



CHOVERET CHINUCH

5 7 8 1



BNEI AKIVA
OF THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

LETTER FROM THE EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR

Shalom Madrichim Yekarim!

As we learn about Avraham during these parashot, and hear about his efforts and attempts to bring Hashem's word into the world, and spread it among those coming to discover, I cannot help thinking of the madrichim, who are opening their metaphoric tents to their chanichim coming to learn truthful precepts, values, and words of Torah. May you all be successful as Avraham Avinu has been.

This month we begin our transition from talking about the Machaneh as a whole, to discussing each shevet in particular. We will be learning about each shevet, its character, and the values it represents through its founding fathers - each of Yaakov Avinu's sons. This week we will be starting with the eldest, Reuven. While the Torah doesn't relate stories about all the brothers, and some definitely stand out more prominently than others, we can draw a lot more information from the brachot they receive in Parashot Veyechi and Vezot Habracha. And of course, where we can, we will also learn about the

geographical areas of the shvatim as well.

Our goal for these coming weeks is to focus on one or two primary qualities that these shvatim embodied, and try to apply them to our current world and surroundings, each person according to his or her life experience.

Wishing you all Behatzlacha, and Kol Hakavod for all you do!
B'virvat Chaverim LeTorah VeAvoda,

Rafi Engelhart
Educational Director

PEULA #1

TOPIC

Big Brother- loyalty to our nation

GOAL

To learn and discuss our responsibility to look after our own - Rosh Gadol - looking out for how to help.

BACKGROUND:

Reuven, as the eldest brother, was born into a role of responsibility. Reuven follows through on several occasions, making sure to take care of those close to him (Getting the Dudaim for Leah, Saving Yosef from brothers, offering to watch over Binyamin).

TRIGGER

- **Objective:** start a discussion about how everyone has responsibility for themselves and others.
 - Madrichim will bring random household objects (brush, toothpaste, book, water bottle, pillow etc).
 - Have the chanichim sit around in a socially distant circle.
 - Pass the object(s) around the circle.
 - a) Each chanich must come up with a unique responsibility the object(s) has.
 - b) Keep going through the circle until no more responsibilities can be found.



PEULA 1:

- **Objective:** Give the chanichim an opportunity to learn about different ways for being responsible and how they should care for others.
 - Provide scenarios to chanichim and roles for them in the scenarios. Tell the chanichim the first part of the story and let them fill in the rest and act it

out.

- The goal of the improv game is for the chanichim to act out the responsible action that should be taken in each scenario. Some of the scenarios have more clear reactions than others. Let the chanichim think about it and act out the ending of each scene provided.
- 1) Your friend just tripped but doesn't look hurt. Do you go over to help or assume he is okay?
 - 2) You accidentally spilled on the table cloth in your friend's house. Do you mention this to your friend or do you tuck the spill under a napkin?
 - 3) Someone's groceries fell on the floor but you are holding a lot of your own groceries. Do you go help pick up the groceries or continue on with your shopping trip?
 - 4) A student in your class is sick and missed class today. You are not close friends with this individual but you take the best notes in class. Do you send your notes or wait for someone else to send them?
 - 5) It's 15 minutes before Shabbat and the table isn't set but you want to finish your TV show
 - 6) Your friend forgot his/her lunch at home but you have your favorite lunch today. Do you share or keep it for yourself?
 - 7) You see someone sitting alone at recess but you know the basketball game is about to start and you want to play.

- 8) Your friend doesn't have a writing utensil for the test but you always like to have 3 extra for yourself just in case.
- 9) Your shul is short for a minyan but you will be bored sitting there since you already davened.
- 10) You pass by a poor person but don't want to find your wallet in your bag to look for some tzedaka.

Diyun/Discussion: These are scenarios that have probably come up in your life already. If not, they are very likely to come up. What is the responsible action to take in each scenario? What impact on the other person will you have when you help him/her in a time of need?

PEULA 2:

- **Objective:** Chanichim will learn to work together and feel achdut (responsibility) for all members of the group.
 - The Floor is Lava!
 - Tell the chanichim they need to move from point A to point B where they will reach safety.
 - Assign chanichim specific challenges (blindness, can't use hands, can't use legs, can't speak etc.)
 - The group must work together in order to reach safety.

DIYUN (DISCUSSION):

There are times in your life when you cannot be selfish and instead must take responsibility to help others. Rabbi Akiva famously taught the Jewish people the value of Veahavta lereacha kamocha, "Love your friend as yourself." It is not always simple to think about what we can do for others, but we must challenge ourselves to think about how we can work together and

be responsible for others. What will happen if I leave my friend behind? Why is it important to take responsibility for others, how do I benefit? What is the overarching goal in taking responsibility?

