

# HADRACHA CHOVERET

**BNEI  
AKIVA**  
UNITED KINGDOM



BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM



## Noach – Impacting Others

### Concrete Concepts:

1. We all bear a **collective responsibility** towards each other; it is not enough to care for only yourself.
2. Just focussing on yourself will leave you **miserable, alone, depressed** and **friendless**.
3. Always look for **ways to help others** as you go about your day.

## Bnei Akiva Svivot 5783· Madrichim Pack

### Week 2· COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

#### No man is an island·

'No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;'

- John Donne

#### **Discussion Point 1: Do you see yourself as an individual or as part of a community? How much of your identity is shaped on each one?**

After a few verses of introduction, Parashat Noach begins with God announcing to Noach that he will bring about the destruction of all living beings with a flood. God gives nine pesukim of instructions on building this ark, and Noach duly begins. However, God has many ways of saving people – why waste time getting Noach to build an ark? Is that at all necessary? Let's look at Rashi:

**עשה לך תבת. הרבה רוח והצלה לפניו, ולמה הטריוחו בבנין זה? כדי שיראוהו אנשי דור המבול עוסק בה ק"כ שנה, ושואלין אותו מה זאת לה, והוא אומר להם עתיד הקב"ה להביא מבול לעולם, אולי ישובו:**

**Make for yourself an ark:** There are many ways of saving before [God], so why did He make Noach exert himself to the extent that he had to build this [ark]? In order that the people of the generation of the flood would see him busy with building this ark for 120 years and ask him 'What on earth are you doing?', and he would say to them, 'The holy One blessed be He will, in the future, bring a flood upon the world' – perhaps they would repent.

Noach was building an ark publicly, so that he could engage with those around him in dialogue, just like God did last week in Bereishit when he looked for Adam and Chava. Maybe by talking to them, some of the generation would have repented!

(If you're old like me)



(If you're young and hip)



Instead, what does Noach do? Without saying a word, he tacitly accepts God's instructions and simply gets on with it. This is the paradigm of Rosh Katan!

### Jargon-Buster. "Rosh Gadol"

Rosh Gadol, literally 'big head', is a term that (probably) comes from the Israeli army. It refers to a person who takes the initiative, rather than doing the bare minimum. For example, if a *mefaked* (officer) instructs a young recruit to clean the barrel of their gun, the recruit may clean it, then clean the rest of the gun and report back to the *mefaked* (this would be Rosh Gadol). Or, they could clean just the barrel and then sit in silence out of the way, being generally useless, waiting for orders because none have yet been given (Rosh Katan). Get the idea?

In fact, Noach barely speaks the entire parasha! His name itself means 'rest' or 'passivity', and he fails to engage successfully with even a single member of the surrounding community!

Partly due to this, the flood is given the name *mei Noach* (waters of Noach) in Isaiah 54:9, (and in the Shabbat zemer *Yom Shabbaton*), as if to suggest that the bringing of the flood was partly Noach's fault, for not having an effect on the community.

**Discussion point 2: To what extent do we bear the responsibility for those whom we could have helped, but did not?**

### The Self and the Other.

Let's look at Hillel's famous statement:

If I am not for myself,  
who will be for me?  
אם אין אני לי מי לי?

But when I am only for  
myself, what am I?  
וכשאני לעצמי מה אני?

First and foremost, we have to take care of ourselves. Indeed, as Aish are fond of saying, 'you can't pour from an empty cup'.

But remember, the cup is there for pouring! We can build ourselves up, but what kind of person will we be if we are only looking out for ourselves?



Studies have shown that people who are depressed are more likely to use the words 'I' and 'me' than someone who is not. There is a lot of research into the negative spiral effects of living only for oneself, refusing to engage with the other.

People who live in themselves are less able to engage with another person on the other person's terms, causing serious damage to relationships with human beings, and ultimately with God as well.

(If you want to read more about this, then [this article](#) is pretty accessible.)

