



BNEI AKIVA
OF THE US AND CANADA

סיור בש"ס

Tour of the Talmud



Seder Moed

PART ONE

Chodesh Adar 5780

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Introduction

Shalom L'Kulam,

The topic of this month's Choveret is Seder Moed. This seder of Mishnayot discusses the halachot of Shabbat and other holidays. Through this choveret we will help Chanichim better understand the meaning behind Shabbat and chagim. We will learn how our mitzvot help us elevate time and make it holy.

Our first peulah focuses on the purpose of Shabbat. Shabbat is unlike any other day of the week. Oftentimes we think of Shabbat as a day of just rules and "can't dos" but this peula will help us understand the significance of a day of rest and how in keeping Shabbat we act holy like Hashem. The story of Yosef Mokir Shabbat is a story from the Gemara which shows us the reward Hashem gives people who love and look forward to Shabbat.

The second peula focuses on Purim but is also true for the other chagim. We will discuss seeing the good in all situations and the story of Nachum Ish Gam Zu. The story of Purim shows us how a situation that can look really bad can actually be for the best. We will learn how to think more positively about our lives and also the people around us.

BeH the rest of the peulot will be sent soon.

To access an editable version of the choveret visit: tinyurl.com/choveretmoed and go to 'File', 'Make a Copy,' and then you will have your own Google Doc to edit.

Feel free to be in touch with any questions or suggestions.

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Peula #1: Shabbat: Making Time Holy

Goal: The goal of this peula is to introduce chanichim to the concept of Kedushat Hazman. Seder Moed discusses the mitzvot and halakhot of the Jewish holidays. The holidays allow us to make time holier by infusing it with meaning by doing mitzvot and spending our time thinking and feeling differently than we do on a regular day. Shabbat is a time every week in which we elevate the day to a holier level. Often kids think about Shabbat and holidays as days with lots of rules and restrictions and things we can't do. Hopefully through this peula we will help chanichim understand how the mitzvot help us make the days more special and holy.

Game: Somethings Different

- Choose a chanich as the "model"
- Chanich stands in the middle of a circle and turns around slowly for the chinichim to look at them
- Model leaves the room and changes one subtle part of their appearance (ex: moves watch to other hand, untucks shirt, takes off earrings)
- Chanichim have to guess what the model changed
- Whoever guesses correctly first gets to be the model

Discussion Points:

- How is shabbat similar to the game?
- Shabbat is another day of the week but its also very different
- How is shabbat different than a regular weekday?
- Do you like how shabbat is different?

What are ways shabbat is special?

- Meals with family
- Special food
- Going to shul
- Singing songs

Game: Charades with a Twist

- Print charade cues before shabbat
- Have a bag with random items that the players have to incorporate into their charades

Examples:

Dancing a ballet

Washing an elephant

Rock climbing

Playing soccer

Flying a kite

Going bowling

Building a campfire

Sewing on a button

Ironing a shirt

Making a pizza

Having a food fight

Paddling in a canoe

Riding a motorcycle

Flipping pancakes

Hailing a taxi

Mowing a lawn

Raking leaves

Building a sandcastle

Playing baseball

Setting up a tent

Discussion Points: Imitating Hashem

- How is charades like Shabbat?

- We try to imitate something else, by keeping Shabbat we imitate Hashem
- How is keeping Shabbat like what Hashem did in Bereishit?
- What does it mean to be like Hashem?
- What are mitzvot that allow us to act like Hashem?
- ואמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא מאי דכתיב (דברים יג, ה) אחרי ה' אלהיכם תלכו וכי אפשר לו לאדם להלך אחר שכינה והלא כבר נאמר (דברים ד, כד) כי ה' אלהיך אש אוכלה הוא אלא להלך אחר מדותיו של הקב"ה מה הוא מלביש ערומים דכתיב (בראשית ג, כא) ויעש ה' אלהים לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור וילבישם אף אתה הלבש ערומים הקב"ה ביקר חולים דכתיב (בראשית יח, א) וירא אליו ה' באלוני ממרא אף אתה בקר חולים הקב"ה ניחם אבלים דכתיב (בראשית כה, יא) ויהי אחרי מות אברהם ויברך אלהים את יצחק בנו אף אתה ניחם אבלים הקב"ה קבר מתים דכתיב (דברים לד, ו) ויקבר אותו בגיא אף אתה קבור מתים (סוטה יד).
- And Rabbi Hama the son of Rabbi Hanina said: (Deuteronomy 13:5) "After God you shall walk." And is it possible for a man to walk after the Presence of God? And doesn't it already say (Deuteronomy 4:24) "Because God is a consuming flame"? Rather, [it means] to walk after the characteristics of God. Just as He clothed the naked [in the case of Adam and Chava]... so, too, should you clothe the naked. Just as the Holy One Blessed be He visited the sick [in the case of Avraham after his brit milah]...so, too, should you visit the sick. Just as the Holy One Blessed be He comforted the mourners [in the case of Yitzhak after Avraham's passing]...so, too, should you comfort the mourners. Just as the Holy One Blessed be He buried the dead [in the case of Moshe]...so, too, should you bury the dead. (Sotah 14a)

Games about Rest:

Sometimes it can be exhausting to always be doing things, Shabbat allows us rest and take a break from what we do every day.

Game: Sing Along Freeze Dance

- Pick a song with a common word (ex: Siman Tov U'Mazel Tov) and say that the chanichim have to sing and dance and when they get to the code word (ex: Yisrael) they must drop to the ground and relax.
- When the madrich/a starts singing again, they dance around again.

Alternate: Getting tired... have chanichim participate in a series of tasks, such as running across the room and back, hopping on one foot for a minute, doing push-ups or sit-ups, spinning in a circle, clapping etc.

Encourage chanichim to do these things multiple times, with very little break. Are they tired yet?

(NOTE: Don't push kids more than they can handle, some kids won't be able to keep up running with everyone else, be sensitive to everyone's limit)

Discussion Points:

- What does Shabbat give you a break from?
- What is something you do on Shabbat to relax?

Mindfulness

- Shabbat allows us to think and focus on things that we might overlook during the week.
- Think about how much time we spend watching TV or using devices- what kinds of things do we not get to experience? What about your parents who go to work?

- Here are some mindfulness exercises for kids. Mindfulness is a way of focusing on certain experiences that we might overlook- kind of like Shabbat.

Blindfolded Taste Tests

Use a blindfold for each child and have them experience eating a small food, like a raisin or a cranberry, as if it was their first time eating it.

Body Scan

Have your kids lie down on their back on a comfortable surface and close their eyes;
Then tell them to squeeze every muscle in their body as tight as they can. Tell them to squish their toes and feet, squeeze their hands into fists, and make their legs and arms as hard as stone;
After a few seconds, have them release all their muscles and relax for a few minutes;
Encourage them to think about how their body is feeling throughout the activity
This simple exercise gets kids to be more aware of their bodies and helps them find a way to be present in the moment.

Heartbeat Exercise

Paying attention to one's heartbeat has a role in many mindfulness exercises and activities.
To begin, tell your kids to jump up and down in place or do jumping jacks for one minute.

When they have finished, have them sit down and put a hand over their heart. Instruct them to close their eyes and pay attention only to their heartbeat and, perhaps, their breath as well
This exercise teaches children to notice their heartbeat, and use it as a tool to help their focus.

Story: Yosef Mokir Shabbos

Yosef Who Honored The Shabbos

There was once a man by the name of Yosef who so loved Shabbos that he would honor it with the finest of foods, with fish and meat, never hesitating even if the price was very high.

The fact that Yosef behaved in this manner soon spread through his city and he became known as Yosef Mokir (Yosef who appreciates and honors the Shabbos).

In the same city there lived a very wealthy man who was also very wicked. The astrologers came to him and told him, "We have seen in the stars that all your wealth will fall into the hands of a Jew called Yosef. Be forewarned and plan how to avoid this."

He Plans To Foil The Prediction

The man became very frightened and he sat down to figure a way to prevent his wealth from falling into the hands of the cursed Jew.

Suddenly, an idea occurred to him. This would be the perfect plan! Taking all his wealth, he bought a precious stone. Putting it into his hat he sewed it in and smiled, "Let us see the Jew get my wealth now!"

While walking along the banks of a river one windy day, the hat was suddenly blown off his head by a gust of wind. "Stop!" he cried in terror, as the hat sailed into the river. "Someone get my hat for me."

It was too late, however. Though he hired many people to search the river and its banks, there was no trace of the hat or of the valuable diamond that was in it.

The evil man was bitter at the loss but he said, "At least I have some comfort in my poverty. At least Yosef will not have the stone, either."

A Fish For Shabbos

That Friday a group of fishermen were busily at work when they caught the largest and most beautiful fish they had ever seen. Immediately the same thought struck them, "Yosef will pay a great deal for this fish to be eaten on Shabbos. Let us go to his home and sell it to him."

Arriving at the house, they told Yosef, "We have caught the most beautiful fish we have ever seen. Would you be interested in buying it?"

Yosef saw the fish and was truly impressed.

"I have never seen such a fish," he said. "I must have it so that I may honor the Shabbos properly."

Even when he heard the very high price he did not hesitate but paid it. He then took it to the kitchen and began to slice it so as to prepare it for Shabbos. Imagine his amazement when he saw, inside the fish, a magnificent precious stone. He took the stone, sold it and with the money he became wealthy and a doer of good for the rest of his life.

Peula #2: Venahafoch Hu: Recognizing Hashem's Miracles

Goal: Purim is one of many holidays that we have that we remember how Hashem saved the Jewish people from destruction. One of the famous lines from the megilla is— וְנִהְפֹךְ הוּא אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלֹטוּ הַיְהוּדִים הַמָּה בְּשָׁנָאֵיהֶם. Even though the situation looked dire, at the end Hashem turned everything around and performed a miracle. This is true for so many other Jewish holidays like Chanukah and Pesach. In this peula we will introduce the Chanichim to the idea of “Venahafoch Hu” and opening them up to seeing the good Hashem does for us even when a situation seems bad.

Game: Charades Circle

- The madrich announces a charades prompt for the first Chanich in the circle Ex: Bounce a basketball
- That Chanich does the action (ex: bouncing a ball) and the person to their right asks- what are you doing?
- They have to say what they are doing which describes their action but is different than what the person to their left said (ex: I am petting my dog)
- Then the next person has to do that action (ex: petting a dog) and the person to their right asks “What are you doing?” They say what they are doing (ex: I am wiping down a car) and it continues until someone messes up!

Game: Madgab

- Print cards with the riddle phrases
- Chanichim have to guess what the actual phrase is

A bottle of Coke
Abe Odd Hull Luck Oak

A slip of the tongue
Ace Lip Puff That Hung

A straight A student
Ace Tray Taste Who Dent

A dark rain cloud
Aid Are Crank Loud

Batteries not included
Bat Tree Snot Ink Looted

Can you keep a secret?

Canoe Key Pass Egret

Go in peace
Cohen Peas

The little mermaid
Delete Elmer Made

Niagara Falls
Nag Rough Halls

We don't stand a chance
Weed Owns Tan Ditch Ants

Figure of speech
Fig Cue Roves Peach

A golf course
Ache Off Cores

Over and out
Owe Foreign Doubt

Sesame Street
Sass Mister Eat

Super Bowl
Superb Whole

Sit back and enjoy
Set Bacon Hinge Ahoy

Discussion Points:

- How did things change from bad to good in the Purim story?
- How are these games similar to the Purim story?
 - It can look like one thing or sound like one thing, but really be something different
- What are examples of things in your life that might have seemed bad but really ended up being for the best?

- How can we work to see the best in every situation?

Game: Positivity Hopskotch

Before Shabbat design a hopscotch outline, but instead of putting numbers in your boxes put the areas of a child's life. (Ex: Home, School, Weekend, Family, Friends, Me)

- The children throw a game piece into one of the squares, and then hop to that spot.
- Once in the spot, they need to say two positive things about that area of their life.

Not only is it important to see the good things Hashem does for us, but also how can we make things in our lives more positive and view the people around us positively?

Role playing positive and healthy friendships is a wonderful way for kids to see, feel, and be a good friend.

Through role play kids can start to understand what a good friend is and what qualities a good friend needs to have. This results in a more positive friendship group.



Story: Nachum Ish Gam Zu

Many years ago, when our Jewish people lived in our Holy Land under the rule of the Romans, there lived among them a great and saintly sage, named Nachum. Rabbi Nachum used to say that everything HaShem does is for the good. Therefore, even if something that happened to him did not appear so good, or even seemed so bad that others would call it a misfortune, he - Nachum - would say "this, too, is for the good." He used to say it so often, that people soon began to call him Nachum Ish Gam Zu, "Nachum the Gam-zu Man."

One day, the Jews were dismayed to learn that the Roman emperor was about to make a law that would make life very difficult for the Jews, for he was no friend of the Jewish people. The Jewish sages and leaders got together to decide what to do. They decided to send a beautiful gift to the king in Rome in order to make him friendlier to the Jews and not give them trouble. But who was to take the gift to the King?

