

AMBASSADORS



GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL
KIDDUSH HASHEM
CURRICULUM

באנו בשורות אלו לחזק לעודד ולתמוך את המפעל הנשגב והנחוץ "מקדשי שמך" Living Kiddush Hashem Institute שהוקם למען המטרה והשאיפה הנעלה להרבות קידוש שם שמים בעולם, לעורר לבב כל ישראל ולהגיע לכל קהילות הקודש ומוסדות התורה ולהנחיל להם את משנתם הסדורה בנושא חשוב זה. ברם יזכר לטובה הרב שרגא פרידמאן שליט"א אשר שם כל מעיינו להפיץ את אור קידוש השם בעולם ואת הדרך ילכו בה לפאר ולרומם שמו של הקב"ה בכל מעשינו והליכותינו בכמה ספרים חשובים שחיבר בנושא זה, ועכשיו ביותר שהכין ופעל תכניות וסדרי לימודים בשפה ברורה שוים לכל נפש, ובפרט לתלמידי המוסדות. ואתו עמו השותף לדבר מצוה מו"ה שבתי גרטנר הי"ו העושה ומעשה למען הפצת והצלחת הרעיון. ואף אנו לעומתם נחזק את ידיהם בעז"ה להורות ולהאיר להם הדרך ולהיות להם לסעד ולעזר בכל מה שאפשר בל"נ.

תהלה להשי"ת אשר בדורנו זה זכינו לגידול מבורך בעולם התורה למעלה מדרך הטבע, ומשקיעים אנו את מיטב כחותינו בצעירי צאן קדשים לתורה וליראת שמים באופן נעלה בס"ד, ואין ספק שמן הראוי הוא גם לשום דגוש מיוחד ולחנך לגיונו של מלך להתנהג ולחיות ברוח של קידוש ה' על כל צעד ושעל שהוא מיסודי ועיקרי אומתנו.

אשרינו שזכינו להני שלוחי דרחמנא העוסקים בעבודת הקודש של מפעל מקדשי שמך להביא את מצות קידוש ה' והליכותיה לידיעתם ותודעתם של כל כלל ישראל מקטן ועד גדול במסגרת סדרי הלימודים והחברות שבהוצאתם. ובודאי חובת השעה היא וחובת כל איש מישראל להיות מוסיף דעת בענינים אלו הנוגעים בחיי היום יום להיות ממקדשי שמו יתברך ברבים ולהימנע מחילול ה' החמורה.

ובזכות ההתאחדות וההתחברות בכח הרבים גם יחד להרבות ולהוסיף פעלים לקדש שם שמים בעולם נזכה לביאת משיח צדקנו בגאולה השלימה במהרה בימינו.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: REPRESENTATIVE

15

LESSON 1 - Your Mission: Kiddush Hashem	16
LESSON 2 - The Purpose of Creation and the Mission of Klal Yisroel.	28
LESSON 3 - Defining Kiddush Hashem	38
LESSON 4 - Chillul Hashem – The empty and the Mundane	49

SECTION 2: AGENT

61

LESSON 5 - Public Relations	62
LESSON 6 - The Ultimate Sacrifice	70
LESSON 7 - Overcoming Temptations – Generating Kedushah	83
LESSON 8 - Kiddush Hashem Presentations.	89

SECTION 3: OFFICER

127

LESSON 9 - Self-respect & Respect for Others.	128
LESSON 10 - Kiddush Hashem Among Other Jews.	137
LESSON 11 - The Circle of Influence	143
LESSON 12 - The World's Oldest Hatred	149
LESSON 13 - Derech Eretz—The Crucial Foundation.	158

SECTION 4: DIPLOMAT

165

LESSON 14 - Communication Is Key	166
LESSON 15 - The Age of Connectivity	176
LESSON 16 - Honesty is the Best Policy.	187
LESSON 17 - Strength in Numbers	199

SECTION 5: AMBASSADOR

215

LESSON 18 - Challenges and Yissurim: A Life Worth Living	216
LESSON 19 - Waiting for the Redemption — The Ultimate Awareness Campaign	229
LESSON 20 - The Most Powerful Tefillah: The Prayer for Divine Honor.	236
LESSON 21 - Bal Tashchis: You Shall Not Destroy	241
LESSON 22 - Current Events and Practical Applications of Kiddush Hashem.	250

KIDDUSH HASHEM ASSESSMENT	263
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DEAR TEACHERS

Every business or organization needs a mission in order to be successful. That mission will be the basis of every decision that is made, and the emotional fuel for every employee or volunteer to stay focused and on track.

We teach many important values in our wonderful schools, and we strive to integrate Torah and mitzvos into the lives of our students. But what is the ultimate goal of all the Torah and mitzvos that they learn? What should our students see as their overall mission?