Along these lines, it's no coincidence that Hillel also said the following:

דַּעֲלֶךָ סְנִי לְחֻבְרֶךָ לֹא תַעֲבִיד — זוּ הִיא כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כּוֹלָהּ, וְאִידֶךָ פִּירוּשָׁהּ הוּא, זֵיל גְּמֹר.

That which is hateful to you, do not do to your friend – this is the entire Torah, the rest is explanation, go and learn [it].

Why does Hillel interpret the famous idea of loving your neighbour as yourself in the negative? Jesus said 'do to others as you would have them do to you'; why does Hillel change from the original Torah formulation?

Because only self-obsessed people think that what they like is also what other people like. It is a flaw of human projection for Rafi to assume that just because he likes yoghurt pizza, everyone else must like it as well. The best you can do is to say that I (Ben) don't like yoghurt pizza, so I won't serve it to anyone else. This avoids assumptions about what people are or aren't happy to do and brings you out of yourself by limiting that sense of self and making room for the other.

This is why Morah Marlene in my kindergarten made such a big deal out of us sharing anything, because it's a hugely important step for children to recognise the other and give of themselves to the other.

(The idea of this projection is also very significant in our relationship with God, but more about that in another choveret.)

To paraphrase Rabbi Sacks (and I recommend watching [the whole video](#), it's great): People have worshipped many gods... what we worship in our time is the self, the me, the I... This is

empowering, this is wonderful... but don't forget, we need the social interaction where we create those spiritual goods of friendship and trust, loyalty and love, that redeem our solitude.

**Discussion point 3: Can you think of examples in your life where you have projected your own personality or preferences onto others, or onto God? How did that work out for you?**

## Tzaddik in a peltz

The Kotzker Rebbe gave an analogy with regard to Noach. He said that on a cold winter's night, you could choose to wrap up warm in a fur coat (*peltz* in Yiddish) and *shkoyach*, you're warm. But what about the next person? They will still be cold! Much better to light a fire, and then you and others can be warmed by it.

Like the old saying, 'Cook a man a fish, he'll have food for a night; teach a man to fish, he'll have food for the rest of his life.'



Noach had two options: to save himself and his immediate family, or to try and save the world. Noach opted for the former. Think about how different the world would be had Noach taken action and been a tzaddik beyond just his immediate four amot! But alas not. That is the difference

between Noach and Avraham – Avraham goes out and teaches, educates those around him, encourages them to thank God, and makes a difference (more on Avraham next week).

At the end of the day, Noach consigns his entire generation to irredeemable depravity, beyond salvation, and that was not a viable starting point for the Jewish nation. And so, at the end of the parasha, we segue nicely onto Avraham.

## Peula Ideas

### Peulot to do with being part of a community.

- Mimicking game: One chanich/a leaves the room. Another is chosen as the leader, who must set a beat that everyone else follows. The person with the beat often changes the rhythm/action and once again, everyone else follows. The chanich/a comes back into the room and must work out who is setting the beat.

### Peulot to do with the Self and the Other.



- **Conscience:** Two chanichim sit opposite each other, two others stand behind them. The two on the chairs have a conversation in a given scenario, and the two standing behind them say what they're really thinking. The order of speaking, if there is one, is usually one chanich/a speaks and then their conscience, followed by the other chanich/a and their conscience. **WARNING:** You'd think this game is funny, but chanichim aren't actually funny.
- **Counting to 50:** This is not the normal counting to 10 game, but rather a chanich/a sits in the middle of a circle and has to count out loud to 50, while all the other chanichim shout out random numbers to make them lose count. If they do, they must start again/they are out. **LINK:** The person counting has to silence the projections of other people onto them.
- **Bunny Bunny:** Similar to the above game in that there's lots of shouting. Also similar to Wah. Chanichim stand in a circle. One person says "bunny bunny", with simultaneous hand motions (Rafi will send a video) pointing backwards, and then again "bunny bunny" with hand motions pointing at the person to whom you wish to send the "bunny bunny". That person receives the "bunny bunny" by saying "bunny bunny" with the backwards hand motions, and then sends it on with "bunny bunny" with forwards hand motions, etc. you get the idea. While this is going on, the two people on either side of the person who currently has the "bunny bunny" must chant, shouting "tonga tonga" at the person who has the "bunny bunny" in rhythm with his or her saying "bunny bunny". If someone doesn't say the correct phrase or speaks when they shouldn't or loses the rhythm, they're out. If this seems complicated, reach out to us and we can teach it to you directly.