Source: פרקי אבות ב:ה'

In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man.	ובמקום שאין אנשים השתדל להיות איש:
--	------------------------------------

What can we learn from this source about the Reuven and his sense of responsibility?

SIKUM:

The scenarios we went through had some clear actions to take, while others you might have been more unsure of what the right action to take was. The game to reach the other side of the room might have been a challenging task given the specific challenges you each faced. Regardless, everyone worked together to find how to be responsible in each situation. Reuven, and many of our role models in Tanach, choose the responsible action to take to look out for family members and for the community at large.

PEULA #2

TOPIC

בתוך עמי אני יושבת - We're all in this together

GOAL

To discuss our responsibility to share the burden with our nation

BACKGROUND:

As part of Reuven's responsibility and commitment to his people, he was also the leader that took upon themselves the crucial role of making sure that all the shvatim were settled in their nachala, before they returned to their own. This, amongst many other sources, teaches about Areivut Hadadit.

TRIGGER

- **Objective:** to introduce the topic of collective responsibility; actions of each individual impacts the whole group
 - Have the chanichim sit around in a socially distant circle
 - Have them put their heads down and close their eyes
 - Tell them to put up either one finger or two
 - a) If they all put up one finger, they each get one candy
 - b) If one person puts up two fingers and the rest of the group puts up one, the chanich who put up two fingers gets two candies
 - c) If more than one chanich puts up two fingers, no one gets candy
 - Keep playing for a few rounds until the chanichim "beat the game," strategizing to ensure everyone gets a chance to get two candies or always put up one finger so everyone gets the same amount



INTRO:

In Machane Yisrael there is a notion of collective responsibility. Reuven demonstrates this by making sure all the other shvatim are settled before returning to their own nachala. If even one shevet is unsettled or having issues it disrupts all of machane Yisrael. We learn from Reuven that in order for the machane to work as a cohesive group, Bnei Yisrael need to look out for each other instead of putting themselves first.

PEULA 1:

- **Objective:** to demonstrate what it means to truly be reliant on other people, every action affects the whole group. Is it easier to accomplish something when there is someone in charge to look out for the team or every person thinking for themselves?
 - Materials: string, plastic cups, rubber bands
 - Before Shabbat, cut strings about 3 feet long (enough for one for each chanich). Tie 4-5 strings to each rubber band (make sure the rubber bands are durable and won't break when stretched)
 - Divide the chanichim into groups of 4-5
 - Give each group a rubber band with strings tied onto it and a stack of 15 cups
 - The objective of the game is to stack

the cups using the strings to stretch the rubber band to latch on and guide the cups into the right spot

- Here's the catch: for round one, no one can speak or use hand motions to strategize; if someone on your team speaks you have to start from the beginning
- For round 2: you're allowed to speak to your team and strategize; first one to stack the cups in a pyramid with 5 cups on the bottom row, then four, then 3, etc. wins!

DIYUN/DISCUSSION 1:

- was it easier to stack the cups when you had to be quiet or when you could strategize out loud? Why?
- Ask each team: did your group have a leader that was helping guide everyone? What did that leader do to help your team? Did having a leader make it easier to complete the challenge? What would you do differently if you played again?
- Just like Reuven acted as a leader and demonstrated that Bnei Yisrael have a collective responsibility, each team experienced accomplishing a goal with and without a leader. In the first round chanichim relied on their assumptions about what their teammates' strategies were and could not communicate to figure out a plan to work together. In the second round, chanichim were able to communicate and likely had a natural leader help strategize and guide the team. However, in both rounds, chanichim experienced collective responsibility; if a chanich pulled their string too loose, the cup

could fall. If a chanich didn't lift their string high enough, the cup could hit the stack and knock it down. All actions have an effect on the group.

PEULA 2

- **Objective:** to create an understanding of individuality and how collective responsibility still applies in situations where we appear to be alone
 - Materials: 2-3 ping pong balls, 2-3 cups, 2-3 puzzles (one for each team)
 - Puzzle Relay. The objective of the game is to finish the puzzle
 - Divide the chanichim into 2-3 teams, set up the teams 15 feet away from the madrich with the puzzle, ping pong ball, and cup. (following instructions happen simultaneously for all teams)
 - Have one team member from each team run to the madrich at a time. They must successfully bounce the ping pong ball into the cup to get a puzzle piece that they will put down next to the madrich, and run back to the rest of their team. Each time the chanich completes the task, they will get another puzzle piece for their puzzle. The pieces may not fit together at first because there are too few, but once there are enough, after bouncing the ping pong ball and receiving a puzzle piece, a chanich can make one match of two pieces before returning to their team. Once all of the puzzle pieces are



handed out, the chanichim continue the relay, running up to the madrich, bouncing the ping pong ball into the cup, and trying to put two pieces together, and then running back until the puzzle is complete.

