

# Hadracha Choveret



תנועת בני עקיבא  
BNEI AKIVA  
UNITED KINGDOM

BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM

## Journeys



### Aims:

- 1) To learn about the journey that Avraham had to go on to become the leader of a new nation.
- 2) To understand the difference between physical journeys and spiritual journeys and the importance of both of them.
- 3) To think about our own individual journeys and about how going on a journey can help us grow.
- 4) To discuss Aliyah and think about how it is a unique type of journey.

Dear Madrichim

Welcome to a new week and a new Choveret!

This week the Choveret is about journeys, building off the dramatic life-changing (and world-changing!) journey which Avraham Avinu made in this week's Parasha. Enjoy it, learn from it, and use it to inspire your Chanichim!

I plan to keep the Choveret in the current format for the year unless a lot of people protest – i.e. educational content on pages 2-5, activities on page 6, Parasha in Pictures on page 7, and adverts on page 8. If you have any comments, complaints or constructive criticisms of the Choveret then please don't hesitate to contact me at chinuch@bauk.org to let me know.

Have a wonderful Shabbat, enjoy Sviva, and make sure your Chanichim enjoy it too!

All the best

Alan

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Parashat Lech Lecha begins with Hashem's famous commandment to Avram:

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם, לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶךָ.

*“And Hashem said to Avram, go for yourself from your land, from your birthplace and from your father's house to the land which I will show you.”*

Bereishit 12:1

The command for Avram to leave his homeland is regarded as one of the tests given by Hashem. But why was it important for Avram to leave Charan in order to become the father of the Jewish nation?

- Why does leaving the safety of one's home allow one to grow and develop?
- Why do you think that Avram is commanded to leave everything behind?

Remember how much of a revolution Avram was proposing to the world. He understood the foundations of the world differently to all those around him, claiming that the world was run by one single Being and that He was not ruthless and in need of appeasement but rather He loved mankind and cared for the world.

In order for him to make a real impact he had to start his work in a place where he wasn't known and where he didn't carry the baggage of his family history. This may shed some light on the strange wording, 'lech lecha' – literally 'go for yourself'. In this sense Avram needed to leave his homeland in order to fulfil his mission.

**For many of our Jewish heroes the process of going on a journey away from home was crucial to their development.**

## Yaakov leaving home

We are told that on his way out of the Land of Israel, fleeing from the murderous wrath of his brother Esav, our forefather Yaakov stopped in at the Yeshiva of Ever, who was actually his several-times-over great-grandfather, and studied there uninterrupted for fourteen years before he continued on his journey.

## Yosef leaving home

Yosef grew up and really developed into a leader only after he was forced out of his own home. The process of leaving home was vital to his journey and although he was forced out against his will, in the long run it enabled him to develop into his own self.

## Rabbi Akiva leaving home

When Rabbi Akiva decided to take on the religious lifestyle and become a Torah scholar he left his home and wife for years on end in order to learn.

With the growth of the Yeshiva world under the leadership of Rav Chaim Volozhin around the 18<sup>th</sup> century it became very popular to go away to yeshiva. By leaving home and becoming engrossed completely in Torah one was able to dedicate considerable chunks of time to becoming learned.



Nowadays this phenomenon has spread and many people leave their home to learn elsewhere, thus undertaking a physical journey in order to undertake a spiritual one.

Jonny Lipczer (Mazkir 5763) said that although one may need to leave home to learn Torah, in today's climate when many people go to Israel to learn, we do in fact:

*“go home in order to learn Torah”.*

- Why may leaving home help you to learn Torah?
- Why did Rabbi Akiva need to leave home in order to learn Torah?

## What is the modern parallel?

Many people like the idea of escaping to go and *find themselves*. This phenomenon is very common in Israel, where many people in their twenties travel the world in search of something.

The wish to grow and develop is something to be praised, but the idea that one has to run away in order to find meaning in life is a dangerous one.

*“When a person sets himself up at the centre of things, such an approach leads to pride. Furthermore, the individual must also relate to the community, seeking out what is good for others, rather than severing himself from them. Aspirations for originality sometimes stem from pride, or from laziness and taking the easy way out... In India where so many young Israelis go in search of peace and spirituality there is an enormous social gap and an absolute disregard for the performance of righteousness and justice. Someone who is seeking out his path must consider how he can best contribute to society in his own special way, and must guard himself against the danger of extreme individualism.”*

Rav Yehuda Amital: *Jewish Values in a Changing World*

## **This does not mean that we have to sever all ties with our past!**

The process of growing and developing into our own people is not just a personal journey. Judaism is not just a personal religion and we are expected to remember our part in the bigger picture at all times in our journey.

