

HADRACHA CHOVERET

**BNEI
AKIVA**
UNITED KINGDOM



BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM

Toledot Ma'asei Avot Siman Labanim



Concrete Concepts.

1. The actions of our ancestors set the tone for our lives
2. It's important to learn from our history

3. The redemption of the Jewish people is modelled on our past

Bnei Akiva Svivot 5783: Madrichim Pack

Dear Madrichim.

This week we're looking at the important role our ancestors played in shaping our lives. We'll see how Yitzchak's life was similar to Avraham's and what he could have learnt. This will also be relevant to Zionism and the return of the Jewish people to our homeland. This may portray Zionist ideas in ways your chanichim aren't used to, so make sure to get the religious overtones across!

Remember we're here to support you in whatever way we can! Rafi can be contacted at svivot@bauk.org or 0208 209 1319 ext. 4, and the I can be contacted at chinuch@bauk.org or 0208 209 1319 ext. 5.

BVCLTVA
Ben

Week 6: Ma'asei Avot Siman Labanim

What does it mean?

Ma'asei avot siman labanim is Hebrew for 'the actions of the fathers are an indicator for the children.' That phrase is taken in many different ways, but the way we're going to look at it is that what happens in Jewish History repeats itself for the Jews throughout their generations.

Discussion point 1: What does the repetition of history say about anthropology/human psychology? Do you think we're wired to act in ways that we're familiar with?

In our *parasha*:

A few strangely familiar events happen this week, that should recall events that we are already familiar with from previous weeks if we've been paying attention...

Avraham	Yitzchak
Marries Sarah	Marries Rivka, who replaces Sarah*
Doesn't have a child for many years	Doesn't have a child for many years
There is a famine and he goes to Gerar	There is a famine and he goes to Gerar
He pretends his wife is his sister	He pretends his wife is his sister
The Philistines demand to know why he lied	The Philistines demand to know why he lied
The Philistines are jealous of him	The Philistines are jealous of him
Digs some wells in Philistia	Digs up <i>the same wells</i> that Avraham had dug, after the Philistines had filled them in
Forms a treaty with Avimelekh of Philistia	Forms a treaty with Avimelekh of Philistia

Has two sons, one of whom is not the continuation of the Jewish people	Has two sons, one of whom is not the continuation of the Jewish people
Feels strong attachment to the son who doesn't make it	Feels strong attachment to the son who doesn't make it

*That's the midrash that all the miracles that had been present until Sarah's death, and ceased after her death, returned when Rivka arrived.

The idea here, which we unfortunately don't have time to go into now but is absolutely brilliant, revolves around how Yitzchak is the continuation of the movement and so he can't

Q: Where do pirates go on holiday?

A: Gerarr

be an innovator, he has to just continue doing what Avraham was doing to strengthen that chain for the next generation. That doesn't mean he was identical – there are actually some pretty stark differences

between the events that took happened (for example, Avraham has two children from two separate wives, whereas both Yitzchak's children are from Rivka). But the point here is that Avraham's life laid the groundwork for Yitzchak's. From there we springboard into the idea that the lives of our ancestors set the tone for our lives too.

Discussion point 2: Why was it important to continue what Avraham started, and not innovate, at this point? What is Yitzchak's character like, compared with Avraham (known for chesed) or Rivka (think about her at the well). And how does Ya'akov fit into this picture?

Well, well, well.

Let's zoom in on the wells for a moment and take a look at what Yitzchak could have learned from Avraham's life

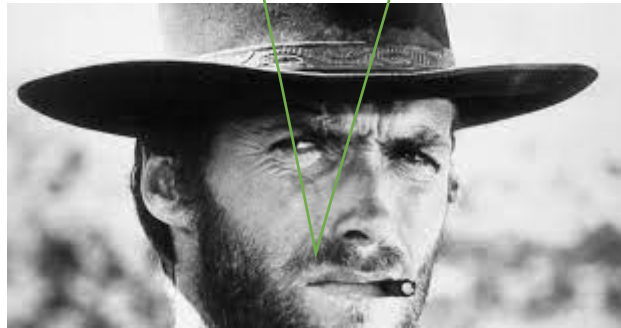
Let's say that your friend told you that they got mugged walking through some dodgy area of the wrong side of Edgware (if you know, you know) – I'd assume that you would avoid such an area unless really necessary. So *kal v'chomer* (all the more so) if your own mother was abducted here by the king's men to join his harem! What was Yitzchak thinking?!



Then Yitzchak digs the wells. Why does he dig the same ones Avraham dug? Because the Philistines themselves had filled them in, because they were jealous of Avraham! Getting a strong sense of

This town ain't big enough for the two of us

vibes going on.



