



CHOVERET CHINUCH

5 7 8 1



BNEI AKIVA
OF THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

LETTER FROM THE EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR

Shalom Chaverim!

Every year in the months Cheshvan-Kislev Bnei Akiva Israel celebrates “Chodesh Irgun,” literally translated as “the month of the movement.” The entire month is dedicated to Bnei Akiva, with extra peulot, guest speakers, fun events, wall painting of the snif, “shelet eish” , revealing the new shevet name, and much more. It’s a super intense and exciting time for Bnei Akiva, to the extent that even schools take it easy on the school work so they can be more involved.

Starting from this year we are going to dedicate 3-4 weeks each year to get to know our tnua better, based on our yearly theme. This year we will be learning about Bnei Akiva’s accomplishments and ideology through the characters of Yehuda, Yissachar, and Zevulun. We draw inspiration from these characters even today, for all the various projects,

initiatives and activities that Bnei Akiva participates in. So join us as we delve deeper into our identity and strengthen our Bnei Akiva foundations.

Kadima, Bnei Akiva! Heidad Bma’aleh!

Rafi Engelhart
Educational Director

DVAR TORAH FROM RAV SHAUL

Shalom Chaverim!

Hashem Imachem!

Just this opening may be strange to some... where is this coming from? Why do we have this and other Bnei Akiva lingo?

Rafi and the educational Tzevet have dedicated this Choveret to start slowly bringing us closer to understanding the origins of “Bnei Akiva” as a way of life.

Our life of “Torah V’Avodah” starts all the way back from creation as the Torah says:

וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁחַצֵּהוּ ה' בְּיָמָיו וְלֹא־יָצָא אָדָם לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה:
וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁחַצֵּהוּ ה' בְּיָמָיו וְלֹא־יָצָא אָדָם לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה:
וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁחַצֵּהוּ ה' בְּיָמָיו וְלֹא־יָצָא אָדָם לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה:

When no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil.

Let us get to work— let’s get to know our mission better and make an impact in our communities and the world!

BCLTVA,

Rav Shaul Feldman
Executive Director of Bnei Akiva of the US and Canada

TOPIC

Yehuda - Standing up for what's right

GOAL

To Learn about Yehuda's leadership for doing what's right, and to learn about Bnei Akiva's leadership in that regard as well.

TRIGGER To conform or not?

For this activity, we will get everyone, except for one, in the group to do something on cue, and see if the one who is unaware will conform with the rest of the group. You can get everyone in on it either by contacting them before snif or taking one person out of the group in the beginning. (In order that he won't be expecting it, perhaps give him a special job, so that he'll think that's the reason he was taken out.)

As an example, you can start by reading a short story. For every time you say a specific word, or mention the main character, you can have them stand up, and see if the one who does not know stands up with them or just stays seated.

Ask why the chanich stood up with the group or why not. If they were in a situation where everyone was doing something wrong, would he conform or take a stand despite social pressure, or potential embarrassment?

BACKGROUND

Yehuda is the natural born leader, who proves himself time and time again. Born into Leah's happiness, as opposed to her first three through whom she hoped just to gain Yaakov's love and appreciation, Yehuda emerges as a confident and motivated leader. He stands up and does, when everyone else was silent, or

disagreed. Yehuda steps up to the plate in 4 different scenarios:

- While the Yosef's brothers contemplate killing him or letting him die in the pit, Yehuda suggests selling him to the Yishmaelim to bring him to Mitzrayim, therefore saving his life (בראשית ל"ז;כ"ו)
- Caught in an awkward incident where Tamar becomes pregnant from Yehuda, and Tamar is sentenced to death, Yehuda, humiliate to himself, vindicates Tamar, and admits to his wrong-doing (בראשית ל"ח;כ"ו)
- Yehuda approaches Yaakov and takes full responsibility of Binyamin, when Yosef asks him to be brought to Mitzrayim, in order that they be able to go down to Mitzrayim to get more food. (בראשית מ"ג;ח)
- Yehuda stands up to Yosef after Binyamin is framed for stealing the goblet, on their way back to Yakov. Amongst the things he tells Yosef, Yehuda demands that he himself be taken captive in place of Binyamin, because of the promise he made to Yakov (בראשית מ"ד ל"ג)
- Kalev Ben Yefuneh (from Shevet Yehuda) also stands up to the 10 meraglim after their negative report from spying out the land (במדבר י"ג;ל)