In Shaarei Teshuvah (3:158), Rabbeinu Yonah states, “The reason that Hashem chose the Jewish nation, elevated them above the rest of the nations of the world, and sanctified them with His Torah and mitzvos, is solely so that they would fear Him and sanctify His Name.” Kiddush Hashem is the reason for the Jewish people’s existence. It is the theme that runs through the entire Torah and all of its commandments, and it is relevant at every moment of every day. Kiddush Hashem is the mission of Klal Yisrael.

The life-changing, innovative curriculum presented here will foster a Kiddush Hashem mindset for life. Through practical lessons and engaging activities, students will learn to appreciate Kiddush Hashem as a mission that informs every aspect of the Torah way of life in every setting—whether they are in a crowd or behind closed doors.

The principles explored in this curriculum are based on the sefer Mekadshei Shemecha and the Artsroll books Living Kiddush Hashem and A Life Worth Living. These seminal works were developed over many years and were inspired by the lectures of Rav Matisyahu Salomon, the Mashgiach of the Lakewood Yeshiva. These works have been endorsed by many gedolim as critical for our times and have already made an impact on many yeshivos and schools.

The following are some of the benefits derived from a Kiddush Hashem mindset:

- A sense of meaning and purpose that enhances students’ motivation. Students come to recognize that every person in the world has the ability to make a difference in the world by creating Kiddush Hashem in many different ways.
- Appreciation of the innate potential within every human being, resulting in sensitivity and respect for others.
- Determination to avoid Chillul Hashem by being honest and pleasant at all times.
- Sincerity and passion in avodas Hashem.
- A keen understanding of the balance between mitzvos bein adam laMakom and mitzvos bein adam l’chaveiro.

Today, more than ever, the focus on Kiddush Hashem is crucial. The world is watching the Jewish People closely, and the society around us is more receptive to the values that we represent. Modern technology magnifies the potential for both Kiddush Hashem and Chillul Hashem many times over, especially on account of the lightning-fast speed of communication today. Due to this reality, every one of our actions can have enormous repercussions.

After developing curricula for students in middle school and in camp, we felt that it was time to supplement those curricula with an in-depth program geared toward high school students. In the high school years, students are capable of understanding the subject matter on a deeper level and appreciating complexities that might be lost on younger children. Every lesson in this curriculum is packed with valuable material and includes an anticipatory set, the body of the lesson, practical applications, and conclusion questions. The body of each lesson includes chomer, stories, meshalim and interactive activities. The intent isn't for teachers to read the words of the lesson verbatim; instead, they should use their own words to convey the content and key messages of each lesson. The last three lessons are independent and may be added as optional lessons if time allows.

A comprehensive assessment has been included at the end of the curriculum. This test may be used as a formative assessment before the program begins and then administered again after the entire program has been completed, so that students can compare their initial results to the final assessment and appreciate their progress. Alternatively, the assessment can be taken only at the end of the program, as a review and test.

If you find that some of the examples given in the lessons are not relevant to your class, school, or neighborhood, you may choose to omit them and use only the examples that work for you. This would be especially applicable to examples related to the use of technology.

Not all lessons will fit into the average time frame of 45 minutes. Divide lessons as needed. It is best to review the previous lesson with your students before beginning a new one. Conclusion questions may be answered orally or in writing, at the end of a lesson or at the beginning of the following class.

Have students be on the lookout for Kiddush Hashem anecdotes to share, whether in books and newspapers or in their own experiences. Create a classroom Kiddush Hashem binder or scrapbook. At the end of the year, you can print copies of the book for the entire class.

We have prepared a one-hour video PowerPoint workshop for teachers to watch in advance of teaching the curriculum. We highly suggest you watch this informative video in order to be well prepared with the main yesodos of the curriculum.

Email us for the link to the video and for any questions or feedback on this curriculum.

May we all be successful in our sacred mission, and may we greet Mashiach soon with the knowledge that we have done our part to hasten his arrival.

Rabbi Shraga Freedman

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Visit LivingKiddushHashem.org

Join the movement to help spread this awareness by starting a chaburah or class in your shul or community, or bring a Kiddush Hashem curriculum to your schools. For other ideas of what you can do and for free resources, visit LivingKiddushHashem.org.

LESSON 1

YOUR MISSION: KIDDUSH HASHEM

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL UNDERSTAND THAT KLAL YISROEL'S PRIMARY MISSION IN THIS WORLD IS TO CREATE KIDDUSH HASHEM AND THAT EVERY JEW MUST BEHAVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT MISSION. UNDERSTANDING OUR MISSION WILL SHAPE OUR BEHAVIOR AND HELP US AVOID INADVERTENT CHILLUL HASHEM.

(The actual definition of kiddush Hashem will be developed over the next few lessons.)

ANTICIPATORY SET

Divide the class into pairs and instruct students to write a list of five famous, successful companies and their less famous counterparts. (e.g., Coca Cola and RC). After five minutes, allow the girls to share their lists.

Discussion Question: What is it about the more successful companies that sets them apart from the others?

(Sample Answers: the taste of the product, its quality, the price, etc.)