But it is a difficult journey:

*“Nothing could be harder. As we embark on our journey, we are expected not only to leave familiar surroundings and warm memories, but often our entire families. This is a test that never really ends; the daily reality of an *oleh chadash* in the Land of Israel with his family far away. Our ‘father’s house’ is even more part of who we are than our childhood memories. Our parents, grandparents and siblings are part of our being, and to leave them is the hardest test of all. [...] I know that the difficulties alluded to in our verse are real difficulties. It is no easy task to leave one’s land, birthplace and father’s house, but it is our duty to do so. We look to Avraham Avinu for inspiration; we look to the Torah and we gain strength and commitment.”*

Rav David Milston: *The Three Pillars*



## Man Leaving Home

Man was created to live life by passing through certain rites. The process of growing up is one of a heightened awareness of our responsibilities and the role we have to play in the world. When Hashem created woman alongside man to live as a couple we learn:

עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד

*“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.”*

Bereshit 2:24

Our parents provide us not just with physical sustenance and nourishment for the most formative years of our lives, but they also provide the lens through which we see the world. The commandment of *‘kibbud av v’em’* - honouring one’s mother and father - is often explained to be a subcategory of mitzvot between Man and Hashem because parents are partners with Hashem in the act of creation. We learn how to look at the world through our parents but sometimes we need to let go and start creating our own frame through which to see the world. This creation of our own world view is that of leaving home and starting our own journey.

The difficulty as we can see through the story of Avraham and the others is that leaving home means all of a sudden flying solo and all the benefits are accompanied by the difficulties of being alone. We often skim over *lech lecha* as one of the tests of Avraham but in fact it may have been one of the hardest. The Torah speaks to each and every generation and the challenge to Avraham is one that is not foreign to us in our time. We wouldn’t be the people we will be without both processes - our upbringing at home and our self creation as people when we finally leave home.

Avraham was also the first person to ‘make Aliyah’. His journey was therefore the blueprint for millions of Jews throughout our history whose journey began in their parental home and ended in our historical and spiritual home. Even for Jews who don’t live in Israel, it will always be a home away from home. At each stage in our journey, we must remember the role that Israel plays in where we come from and where we are going.



## Activities

Don't forget that your Sviva has two incredible games booklets with tons of great suggestions for games and activities. Make sure to take advantage of them each week when you plan your meetings!

Here are just a few additional suggestions specifically for this week:

- Family Fortunes - link to Avraham leaving his family and how everyone going on a journey has to leave behind family and other things.
- Hide and Seek, ending with the variation of Hide and Seek Yourself! - Everybody is hiding and then has to seek. A very short lived activity all about finding themselves!
- Colour disc me: give each chanich a different coloured piece of paper or chip. Tell them to put them in a pot. Then secretly each chanich must take one. A complicated hide and seek as they have to find the person with their chip, i.e. THEMSELVES.
- Grandmother's Footsteps - to highlight importance of family and discuss whether we always have to follow in their footsteps.
- Avraham Avinu 10 'Obstacles' Course: Set out an obstacle course around the room or site and make each obstacle themed towards one of Avraham's Tests!
- Put sweets in the middle of the room and then command one Chanich to take some and ask if they only took because they were commanded.
- Ask your chanichim to think about all the wonderful things they have by being at home - not just possessions but also care / attention, etc. - and get them to think about what it would be like to relocate to a different country alone and what a sacrifice Avraham made.
- Get quotes from people who have made Aliyah and put them up around the room to trigger a discussion on why they did it and what they went through on their journey.



# Coming soon at Bnei Akiva!

## **Limmud – your weekly dose of learning**

**Manchester:** starting at 19:00 on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October at the Bayit with free dinner!

**Leeds:** starting at 20:00 on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October at Etz Chaim Shul with free dinner!

**London:** continuing every Monday at 19:30 at the Bayit.

**Birmingham:** continuing every Monday at 18:00 at the standard location.

For more information or to arrange a Chavruta email Alan at [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org)

## **15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> October: Shabbat Hachshara, Year 13**

A fantastic opportunity to find out about all of Bnei Akiva's gap year programmes in Israel while having one last fun Shabbat in England with all of your friends.

Shabbat Hachshara is in Woodside Park – book your place now by emailing Rafi at [Israel@bauk.org](mailto:Israel@bauk.org)

## **18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> October: Yeshiva / Sem Fair, Year 13**

Learn more about some of the fantastic institutions on our gap year programme.

**Manchester:** Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October at 19:00 at the Bayit.

**London:** Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October at 19:00 at Hasmonean Girls.

## **31<sup>st</sup> October: Israel Machane Reunion, Year 12**

Meet up with your group again while having a great day out at Alton Towers!

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity – book your place now by emailing Rafi at [Israel@bauk.org](mailto:Israel@bauk.org)

## **Other important dates for your diary!**

22<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> December: Winter Machane (pre-camp for Madrichim from 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>)

11<sup>th</sup> July – 4<sup>th</sup> August: Provisional dates for Israel Machane, Year 11