PEULA 1 Bnei Akiva Stands Up

- **Objective:** to learn about the different times Bnei Akiva has stepped up to the plate.
 - Set up the pictures and descriptions

around the room (included in the resource section), and give the chanichim a few minutes and two different color post-it notes to walk around the room and learn about them. Have them put a post-it note of one color as their preferred cause that they would most likely join if they were able to, and the other color as the second preferred option.

DIYUN #1 Why did you choose what you chose?

- If the opportunity presented itself would you do it, even despite the potential dangers/consequences?
- Can you remember a time when you did something because it was important, or just the right thing to do, even though it wasn't "mainstream"? Why did you think it was important to do?

Alternative option for more active activities, or for younger kids:

You can have the chanichim enact any of the Bnei Akiva actions, or create a game similar to them. For example for Choma Umigdal, you can play any game involving hiding something (from the madrich AKA the British) or doing something while them not noticing (classic games like wax museum, bite the carrot etc. could work), or have them need to complete a lego/block structure in a certain spot without being noticed/caught.

PEULA #2 What are we going to take responsibility for?

- **Objective:** In the spirit of Bnei Akiva in the past, they have taken upon themselves very important tasks to help our nation

achieve its goals. What can we do in our communities?

- Madrichim from each shevet will prepare various different topics, or causes that they can decide on what they want to do with their shevet. Each shevet should be different (cut up on large pieces of paper). Examples of topics could be - Youth minyan, shabbat morning groups, chesed programs, babysitting for shul programs, tzedaka, etc, whatever you think your community/school could use help with.

DIYUN #2 Which project do we pick?

- What goes into our decision making process?
- Let's make an actual plan to make this happen

SIKUM

Bnei Akiva has been following Yehuda's example by always clinging to our values, doing what's right despite the pressures and reasons not to, and stepping up to the plate. Every year Bnei Akiva decides on a new mission that it wants to take upon themselves, so that we can help lead Am Yisrael to new heights. What will be our mission?

TOPIC

Yissachar - Living the life of Torah

GOAL

Learn through Yissachar the pillar of Torah and the importance of sticking to one's values despite hardships. Draw parallels between Yissachar's value of Torah and Rabbi Akiva's value of Torah.

*Includes pre-Shabbat preparation: Write out the different values on each piece of paper before Shabbat

*Trigger: Give every chanich 3 popsicle sticks. Place 7-10 pieces of paper on the floor with shared values (Ex. family, money, school, friends, food, Torah, Israel etc.). Have each of the chanichim place their popsicle sticks on the value that they appreciate most.

SHORT DIYUN

Ask the chanichim which 3 values they chose. Why did they choose those values? Was it hard for them to choose one value over another? Why or why not? Was Torah one of them?

Bnei Akiva is built on a foundation of values, one of them being Torah. One of the figures we emulate in his devotion to Torah learning is Rabbi Akiva who went to learn Torah only beginning at age 40, and still became one of our greatest Talmidei Chachamim.

BACKGROUND

Source: דברים ל"ג, י"ח

And of Zebulun he said: Rejoice, O Zebulun, on your journeys, And Issachar, in your tents.	וְלִזְבוּלֹן אָמַר שְׂמַח זְבוּלֹן בְּצֵאתְךָ וְיִשָּׁשכָר בְּאֵהְלֶיךָ: רַשִׁי (בראשית רבה צ"ט):
---	---

Rashi (Breishit Raba 99) Zebulun and Issachar entered into a partnership: Zebulun dwelt at the harbour of ships and went out in ships to trade; he made profit and used to provide food for Issachar who sat at home and occupied themselves with the Torah. Consequently he mentioned Zebulun before Issachar (although the latter was the elder) because Issachar's knowledge of Torah was due to Zebulun	שֵׁם זְבוּלֹן בְּצֵאתָ וְיִשָּׁשכָר בְּאֵהְלֶיךָ. זְבוּלֹן וְיִשָּׁשכָר עָשׂוּ שִׁתְפוּת, זְבוּלֹן לְחוּץ יָמִים יֵשֶׁן וְיוֹצֵא לְפָרֶקֶת מִטְּיָא בְּסִפּוּנוֹת וּמִשָּׁתָכָר וְנוֹתֵן לְתוֹךְ פִּי זְכוּ לְיִשָּׁשכָר, וְהֵם יוֹשְׁבִים וְעוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה, לְפִיכָּה הִקְדִּים זְבוּלֹן לְיִשָּׁשכָר שְׁתוֹרָתוֹ שֶׁל יִשָּׁשכָר עַל יְדֵי זְבוּלֹן הִתְנָה:
---	---

The defining trait of Yissachar is Torah learning. Given their unique ability to learn for the nation, they worked out a deal with Shevet Zevulun, that Zevulun would trade and provide for them, while they studied Torah. This has Halachik ramifications, as it is ruled as acceptable to sustain a talmid chacham, while in return you become a partner in his Torah study.

PEULAH #1 Master Chef Taste Test

What do you look for in your favorite candy? Texture (crunch, chewy, soft), Taste, Packaging.

- Objective:** Have the chanichim consider what they value most. What it means to have values and prioritizing what is most important to you?

Provide chanichim with 3 different candy types (Ex. twizzler, laughy taffy, chocolate). Go around the circle and ask chanichim which candy is their favorite. Then have them eat the candies and ask them to evaluate on a scale of 1-10 how they would rate the texture, taste, and packing of each candy. Can make this Corona-friendly by not eating, rather discussing preferences, and sending the chanichim home with the candy to eat later.

DIYUN #1

If you can only choose one candy, why that one? Do your ratings match your original opinion? Did your opinions change after you heard your friend's opinions/ratings? What are the criteria that we use for the values we choose? How can we make Torah fit into those?

- Everyone values different things. Some people prefer candies that have a certain texture while others go for the most attractive packaging. They all have unique qualities which we favor. Yissachar's Torah values and Rabbi Akiva's Torah values each have something we can learn from. Whether it be Yissachar's diligence and motivation to learn Torah, even when it's hard, or Rabbi Akiva's commitment to learning even though it was already late in his life and the hardships he experienced as a result of his love for Torah. If we make it a priority, we will succeed in achieving it!

PEULAH #2 Mock Debate with a Twist!

- Objective:** To discuss the importance of sticking to your values in the face of

hardships.

Ask for volunteers or pick chanichim that you think will be articulate and persuasive. Have them argue a case against the rest of the group. Choose topics that might have a little truth to them, but would be mostly disagreeable. The goal is to see if the chanich will stick to his/her beliefs or ultimately succumb to peer pressure. Examples: water is wet, cereal is soup, a hot dog is a sandwich, Lebron is the GOAT, Tomatoes are vegetables, Android>Apple, etc.

DIYUN #2

- Was it hard to argue your point when the group was disagreeing with you?
- Was it difficult arguing for a position you didn't agree with? Why or why not?
- Was it hard to argue your point with limited time to compose your responses?

Success doesn't come without hard work. If you believe something is true, it is important that you stick to your beliefs and defend why you are passionate about these beliefs, even when you face opposition from people who disagree with you and strive to bring you down. Similarly, Rabbi Akiva faced challenges and oppression by the Romans in proudly learning and teaching Torah to his students. Despite these challenges, Rabbi Akiva persevered and continued to do what he thought was right: spreading his love for Torah and building a stronger Jewish nation. While we dont have the pressures that Rabbi Akiva did, we have plenty of other pressures that may detract from our Torah learning or practice. Will we

stick with it like Rabbi Akiva did? Or do we crack under the pressure?

