

Hadracha Choveret



תנועת בני עקיבא

 BNEI AKIVA UK

BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM

In this pack:

1. **A linear guide through the Prezi. The prezi only makes sense with this linear guide. It is primarily designed for you as Roshim, and explains the concept/lesson that I'm trying to teach in the Choveret.**

I recommend reading through this guide before you start the meeting so you're familiar with the structure and concept/lesson.

2. **A suggested plan for the madrichim meeting with suggested activities that can help to teach/explain the concept/lesson being discussed.**

This will be helpful as you're starting out in the year, and once you become familiar with what works and what your madrichim enjoy in the meeting, it will become less relevant.

3. **A selection of suggested games/activities that your madrichim can use in Sviva that are linked to the topic. (Attached separately).**

4. **A summary sheet that can be handed out to madrichim. (Attached separately).**

5. **A PDF of the slides of the Prezi if you need. (Attached separately).**

Please note the London Bayit has projectors and screens that you can borrow for your meetings.



Linear guide through the Prezi

A. Introduction to Hebron

In this week's Parasha we read the story of Avraham buying the plot of land where Maarat HaMachpela is. Maarat HaMachpela today is located in the city of Chevron. For around 30-35 years, every year on hundreds and thousands of Religious Zionist Israeli Jews travel to Chevron to visit Maarat HaMachpela on the Shabbat when Chayei Sarah is read.

The trip to Chevron on this Shabbat is many things:

- It is religious journey and a way to connect to the history of Judaism and the Avot & Imahot in a very concrete way – one can literally stand within metres of a place central to Judaism.
- It is a political statement – a way for Religious Zionist Israeli Jews to emphasise control, connection to and their presence in Chevron.
- It is a social event – many of the people who go are young Israeli Jews and there is a fun, social and party atmosphere.

This Choveret will discuss the question of “what should our connection to Chevron be and how should we express that connection as Religious Zionist Jews?”

Context of Chevron Today:

- Ask your madrichim: what do they know about Chevron today? What might make it a political hotspot?

1: Basics of Chevron

Today Hebron is the largest city in the West Bank with a population of around 170 000 people. It is the district capital of the Hebron Governorate (an administrative district of the Palestinian Authority), the largest governorate in the West Bank. Since early 1997, following the Hebron Protocol, the city has been divided into two parts: H1 and H2. The H1 area, home to around 140000 Palestinians, came under the control of the Palestinian authorities. The H2 area, which is inhabited by around 30 000 Palestinian Arabs and approximately 500 Israeli Jewish settlers in four downtown settlements, remained under Israeli military control.

Ma'arat HaMachpela (also known as Ibrahimi Mosque for Muslim people) has made Chevron a holy city for us as Jewish people and for the Muslim and Christian faiths. Avraham and his wife Sarah are, together with Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, believed to be buried on the place where the current Ma'arat HaMachpela is built. The building is probably one of the oldest holy sites in the world and is considered to be the second most holy site for Jews and one of four holy cities for Muslims.

Hebron is a busy hub of West Bank trade, responsible for roughly a third of the area's gross domestic product, largely due to the sale of marble from quarries. It is locally well known for its grapes, figs, limestone, pottery workshops and glassblowing factories, and is the location of the major dairy product manufacturer, al-Junaidi. The old city of Hebron is characterized by narrow, winding streets, flat-roofed stone houses, and old bazaars. The city is home to Hebron University and the Palestine Polytechnic University.

Bnei Akiva Chayei Sarah – Place of Chevron in our Ideology Roshim Guide

- The 500 (or so) Israeli Jews living in Chevron are considered to be on the extreme right of Religious Zionism and there are often frequent clashes between the Israeli Jews living in the small enclave around Maarat HaMachpela, the surrounding Palestinian Arabs and Israeli soldiers there to guard the Israeli Jews.
- On Shabbat Chayei Sarah, the number of Israeli Jews in Chevron increases by huge percentages as hundreds and thousands of people flock to the city.
- This causes a lot of tension with the local Palestinian Arabs living in Chevron.
- Chevron is not currently considered to be part of Israel proper and is controlled and administered by the Palestinian Authority.

