re'ei* (12:21), permission is given to the Jewish people to eat meat, followed by some strict caveats such as not eating blood, and covering the blood of the slaughtered animals
- Permission to eat meat is written after the acknowledgement that human beings will have a desire to eat meat
- It's unclear in the text whether eating meat outside of the context of *korbanot* is ideal.
- Most people agree that when *mashiach* comes, animal sacrifices *korbanot* will be reinstated (yes, even Rav Kook!)
- The amount of meat a non-Kohen will eat is minimal – only really the *korban Pesach*.

## Torah Umadda (get hyped!)

*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, Torah Umadda)

*The Author of the Torah is the Author of the world (Rabbi Dweck)*

*I heard that God created a book, and that is the world. And [he created] the commentary [on the book], and that is that Torah. For the Torah is akin to a commentary of God's possessions.*  
(Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin)

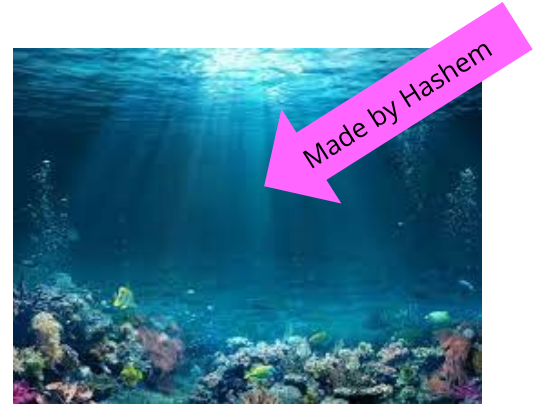
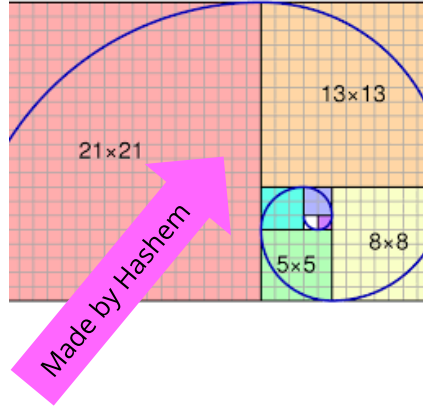
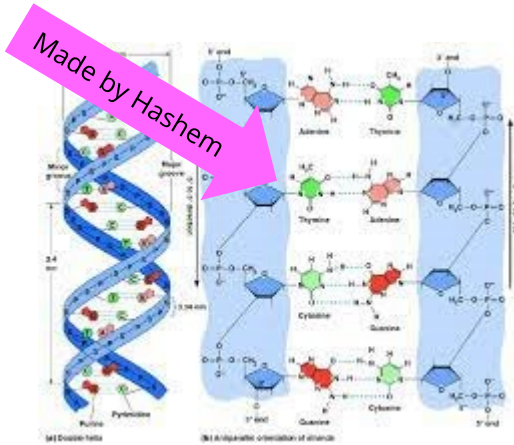
There are a few different models for the interrelation of Torah and Madda, but the one we'll discuss here is the **synergetic** relationship. Rather than simply using science to answer halakhic questions, science is **itself** a 'holy' endeavour

In fact, Professor Marc Shapiro argues that according to Rambam, one should recite *Birchot HaTorah* (blessings before learning Torah) before studying natural sciences!

**[ב] וְהַיָּאֵד הַיָּא הַדְרָד לְאַהֲבָתוֹ, וְיִרְאַתוֹ: בְּשַׁעָה שִׁתְּבוּנָן הָאָדָם בְּמַעֲשָׂיו וּבְרוּאָיו הַנְּפֹלְאִים הַגְּדוֹלִים, וְיִרְאַה מְהֵם חֲכָמָתוֹ שְׂאִין לָהּ עֶרְךָ וְלֹא קֶץ—מִיָּד הוּא אוֹהֵב וּמְשַׁבַּח וּמוֹפְאָר וּמְתַאֲוֶה תַּאֲוֶה גְדוֹלָה לִידַע הַשֵּׁם הַגְּדוֹל**

*And what is the way to this love [of God]? When a person contemplates God's great and wonderful actions and creations, and perceives in them His unbound and immeasurable wisdom – immediately he loves, praises, glorifies [God] and desires a great desire to know the great name [i.e. God].*

*Mishne Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei HaTorah 2:1 (or 2)*



**Discussion Point:** Do you think your *chanichim* have ever been exposed to the idea that 'secular' studies are also an expression of God, and deserve religious merit in their own right?

**Discussion Point:** How can you communicate the idea that the Torah and the world are both instances of divine revelation, and can be studied in order to grow closer to God?