SIKUM

We have discussed what it means to have a set of values and the importance of sticking to your values even when they are challenged. One of the core values of Bnei Akiva is Torah. We learn both from Rabbi Akiva and the tribe of Yissachar the importance of Torah learning. Torah is not just an abstract idea; it is a crucial part of how we live our lives and make a name for ourselves in this world, and therefore dedicate our time and efforts to learn it. We should recognize the value of Torah that we learn from Yissachar and the importance of maintaining the value of Torah that we learn from Rabbi Akiva, and how they play a role in our everyday lives as Jews, no matter where and what circumstances we find ourselves in.

PEULA #3

TOPIC

Zevulun (Avodah)

GOAL

To learn the value of Avodah from Zevulun and its importance within Bnei Akiva and our communities

TRIGGER What is Avodah?

- Write or print on a piece of paper the following text : SO_P
- Prepare notes for each person in the group with either a bath item, or a vegetable/place setting (Ex. shampoo, bath, conditioner, spoon, bowl, onion, carrot...)
- Hand out the notes (one per person) and tell them to look at it.
- Then show everyone the first text and ask them what the word is. You will notice that half will say soup and the other half will say soap. (it depends on the word they receive on their note)

INTRO

Source: **אם אין קמח, אין תורה; אם אין תורה, אין קמח**. If there is no flour, there is no Torah. If there is no Torah, there is no flour. (Pirkei Avot ג,י"ז)

Based on this Mishna we learn about the essence of the relationship between Yissachar and Zevulun. Without Zevulun's trade and profit, Yissachar was not able to learn Torah, and without Yissachar's Torah, Zevulun would not be able to engage in commerce. In Bnei Akiva, what allows us to uphold our Torah values is our Avodah, and what guides our Avodah is the Torah. When Bnei Akiva was established, the Avoda that was needed to bring the Torah into the hopeful new state was settlement and agriculture. Now there are new challenges

that need to be addressed and faced. It's all dependent on the setting, just like our soup and soap example.

What do you think constitutes Avodah today? How would you define it? Physical work, Spiritual work, community development? Is there a difference between Avodah in Israel vs. snifim outside of Israel?

PEULAH #1 Timeline of Bnei Akiva Avodah

- **Objective:**
 - To learn about the ways in which Bnei Akiva worked to build a movement that gave back to the greater community in Israel and worldwide
 - To compare these examples of Avodah or achievements with things that might not seem as concrete or as big of an achievement but is still Avodah

Cut out the events and give them to the Chanichim. The activity can be done with the Chanichim in one group or you can choose to print out 2 sets and make it a race. Have the Chanichim put the events and accomplishments of Bnei Akiva in order. Use the key to correct them, and then lead a discussion on what we can learn from these instances of Avodah.

Timeline Key:

- 1. Bnei Akiva was founded in 1929

- 2. The first Bnei Akiva Galil (outside of Israel) was formed in Brooklyn in 1934
- 3. The first Bnei Akiva camp, Camp Moshava, was opened in 1936
- 4. The first Bnei Akiva Yeshiva was founded by Rav Moshe Zvi Neriya in 1939
- 5. First Mach hach Baaretz Trip goes to Israel in 1972
- 6. The Shachar Program was started in Israel in 1995
- 7. Shevet Yuval was established in 1997
- 8. Bnei Akiva created a day of appreciation for wounded soldiers in 2014

The First Bnei Akiva Galil was formed in the US in Brooklyn

The First Bnei Akiva Camp, Camp Moshava, was opened.

First Machach Baaretz Trip goes to Israel

DIYUN #1

- How might these accomplishments and events helped others? How does Bnei Akiva engage in Avodah within communities?
- What guides us in our Avodah? Can we have successful Avodah without Torah or other values behind it?
- What different kinds of Avodah are we involved in and what Avodah do we think is the most important?
- Are we doing Avodah even if we don't feel like we are achieving things? What does it mean to do Avodah even if you don't feel like you are gaining or achieving anything?

Bnei Akiva has been engaging in Avodah infused with Torah and its other values since its founding in 1929. We know that Avodah means work, and that there are many different types of Avodah that we can do. Some forms of Avodah are what we think about when we think about “work”, like school, and jobs. Others are less concrete like creating movements, helping others, and working on improving

ourselves. These events show the accomplishments of Bnei Akiva over the past 100 years, but they wouldn't be possible without the Avodah of each snif and galil.