Religious Context:

1: Bereishit - Chapter 23 - Verses 1-6, 12-20

Then Abraham rose from beside his dead, and spoke to the Hittites, saying,	וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי מֵתוֹ וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי-חֵת לֵאמֹר
"I am a resident alien among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial."	גֵּר-וְתוֹשָׁב אֲנִי עִמָּכֶם תְּנֵן לִי אֶחְזֶזֶת-קֶבֶר עִמָּכֶם וְאֶקְבְּרָה מִתִּי מִלְפָּנַי

1. What do you think the phrase 'Ger-Toshav - resident-alien' means? What does it make you think of? (It translates literally as Stranger and Settler/Dweller)

2: The Commentary of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki - 10th Century Rabbi) - Genesis: 23:8

I AM A STRANGER AND A SETTLER WITH YOU — A stranger having come from another land, but I have settled down amongst you. A Midrashic explanation is: if you agree to sell me the land then I will regard myself as a stranger and will pay for it, but if not, I shall claim it as a settler and will take it as my legal right, because the Holy One, blessed be He, said to me, (Genesis 12:7) "To your descendants I give this land."	גר ותושב אנכי עמכם גר מארץ אחרת, ונתישבתי עמכם ומדרש אגדה אם תרצו הריני גר, ואם לאו אהיה תושב ואטלנה מן הדין, שאמר לי הקב"ה לזרעך אתן את הארץ הזאת:
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1. In light of this interpretation of the phrase, how might Rashi understand Avraham's insistence on paying for the burial place (Avraham argues at length that he wants to pay for the plot of land and won't just claim it by force).
2. What do you think of Rashi's interpretation of 'settler'?

3: Genesis Rabbah 79:7 – commentary on Genesis 33:19

"And he bought the part of the field where he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitas." (Bereshit 33:19) R' Yudan bar Simon said: this is one of the three places about which the nations of the world cannot defraud Israel and say 'this is stolen property in your hands.' They are – the cave of the HaMachpela, the Holy Temple and the grave of Yosef. The cave of the HaMachpela, as it is written	ויקן את חלקת השדה אשר נטה שם אהלו וגו' במאה קשיטה - אמר רבי יודן בר סימון: זה אחד משלושה מקומות, שאין אומות העולם יכולין להונות את ישראל לומר: "גזולים הן בידכם" ואלו הן: מערת המכפלה ובית המקדש וקבורתו של יוסף מערת המכפלה, דכתיב (בראשית כג): וישמע אברהם אל עפרון, וישקול אברהם לעפרון. בית המקדש, דכתיב (ד"ה א כא): ויתן דוד לארנן
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Bnei Akiva Chayei Sarah – Place of Chevron in our Ideology Roshim Guide

“And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver...” (Bereshit 23:16)

The Holy Temple, as it is written “And David gave to Ornan for the place shekels of gold weighing six hundred.” (Divre HaYamim I 21:25)

The grave of Yosef, as it is written ““And he bought the part of the field where he had pitched his tent...” (Bereshit 33:19)

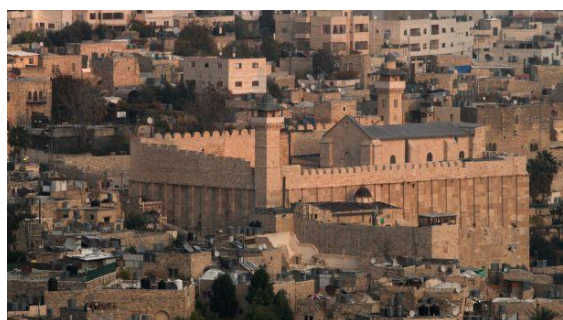
במקום וגו'.
וקבורתו של יוסף, (בראשית לג) ויקן את חלקת
השדה, יעקב קנה שכם

1. Why do you think this Midrash might have been written?
2. What textual gap or difficulty might this Midrash be trying to solve?
3. What do you think of the argument of the Midrash?
4. What does this say about the rest of the land?

Key Questions:

Religious Zionist Jews mostly believe that a key part of our connection and right to the land comes through our religious texts. This is especially true when it comes to Chevron. It can be a huge part of our religious identity and connection to the land. However it also leads to tensions, and often violence, with the much large Palestinian Arab population of Chevron.