### Concrete Concepts:

1. Seeing all human beings as valuable is a Torah imperative
2. Jewish people have an extra responsibility to be a moral example to the rest of the world
3. Jewish people have a responsibility to look after all of Hashem's creations
4. Torah Umadda describes an outlook on the world where learning about science and worldly matters is a method of understanding more about Hashem



## WINTER MACHANE 5782

Gimmel: Jewish identity - עברי אנכי -

K6: Me and Hashem

### K6. ME AND HASHEM

#### Objectives

1. To learn about different methods of developing a relationship with Hashem
2. To evaluate how investing in the relationships discussed in K1-5 improves one's ability to serve Hashem
3. To explore investing in Hashem as a foundation for working on the relationships discussed in K1-5

We read in the *shema*:

וְאֶהְבֶּתְךָ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ  
וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ:

*You shall love the LORD your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Devarim 6:5)*

In the last K, we briefly touched on the Rambam's method of studying science to develop love of God. In this K, we'll look at a few other ways to build this relationship.

The very first words Hashem says to Avraham are: *lekh lekha* (el Nineveh...)

Avraham must go **for his own sake** – it has to be Avraham being Avraham because that's who he is, not because that's who God has told him to be (look back at the Kotzker Rebbe quote in K1). The only thing you can give God is yourself (He has everything else), which means there must be a 'you' to give. The same is true with any relationship, but God isn't getting into messy teenage co-dependencies – we as humans

*Immature love says: "I love you because I need you." Mature love says: "I need you because I love you."*

*Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving*

In our relationship with Hashem, which is indeed a loving one, the **love** must be the basis, not the **need**. We can't have a real connection to Hashem based on wanting a reward, or trying to appease a 'great deity' who will now make things go your way and give you the parking space. The love has to come first.

**Discussion Point: What ways do you focus on growing your relationship with Hashem? Do you think your *chanichim* will have ever considered that they have a relationship with God? (Story Time with Ben: Ask me what happened in *cheder*.)**

#### 1) Tefilla

The Gemara in *Massekhet Ta'anit* (6a) refers to *tefilla* as the 'service of the heart'. Prayer is one of the primary ways in which we can work our connection with Hashem on a frequent level.

The word תפילה comes from the Hebrew word פלל meaning *to make judgements* (see *Shemot* 21:22), so in the word להתפלל which is a *hitpa'el* infinitive (ask Rafi what that is), it means *to judge oneself*.

The Rambam (*Mishneh Torah, Hilkhos Tefilla* 1:2) writes that there are 3 parts to *tefilla*:

1. Praising Hashem
2. Asking for things
3. Thanking Hashem

Often we forget that the purpose of Tefillah is not just to ask Hashem for things. It is also to build up a relationship with Hashem, to fulfil an obligation, to reflect on where we are at spiritually and to express gratitude for what we already have – key parts of every relationship.



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**Discussion Point: What is your biggest motivation for davening? Does it change depending on your personal circumstances?**

The Gemara (Brachot 26b) discusses the origin of *tefilla*. Two different suggestions are given:

Rabbi Yosei B'Rabbi Chanina (relationship)	Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi (obligation)
<i>Tefilla</i> was instituted by the Avot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avraham - Shacharit (עמידה - standing)</li> <li>• Yitzchak - Mincha (שיחה - conversation)</li> <li>• Yaakov - Maariv (פגיעה - encounter)</li> </ul>	<i>Tefilla</i> was instituted based on the daily <i>Korbanot</i> (offerings)

This debate expresses the tension between *tefilla* as an inherently spontaneous event arising out of relationship, or as a requirement God sets on us that we must fulfil in order to maintain that relationship. In reality, *tefilla* today contains elements of both.

**Discussion Point: Does your experience of *tefilla* vacillate along this spectrum?**

**Discussion Point: How does this tension play out in human relationships?**

**2) Learning Torah**

*Pirkei Avot* (5:21) delineates the original study schedule of the Tannaitic era:

הוא היה אומר, בן חמש שנים למקרא, בן עשר למושנה, בן שלש עשרה למוצות, בן חמש עשרה לתלמוד

*He used to say: At five years of age the study of Scripture; At ten the study of Mishnah; At thirteen subject to the commandments; At fifteen the study of Talmud...*

We see here how the question is not whether someone should learn Torah or not but **when** is the best time to start doing so. The juxtaposition of Torah learning with doing mitzvot also highlights learning as a necessary foundation for the performance of mitzvot, and therefore, fulfilling the will of Hashem.

**Discussion Point: How often do you schedule learning Torah into your timetable?**

**What do you think counts as 'learning Torah'?**

**3) Commitment and consistency**

The Rabbis dispute what the most important *pasuk* in the Torah is:

בן זומא אומר: מצינו פסוק כולל יותר והוא (דברים ו ד): "שמע ישראל ה' אלוהינו ה' אחד."

