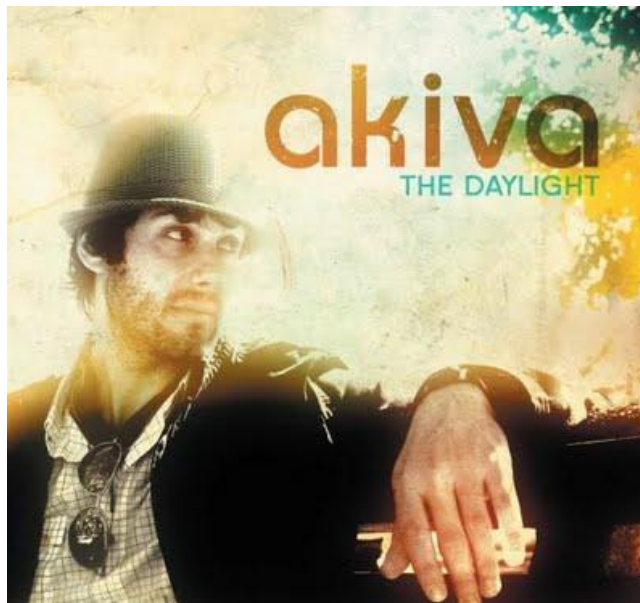


Rabbi Akiva



Aims:

1. To learn about the life and teachings of Rabbi Akiva.
2. To think about why we are named after Rabbi Akiva.



Shalom Roshim, Sganim v'Madrichim,

A big kol hakavod to Woodside Park Bnei Akiva on their great fireworks event last Sunday! All reports say that it was very fun and had a great turnout. Looking forward to seeing more great events from our svivot over the year!

This week we are focusing on a Bnei Akiva hero – Rabbi Akiva. At the start of the year, it's good to understand why we are named after him, and get inspired by his incredible life and teachings to follow his example.

Bevirkat Chaverim l'Torah v'Avodah

Marina Spiers

Ovedet Chinuch 5775

chinuch@bauk.org 0208 209 1319 ext 6

P.S. **WINTER MACHANE!!!** 22nd-29th December of chanichim, 17th-29th December for madrichim! APPLY BY 14TH NOVEMBER! Visit www.bauk.org for the forms!





Also, remember London Limmud at the Bayit on Monday night!
10th November: Rabbi Yaacov Finn from Borehamwood/Elstree is speaking.
24th November: Rabbi Lawrence from Kinloss shul is speaking.

LONDON LIMMUD IS BACK!

Fantastic speakers

Every Monday night
7:30 - 8:30 - Chavruta
8:30 - 9:15 - Guest speaker
Followed by Ma'ariv

**PLUS special
SHEVET EITAN
chabura with Rav Ari!**

Meet friends

תנועת בני אקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

**Plus 10% Limmud discount at
White House Express in
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BRICKS

Aim 1: To learn about the life and teachings of Rabbi Akiva

Of all the great Jewish leaders, patriarchs, rabbis, prophets, sages – why are we called Bnei AKIVA? What is it that he stood for that makes us want to follow in his footsteps? In my opinion, the thing that makes Rabbi Akiva unique is that he just had it all! Not that he was perfect or never made a mistake – no-one can say that – but rather that he had the correct outlook in life, as we shall discover...

FACTFILE

Name: Rabbi Akiva ben Yosef

Lifespan: approximately 50CE to approximately 137CE

Residency: Eretz Yisrael – under Roman rule.

Hobbies: Before age 40: shepherding. After age 40: learning and teaching Torah, standing up to the Romans

Famous for: being a Tanna (one of the Rabbis who formed the Gemara) and being known as “Rosh Lachachamim” – being head of the sages. . It is said that all Mishna, Tosefta and Midrash were based in some way on his teachings.



TIMELINE

- Grew up as a non observant Jew, the Talmud tells us that he hated Talmidei Chachamim
- Worked for Kalba Savua, one of the richest men in Israel, as a shepherd
- He fell in love with Kalba Savua’s daughter Rachel, who agreed to marry him on condition that he went to learn Torah. He went to learn for 24 years in total in Lod and Yavneh. He amassed tens of thousands of students.
- 70CE: Destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash
- After his students died in the Bar Cochba Revolt (which we remember during the Omer) he found five new students and taught them. They were: Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Nehemiah, Rabbi Yose ben Chalafta and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.
- He supported the Bar Cochba Revolt, which ultimately failed, and claimed that Bar Cochba was the Mashiach. He was tortured and killed by the Romans in the persecutions of the time of Emperor Hadrian and the Revolt. His last word were the Shema.



MORTAR

Aim 1: To learn about the life and teachings of Rabbi Akiva

Activities

- **This Is Your Life:** quite obvious really! Madrichim make a red book and start it off, maybe get chanichim to act out the rest of Rabbi Akiva's life. Have a debate as to why we are called Rabbi Akiva using the opinions listed above.
- **Timelines:** make pictures of the different events in Rabbi Akiva's life, and get the chanichim to put them in order. You can make it a race between 2 teams.
- **Just a minute:** challenge your chanichim to speak for one minute about Rabbi Akiva. No hesitation, repetition or deviation. How much do they think they know?

BUILDERS BLUEPRINT

WHAT WAS THE BAR KOCHBA REBELLION?