- **What do you think about using the Torah as a ‘real-estate deed’?**
- **What do you think the impact of this approach to Chevron has had on relationships with the local Palestinian Arabs?**
- **What do you think about the phenomenon of hundreds and thousands of Israeli Jews coming to Chevron for Shabbat Chayei Sarah?**
 - Is it important expression of religious connection to the land or a social party with friends?
 - Is it an important political statement or a divisive political statement?



The following is an interesting article written by a Bogeret about her experience visiting Chevron. The article represents the author's views.

Article by Liora Goldberg, Bogeret in Yediot

August 24, 2015

Full article: <https://baukyediot.wordpress.com/2015/08/24/10-hours-on-a-palestinian-tour-bus/>

After walking around Ramallah for a while, we then made our way to Hebron. Instead of the half an hour journey that it should take from Ramallah to Hebron, we had to take the alternative route as our guide was Palestinian and could not travel on the regular roads without being checked. The journey was therefore an hour and a half. America had donated money for these alternative roads to be built as Palestinians were infuriated by the constant checkpoints they faced. Truthfully, having separate roads made me feel uncomfortable.

Our first stop in Hebron was lunch in the Palestinian house nearest to Maarat HaMachpelah or the Cave of Ibrahim. It was at this point we had to inform our tour guide that we were not going to be eating the food. Although it was a little uncomfortable for us, both our guide and host were completely understanding; the Palestinian host even made a few jokes about saying a Bracha before eating the non-kosher chicken. It was one of the most bizarre places I'd ever found myself in. Once everyone had finished, my dad offered them money for the drinks which they refused to accept. They said that it was their gift to us. Their excessive hospitality is something that I will always remember about the day; genuinely down to earth, friendly people. We then sat outside the souvenir shop that the host owned downstairs, drank tea and discussed the conflict. A tour guide of a different group had joined us for lunch and he began philosophising as we sat there. He claimed that if there was no religion, people would treat each other like human beings. Because that's what we all are at the end of the day.

We were then told to enter the Jewish side of the Cave, though our tour guide had to wait for us by the shop. The last time I had been there was with Midreshet Harova on my gap year, nearly 2 years ago, experiencing one of the most powerful Friday Night davening services I've ever had. This time, I was in a completely different place. With Harova, we'd had a tour of Hebron on Shabbat afternoon and were taken around by an outrageously right wing man who lived in Hebron. He encouraged us to dance and sing at the top of the mountain, in front of the glaring Palestinians below. A group of us stood at the side; confused, angry and horrified at what we'd been encouraged to do. To torment them. To mock the fact that there was nothing they could do about the 550 Jewish people who have settled in Hebron. To imply that those 550 people had more power than the 500,000 Palestinians who lived there would ever have.

We left Maarat HaMachpelah and waited for the group by the Palestinian shop. There was a couple missing from the group so my dad volunteered to go and find them. About 30 seconds after he left, a group of French Jews came up to the Palestinian shop and began shouting at the Palestinians, provoking them. What happened next changed everything for me and will stay with me for the rest of my life. One of the French Jews picked something up from the shop and threw it at our Palestinian hosts and tour guides. Within seconds, the table had been thrown, glass strewn everywhere and they were physically fighting a metre away from me. I ran to find my dad, completely shaken and humiliated that I had seen the Jewish people start it. I had seen it with my own eyes. I could never deny it. The fight was separated by IDF soldiers, but people still crowded the area. Palestinians were

snapping away on their cameras, ready to use the pictures as evidence and propaganda. Why would they not? They had every right to.

These extremists were young Jewish men. They were part of the French Jewish Defence League whose aim is to 'protect Jews from antisemitism by whatever means necessary'. Yet in this scenario, to the people on our tour group, they were representing the Jewish people. On this tour, I had been submerged into this world where I was no longer on the Jewish side, I was on the other side. The pain that I felt when I saw my own people antagonise the innocent Palestinian hosts, who 5 minutes before had been discussing the necessity for us to all treat each other as human beings, was indescribable. I'm not suggesting that it is always the Jews who start these fights. I very much believe that both could provoke one another in different circumstances. But I happened to witness a time when my people were the perpetrators.