PEULAH #2 Build your own community

- **Objective:** To build a community centered on values of Bnei Akiva

Print out images of important buildings and resources to have in a community

- Beit Knesset
- Supermarket
- Bank
- Houses
- Parks/playgrounds
- Schools
- Office buildings
- Stores
- Restaurants

Let the chanichim imagine that it is 1936 and they are building Kibbutz Tirat Zvi. The chanichim will choose the layout of the community. Tell the chanichim that this is their chance to build the community of their dreams. What is in the center of Kibbutz Tirat Zvi? What type of community is it? Where do the community members spend their time? How does this shape the kibbutz?

DIYUN #2

- What is at the center of your community?
- How did you decide the layout of your community?
- What role does Bnei Akiva play in your community?
- Did you make a house for the shlichim?
- Are there community events by Bnei

Akiva for families?

SIKUM

Bnei Akiva has been playing an impactful role in families across the world since 1929. This is almost 100 years! Communities have been built and centered around the values of Bnei Akiva. The impact of Bnei Akiva as a pillar and center value of the community has helped it stick with so many people and continue to spread around the world, reaching people each week and Shabbat, like us today.

RESOURCES FOR PEULA #1



Choma Umigdal -

The Choma Umigdal movement was the answer to strict British restrictions on Jewish land purchase and settlement. In a time where the Jewish enterprise needed to expand to move forward to building a state, early settlers found a loophole in the British regulations (based on Ottoman laws) that any settlement with a wall and tower would not be removed.

Jewish pioneers assembled pieces of walls and the tower ahead of time, and in one day would truck it all to the desired site and build as quickly as possible, before the British were able to react. Kibbutz Tel Amal was the first settlement to be built that way in 1936. Kibbutz Tirat Tzvi was built by Brit Chalutzim Datiim, which partnered with Bnei Akiva on several occasions.



Atlit Detention Facility and Immigrant Camp

The Atlit facility was originally used as a British detainment camp for illegal immigrants trying to sneak into the land of Israel. Here they were showered, decontaminated, and then held here until deportation or reception of permit to stay. Following the British retreat from the land of Israel, the camp was used as a transition camp between the arrival of new immigrants and settling them in kibbutzim or other communities.

Among the names on the wall were also carved the semel of Bnei Akiva, indicated that Bnei Akiva was a major part of the olim's identity.



Biriya

During the harsh restrictions of Jewish land purchases and settlement, the Jewish settlement enterprise was deeply concerned about the area of Tzfat - a strategic location that would be lost because of the Arab majority in the area (Tzfat itself was 12:1 Arab to Jewish). Bnei Akiva youth, along with other movements set out to create another settlement near Tzfat called Biriya, where an old fortress stood above a mountaintop, observing the surrounding area. After a few attempts at settling and planting trees, the British finally gave in and allowed the Jewish settlement (then just tents) to remain. And to rub it in the British faces, the water tower in Kfar Tavor, right by the main road up north, was decorated with big white letters on a black water tank: "Biriya Belongs To Us!"



Shevet Yuval

In 1997 Bnei Akiva answered the call for youth activities for special needs youth and established Shevet Yuval - a special shevet in some snifim intended to provide programming and integrate special needs children into the snifim. Shevet Yuval has 4 primary goals:

- 1) To include special needs children in Bnei Akiva programming and providing them with social outlets and experiences.
- 2) Raise awareness to special needs children and help society accept them better
- 3) Aide the families struggling with the extra efforts needed to take care of their children's special needs
- 4) Boost self-confidence amongst participants



Shachar

Snif Shachar was an initiative started by Bnei Akiva in 1995 to help Ethiopian immigrants integrate into Israeli society by recognizing their needs and struggles and helping them overcome challenges in acclimating to their new environment. Anything from language learning, bridging the culture gap, and providing an open and comfortable social outlet, Snif Shachar functions in many Ethiopian communities, and not only provides programming for the Ethiopian immigrant youth, but also trains Ethiopian madrichim that go on to be madrichim in their own snifim, as well as regular snifim