

Week 1

6.4.1

# Achrayut

## אַחַרְיֻט

# TODAY'S LESSON

Welcome

Warm Up

Activity 1

Introduction to *Achrayut* אַחֲרָיִוֹת

Activity 2

The *Mitzvah* מִצְוָה of Stewardship

Activity 3

*Bal Tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית Text Study

Activity 4

Video: *Am Ha'Aretz*

Activity 5

Values in Action: *Bal Tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית

Assessment

Activity 6

Tu B'Shvat ט"ו בְּשָׁבָט Snack

Wrap Up

# WELCOME

## Your Choice

Answer one of the following:

- What is a way you show responsibility?
- What are three regular chores you are responsible for at home?
- Who is one of your role models? Why?



# INTRODUCTION TO ACHRAYUT אַחַרְיֻת

The root of *achrayut* אַחַרְיֻת comes from the Hebrew word **acher** אַחֵר, meaning **other**.

We have to answer for our own actions **and** make others' needs and concerns our own.





# INTRODUCTION TO ACHRAYUT אַחַרְיֻט

You've heard your mother, your grandmother, your dad, your aunt, your teacher, and/or your coach remind you of **your responsibility**.

What do we mean by that word **responsibility**?



# INTRODUCTION TO ACHRAYUT אַחַרְיֻט

Who is the most responsible person you know?

How do they show responsibility?



# INTRODUCTION TO ACHRAYUT אַחַרְיֻט

*Achrayut* אַחַרְיֻט is defined as  
“responsibility.”

*Achrayut* אַחַרְיֻט tells us how we should respond,  
answer, or account for our decisions and actions.

Sample

# INTRODUCTION TO ACHRAYUT אַחַרְיֻט

Share a personal experience of taking responsibility.

What are the benefits of being a responsible person at home, school, or part of a team?  
Are there benefits to being irresponsible?

What are they?



# THE MITZVAH מִצְוָה OF STEWARDSHIP

One way we show responsibility is looking out for the environment, the land, and the planet.



# THE MITZVAH מצוה OF STEWARDSHIP

What have you done today that impacts the environment?



# THE MITZVAH מִצְוָה OF STEWARDSHIP

Is it a *mitzvah* מִצְוָה (a commandment) to take care of the environment?

Does Judaism have something to say about our responsibility toward the environment?





# THE MITZVAH מִצְוָה OF STEWARDSHIP

Read *Midrash Kohelet Rabbah* 7:13

When God created the first human beings, God led them around to all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said: “Look at My works! See how beautiful they are—how excellent! For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it.”

קהלת רבה פרשה ז:יג

בשעה שברא הקב"ה את אדם  
הראשון נטלו והחזירו על כל אילני  
גן עדן ואמר לו ראה מעשי כמה  
נאים ומשובחים הן וכל מה  
שבראתי בשבילך בראתי, תן דעתך  
שלא תקלקל ותחריב את עולמי,  
שאם קלקלת אין מי שיתקן אחריך



# THE MITZVAH מִצְוָה OF STEWARDSHIP

## Discussion Questions

- If God created the world for us to use, does that mean that we can use it however we please?
- Are we responsible for preserving our natural resources?



# THE MITZVAH מִצְוָה OF STEWARDSHIP

- How do we show that we appreciate the natural resources that we have been given?
- How can we balance our need and desire to use modern technology and disposable products with our concern for the environment?



# THE MITZVAH מִצְוָה OF STEWARDSHIP

## The Most Beautiful Place

Write a detailed description of a natural place that you think is beautiful.

- What is necessary to be a “steward” and care for that place?
- Use the term “steward” in your writing.



# THE MITZVAH מִצְוָה OF STEWARDSHIP

Describe your place to the class.

As you are speaking, the class will try to draw what is being described.



# BRAIN BREAK

## Be a steward!

- Take a quick trip around your classroom or school.
- Identify areas that need stewardship, or someone to take responsibility.
- Think creatively about which areas need care and what you can do to help.



# BAL TASHCHIT בַּל תִּשְׁחִית TEXT STUDY

The commandment of *bal tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית—do not destroy or waste—has long been considered central to a Jewish environmental ethic.

Jewish tradition widely forbids wasteful acts and needless destruction, and teaches us how *not* wasting can help us improve our lives both physically and spiritually.