After students have shared their ideas, introduce to them (using the material below) the idea that successful companies often have clear and powerful **mission statements**.

MISSION STATEMENTS

Large companies spend thousands of dollars and countless hours every few years on developing a mission statement. That statement is then drilled into the minds of all the employees and stakeholders.

Question: What is a mission statement?

Answer: By definition, it is a brief declaration, for oneself (or a company) as well as for the public, stating a purpose, vision, objectives, philosophy, and values. A mission statement is typically only a few lines long, but an enormous amount of thought is invested in creating it.

Present some examples of corporate mission statements to the class. Some are provided below, but it is preferable to include at least one from your own community, such as the mission statement of your high school or a local non-profit organization.

A BAIS YAAKOV EXAMPLE:

To educate each individual student in a nurturing Torah environment, while instilling in her a love of Yiddishkeit, self-esteem, and a lasting commitment to family, community and Klal Yisrael as she charts her unique path in avodas Hashem.

GOOGLE:

To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

Google has also stated its vision: To provide an important service to the world—instantly delivering relevant information on virtually any topic.

THE HOME DEPOT:

Our goal is to provide the highest level of service, the broadest selection of products and the most competitive prices in the home improvement business. We are a values-driven company and our eight core values include the following: excellent customer service, taking care of our people, giving back, doing the “right” thing, creating shareholder value, respect for all people, entrepreneurial spirit, and building strong relationships.

APPLE:

To bring the best user experience to its customers through its innovative hardware, software, and services.

CHAI LIFELINE:

To bring joy and hope to children, families and communities impacted by serious illness or loss.

Question: Why is it important for a business or organization to have a mission statement?

Answer: It helps **set clear goals, motivates employees, and creates accountability.** When decisions are made, they can be evaluated against the mission statement. This helps the company's directors ensure that their decisions are in line with their core values and are helping them accomplish what is important to them.

OUR MISSION

The benefits of a mission statement are not limited to businesses or nonprofit organizations. Klal Yisroel itself also benefits from a clear and solid understanding of its mission. Every individual Jew should be aware of his mission and the purpose of his existence in this world.

Question: What is the mission of a Jew?

Have the students take a few minutes to think about and write down what they think should be the mission statement of every Jew.

Allow the students to share what they've written.

(Students might come up with answers such as: learning Torah, developing a relationship with Hashem, working to better ourselves through avodas Hashem, or earning reward in Olam Haba by performing the mitzvos.)

THE GOAL OF THE TORAH AND MITZVOS

Quote the following three sources to the class:

1. כתב רבנו יונה בשערי תשובה (שער ג סי' קנח): "עמוד והתבונן גודל חיובנו לקדש את ה', **כי עיקר מה שקדשנו ה' בתורתו ובמצוותיו והבדילנו להיות לו לעם, כדי לקדשו וליראה ממנו**".

2. ועי' גם בפירוש הספורנו (יתרו יט ו): "ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש. **פירוש, להבין ולהורות לכל המין האנושי לקרוא כולם בשם ה'.**" הרי שזוהי תכלית העבודה של כלל ישראל, לקדש את שמו יתברך בעולם.

3. כתב במכתב מאליהו (ח"א עמ' כב): "הנה המצוה העיקרית היא קידוש השם, כי היא כוללת הכל, כל המצוות וכל עניני עבודת ה' תוכנם הוא קידוש השם!"

1. Rabbeinu Yonah states, "The purpose for which Hashem chose the Jewish nation, elevated them above the rest of the nations of the world, and sanctified them with His Torah and mitzvos, is **solely that they would sanctify His Name.**"
2. The Sforno explains that the reason Bnei Yisrael were designated by Hashem as a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" was for us to teach the other nations of the world to recognize Hashem and serve Him. (We will learn in a future lesson how we "teach" the rest of the world about Hashem.)
3. Rav Dessler teaches us that kiddush Hashem encompasses all other mitzvos. All *avodas Hashem* is, at its essence, kiddush Hashem.

Question: According to all of these sources, what is every Jew's mission in life?

Answer: To create kiddush Hashem.

Optional: After discussing the concept of mission statements, assign a student to create a large mission statement poster for the classroom wall describing the mission of Klal Yisrael. Let either the student herself or the entire class come up with the exact wording of this national mission statement.

STORY

The Mir Yeshiva escaped to Shanghai during World War II. Rav Leib Bakst, who was a student in the yeshiva, was once hospitalized in Shanghai during this period with a ruptured appendix and was in danger of losing his life. At one point, he lost consciousness and dreamed that he was standing before a Heavenly beis din consisting of three rabbanim from the previous generation, one of whom was his rebbi, Rav Yerucham Levovitz.

*Two of the rabbanim turned to Rav Yerucham and said, "You are this student's rebbi; ask him a question." Rav Yerucham said to Rav Leib, "We know that a malach can carry out only one mission at a time, but a human being can complete more than one mission at a time. Why is this so?" Rav Leib replied, "**A human being should also do only one thing in this world.**"*

*The beis din announced that this response had earned him the merit to continue living in this world, and Rav Leib indeed made a complete recovery. When he shared this story with his students in the Detroit Yeshiva, he would add an important point: **The single mission that every human being should carry out is the mission of kiddush Hashem, bringing honor to Hashem and sanctifying His Name.***

(This is a good place to split the lesson if needed)

MASHAL: SAILORS AND PASSENGERS

Optional: Before teaching the mashal below, ask the students (either as a class or in pairs) to list the responsibilities of the crew of a ship at sea and contrast them with the responsibilities of the passengers on the ship.

Rav Elchonon Wasserman Hy"d once presented a parable to explain why the Jewish

people were given 613 mitzvos while the rest of the nations received only seven. When a large ship sails on a cruise or other sea voyage, all of the passengers are responsible for following a few basic rules. These are simple rules that include not damaging the ship, not standing on the railings, and so forth. The captain and crew of the vessel, however, have to learn and follow a thick manual of detailed instructions. Why do they have so many more rules to follow? The difference is clear. The captain and crew are responsible for navigating the boat through the ocean and bringing it safely to its destination; the passengers are merely along for the ride. It goes without saying that the people who operate the ship have a much more complicated task, which involves many more rules and much more information, than those who are merely passengers.

THE NIMSHAL: KLAL YISROEL AND THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

This mashal illustrates the difference between the Jewish people and the nations of the world. The non-Jewish nations are like the passengers on a ship. They are merely along for the ride; they are not charged with actively causing the world to fulfill its ultimate purpose. They achieve their perfection, the “destination” of the world, through Klal Yisrael’s avodah. The Jewish people, on the other hand, are the driving force that leads the world to perfection, and therefore they must follow a vast array of laws and regulations in order to fulfill their mission. The goal of our lifelong voyage is for the whole world to accept Hashem as its King and bask in His glory; that is the “destination” of our journey. (This idea will be developed further in future lessons.) Thus, we are like the sailors who steer the ship, while the nations of the world are akin to passengers. And we can rest assured that our nation, which is instrumental in bringing the world to its final destination, will be all the more richly rewarded when we complete our mission.

OPTIONAL: MORE ON RAV ELCHONON’S MASHAL

Explain on the above mashal either by assigning Handout A for the students to complete individually or in pairs, or by doing the interactive activity below.

1. Handout Option: Have students answer questions from Handout A (found at the end of the lesson), and then discuss the answers as a class. Possible answers are included below.
2. Activity Option: Hand each student a slip of paper containing one of the questions from Handout A. (Some students will have the same question.) Have the girls walk around the room, pairing up with different students in turn. Each pair of girls should pose their respective questions to each other and try to answer each one. Instruct them not only to come up with an answer for each question but also to explain how each aspect of a sailor’s job reflects something about Klal Yisroel’s role in this world. After there has been sufficient time for every girl to hear and address all of the questions, have the students return to their seats so that the entire class can review the questions and answers.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HANDOUTS:

Answer each question. Explain how every aspect of the role of a ship’s captain or sailor is analogous to Klal Yisroel’s role in this world.

1. **What is expected of the ship’s captain and crew with regard to: a) performing their duties and steering the ship, and b) interacting with the passengers?**

The ship's crew is expected to stay focused on handling the ship correctly and operating all the right controls to ensure that it remains on course. The crew must relate to the passengers as customers who are to be treated with honor and respect, but at the same time, the crew must remember that they are different from the passengers, with their own unique responsibilities. Similarly, Klal Yisroel must stay focused on avodas Hashem and on bringing Kiddush Hashem into the world. We must respect the other nations while remaining separate and distinct in order to fulfill our own unique mission.

- 2. Why would anyone want to be part of the ship's crew if it means having more responsibilities, more difficult work, and more rules to follow?**

Unlike a passenger, a ship's captain or crewmember is a leader. He makes a difference through his work. He lives a life of purpose and meaning. He will be richly rewarded for his efforts by the owner of the ship. Similarly, a Yid's life of avodas Hashem brings him endless meaning and satisfaction. And when the going gets tough, he knows that his reward will be commensurate with the hardship.

- 3. How are the consequences different when a sailor is remiss in performing his duties than when a passenger doesn't live up to his own responsibilities?**

There is more at stake in the sailor's work, and therefore the consequences are more severe if he shirks his responsibilities. If a sailor doesn't do his part to steer the ship, it might veer off course, and the voyage may take much more time. His failure to work properly will cause a loss to everyone on board; therefore, he must be held to a higher standard. Similarly, if Klal Yisroel loses focus of their goal, it will not only be detrimental to them but will also cause the entire world to drift further away from fulfilling its purpose of recognizing Hashem as King.

- 4. Compare and contrast the experiences of the ship's crew and passengers during an ocean voyage.**

The captain and crew are always on the job, while the passengers can relax and enjoy the trip without dealing with many responsibilities. The captain and crew also have living quarters that are separate from the cabins occupied by the passengers. The crew members should not indulge in the same entertainment and recreation as the passengers, since they might be distracted from their duties. Along with their increased responsibility, the crew can enjoy special privileges and derive great pride from their work.

Similarly, the nations of the world have limited responsibilities; they are required only to keep the 7 mitzvos of b'nei noach. Klal Yisroel, on the other hand, have 613 mitzvos to observe and an obligation to devote their entire lives to the service of Hashem. However, their added responsibilities can allow them to enjoy greater pride and special privileges that are not necessarily available to the other nations.

- 5. What will happen if the crew members are influenced by the passengers to slack off on the job, or they allow the passengers to convince them to change the ship's course?**

The captain and crew answer to the owner of the ship; they should not take instructions from the passengers. If they allow the passengers to distract them

from their duties or to convince them to alter the ship's course, the entire voyage will be affected. It will take much longer for the ship to reach its destination, which will be a loss to everyone on board, and the owner of the ship will be displeased with the crew. Likewise, if the Jews are influenced by the goyim and fail to fulfill their responsibilities as ovdei Hashem, then the entire world will "drift off course" and fail to achieve its purpose of kabbalas ol Malchus Shamayim.

ROSH HASHANAH: STARTING WITH THE END IN MIND

When we understand that the purpose of our existence is kiddush Hashem, we will have tremendous insight into the holiday of Rosh Hashanah.

Rosh Hashanah is the annual day of judgment. It is the day when Hashem sits in judgment over the entire world and all of His creations, when our very lives hang in the balance and all of the events that will occur over the coming year, both large and small, are decided in the Heavenly court. It would probably be logical for us to spend hours on Rosh Hashanah desperately begging Hashem for health and sustenance. But that is not the way we spend the day. Surprisingly, the prayers of Rosh Hashanah have almost nothing to do with our own needs.

Question: Instead, what do the tefillos of Rosh Hashana focus on?

Answer: The tefillos focus on our desire for the world to recognize Hashem as its King, and for Hashem's honor to be revealed throughout the cosmos.

How can we understand this?

There is a story told about an elderly couple who were celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary, having enjoyed a beautiful, harmonious marriage for many years. At their anniversary party, the wife remarked that she could not remember a single time when she had asked for a gift and her husband had failed to accommodate her. Her husband turned to her and said, "That's because you always asked for things that I would enjoy as well, things that were good for me too. How could I turn down such a request?"

Question: Keeping the message of this cute story in mind, how can we understand why we don't need to spend Rosh Hashana focusing on our personal needs and desires?

Answer: Our role in this world is to bring honor to Hashem. When we spend Rosh Hashanah davening and truly yearning for the world to recognizing Hashem's Kingship, we show Hashem that we understand the purpose of our time in Olam Hazei. When Hashem sees that we want to use this world to bring Honor to His Name, then He will grant us everything we need or desire so that we can use those things to help us achieve our lofty goals. Therefore, there is no need to ask for them directly.

MAKING IT PRACTICAL

Be more aware of kiddush Hashem this week. Notice when you and others around you make a kiddush Hashem, and jot down some examples to share with the class.

CONCLUSION

End the lesson either by having the students complete Handout B individually or with partners, or by using the questions from the handout for a quick review led by the teacher.

(Handout B available at the end of this lesson.)

1. List at least three reasons for the importance of a mission statement both for a company or organization and for Klal Yisrael as a whole.

- *It helps set clear goals.*
- *It motivates individuals.*
- *It creates accountability and makes it possible to evaluate decisions.*

If the article by Glenn Smith (at the end of the lesson) is used, answers may include:

- *It creates a sense of direction.*
- *It shapes a vision of the future.*
- *It helps keep our priorities straight and make sure that we make the right decisions based on our ultimate goals, even on things that seem small and insignificant.*
- *It creates alignment and leads everyone to work together toward the same goal, making our efforts more effective and helping us live in harmony with each other.*
- *It fosters adjustments to help us achieve our mission in spite of changing times and norms.*
- *It provides a basis for gauging whether we are truly accomplishing what we are meant to do.*

2. List three ways that Klal Yisroel's role in this world is comparable to the function of the crew of a ship.

Sample Answers:

- *The crew is in charge of steering the ship to its destination. Likewise, Klal Yisroel is responsible for steering the world toward the fulfillment of its ultimate purpose.*
- *The crew of a ship must follow many more rules than the passengers. Likewise, Klal Yisroel have many more mitzvos and obligations than the nations of the world.*
- *The members of a ship's crew are rewarded handsomely for their work. Likewise, Klal Yisroel will reap enormous reward for their avodah.*

3. What is the main focus of the tefillos of Rosh Hashana? Why don't we daven for our own personal needs?

The tefillos of Rosh Hashanah focus on kavod shamayim; we daven that everyone should accept Hashem as the world's King. The best way to have our personal needs met is to commit to using the gift of life and all its brachos to accomplish our mission.

4. What questions or comments do you have on these yesodos?

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL MATERIALS AND SOURCES:

The following article sets forth a number of the benefits of a mission statement for a company or organization. Use the comments after every point to demonstrate how the same concepts can apply to Klal Yisroel's national mission.

6 REASONS YOUR COMPANY NEEDS A CLEAR, WRITTEN MISSION STATEMENT

Glenn Smith, Executive Coach

It is critical that every business (even small businesses) have a clear, written mission statement.

1. IT DETERMINES THE COMPANY'S DIRECTION

Smart business owners use this statement to remind their teams why their company exists, because this is what makes the company successful. The mission statement serves as a "North Star" that keeps everyone clear on the direction of the organization. And as Andy Stanley says, "It's your direction, not your intention, that determines your destination." This leads to the second reason.

We will have more success achieving our goal of promoting kavod shamayim if it sets our overall direction in life.

2. IT FOCUSES THE COMPANY'S FUTURE

Many people refer to this as the "vision," which is different than the mission. The vision is about a preferred future. Where will you be in 1 year? 3 years? 5 years? The mission tells us what we're doing today that will then take us where we want to go in the future.

We need to constantly ask ourselves: What are we doing today that will help us achieve our goal of kiddush Hashem (leading the whole world to recognize Hashem)?

3. IT PROVIDES A TEMPLATE FOR DECISION-MAKING

A clear mission sets important boundaries which enable business owners to delegate both responsibility and authority. Mission is to the company what a compass is to an explorer, a map to a tourist, a rudder to a ship, a template to a machinist. It provides a framework for thinking throughout the organization. It provides the boundaries and guardrails you need in order to stay on the path to your preferred future.

We make countless choices in life, big and small, and sometimes it can be tempting to trivialize certain minor decisions. We might ask ourselves questions such as: "Is it really important to spend money in order to keep a lawn neat? Is it really necessary to go back to a store in order to return an extra item that found its way into my shopping bag? Is it really important to expend the extra effort to greet a neighbor? Does a driver really need to slow down while he is on his way to shul?" Remembering our mission of

kiddush Hashem will help us keep our priorities straight and guide us to make the right decisions even in these situations.

4. IT FORMS THE BASIS FOR ALIGNMENT

When a new employee is hired, it's critical that the new hire know what the company does and where the company is going. The mission statement forms the basis for alignment not only with the owner, but with the entire team and organization. Your team will all be on the same page when it comes to what you do and why you do it, which leads to better effectiveness and efficiency.

We are all together in our mission of kiddush Hashem. One person's chillul Hashem affects all of us. The more people are focused on the mission of kiddush Hashem, the more effective we will be in accomplishing our goal of promoting kiddush Hashem in the world. We must also recognize that all Yidden are pursuing the same goal of kiddush Hashem, even if different groups have different ways of going about it. This will help us live harmoniously with our fellow Jews from all walks of life.

5. IT WELCOMES HELPFUL CHANGE

Many people are resistant to change because it causes us to feel insecure and sometimes out of control. However, if the mission is clear, then team members are more likely to see the value of the change and how it helps the organization accomplish the mission. This will create a culture that welcomes change when warranted.

The path to kiddush Hashem changes in different places, times, circumstances and environments. Sometimes we have to alter or fine-tune our behavior in order to keep up with what constitutes a kiddush Hashem in our new circumstances. Remaining focused on the mission will help us make those adjustments.

6. IT FACILITATES EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

It has been said that “what you measure will be your mission.” If you have a clear, written statement of mission, you will know exactly what to measure and how to measure it.

We will be able to see if we are on the right track by looking around us and seeing if our lifestyle is creating “chein” in the eyes of our family members, our neighbors, our coworkers, our employees, and other people with whom we interact. Awareness of our mission will allow us to gauge whether we are attaining the goals and standards of the intended mission.

INADVERTENT CHILLUL HASHEM

The Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (4:5) states that the punishment for an inadvertent *chillul Hashem* is just as severe as the punishment for an intentional one. Why is this? Rabbi Avraham Schorr *shlita* explains this with the following *mashal*:

A king once sent a trusted official to a faraway land on an important royal errand. In addition to his main mission, the man was also told to bring regards to the king's relatives who lived in the remote country. When the official returned, he reported that he had given the king's regards to his relatives, but he had completely forgotten the main purpose of his journey.

Rabbi Schorr explains that this kind of failure would be utterly inexcusable. A person might be forgiven for overlooking some of his secondary responsibilities, but there is no justification for forgetting the main purpose of his mission. Similarly, *kiddush Hashem* is our main mission in this world. If a person creates a *chillul Hashem* inadvertently, it means that he has forgotten the main purpose of his existence, and that is an unforgivable offense.



NAME: _____

THE CAPTAIN AND THE PASSENGER

- 1** What is expected of the ship's captain and crew with regard to: a) performing their duties and steering the ship, and b) interacting with the passengers?

- 2** Why would anyone want to be part of the ship's crew if it means having more responsibilities, more difficult work, and more rules to follow?

- 3** How are the consequences different when a sailor is remiss in performing his duties than when a passenger doesn't live up to his own responsibilities?

- 4** Compare and contrast the experiences of the ship's crew and passengers during an ocean voyage.

- 5** What will happen if the crew members are influenced by the passengers to slack off on the job, or they allow the passengers to convince them to change the ship's course?

NAME: _____

CONCLUSION

- 1** List at least three reasons for the importance of a mission statement both for a company or organization and for Klal Yisrael as a whole.

- 2** List three ways that Klal Yisroel's role in this world is comparable to the function of the crew of a ship.

- 3** What is the main focus of the tefillos of Rosh Hashana? Why don't we daven for our own personal needs?

- 4** What questions or comments do you have on these *yesodos*?

LESSON 5

PUBLIC RELATIONS

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL UNDERSTAND HOW KIDDUSH HASHEM IS SPREAD THROUGH OUR MITZVOS, EVEN MITZVOS THAT ARE NOT NECESSARILY LOGICAL OR UNDERSTOOD BY OTHERS. THEY WILL UNDERSTAND THAT OUR ROLE IS NOT TO PREACH ABOUT THE TRUTH OF TORAH; RATHER, OUR JOB IS TO BEHAVE LIKE A TZELEM ELOKIM, AND HASHEM WILL TAKE CARE OF PUBLICIZING THE TRUTH.

ANTICIPATORY SET

Split students into groups, and instruct them to look through their siddurim and write down every place they find in davening where we ask Hashem to do something “lemaan shemo,” “lemaan shemecha,” or “baavor shemo”—in other words, for the sake of His Name.

Instruct the students to keep their findings in mind as you begin today’s lesson.

REFLECTION AND DEMONSTRATION:

Kiddush Hashem sometimes comes about not because we impress others with our actions, but rather because of the way Hashem reacts when we keep the Torah and mitzvos properly. Let’s read through the following sources to gain an understanding of this aspect of kiddush Hashem.

Distribute Handout A and learn together as a class. Then continue with the lesson below.

ובמלכים א (ח נו) כתיב: "ברוך ה' אשר נתן מנוחה לעמו ישראל ככל אשר דבר, לא נפל דבר אחד מכל דבר הטוב אשר דבר ביד משה עבדו. יהי ה' אלקינו עמנו כאשר היה עם אבותינו אל יעזבנו ואל יטשנו. להטות לבבנו אליו ללכת בכל דרכיו ולשמר מצותיו וחקיו ומשפטיו אשר צוה את אבותינו. ויהיו דברי אלה אשר התחננתי לפני ה' קרובים אל ה' אלקינו יומם ולילה לעשות משפט עבדו ומשפט עמו ישראל דבר יום ביומו. למען דעת כל עמי הארץ כי ה' הוא האלקים אין עוד". הרי מפורש שהתכלית של ההשגחה הפרטית לישראל הוא "למען דעת כל עמי הארץ". ועיין ברד"ק שם שפי': "לתת לנו דבר יום ביומו מה שאנו צריכים, להשפיע לנו הטובה ולשמרנו מרעה, ובה ידעו כל עמי הארץ כי ה' הוא אלקים, כי הדברים בו שבעי טובה ונשמרים מרעה".

Shlomo Hamelech davened for Hashem to protect Klal Yisrael from harm so that the nations of the world would know that He is the only G-d.¹ The Navi describes the blessings Hashem bestowed on the Jewish people and concludes that the purpose of those blessings was to ensure that all the nations would recognize Him as the One and Only G-d of the world.

ובמשך חכמה בפרשת יתרו כתב: "והייתם לי סגולה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ... הנה [הגויים] מכירים השם יתברך, אבל משתתפים אחרים, ואינם מכירים אמיתו יתברך... וזה שיקרה כשבני ישראל מושפלים

¹ Melachim I, beginning with 8:56. See also Radak on those pesukim.

ונרדפים. אכן אם היו נושעים לעולם באמת אז השכילו כל העמים שה' אחד ושמו אחד, ויזנחו עצביהם ופסיליהם ויעשו שכם אחד לבא אל האמת. לכן אמרו 'וכל החיים יודוך סלה ויהללו את שמך באמת' - אימתי יגיעו לזה? בזמן ש'הא-ל ישועתינו ועזרתינו סלה', שלא יראה שום השפלה לעובדי א-ל באמת. וזה הביאור של הפסוק 'הללו את ה' כל גוים שבחוהו כל האומים', בשביל שבאתם לידיעת האמת ולעבוד ה' שהוא לבדו המשגיח והמהווה כל, ולא מסר שום כוח לזר רק ה' לבדו ולו לבדו ראוי להתפלל, **בשביל זה שאתם רואים 'כי גבר עלינו חסדו ואמת ה' לעולם'.**

In the Torah, Hashem tells the Jewish people: "You shall be a treasure for Me among all the nations, for the entire land is Mine."

