



CHOVERET CHINUCH #6 5784

THE REVIVAL
OF HEBREW

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The Choveret Chinuch is a project of Bnei Akiva of the US and Canada's Chinuch department. For comments or questions, please reach out to Rav Avishai Berman at aberman@bneiakiva.org

Dear Madrichim,

Last week we celebrated Yom Hasafa Haivrit, the Israeli National Hebrew Day.

In honor of Eliezer Ben Yehudah's contributions, the Israeli government designated his birthday, the 21st of Tevet, as a national day dedicated to promoting the Hebrew language both within Israel and globally.

It's a day to celebrate the revival of the Hebrew language with a particular focus on research and language study.

In this Choveret the Chanichim will learn about the founder of modern Hebrew, Eliezer Ben Yehuda, and they will have a chance to see how Hebrew words are created.

Good luck,
Shani Becker



Week One

Today, people in Israel speak Hebrew, but it wasn't always like that. Back in the days of the Tanach, the Jews in Israel spoke ancient Hebrew. However, when they were sent into exile, they stopped using it for regular conversations and mainly used it for learning and praying. For a long time, Hebrew wasn't spoken in everyday life. So, how did it make a comeback? How did it become a spoken language again? Let's find out!



Meet Eliezer Ben Yehuda:



Eliezer Perelman was born in Lithuania in 1858, to an Orthodox Jewish family. From a young age, he enjoyed the study of Hebrew literature.

In 1881, after he married, he changed his last name to Ben-Yehuda and decided to move to Eretz Yisrael. When he got to Yerushalayim, he heard the Jews around him speaking in Yiddish, French and Arabic, but he did not hear any Hebrew used for communication.

After seeing this, Ben Yehuda decided to make it his mission to revive the Hebrew language as a spoken language in Eretz Yisrael.

He established the first Modern Hebrew-speaking household with his wife and raised the first modern Hebrew-speaking child, Ben-Zion Ben-Yehuda. He published articles in Hebrew and started thinking of new words to add to the modern language.

Many people disapproved of what Ben Yehuda was trying to do, claiming that Hebrew was to be used exclusively for religious purposes (tefilla, learning Torah), but Ben-Yehuda persisted in his mission. Despite a Cherem (excommunication) that was put on him, he continued speaking Hebrew at home and encouraged other Jewish families to do the same. Ben-Yehuda used extreme measures, including not permitting his son to learn other languages, making it hard for him to communicate with kids his age.

Ben-Yehuda's language revival project included creating a vocabulary suitable for national use. He gained support from enthusiastic Jewish nationalists and began

collecting material for a Modern Hebrew dictionary. Ben-Yehuda dedicated more than 18 hours a day to expanding the Hebrew language.

Despite the small successes and failures, Ben-Yehuda's dedication inspired others. In his later years, he co-founded the Language Council, later becoming the Academy of the Hebrew Language, which continues his work, approving new Hebrew words and working on the Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda passed away a month after British authorities declared Hebrew as the official language of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael. Although he didn't witness the creation of the State of Israel, his dream of a reborn nation speaking its own language became a reality, earning his efforts a place among the great language revivals in history.

Discussion Points:

- Despite not witnessing the creation of the State of Israel, how did Ben-Yehuda's dream become a reality?
- Why do you think people were so against the change Ben Yehuda was trying to make?
- Ben Yehuda gave up a lot to fulfill his dream. Can you think of some things he gave up?
- Can you think of something in your life you'd be willing to make sacrifices for?

Ideas For Activities:

- Human Matching Game: Try and see if the chanichim can match a Hebrew word to its meaning.

Print/write up the words on separate cards. (The words are written below. These words were made up by Ben Yehuda.

Have two chanichim leave the room, give out to each chanich a card with a word. When the chanichim come back they must take turns and try to find the matches (the Hebrew word and its definition) by calling on two chanichim who are holding words. If they got a match they can go again. The Chanich who earns the most matches is the winner.

אווירון - airplane, אמנות - art, בובה - doll, וילון - curtain, כפפה - glove, מברשת - brush, מגהץ - iron, משטרה - police, עיתון - newspaper

**See printable resources below.*

- Advertisement- Have the Chanichim split up into groups. Each group gets a word in Hebrew and they have to think what it means. The group then has to think of a creative way to 'sell' the word. Give each group a few minutes to make a pitch, explaining why their word should be added to the language. Then have the other Chanichim vote if they think it should or shouldn't be added. (These are words Ben Yehuda tried adding to Hebrew but they didn't make their way into the language.)