# BAL TASHCHIT בַּל תִּשְׁחִית TEXT STUDY

*Devarim/Deuteronomy 20:19-20:*

“When in your war against a city you must besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siege works against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.”

# BAL TASHCHIT בַּל תִּשְׁחִית TEXT STUDY

יט. כִּי תִצּוֹר אֶל עֵיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְשָׁהּ לֹא  
תִּשְׁחִית אֶת עֵצָהּ לְנֹחַח עָלֶיהָ גִּרְוֹן כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ תֹאכַל וְאֹתוֹ לֹא  
תִּכְרֹת כִּי הָאָדָם עַל הַשָּׂדֶה לָבֹא מִפְּנֵיךְ בַּמִּצּוֹר:

כ. רַק עַל אֲשֶׁר תִּדְעַה כִּי לֹא עַל מֵאֲכָל הוּא אֹתוֹ תִּשְׁחִית וְכָרָת  
וּבְנִית מִצּוֹר עַל הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר הוּא עוֹשֶׂה עִמָּךְ מִלְחָמָה עַד רִדְתָּהּ:



# BAL TASHCHIT בל תשחית TEXT STUDY

## Discussion Questions

- Where do you see waste in your everyday life?
- How do you feel when you see others wasting food or resources?  
Does it bother you? Do you notice?



# BAL TASHCHIT בַּל תַּשְׁחִית TEXT STUDY

- What do you think is worse: wasting time or wasting resources?
- Think about the midrash of Adam in the Garden of Eden we studied earlier. Why do you think the Torah sees *bal tashchit* בַּל תַּשְׁחִית as such a terrible thing?



# BAL TASHCHIT בַּל תִּשְׁחִית TEXT STUDY

Share one example of *bal tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית from your life that this text reminds you of:

Whoever breaks vessels, or tears garments, or destroys a building, or clogs a well, or does away with food in a destructive manner violates the negative *mitzvah* מִצְוָה of *bal tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית - do not destroy or waste (*Kiddushin* 32a).



# BAL TASHCHIT בַּל תִּשְׁחִית TEXT STUDY

Share one example of *bal tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית from your life that this text reminds you of:

Rav Zutra taught: “One who covers an old lamp or uncovers a naptha lamp [actions which burn extra fuel] transgresses the prohibition of wasteful destruction (*bal tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית).” (Shabbat 67b)



# BAL TASHCHIT בַּל תִּשְׁחִית TEXT STUDY

Share one example of *bal tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית from your life that this text reminds you of:

One should be trained not to be destructive. When you bury a person, do not waste garments by burying them in the grave. It is better to give them to the poor than to cast them to worms and moths. Anyone who buries the dead in an expensive garment violates the negative *mitzvah* מִצְוָה of *bal tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית. (Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Mourning 14:24)

# BAL TASHCHIT בַּל תִּשְׁחִית TEXT STUDY

## Discussion Questions

- What do you think is worse? Wasting time or wasting resources?
- Think about the *midrash* of Adam in the Garden of Eden from *Kohelet Rabbah* that we studied at the beginning of class. Why do you think that the Torah sees *bal tashchit* בַּל תִּשְׁחִית as such a terrible thing?



# VIDEO: AM HA'ARETZ

Watch this clip about how personal interest can lead to environmental impact.



Sample

# VIDEO: AM HA'ARETZ

## Discussion Questions

- In what ways did planting a garden make an impact?
- How did *Am Ha'Aretz* get started?
- What is something you are interested in or passionate about, that could help the environment?





# VIDEO: AM HA'ARETZ

## Discussion Questions

- How are the people who work at this recycling plant/sustainable farm doing a *mitzvah* מצוה?
- How can we learn from their actions?
- What can we do to “take care of the garden” in our homes, schools, and community?



# VALUES IN ACTION: BAL TASHCHIT בל תשחית

- Walk around and look for five ways that you could improve the environment. For example, could you add a recycling bin? Replace old light bulbs with energy-efficient ones?
- Write a letter to the building administrators or to your parents with your ideas.



# TU B'SHVAT טו בִּשְׁבָט SNACK



# TU B'SHVAT טו בשבט SNACK



# WRAP UP

- Our Jewish values and traditions connect us to the environment.

Sample



## Next Week:

What do we do when we find something of value that doesn't belong to us?



# TABLE TALK

What are some things we could do as a family as an expression of our commitment to the value of *achrayut* אֲחֵרִיּוּת to the environment?