- 132–136 CE.
- This was a rebellion of the Jews of Judea following the rule of the Emperor Hadrian, led by Simon bar Kokhba, against the Roman Empire, due to oppression and persecution of the Jews.
- The rebellion survived for two and a half years. The proponents of this Jewish state independent of the Romans even produced their own coins.
- The rebellion ended with the Jews being defeated by the Romans in the massacre of Beitar on 9th Av.





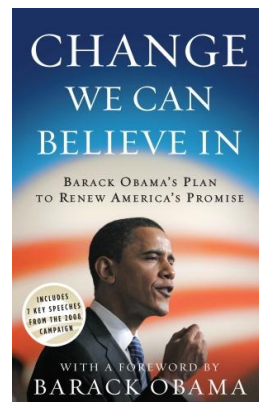
BRICKS

Aim 2: To think about why we are named after Rabbi Akiva

OK Rabbi Akiva had an action-packed life – he was famous, clever and well-liked! But why do we name our movement after him?

THE ABILITY TO GROW AND CHANGE

Rabbi Akiva only started learning Torah at the age of 40, but rose to be one of the greatest sages of all time. He shows that it's never too late to start learning or growing and that anyone can change. As a youth movement and as individuals, we should always be prepared to change for the better.



THE GREATEST LEARNER

There is a famous Midrash that Moshe Rabbeinu himself paid a visit to Rabbi Akiva's classroom and found himself not understanding what was going on! Without going into that story, suffice it to say that Rabbi Akiva was one of the greatest learners ever – not only because he was clever, but because he totally devoted himself to it.

One major aspect of our ideology is to set aside regular time for Torah study – like at Limmud – and we get this from our man Rabbi Akiva.

THE GREATEST TEACHER

He had SO many students! It is most commonly thought that he had 24,000. Either way – he was clearly a great educator who inspired many people. He moulded the next generation of Sages. An example to follow for us madrichim...

KIDDUSH HASHEM

The ultimate Kiddush Hashem is to die with the Shema on one's lips – and that was what he did. He lived by his ideals, that of perfect devotion to Hashem and sanctifying His name – and died by them.

ACTIVE REBEL



After the destruction of the Temple, it would be easy to give up on Judaism. A mere 60 years later and Rabbi Akiva was actively supporting a revolution by Bar Kochba to regain control of Israel. We know that he ensured his students took part and gave his moral support.

Rabbi Akiva believed in the idea of actively bringing the geula, as opposed to passively waiting for it to happen. This is the essence of Bnei Akiva's view of Religious Zionism. He valued Eretz Yisrael and

knew that it was the only place where Jews should be. We emulate his early striving to create the first post-biblical Jewish State.



This could not be more relevant to today, when Am Yisrael took a decision re-establish a Jewish State. For religious people, the balance between fighting in an army and learning Torah; between agriculture and religion; between one's own religious community wishes and that of a multi-opinioned society – are all challenging. But Rabbi Akiva took upon himself those challenges, and so should we.

AHAVAT YISRAEL

Remember the song 'Amar Rabbi Akiva'? It tells of the quote from the Gemara that Rabbi Akiva says that 'Veha'avta Lereicha Camocha' is the greatest rule in the Torah – loving your neighbour as yourself. This is a key part of why we follow Rabbi Akiva - for all the Torah learning and ideals we may have are all worthless if we do not respect one another.

HOPE AND OPTIMISM

There is a famous story at the end of Gemara Makkot, where Rabbi Akiva and other Sages are viewing the Temple ruins. They all cry – but Rabbi Akiva laughs. When they ask him why, he replies that now it's destroyed he could see the prophecies coming true and was comforted that the Jews will return and the Temple will one day be rebuilt. He taught us to be eternal optimists – and how would the Jewish nation have got through

MORTAR

Aim 2: To think about why we are named after Rabbi Akiva



- Rebellion: When Bnei Akiva was founded by Yechiel Eliash in 1929, the idea of a religious youth movement was unheard of, and Bnei Akiva's activities in earlier times certainly rebelled against the status quo e.g. by actively training chalutzim to go to Eretz Yisrael.
- Is Bnei Akiva still radical today? Have we become part of the "establishment"? Is there independent value in being rebellious?

Activities

- The Ultimate BA-nik: each group has to make an advert for their ideal BA-nik in different styles (e.g. World War 2 TV era style, Blue Peter, X Factor, Match of the Day etc).
- Have a debate as to why we are called Rabbi Akiva using the opinions listed above.

Ability to grow and change

- **Amoeba game:** progress up the animal kingdom and realize that there is always a new way to develop.

The greatest Teacher

- **Follow the leader:** One person in the group can lead everyone else in performing a task, with an impediment e.g. the group has to build a house with their bodies, but all while standing on one leg. This can give an idea of the leadership Rabbi Akiva had to show, despite the hardships of the time he was living in
- **“The ideal teacher”:** Get chanichim to discuss what attributes a teacher needs.

Active Rebel

- Show the chanichim pictures of people who are considered “rebels” in our society. What makes a rebel?
- Get one person in the group to rebel against what is going on... potentially very funny and raises the question of whether rebellion is necessarily noble or misdirected.

Ahavat Yisrael

- **Love your neighbor:** Simple!

Peulah Planning Sheet

Peulah Title:

Trigger:

Aim 1:

Related Activities and how they relate:

Aim 2:

Related Activities and how they relate:

Aim 3:

Related Activities and how they relate:

What we still need to do (tziud + other preparations):

Conclusion: