

Bnei Akiva Svivot 5780: Choveret Chinuchit

Dear Chaverim,

The world is currently in an unfamiliar place. The future holds a great deal of uncertainty and the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of British Jews is becoming evident, as shuls and communal organisations are taking precautions to ensure the safety of vulnerable members of the community. We don't know exactly how the situation will continue to unfold, but we must be prepared to react, not only by following safety guidelines, but by showing how we as a community are strong, caring and supportive of each other.

Whilst due to safety measures, svivot are now no longer physically able to run, we would like to still provide you with peulot (activities) and chinuch (education) to engage in with your children. We will be publishing our weekly Choveret (booklet) (usually only available to madrichim) with amazing ideas for activities and interesting reading material. Our hope is that we can help to enhance this time for both you and your children, something especially important in the current climate.

During this time of social distancing, it is crucial that we make an extra effort to attend to our own personal wellbeing. Within this chovert, we have aimed to show you just how seriously Judaism takes looking after ourselves and have also provided you with some tips and activities as to how we can do so.

Please feel free to share it around with your friends. If you would like to receive this activities pack directly to your email, please email svivot@bauk.org.

Wishing you all a Shabbat shalom and good health!

*Zoe Daniels and Chana Be'eri
Svivot and Hadracha and Chinuch Workers*

In this pack you will find....

- ***Information about what Judaism says about looking after your wellbeing.***
- ***Questions to Ponder***
- ***Discussion Points***
- ***Peulah (activity) Ideas***
- ***Extra Activities***
- ***Resources***

Parshat Vayikra - Wellbeing

Treat yourself with kindness

Self-care is an integral part of the Torah. In places where one might least expect it, we can find messages that remind us of how to treat ourselves and others. Parashat Vayikra gives a detailed description of the korbanot. At first appearance, this may seem like a portion dedicated to discussing matters that are *bein adam l'makom*, relating to our relationship with God. And yet, looking deeper we can see values of *bein adam l'chaveiro*, relationships between people as well as *bein adam l'atzmo*, how a person should treat themselves, that are hidden in the text.

For example, the Korban Shlamim (wellbeing offering) is discussed before the Korban Chatat (sin offering), teaching us to prioritise peace over punishment not only when relating to others, but also

with our own personal offerings. We must treat ourselves with kindness and mercy as we would want God to do.



"It being Saturday night, the gods have asked for pizza."

A number of the korbanot are means-dependent. Someone who is wealthy would bring a more expensive animal, but someone who could not afford to do so would bring a cheaper animal, a bird, or even an offering of grain. In God's eyes, all of these offerings are equal. We can only give what we are able to. This applies not just financially, but also physically and mentally. We owe it to ourselves to treat ourselves with respect and love and not to push ourselves beyond our capabilities.

Healthy body, healthy mind

Judaism is a religion in which physicality and spirituality are intimately intertwined. We see God's handiwork in the world around us, and we fulfil our physical desires as a part of our service of God. The seemingly mundane physical world is elevated when we use it to perform mitzvot - from saying a bracha on a piece of food, to decorating a sukkah so that it is a beautiful space to spend time in. We use physical symbols to connect during tefilla and as part of our chagim. And while Jewish thought and philosophy is constantly evolving with the times, our texts and our rituals connect Jews past, present and future.

Whilst it plays an integral part in our practices, the physical world is not the essence of Judaism. It is the vehicle through which we achieve a connection to God, to our fellow Jews, and to the rest of humanity. The most important physical tools we have with which to do this are our bodies. It is therefore not a surprise that we are commanded to look after them! A verse in Devarim reads as follows:

רק השמר לך ושמר נפשוך מאד

"But guard yourself and guard your soul exceedingly" (Devarim 4:9)

Rashi comments on this verse to explain that "guard yourself" is a commandment to look after your physical body. Even more important than this, however, is to guard your soul, as seen by the addition of the word "exceedingly".

Our bodies are 'on loan' to us from God, and we have a responsibility to protect them and use them to fulfil our role in this world. But as we have already said, our physical bodies are merely a tool with which to achieve spirituality. It is not enough to guard your body if you do not also guard your soul.

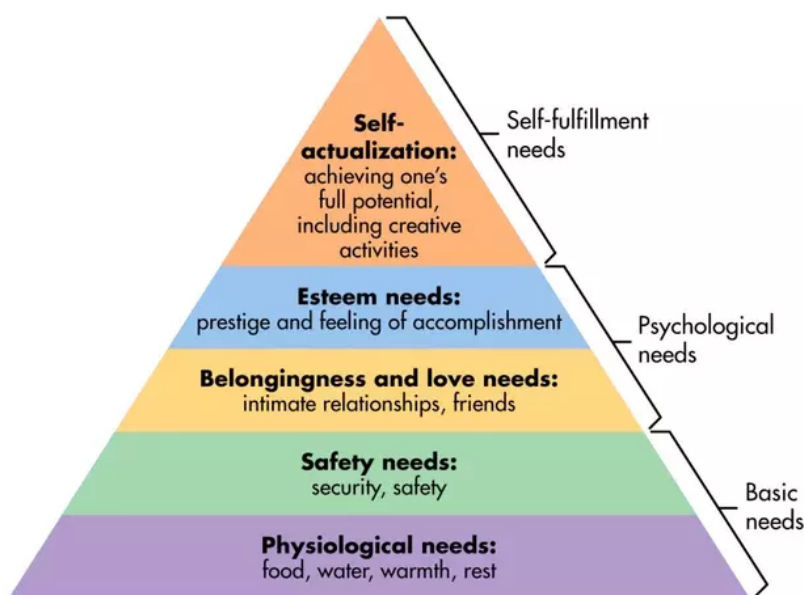


The Torah takes the sanctity of human life incredibly seriously. One is not only permitted to, but actually *commanded* to break Shabbat in order to save a life - and the same is true for most other transgressions! Life happens when a body contains a soul. It reflects the ultimate purpose of this world, of something spiritual expressed through something physical.

How to be the best version of yourself

We have seen that there is actually a commandment to care for one's body; eating healthy and exercising fulfils a mitzvah! But how does one care for one's soul?

Psychologist Abraham Maslow studied what motivates people. He came up with the following hierarchy of human needs:



A person's most basic needs are at the bottom of the triangle. Without a solid base, it will become much more difficult to achieve the elements that are higher up the triangle. But according to Maslow, those basic needs aren't enough to lead a fulfilled and happy life. To be truly motivated to achieve one's potential, one must be psychologically fulfilled. It is important to form healthy relationships and to have a sense of worth. In short, Maslow is stating that we need to look after our entire wellbeing!

The world today is facing a huge physical threat, Luckily, we are able to do something about it. By staying home and self-isolating, we are all able to play our part in protecting those most vulnerable. At the same time, self-isolation will take a psychological toll on all of us. In addition to the uncertainty and worry caused by the coronavirus, we are separated from friends and family members and unable to continue our lives as normal. Most of us are no longer at work or school, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance will get harder. We must take active steps to look after our own wellbeing, as well as to be aware of the difficulties that others will face with their mental health and to reach out where possible.

Tips and Tricks

We've all got some adjustments to make; living in isolation means being more creative with looking after our wellbeing. Here are some great ideas to get you started!

- **Make a schedule** - having set times each day for specific activities will help maintain routine and structure in your day. Try to make a weekly schedule so that not every day looks the same!
- **Be active** - there are lots of home workout videos available online. From pilates to zumba, there's something for everyone!
- **Engage your brain** - learn something new every day! Many organisations are making lectures and shiurim available online over Facebook and Zoom. Check out Bnei Akiva's Machane Aviv schedule for a start! If you have something you'd like to share with the world, make your own video or be in touch with us to see how we can help.
- **Explore the world** - engage your curiosity with a virtual tour of a museum or an international city! See this link for some museums with virtual tours available: www.shorturl.at/AGNX8
- **Develop your skills** - now is the time to learn a new hobby or focus on an old one!
- **Get some fresh air** - current government advice is that you can go out once a day for exercise provided you keep a safe distance from other people. Parks may be crowded, but if possible find an open green space. If you have a garden, take advantage of the weather and spend time in it.
- **Give to others** - there is no better way to feel fulfilled than to help others. Whether you donate to charities, shop for vulnerable people or phone someone isolating by themselves, your support will make a huge difference.
- **Connect** - just because you can't see other people, doesn't mean you have to lose touch! Set up regular calls and video chats with friends and family - remember, you're all in this together!
- **Take a break** - it's important to give your mind and your eyes a rest from staring at a screen and scrolling through social media. Try to have set times in the day for social media/looking at the news and when you are looking at a screen, make sure you give your eyes a short break every 20 minutes.

- **Share your feelings** - it's easy to feel upset or frustrated when you're cooped up in the house for so long. Make sure that household members are aware of how each other are feeling and can discuss their emotions together. If you need some additional support, please be in touch with mental health charities Jami, Mind or Big White Wall.

Questions to ponder

- Why did God create us with physical needs?
- Why does the Torah need to command us to take care of ourselves?

Discussions

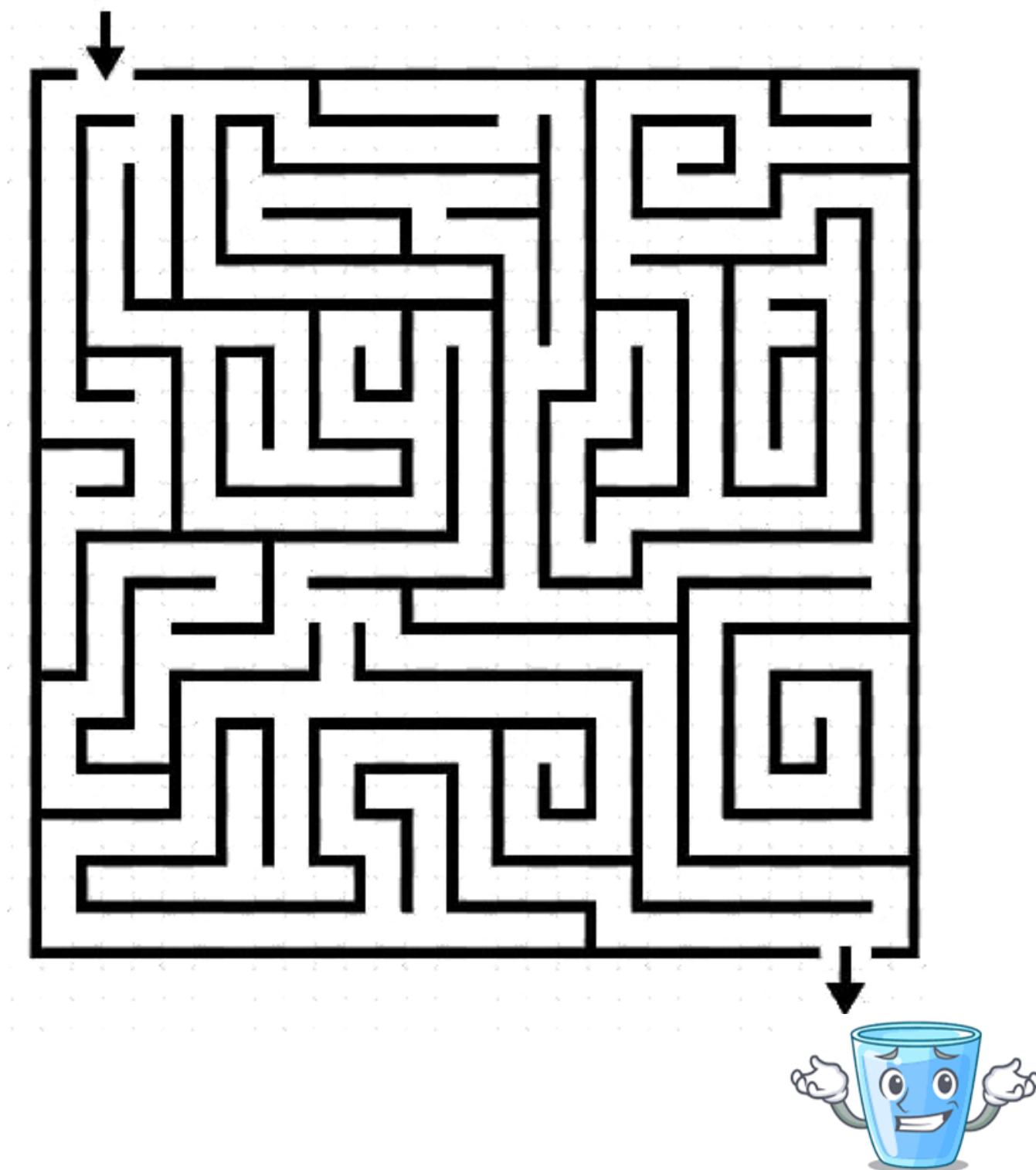
- What does it mean to "guard your body"?
- What things make you feel fulfilled and happy? What makes you frustrated?
- Why is it important to share how we're feeling?

Peula (Activity) Ideas

- **Smile if you love me** – smiling is catching! One person says to another, "smile if you love me baby" and the second person must reply, "I love you baby but I just can't smile" (if they smile, they're out, if not, it's their turn to ask the question to someone else).
- **Psycholog** – play as a family or with friends over Zoom! One person is the 'psychologist' and gets kicked out of the meeting while the other players decide on a 'condition' with which they will answer any questions from the psychologist (e.g. all answering as if they are zoo animals, or as if they are one of the players, or only starting their sentences with the letter 'p' etc.). The psychologist re-enters the game and asks the players questions to try and 'diagnose' what the condition is!
- **Boot camp** - Create your own indoor exercise regime! Get each member of the family to come up with part of the routine. Send us photos of any creative exercises!
- **Bottle your feelings** - pass around a bottle of fizzy drink. Each person takes it, says something that frustrates them and shakes the bottle. At the end, open the bottle. What's the difference between opening it slowly and quickly? Shows what happens if you let feelings build up without talking about them.
- **Movies and Morals** - see the following link for a guided activity using clips from Disney's Inside Out: www.shorturl.at/mnAN3.
- **Wellbeing Bingo** - (See resource below) Cut up the calling card and put the wellbeing ideas in a hat. Each participant gets a bingo card and some buttons (or any item to use as a cover). Draw a piece of paper from the hat and read it out, with participants covering it when they find it on their board. You can start off with the winning being when they have a row or column covered and then go for a full house!

Other Activities

Maze - Can you find your way to the glass of water?



Brain Teasers (Answers on the last page)

1. **What question can you never answer yes to?**
2. **What has hands but doesn't clap?**
3. **What travels around the world but stays in one spot?**
4. **What is full of holes but still holds water?**
5. **I have keys but no door. I have space but no rooms. I allow you to enter but you're never able to leave. What am I?**

Resources

Wellbeing Bingo

Calling Card

Playing in the Garden	Going for a walk	Eating healthily	Taking a screen break	Speaking to a friend	Getting dressed
Laughing	Listening to my parents	Going to bed on time	Discovering a new hobby	Practising an old hobby	Tidying my room
Having a bath/shower	Reading a book	Staying hydrated	Having time for me.		

Participant's Cards

Playing in the Garden	Having a bath/shower	Speaking to a friend	Tidying my room
Having time for me.	Staying hydrated	Eating healthily	Going to bed on time
Laughing	Taking a screen break	Reading a book	Going for a walk
Listening to my parents	Practising an old hobby	Discovering a new hobby	Getting dressed

Taking a screen break	Playing in the Garden	Reading a book	Having a bath/shower
Getting dressed	Having time for me.	Staying hydrated	Eating healthily
Laughing	Discovering a new hobby	Listening to my parents	Tidying my room
Speaking to a friend	Going for a walk	Going to bed on time	Practising an old hobby

Getting dressed	Having a bath/shower	Speaking to a friend	Tidying my room
Practising an old hobby	Taking a screen break	Going to bed on time	Eating healthily
Having time for me.	Listening to my parents	Discovering a new hobby	Reading a book
Laughing	Playing in the Garden	Going for a walk	Staying hydrated

Staying hydrated	Listening to my parents	Practising an old hobby	Having time for me.
Having a bath/shower	Going for a walk	Playing in the Garden	Eating healthily
Getting dressed	Going to bed on time	Reading a book	Discovering a new hobby
Laughing	Speaking to a friend	Tidying my room	Taking a screen break

Speaking to a friend	Going to bed on time	Staying hydrated	Eating healthily
Taking a screen break	Tidying my room	Having time for me.	Going for a walk
Having a bath/shower	Listening to my parents	Playing in the Garden	Practising an old hobby
Getting dressed	Discovering a new hobby	Reading a book	Laughing

- Brain Teaser Answers:**
1. Are you asleep yet?
 2. A clock
 3. A stamp
 4. A sponge
 5. A keyboard