### Peulot to do with helping others as well as yourself.

- **Could it get any worse? THEN Could it get any better?:** Chanichim sit in a circle. Someone starts by saying something mildly unpleasant, for example, 'cold chulent' (credit **Waffle Kastner**). The next chanich/a has to say something a LITTLE BIT worse, like 'cold chulent on a Sunday'. Go around until somebody says something that cannot be made any worse, e.g. 'nuclear apocalypse', and that person loses. **THEN** you have to play the same game but 'could it get any better?' Until someone says 'moshiach coming' and then they lose (or win, depending on how you look at it). The key is to show how you can always make something a little bit better for someone.
- **Freeze:** Have a small number of chanichim act out a scenario, and others spectate. When a spectator wishes to alter the course of the play being enacted before them, they shout "Freeze!" (Everybody clap your hands...) and they swap out with one of the chanichim and take the play in a different direction. See if you can theme it around making things better for the other people in the play.

### Peulot that are absolutely not to be played.

- Remember how two games ago, we played 'Could it get any better?' and the idea was to get better in increments? Well, that sounds a lot like the Tesco slogan, 'Every Little Helps', and since we're talking about slogans, that reminds me of an old BA game called 'Down My Trousers'. The game is simple: you go around in circles saying famous brand slogans, followed by the words 'down my trousers'. E.g. 'Lloyds TSB - for the journey down my trousers'. Yes it's very immature and very silly, but that was what we were doing in Barnet sviva 10 years ago. So don't make the same mistake my madrichim made, as it has an irreversible effect on your chanichim!

## Random Games Corner

*Over here each you'll find random games that we've compiled from the days of old. The titles are a bit weird and they're mostly just for fun but you never know when they might connect to an educational message!*

### BACK TO BACK TAG

**TYPE: Active** Play in a large area One player is chosen to be "it." He/she remains "it" until they tag another player who then becomes "it." In this variation of tag, the players can be "safe" only when they stand back to back with another player. No two players may stand back to back for more than five seconds. A time limit is set, and whoever is "it" when the time limit expires, loses. Variation: Instead of only one "it," all of the players who are tagged remain "it" and can tag other players. The last player to remain untagged at the end of the game wins.

### CAT AND MOUSE

**TYPE: Active** Play in a circle Two players are chosen. One to be the "Mouse" and the other to be the "Cat". All of the other players join hands in a circle. The cat stands outside the circle and the mouse inside. The cat must "catch" (tag) the mouse. The rest of the players help or hinder the cat by raising or lowering their arms. The cat and mouse can run in and out of the circle, under the other players arms. When the mouse is caught (tagged), two other players are chosen. Variation: Add a time limit. If the mouse is caught within the time limit, the cat wins and continues to play with a different mouse. If the mouse is not caught, the cat is replaced and the mouse continues to play.

### COPY CAT

**TYPE: Active** Play in two parallel lines The players are divided into two teams. Each team sits opposite of each other. Team A starts. The first player on Team A does a movement of some kind. The first player on Team B must immediately do the opposite movement. If an opposite movement is impossible, do the movement with the opposite hand etc. Then the second player on Team B does a movement and the second player on Team A must immediately do the opposite movement. The play continues with the teams changing off who goes first. The first team to hesitate or make a mistake loses. Variation: Keep score and the first team to make five mistakes loses. Note: Specify that the movements made must also have an opposite movement possible.