Around fifteen minutes after the incident, everyone continued with their daily lives. This was another shocking element for me. In the general scheme of these people's lives, this incident had been so minor and insignificant. But for me, it opened my eyes to the harsh reality of the complexity of this conflict. Until this point, I had refused to open them to the truth.

Our tour guide's leg had been cut by thrown glass and was bleeding quite significantly. What bothered me is that he didn't try and clean up his wound. He left it for everyone to see. I understood why he did, but it clarified something for me. The whole conflict is a game. Whoever could convince the world that they are the victims will emerge as the winner.

We were then taken to the mosque part of the Cave and a member of our group refused to enter because he felt that our tour guide's priority should have been our safety. Instead of taking us away from the situation, he had involved himself in the fight. As we walked through the security barrier to the mosque, the IDF soldiers stopped my dad and I and asked what religion we were. To be honest, we couldn't really look more Jewish if we tried. They took us to the side and told us that we weren't allowed in, for our own safety. I was quite relieved; I didn't feel comfortable entering in the first place. They said that they keep the Jews and Muslims separate for everyone's safety. The whole encounter with the IDF was fascinating, but what struck me the most was the fact that the Muslim entrance to the mosque was manned by IDF soldiers. I began to sympathise with the discomfort that the Palestinians must feel every day.

On the walk back to the bus, our tour guide broke the news that our driver had been kept by the Israeli police as a witness to the incident. They had taken his ID card and therefore we could not leave. He said that it would take 5 minutes for him to be released. 2 hours later, we were still sitting on someone's front patio. They wanted us all to be witnesses, but our guide wanted to avoid getting his ID taken too so lied that we had already left. If they had called me back to be a witness, what would I have said? I would have had to admit to the IDF, the people who I had admired my entire life that I had seen the Jews start the fight. How would I have felt confessing to my own people, that this time, we were the perpetrators?

As we waited for our driver, we watched young Palestinian boys play football in the car park. It was reminiscent of when the boys play football outside our shul every week on Shabbat. They were just regular people trying to get on with their daily lives. Though their daily lives were polluted with this conflict. During this period of time, an Israeli car pulled up quickly and a group of undercover Palestinian police ran out, with guns in their hands. It happened so quickly that we didn't have time to comprehend what exactly was happening. This event just added to what had been the most confusing day. Eventually, our bus driver returned and we made our way back to Jerusalem.

On reflection, we realised that our tour guide was not a polished educator. He portrayed his opinions as facts and did not sufficiently answer our questions. He had a clear agenda. His facts were tainted with politics, even though there was truth to certain things he was saying. Our guide was a window into a new narrative that I'd never allowed myself to look through. The conflict is so much more complex than I'd previously liked to have admitted. Our guide had asked us why we had decided to come on this tour now, after having been to Israel many times in our lives. We said that it was about time we heard and saw the other side, to which he responded that he really respected that.

I'm not sure my political stance has drastically changed after today, but it has been affected by what I saw. Before today, I'm willing to admit that I had never sympathised with the Palestinian people. I believed that this was our land; legally, historically, politically and religiously. I believed that the Palestinian people were a mere stumbling block in the road to us claiming the whole land of Israel. I came away from this eye-opening day understanding the Palestinian narrative better. But I also came away with the feeling that they are not ready for constructive dialogue. The fact that our guide refused to admit that the Jewish people had a right to this land proved that. My previous experience 2 years ago with the crazy right wing settler in Hebron had demonstrated that people on our side are also not ready for dialogue. I don't know if either will ever be.

I left the West Bank today feeling more confused than ever before, with more questions than I had before. I recommend that people go on a tour like I did; to not be afraid of opening your mind and ears to another voice.

The day was a painful reality check; one that I'd never experienced before. I received a completely different narrative to the one I had grown up with. I still believe in the Israeli narrative. I believe in its authenticity. I still intend to make Aliyah in a few years' time. I am proud to call myself a Zionist and will continue to stand up to the people at my university and beyond who delegitimise my country's right to exist. I believe that the Jewish people have a right to our own land and specifically this land. However, there is so much more that needs to be done to build bridges of understanding and compromise through dialogue with the Palestinian people. I know there are many Israelis who feel the same way. In order to drive this challenging process forward, we must all be open and willing to truly hear and see the other side. There are two sides to this conflict.