DIYUN (DISCUSSION 2):

- What was the difference between this activity and the one before it? How does it feel to work on something as a team all together vs. as a team but one by one (like in a relay?)
- Even when you were alone doing the task, were you still responsible for the team? What are some times that you have felt alone or by yourself but knew you were still responsible for a larger group?
- Just as in our previous example, we see the importance of working as a group and the responsibility that we have for each other. Sometimes it's easier to be a leader like Reuven and remember that responsibility when your leading or working with your team, but it can be harder to remember when you feel you are alone and think no one is watching. However, every chanich was important in completing the puzzle relay just as we all are important in remembering our individual responsibility for one another as Am Yisrael.

Source: במדבר ל"ב: ו, ט"ז-י"ז

Moses replied to the Gadites and the Reubenites, "Are your brothers to go to war while you stay here?"	וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְבְנֵי-גַד וְלְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן הֲאֶחְיִים יָבֹאוּ לְמִלְחָמָה וְאַתֶּם תֵּשְׁבוּ פֹה:
And we will hasten as shock-troops in the van of the Israelites until we have established them in their home, while our children stay in the fortified towns because of the inhabitants of the land.	וְאַנְחֵנוּ נִחְלֵץ חָשִׁים לְפָנָי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם-הִבִּיאֲנָם אֶל-מְקוֹמָם וְיָשֹׁב טַפְנוּ בְּעָרֵי הַמְּבֻצָּר מִפְּנֵי יִשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:
We will not return to our homes until every one of the Israelites is in possession of his portion.	לֹא נָשׁוּב אֶל-בְּתֵינוּ עַד הִתְנַחַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ נַחֲלָתוֹ:

SIKUM:

As a leader, Reuven put his responsibilities for others before himself. We saw in the cup stacking activity how important a leader can be, and we learned how members of a group or team depend on each other through the candy trigger and the puzzle relay. We also discussed what it means to have collective responsibility, and how we still have that responsibility as members of Am Yisrael even when we are alone. Like Reuven, we need to remember the responsibility we have for each other and for the whole of Am Yisrael.

TOPIC

Shimon - Then get up and do it! (Or on second thought...) - activism

GOAL

To discover how strongly we feel about our values, and how to be active within them.

BACKGROUND:

Shimon's image in the Tanach is not a positive one. It seems that more times than not he is involved in unfortunate-to-disastrous incidents. But there is one thing that is very consistent - he is active. He acts, and does it with a lot of passion and energy. Perhaps this is why it says about Shevet Shimon that he will be the teachers of children and soferim (Ba'al Hahafla'a - פנים יפות)

וכיון שאמר יעקב אהלקם ביעקב ואפיצם בישראל [בראשית מט, ז] דהיינו אהלקם ביעקב קאי על שמעון שגזר עליהם שיהיו מלמדי תינוקות וסופרים

TRIGGER See what they focus on

- **Objective:** open up the question of what gets us to act. What will move us to be active?
- Before your chanichim come into the room or corner, make a mess. An easy mess - papers on the floor, chairs knocked over, a couple random toys, playing cards strewn about. Nothing that should take more than a minute or two to clean up all together. Also put in the room a bowl of candies or snacks (for snifim that don't allow food you can replace it with a couple footballs, resealed candy boxes that look full, etc. something that will likely grab their attention.) Observe what the chanichim do when they come in. As you may have guessed, they're heading straight for the candy.

INTRO:

This peula will focus on Shimon and Levi's "zeal" their readiness to act upon whatever they experience. Zeal can be good or bad, depending on how and when it's used.

• Source - בראשית ל"ד:כ"ה -

On the third day, when they were in pain, Simeon and Levi, two of Jacob's sons, brothers of Dinah, took each his sword, came upon the unsuspecting city, and slew all the males.	וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בְּהִיוֹתָם כְּאֲבִים וַיִּקְחוּ שְׁנֵי-בְנֵי-יַעֲקֹב שְׁמֻעוֹן וְלֵוִי אֲחֵי דִינָה אִישׁ חֶרֶב וַיָּבֹאוּ עַל-הָעִיר בָּטַח וַיַּהַרְגוּ כָּל-זָכָר:
--	--