### CHARADES

**TYPE: Moderate** One player is chosen by the leader. The leader gives them something to act out (i.e. movie title, book title, etc.). The player must act it out without the use of words. The game ends when the players guess what is being acted out. Hint: To make the game more competitive, whoever guesses correctly gets one point. The player with the most points wins. Variation: Instead of the leader giving something to act out, let the players themselves provide it. But, this variation can only be used with older groups

### CONDUCTOR

**TYPE: Moderate** Players sit in a circle The players are divided into four teams. Each team must shout a word when the leader (conductor) points to them. The first group must shout "Chinga," the second group "PaNa-Ma," the third group "Vy-Did-He-Do," and the fourth group "Ehh . . . Boom"! This game is dependent on the leader for they must create a rhythm by combining the different shouts using a "beat." Hint: For best results, each team should have at least fifteen to twenty players. Variation: If a group hesitates from making a sound when pointed to, they lose one point. The group with the highest number of points wins.

### **ACTING IT OUT**

**TYPE: Quiet** Four players are chosen; all but one are sent out of the room. The leader then acts out a short skit (thirty to sixty seconds) in pantomime. A second player is brought back and the player who remained in the room must act out the same skit that the leader had done. The next player is brought in and the second player acts out the skit that he saw the first player do. The last player is brought back in and he watches the third person act out the skit and finally he acts out the skit for everyone. After they finish, ask each player (#4 first, then #3, #2, and then #1) what they were acting out and then ask what he acted out.

### **ADVANCED QUESTION FOOTBALL** (would need some adapting for British football)

**TYPE: Quiet** Eleven chairs and an object are needed. The group is divided into two teams. The "ball" (any object) is put on the 20 yard line and a team is given four downs (questions) to advance the team's goal line (80 yards away). Each time, before a question is asked, the first team must choose either to run, punt, or pass. If they choose to run and answer the question correctly, the ball advances 5 yards. If they choose to pass or punt, they state the number of yards they wish to go. If the question is answered correctly, the ball advances that distance. If it is answered incorrectly, the other team may take over the ball (intercept it) merely by answering the question correctly. If ten yards are gained by a team within four downs, they can use another four down to try to make a touchdown. Six points are scored for every crossing of the goal (touchdown). One point is given for an additional question answered correctly after a touchdown.

### **IMITATING PEOPLE**

**TYPE: Mixer** The first player must stand up and imitate one of the other players until the other players guess who they are imitating. The first player to guess who it is gets one point. Then the second player has a chance to imitate another player, etc. The first player to get X number of points wins. Hint: Be careful to tell the players they will be disqualified for insulting any player while imitating them. Variation: Have the players imitate a famous person.

### **INTRODUCTORY CONCENTRATION**

**TYPE: Mixer** The leader begins by saying: "My name is \_\_\_\_"; then they should tell one further thing to identify themselves; where they lives, where they works, etc. They then select a new leader by asking his name and presenting them to the group. This second leader says: "I was introduced by \_\_\_\_ who lives (or works) \_\_\_\_\_, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I (information about self) and I wish to introduce \_\_\_\_\_." When a leader fails to give the proper sequence of names and correct information he is "out."

### **ANKLE RELAY**

**TYPE: Relay** Play with each team in its own line. The group is divided into teams. Each team then lines up, each in its own line. At the signal, the first player from each team must run to the other side of the room and back while holding on to his ankles. Then the second players do this and so on. The first team to finish wins.

### **BLINDFOLDED PILLOW FIGHT**

**TYPE: Shtick** Two blindfolds and two pillows are needed. Two players are chosen. Each is blindfolded and given a pillow. They are then spun around and told that the first player to hit the other three times wins. Whoever loses is then replaced by another player who is also blindfolded. Play is repeated, but this time whoever loses is replaced by someone who is not blindfolded! See how long it takes them to figure it out! Hint: Specify to the last player not to hit too hard.

### **COW'S TAIL**

**TYPE: Shtick** The leader goes around asking questions, but the players must always answer: "A cow's tail." Example: "What did you eat for breakfast?" -- "A cow's tail." "Describe Jack's hairstyle." "A cow's tail." Any player who smiles is out.