בן ננס אומר: מצינו פסוק כולל יותר והוא: (ויקרא יט יח): "זאהבת לרעך כמוך."

שמעון בן פזי אומר: מצינו פסוק כולל יותר, והוא (שמות כט לט): "את הכבש האחד תעשה בבקר ואת הכבש השני תעשה בין הערבים."

*Ben Zoma said: We've found a pasuk that is more fundamental: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.'*

*Ben Nanas said: We've found a pasuk that is even more fundamental than yours: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.'*

*Shimon ben Pazi said: We've found a pasuk that is EVEN EVEN MORE fundamental than yours: 'Lamb no. 1 you will prepare in the morning, and lamb no. 2 you will prepare in the evening.'*

Huh?



## WINTER MACHANE 5782

Gimmel: Jewish identity - עברי אנכי -

K6: Me and Hashem



Ah, but I shall go even further back in time, and bribe the architect...

A hole in the wall?! Ach, you were lucky - we used to DREAM of having our own hole in wall!



And that's not even the kicker...

עמד ר' פלוני על רגליו ואמר: "הלכה כבן פזי! דכתיב (שמות כה ט): "ככל אשר אני מראה אותך את תבנית המשכן ואת תבנית כל כליו וכן תעשו"

*Rabbi X stood up on his feet and declared: The halakha is in accordance with ben Pazi, as it is written: 'According to all that I show you - the blueprints of the mishkan and all its vessels - and so shall you do.'*

How is it that a *pasuk* about the *korban tamid*, the daily offering, can be considered more important than the rudimentary pesukim mentioned? The answer is that this *pasuk* represents the value of consistency, of committing to a Torah lifestyle and therefore to serving Hashem. This is one of the most important values that you can instil in your *chanichim*.

*Words have their own dynamic. The concepts of "commitment" and "obligation" are relatively new, and they arouse associations of coercion, of something that is not part of ourselves but rather is forced upon us. In our traditional sources, the term that is used instead of "mechuyavut" (obligation) is "ne'emanut" (loyalty, trustworthiness, **faithfulness**). We say in our prayers, "You are faithful to revive the dead" - God is obligated, as it were, to revive the dead. Moreover, Rashi interprets the phrase, "I am Hashem" (Shemot 2:2) as meaning, "I am **faithful** to give reward." The Tetragrammaton refers to God's keeping faith with His creatures.*

*(Rav Yehuda Amital zt"l, Commitment vs. "Connecting" - The Current Crisis of our Youth)*

#### 4) Relationship with Hashem as a foundation for investing in other relationships

You may have noticed that throughout the Chomer, we've been constantly linking each Kvutza to the ones that came before it, revealing the symbiotic nature of the investments we make in ourselves and everyone around us. We've also explored our identities as individuals who exist simultaneously in all of these different contexts.

Now it's time to zoom both in **and** out as we view the paradoxical nature of investing in Hashem as both the start and end point of all these other investments. (Really, it's not quite a paradox, just cyclical in nature but admit that sounded really cool.)



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Can you think of ways that a relationship with Hashem will help enhance your ability to invest in:

- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1) The environment      | 5) Your friends |
| 2) Humanity             | 6) Your Family  |
| 3) Israel               | 7) Yourself     |
| 4) The Jewish Community |                 |

At this point, your Chanichim should be able to answer all these questions based on the information and ideas that you've taught them in all the previous Kvutzot. Seeing as whilst you're reading this, Machane itself has not started yet (hopefully), you can bear this concept in mind throughout Kvutza; **don't view each K as a standalone lesson. Rather see them as vital components of an overall multi-faceted message. Every time we invest in each one of the contexts that we find ourselves in, we build our identity as a Jewish person, and enhance our contributions to every other context as well (read that again).**

### Conclusion

You've made it to the end of the Gimmel Winter Chomer! You have an amazing opportunity to help your *chanichim* explore their identities as they navigate through the many different contexts and environments that they find themselves in, at a critical time in their lives. An important concept to end on is that each of these contexts do not exist in a vacuum. Every one of us is simultaneously an individual, a family member, a friend, a member of the Jewish People, a human being and an *eved Hashem*. Being aware of this is a unique privilege and is part of the Jewish experience. B'ezrat Hashem, by the end of this winter your *chanichim* will be able to proudly say, with a deepened and complex understanding, 'Ivri Anochi'!

### K6 Concrete Concepts.

1. It's important to have an emotional and cognitive relationship with Hashem
2. There are many ways to work on one's relationship with Hashem
3. Connecting with Hashem is both a foundation for and a result of investing in the other relationships all around us