דפופה (book stand-דוחן ספרים)

מדלק (match-גפרור)

מוז (banana-בננה)

מעשנה (chimney-ארובת עשן)

**See printable resources below.*

- Initials game - Have the Chanichim stand in a circle. One chanich stands in the middle of the circle with a water bottle in hand. Choose a Chanich from the circle who will begin. They must use the initials of another Chanich while putting them into a phrase - for example, they can say salt water, referring to Shira Walker. Now Shira must say another Chanich's name using their initials and putting them into words. The Chanichim around the circle must be fast (to identify that their initials have just been used, and to quickly come up with a phrase using the initials of another chanich), because if the Chanich in the middle of the circle figures out whose initials are used before they say a new phrase, they must touch them with the bottle. If you are touched with the bottle you must go in the center of the circle.

Week Two



Modern Hebrew is a relatively new language. It was revived less than 100 years ago, so when spoken, some people may run into trouble expressing themselves, as the word might not exist yet in Hebrew!

But how do you add words to a language? And how do you let people know the meaning of the new words?



האקדמיה ללשון העברית

In Israel today there is a special academy called - האקדמיה ללשון העברית.

This is an official group of people whose job it is to make sure modern Hebrew stays a spoken language for many years to come.

What do they do exactly?

Any individual can call the Academy with a question of how you say a word in Hebrew, if the word exists, they answer the question, otherwise they sit in a committee and work together to think of a new word. They later update all the new words and rules onto their website so everyone can be updated. These words later go into school text books and within a few years you can hear them on the streets around Israel.

Fun facts about Hebrew:

- The name 'Hebrew' referred to the language only after the second Beit Hamikdash- beforehand the language was called 'Yehudit' - the language that the people of Yehuda spoke.
- In the days of the Tanach they didn't know how to read with Nekudot- it was only invented in the late 1000 BCE.
- The first word that Eliezer Ben Yehuda invented was מילון - dictionary- beforehand it was called a book of words.
- Eliezer Ben Yehuda made up about 220 words in Hebrew.
- The most commonly used Hebrew word is לא - no.

- When Israel was first established, the law makers in the Knesset also discussed new Hebrew words.

For some more info: ***Where do new words come from? - Marcel Danesi***



Discussion points:

- Do you think you'd be able to make up words for a language? Suggest a new word in English that you'd like to see become a real word.
- What do you think are some ways that you can get a new word to stick and become used by many people?
- Can you think of some new words that were created in the last ten years? (examples: Jeggings, Youtuber, hangry...)

Ideas for activities:

- Broken telephone - have the Chanichim sit in a circle. Have each Chanich on his/her turn think of a word and whisper it in the ear on the Chanich next to them. Try and see if the word stayed the same as it started out.
- Charades - Each Chanich on their turn will get a word (a verb) to act out without speaking. The others have to guess what the word is he's acting out.

**See printable resources below.*

- Malarkey - Call up three Chanichim, read out a word in Hebrew (created by Ben Yehuda, but didn't catch on) and give the Chanichim each a piece of paper, two papers say the word Bluff and one says the real answer. The Chanichim with the Bluff need to make up definitions for the word's meaning. The rest of the Chanichim have to guess who had the right answer.

(Alternatively the madrich could whisper the answer in one of the Chanichim's ears, and to the other two whisper the word Bluff)

עֲמוּנוֹת = democracy (from the word Am)

שַׁח רְחוֹק = telephone (being able to speak in a distance)

תְּאֵבְדָּעִי = curious (from Aramaic)

צִיּוּר־אֹר = photograph/צילום (that photos use light)

**See printable resources below.*

Printable resources:

Week one:

Human Matching Game:

airplane	אווירון
art	אמנות
doll	בובה
curtain	וילון

glove

כפפה

brush

מברשת

iron

מגהץ

police

משטרה

newspaper

עיתון

Week one:
Advertisement:

דְּפוּפָה

אַבְרוֹן

מִדְּלֵק

מוֹז

מַעֲשֵׂנָה

Week two:

Charades:

Sushi	סושי
Yoga	יוגה
Ballet	בַּלֵּט
Tornado	טורנדו
Gardening	גַּנְנוֹת
Sherlock Holmes	שרלוק הולמס
Microwave	מיקרוגל
Surfing	גְּלִישָׁה
Juggling	לְהִטּוֹטְנוֹת
Elephant	פיל
Kangaroo	קנגרו
Photographer	צַלֵּם

Week two:

Malarky:

telephone = שֶׁח רְחוֹק
(being able to speak in a distance)

democracy = עֲמוּנוֹת
(from the word Am)

curious = תְּאַבְדֵּי עֵי
(from Aramaic)

photograph, צִיּוּר־אֹר = צִלּוּם
(that photos use light)

Bluff

Bluff