• Source - במדבר כ"ה: וי-ח -

Just then one of the Israelites came and brought a Midianite woman over to his companions, in the sight of Moses and of the whole Israelite community who were weeping at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. When Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he left the assembly and, taking a spear in his hand, he followed the Israelite into the chamber and stabbed both of them, the Israelite and the woman, through the belly. Then the plague against the Israelites was checked	וַהֲנִה אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּא וַיִּקְרַב אֶל-אֲחָיו אֶת-הַמִּדְיָנִית לְעֵינֵי מֹשֶׁה וּלְעֵינֵי כָּל-עֵדֹת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָמָּה בָּכִים פָּתַח אֱהֵל מוֹעֵד: וַיֵּרָא פִּינְחָס בֶּן-אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן-אֶהֱרֹן הַלֵּוִי וַיִּקָּם מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה וַיִּקַּח רֶמֶס בְּיָדוֹ: וַיָּבֹא אַחֵר אִישׁ-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-הַקֶּבֶה וַיִּדְקֹר אֶת-שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת-הָאִשָּׁה אֶל-קֶבְתָּהּ וַתַּעֲצֹר הַמִּגַּפָּה מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
---	---

We see to different actions of Zeal. One controversial, the other heroic. What motivates us to act? Why did we pay more attention to the candy and not to cleaning up the mess? And what does that say about us?

PEULA 1: Walk-o-meter

- **Objective:** use pace of walking as a measure to how much you would be motivated in a certain scenario. A casual walk would mean that you would be hesitant/less willing to act, a sprint would be really willing to.. And everywhere in between :



- A fight between friends breaks out Superbowl tickets are being sold at only \$50 a piece
- Tickets to Israel are being sold at \$150 a piece
- A beggar on the street asks for money
- A limited supply of Chinese food being served for school lunch
- A notice for a new tiktok/instagram story/post/you get the picture pops up on your screen
- A Bnei Akiva Torah learning program starts in 5 minutes, and you live 6 minutes away
- You notice a professional baseball player from your local team is on your flight
- A Gadol HaDor (Great Rabbi) comes to your shul to speak and meet with the community

DIYUN 1:

- **Objective:** To discuss what motivates us to act, and is that reflective of our values? Lead questions:

- Which kind of things did we run for?
- Which did we just walk casually for?
- Were any of these things representative of what Zimri (the Israelite who worshipped Avoda Zara from the previous source) did?
- Were any of these things representatives of what Pinchas did?
- What do our responses say about the values we believe in?

PEULA 2: Run for Mitzvot

- **Objective:** Practicing our reaction time for identifying mitzvot and running to do them
- Divide the group into two and assign them as Bein Adam LeChaveiro, (Mitzvot performed between man and his fellow man), and Bein Adam LaMakom (Mitzvot performed between man and Hashem). You will read a list of mitzvot, one by one. If that mitzva is BALC those who were assigned as such will need to race to a determined finish line, or have to complete a certain action (Corona friendly) and whoever gets there first wins. Same for BALM.
- List of Mitzvot:
 - Netillat Lulav
 - Tfillin
 - Tzedaka
 - Distance oneself from lies
 - Avoda Zara
 - Giving testimony in court
 - Benching
 - Hashavat Aveida
 - Farming in Israel
 - Learning Torah
 - Teaching Torah
 - Helping someone pick up something they dropped
 - Holding the door open

DIYUN 2:

- How often do you have these opportunities each day?
- Are you able to notice them and run to do them? Why or why not?
- How can we make sure to notice them and act upon them?

SIKUM:

We learn a lot from Shimon and Levi's actions. Primarily with Shimon, we see how quickly and enthusiastically he acts, and that is a quality we can admire, as long as that quick and enthusiastic reaction is for good cause. Sometimes we may find ourselves running towards things that may not be that significant, yet we perceive them as such. Other times we may not run to things that indeed are significant. What we hope to learn from Shimon is to examine the type of things we are proactive for and quickly running to do, and to make sure that those are the right causes.

In Bnei Akiva, as a youth movement this is very significant. One of the difference between a youth movement and an organization is that a movement by definition calls for action. Are we learning from Shimon and acting strongly when appropriate? Or perhaps are we acting for the wrong reasons? Or not acting at all?

ADDITIONAL SOURCES FOR DISCUSSION:

- Source: Sanhedrin 102:b

Rav Ashi said to him: Since you were so wise, what is the reason you engaged in idol worship? Manasseh said to him: Had you been there at that time, you would have taken and lifted the hem of your cloak and run after me due to the fierce desire to engage in idol worship

א"ל מאחר דחכימתו
כולי האי מאי טעמא
קא פלחיתו לעבודת
כוכבים א"ל אי הות
התם הות נקיטנא
בשיפולי גלימא
ורהת אבתראי

- What does this source teach us about what we tend to run to or respond to?
- What would be the modern day equivalent to Avoda Zara from this source, according to your opinion

- Source: Brachot 6:b

Rabbi Zeira said: The reward for attending the lecture is for running [to it]

אמר רבי זי"רא: אגרא
דפרקא - רהטא

- Why do you think the reward for attending a Torah lesson is the extent they ran to it?
- What important lesson do you think it has to teach us?
- What might someone suggest as an alternative for the reward of attending the shiur?
- How can we learn this concept relating to Shimon?