

Hadracha Choveret



תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA
UNITED KINGDOM

BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM

Angels



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Dear Roshim, Sganim and Madrichim,

Hi all. Hope you're having a great week and that the clocks changing hasn't radically changed your lives for the bad (that sounded quite dramatic didn't it?!)

We've been hearing some great feedback about how Svivot are going, so well done and keep up the good work!

This week's Choveret is about Angels – a topic that I don't think has been done before (at least not amongst the folders that I found in the Bayit). So I hope you learn some new things, and that you're able to successfully put it over to your chanichim in a Bnei Akiva way that we all love.

Please let me know if you need any help, want a chat, or just want to compliment me on the thrilling Chovrot!

Bhatzlacha!

Bevirkat Chaverim l'Torah v'Avodah

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Aims:

- To learn about the Angels that came to Avraham
- To understand the role of Angels in Judaism
- To consider our perception of angels

Now before we get started properly, take a look at the suggested schedule for your Shabbat Afternoon meetings. You don't have to use this in your Sviva, it is of course your choice, but you may find it useful to adapt this kind of format. Have a look.....

Gathering Time (waiting for people)	10 minutes
Peulah Time	35-40 minutes
Transition Time (use sheet provided)	5 Minutes
Extra Time (Use ideas provided for what to do here)	40 minutes
Mifkad	15 minutes

This week's Parasha begins with the time where 3 'men' appear to Avraham whilst he is sitting in the entrance of his tent, after his Brit Milah:

וַיִּשָׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיִּרְא וַיָּרֵץ לְקִרְאתָם מִפֶּתַח
הָאֵהֶל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֶרְצָה

“And he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three *men* were standing beside him, and he saw and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent, and he prostrated himself to the ground”.

Rashi however, says that these men were in fact angels; one to bring news of Yitzchak's birth to Sarah, one to overturn Sodom and one to heal Avraham following his Brit Milah. You might question why there needed to be 3 angels – couldn't one have just done all the jobs.....they are angels after all! The answer is no, as one angel cannot perform two jobs, as is written in Bereishit Rabba.

Rambam and Ramban (names sound and look similar, but they are different people – I promise!) disagree on whether the angels actually appeared or if it was just a vision that Avraham had?

What do you think? Do angels really exist or are they figures of your imagination?

I would normally insert a nice picture here, but a picture of an angel is probably a bit heretical....!



???



In order to gain a greater understanding about angels in Judaism, let's take a look at some other places that they come up in. The first is in שלום אליכם which we sing every Friday night. We sing this song to welcome the angels who have escorted us back from Shul. First we welcome them, שלום אליכם then we ask them to come in by saying בואכם לשלום, ask them to bless us 'ברכוני לשלום'. Ashkenazim sing farewell at this point, however, Sefardim, sing another verse of בשבתכם לשלום, where they welcome the angels to sit down. It seems strange that we should invite them in and then send them on their way. The truth is that we are not actually bidding them farewell. It is in fact the weekday angels that we say goodbye to.

Do you think angels really come to your house on Friday night? Are there other occasions we should invite them to?



Another occasion where angels 'appear' in our lives is in the song that hopefully you all know and love; Be'shem Hashem. If you need a reminder....here are the words...

בשם השם אלוקי ישראל
מימיני מיכאל ומשמאלי גבריאל
ומלפני אוריאל ומאחורי רפאל
ועל ראשי, ועל ראשי, שכינת הקל

This Passuk features in the bedtime Shema and describes the position of the angels around the Divine Throne. To his right is Michael, the performer of miracles, to his left is Gavriel, messenger of Hashem; Uriel in front carrying the Divine light; and lastly there is Raphael the healer of the sick. Man however, places himself with permission from Hashem, places himself in the centre of the angels, with the Divine Presence resting above his head. As it says in Tehillim, ‘an angel of Hashem encamps around those that fear G-d and delivers them.’

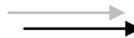
Do you think that we have the right to place ourselves amongst angels of Hashem? Should we put our trust in them entirely?

Moving towards more modern Jewish thought on Angels, the Ramchal in the 18th Century in his book ‘Derech Hashem’ wrote about the role of angels. He writes that Hashem created an angel over everything in the physical world. Every angel is intended to remain in their post, unless Hashem decides to remove him. There are also levels within the angel ‘system’. Some angels are assigned to oversee the laws of nature, and to strengthen aspects of the physical world. Above them are the angels responsible for carrying out decrees regarding reward and punishment.

He also writes how the leg of the angel is straight; the human leg can move and is flexible. This symbolises the idea that whilst angels are static, humans are dynamic. Our legs touch the ground, and so through this we connect to the world.

As we are dynamic, can humans in any way be considered to be better than angels?

Loving angels instead



So hopefully the above has given you some insight into angels in Judaism, and got you thinking a little bit more about it.

Here are some handy Peula ideas you may wish to use:

Peula Ideas

- Play the song game with the word angel!
- Get chanichim to write their own 'Beshem Hashem'.
- Do an obstacle course where the person is accompanied by a person on their left, right, behind and in front (like the angels in the song)
- Play the 'I went shopping game' with things that an angel could be responsible for. You can really go wild here – the options are endless....!

You should have all received your forms in for Machane so send them in to ensure your winter is epic!



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