Eventually, the Philistines become jealous of Yitzchak and drive him out, then eventually reach a peace treaty with him. But Rav Shlomo Riskin believes that Yitzchak made a fundamental error in reaching a peace agreement with Avimelekh. Not only was he wrong to reach a deal with a bad person, and not only was he mistaken in making a peace treaty with a people who were the enemies of his descendants, he failed to learn from the past. For this, he was punished by his son Esav marrying two Hittite women. For the *avot*, it was strictly forbidden to marry Canaanite and Hittite women. God's punishment fitted Yitzchak's crime – Yitzchak entered into a partnership that was forbidden, so his son entered into a relationship that was forbidden.

In the Modern Day.



"Those who don't study history are doomed to repeat it. Yet those who *do* study history are doomed to stand by helplessly while everyone else repeats it."

Many parallels have been raised from events in the modern era to Biblical precedents. For example, people have compared the slavery in Egypt to the Holocaust; Pharoah's concern that the Jews were becoming too populous, setting them to forced labour until they could not work and were killed, appointing Jewish captains to oversee their brethren, etc.

At Yom Ha'atzmaut 5777, Rabbi Mirvis compared the redemption of the Jews from the Babylonian exile to the redemption from this exile. Think about it for a second: Cyrus is ruler of the Persian empire, largest empire in the world and at the time in control of Israel. He makes a

declaration that allows Jews to return to Israel.

Balfour is a representative of the British Empire, largest in the world and at the time in control of Israel. He makes a declaration that allows Jews to return to Israel.

The timeline is also similar:

1 st Redemption	2 nd Redemption
In 586 BCE, we began 50 years of exile in Babylon before we could return	In 1897, the first World Zionist Congress met to discuss a homeland for the Jews
In 539 BCE, the Persian Empire conquered the Babylonian empire, giving them control of Israel, changing the entire political landscape of the world – in favour of the Jews.	In 1945, the allied forces defeated the Nazis in WW2, changing the entire political landscape of the world – in favour of the Jews.
In 536 BCE, 50 years after the exile and 3 years after the destruction of the Babylonian empire, we returned to our land.	In 1947, 50 after the first WZC, the UN voted in favour of the Partition Plan for Palestine, allowing Jews to return to their homeland. In 1948, 3 years after the end of WW2, the Jewish state was declared
In 516 BCE, 20 years later, the Jews finally rededicated the temple.	In 1967, 20 years later, the Jewish people returned to Jerusalem and the temple mount.

In fact, the return to Zion in Ezra's day was not as large as ours. The entire list of **all** the families (approx. 42,000 people all in all) who made *aliyah* back in 536 BCE is recorded in the second chapter of Ezra. Imagine trying to do that now! It would be impossible. Even the most generous estimates of the proportions in the book of Ezra suggest that the number of Jews who returned then was only 20% of world Jewry. Now we have over 50% of Jews in Israel! If the *geula* then was considered 'real', why is the *geula* in our day even a question?!

By the way – the exact date of the UN partition plan vote was on the 29th November 1947. Make sure you point this out to your *chanichim* as an upcoming date to be aware of!

Discussion point 3: Will your *chanichim* have ever heard this kind of argument put forward for Religious Zionism before? How can help them realise the parallels for themselves?

Peula Ideas

Games to do with Passing on History.

- **I went to the shop and I brought** – Go around a circle, listing things you bought from a shop. Each person must first repeat everything that everyone else bought first. You can combine this with the Israel theme and play 'I went on Aliyah and I brought...'
- **Predicted story-writing** – In a circle, form a story out of one word per person. However, in advance of Shabbat, write down a few topics that you think the *chanichim* will end up talking about (assuming you know your *chans* by this point). At the end of a few stories, take out an envelope with these in and pull out the topics that made it. Show the *chans* that really, the stories they come up with and things that happen in life are often quite predictable, especially on a large scale and especially with the Jewish people

Games to do with modern *geula* and its parallels.

- **Playing Detective** - As a trigger for this kvutza print out lots of famous documents. Your chanichim are split into two teams – first to identify what all the documents are wins! Include famous ones like the declaration of independence, American constitution etc. and also throw in the Balfour declaration and the Cyrus cylinder declaration. Use the activity to transition into discussion about the parallels between the cyrus cylinder and the Balfour declaration and what the parallels could mean.
- **Aliyah Obstacle Course** – Before shabbat, write down some potential push and pull factors for Jews making aliya in the days of Ezra, and also nowadays, and discuss these with the *chanichim*. As a climactic end to this discussion, place all the push and pull factor cards at the end of an “Aliyah obstacle course” and complete the obstacle course together, to overcome those obstacles to making aliyah!

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!