"No one is more suitable than Nachum Ish Gam Zu," all the Sages agreed, for he was a man for whom G-d made many miracles. They knew the journey to Rome was a long and dangerous one, and the king was a cruel man. You really needed a miracle to succeed in such a dangerous mission. So they all asked Nachum to be their shli'ach (messenger). Nachum humbly agreed, saying only, "Gam zu l'tovah."

With the blessings of all the sages, Nachum set out for Rome, carrying with him a beautiful box filled with precious gems and pearls for the king and queen.

Just before reaching Rome, Nachum stopped at an inn overnight. During the night, while Nachum was asleep, two thieves sneaked into his room, looked through his things, and found the box. They opened it and saw it was filled with costly gems and pearls. They emptied it of its precious contents, which they put in their pockets, and filled the box with sand. Then they left quietly.

The following day, Nachum appeared at the royal palace and told the guards that he came all the way from the Land of Israel, carrying a gift for the king from the Jewish people.

The Jewish sage was ushered into the presence of the king. Nachum told his majesty that he brought humble greetings and good wishes from the Jewish people, as well as a gift for the king and queen. The king sent over one of his servants to fetch the box. After admiring the beautiful box for a moment, the king opened it, and his face turned red with anger.

"Look what the Jews sent me for my birthday!" he said to his servants, as he lifted a handful of sand from the box and let it fall back through his fingers. "I'll teach them a lesson they will not forget, for making fun of the king!"

Then he ordered his guard to seize the Jew who had brought him this "gift," and throw him into prison, where he would await his execution that would be arranged publicly, with much pomp and fanfare.

Poor Nachum, what could he do? He was surprised as anyone else when he saw what the box contained. Of course, he realized that this was the work of thieves, but the king was in no mood to listen to an explanation. So Nachum Ish Gam-zu lifted his eyes heavenward and said, "Gam-zu l'tovah!"

II

Later that evening, as the king prepared to retire for the night, Elijah the Prophet appeared before him in the guise of one of the king's servants.

"Your Majesty," Elijah said, "you surely did not think the Jews would make fun of you and send you ordinary sand? Maybe it is the kind that their Father Abraham used to defeat his enemies in war? It has been told that Abraham threw handfuls of sand against his enemies that turned into swords; and straw that turned into deadly arrows. Would it not be advisable to test this sand the Jews sent you? Maybe it's that secret weapon..."

"There's no harm in doing just that." the king agreed.

It so happened that the king was fighting a long and costly war against the Barbarians, and he was not able to defeat them. So he ordered his generals to try out the sand the Jewish sage had brought him. And wonder of wonders! The Barbarians fled in terror, and the war was over.

Now the king ordered that Nachum be freed and brought before him.

"I had no idea what a wonderful gift you had brought me," the king said to him. "You may ask any royal favor in return."

Nachum told the king what the purpose of his mission was: to plead with the king to withdraw the decree that would hurt the Jews very much, and would be of no benefit to the king.

The king readily granted the request. In addition he ordered his royal treasurer to fill the box with gold and diamonds and rubies from the king's treasure chamber and give it to the Jewish sage to take back with him. Nachum was sent off on his way with much honor, fit for the greatest ambassador.

III

On his way home, Nachum Ish Gam-zu stopped at the same inn where thieves had stolen the contents of the box and filled it with sand.

The innkeeper had heard of the honor and wealth the king had bestowed upon the Jewish sage.

"What did you bring the king in the box that made him so happy?" the innkeeper asked.

"Only what I carried from here," Nachum replied, truthfully.

The innkeeper talked to his son, and the two of them - they were none other than the thieves that stole the contents of the box decided that they would do even better than the Jewish sage. They broke down the best wall of the inn and collected a good deal of broken pieces of rock, which they pounded into a fine sand. This they packed into large boxes which they loaded on donkeys. Tired after all this work, but happy at the thought of how much wealth they will bring back, they made their way to the king's palace.

When they appeared before the king, they told him: "This is the same kind of sand that the Jewish sage had brought to the king that made the king happy. We've brought a lot more to make the king even happier!"

"Indeed?" the king remarked wondering. "Well, we'll soon find out."

He ordered samples of the sand to be tested for the miraculous power it was supposed to have. But no miracles happened this time. So the king ordered that the two thieves be hanged and buried and covered with their own sand.

When Nachum Ish Gam-zu heard what happened to the thieves, he shrugged his shoulders and said - you guessed it: "Gam zu l'tovah!"