ISRAELI POSTMAN (VARIATION OF FOR A CHANGE)

TYPE: Active Play in a circle All of the players take the name of an Israeli city. One person is chosen to be in the middle and s/he removes his/her chair from the circle. The person in the middle is the "postman". The postman then announces the arrival of a letter from city (X) to city (y). The two players using those cities names must exchange seats without letting the postman sit down on one of their chairs. The player left without a seat becomes the new "postman" and the play continues. Variation: To add a little extra excitement allow the postman to also announce a "special delivery". If s/he calls for a "special delivery", all the players must exchange seats at once. Variation: Instead of using just cities in Israel, you can use: Moshavim, Kibbutzim, geographical regions (e.g. the Negev, Galil, etc.), mountains, etc.

JOHNNY OVER

TYPE: Active Play in a large area One person is chosen to be "it." Each end of the playing field is a goal, and no one may be tagged there (see diagram). The person who is "it" calls out "Johnny Over" and everyone must run from one goal to the other goal. Whoever is tagged by "it" joins him and tries to tag everyone else. The last person untagged wins. The first person who was tagged becomes the new "it" and play begins once-again.

LUNG CAPACITY

TYPE: Active A light object (i.e. a feather) is needed. The players are divided into teams. Each team is given a feather. At a signal, each team must blow a feather into the air and keep it there by continuously blowing on it. The team whose feather stays up the longest wins

HUMAN ANAGRAMS

TYPE: Moderate Play in a large room; a list of questions, one set of alphabet cards per team with enough letters to answer each question are needed The players are divided into teams.

Each team receives one set of alphabet cards. The cards are then distributed to the players on each team. The leader asks a pre-written question to the teams. The first team to arrange the players on its team who are holding the alphabet cards, to spell out the answer gets one point. The team with the most points after the last question wins. Hints: 1) Have between ten to twenty questions. 2) If any answer uses a single letter two or more times, make sure you have that same number of that letter on the alphabet card set. 3) Write the letters large enough for everyone to see.

LIMBO

TYPE: Moderate A string or a long pole is needed A string (or pole) is suspended from both ends. Each player must pass under it, without touching to remain in the game. But no one may bend forward, only backwards. After everyone has had a turn the string (or pole) is lowered and the process is repeated. The last remaining player wins

GEOGRAPHY

TYPE: Quiet Play in a circle The leader starts the game by naming a city, state, country, river, or lake beginning with the letter A (i.e. Albany). The first player must name a city...etc. beginning with the last letter of the previously named word (i.e. Yavne). The second player must then name a city . . . etc. beginning with the last letter of the last named place (i.e. Eilat). The play continues in this fashion. Any player unable to give a name of a city, etc. is eliminated. The last X players "in," win. Variation: Instead of all places, use only places in Israel or use things associated with Chagim

GUESS THE LEADER

TYPE: Quiet Play in a circle One player is chosen to leave the room. Another player is chosen to be the "leader" and he is to make various motions (in a steady beat). Examples: patting the head, clapping, snapping fingers, stamping the floor, etc. Everyone must follow the "leader's" different motions. The player returns and has three tries to guess who the leader is. Hint: Set a time limit on how long the three guesses can take

I'M GOING TO ISRAEL AND I'M TAKING

TYPE: Quiet Play in a circle The first player begins by saying "I'm going to Israel and I'm taking _____" filling in the blank. The next person begins once again repeating what the first player said and adding something of his own. Play continues with each player repeating what all the others have said and adding in something of his own. Any player who forgets something or makes a mistake is out. The last player to remember all of the things wins.

HUMMING

TYPE: Relay Play with each team sitting in one line, facing another line Two teams sit opposite each other. Then, at the signal, the first person from each team hums with his mouth closed until he is out of breath. Then he tags the player next to him. The second player then begins to hum and so on. The last team humming wins.

MONKEY TAG

TYPE: Shtick Play in a large area One player is chosen to be "it." He remains "it" until he tags another player who then becomes "it." But no one may be tagged if they are in the following position: 1) One foot raised. 2) Both hands scratching themselves on their side like a monkey. 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 wins the game.

MOO!

TYPE: Shtick One player is sent out of the room. The remaining players pick one player to yell the loudest. When the player returns he is told he will have three chances to hear everyone yell "moo" and after each time he must try to guess who is yelling the loudest. If he guesses correctly, he will "win;" if not, he loses. The game is repeated once more, but this time when the player (player A) is out of the room, tell all of the other players that the next time they play, player A will be chosen to yell the loudest, and on the third time they yell "Moo!" No one is to yell except player A. Player A returns and has his three guesses. Then someone else leaves the room, and player A is chosen to yell the loudest. On the third guess player A will yell "moo!" all by himself--Have Fun!