What is the connection between the two ideas expressed in this pasuk: that the Jewish people are a treasured nation and that the entire land belongs to Hashem?

The Meshech Chochmah explains that when we observe the Torah and mitzvos, we become a "treasured nation" in the sense that we are subject to special *hashgachah pratis* that guides us and saves us from harm. This special *hashgachah*, which is clearly recognizable to the nations, causes the entire world to accept Hashem as King, and thus makes the entire world "belong" to Hashem.

ומצינו פרק מפורש בתהלים שמדבר מענין זה, והוא פרק סז: "למנצח בנגינות מזמור שיר. **אלקים יחנונו ויברכנו יאר פניו אתנו סלה. לדעת בארץ דרכך בכל גוים ישועתך.** יודוך עמים אלקים יודוך עמים כולם. ישמחו וירננו לאמים כי תשפוט עמים מישור ולאומים בארץ תנחם סלה. יודוך עמים אלקים יודוך עמים כולם. ארץ נתנה יבולה יברכנו אלקים אלקינו. יברכנו אלקים וייראו אותו כל אפסי ארץ."

Dovid Hamelech teaches us this concept in *sefer Tehillim* (ch. 67), where he states, "G-d will show grace to us and bless us; He will cause His countenance to shine for us forever, to make Your way known in the land, Your salvation among all the nations." These *pesukim* clearly indicate that the purpose of the Divine grace shown to Klal Yisroel is to lead the nations of the world to recognize Hashem's "ways." The following *pesukim* go on to describe the reaction of the nations: "Nations will give thanks to You, G-d; all the nations will give thanks to You. Peoples will rejoice and sing, for You judge nations fairly and You will lead the peoples on the earth for eternity. Nations will give thanks to You, G-d; all the nations will give thanks to You. The earth will yield its produce; G-d, our G-d, will bless us. G-d will bless us, and [the people at] all the ends of the earth will fear Him."

Once again, we see that Hashem's blessings for the Jewish people will be the impetus that causes the nations of the world to submit to Him.

DISCUSSION

Question: According to what we read above, what will be the result of the chessed that Hashem performs for Klal Yisroel?

Answer: The entire world will recognize Him as its King.

Question: Why is this so? What is the connection between Hashem's kindness for Klal Yisroel and the entire world accepting Him as its King?

Answer: When the nations of the world see that Hashem approves of the way the Jewish people conduct their lives, and that He showers blessings on them as a result, the nations

will realize that the Torah is true. This creates a kiddush Hashem.

Question: How does this idea explain why many of the requests we make in davening are described as lemaan shemo or baavor shemo—i.e., for the sake of Hashem’s Name?

Answer: When we ask Hashem to do something for us “lemaan shemo,” the implication is that we are seeking His kindness for the sake of the kiddush Hashem that will result when the world sees His love for us.

Question: What do we have to do in order for Hashem to heed these requests?

Answer: Of course, we must act in a way that truly meets with Hashem’s approval. After all, that is the only way that His kindness to us will create kiddush Hashem. Hashem’s kindness toward Klal Yisroel is seen as an endorsement of our way of life; therefore, if we wish to be zocheh to His chesed, we must make sure that we reflect His values properly.

When we focus on making ourselves true reflections of Hashem’s Will, then Hashem will wield His hashgachah to protect and benefit us. This will send a powerful message to the world about Hashem’s greatness, without the need for us to preach to them at all!

Question: This idea can be a source of comfort to us when we feel that the nations of the world do not appreciate our values. We may feel that we have done everything that the Torah demands of us, but the nations of the world do not respect our actions, whether it is because they do not respect the Torah’s values or because they do not understand the reasons for many of its mitzvos. Nevertheless, we do not need to worry that we haven’t achieved our mission of kiddush Hashem. Why is that so?

Answer: Even when the rest of the world does not appreciate Jewish values and morals, we can take comfort in the fact that Hashem Himself will cause kiddush Hashem to emerge from our actions. He will shine His light on us, demonstrating His love for us and thus sending a message to the world that He approves of our actions and attributes. Therefore, we can focus on improving ourselves and acting correctly, and we can rest assured that Hashem will then dazzle the world with His hashgachah and the resultant kiddush Hashem.

In short: When our actions and attributes reflect Hashem’s Will, Hashem Himself will create the kiddush Hashem by demonstrating His special love for us.

For example, we know that tzadikim have the power to give brachos and that they merit special Divine hashgachah. When a tzaddik performs wonders, it indicates that he is especially beloved to Hashem; he receives special favor from Hashem, which enables him to bring about miracles. When other people observe that a tzaddik has this special status, they will become inspired to emulate his example (see story #1 below). That is one way that a tzaddik creates kiddush Hashem through his tzidkus.

ACTIVITY: POEM WRITING

Divide students into small groups and instruct each group to write a four-line poem summarizing the main message of today’s lesson.

Note: Students might ask why we don’t observe this phenomenon all the time. Why don’t the people who reflect Hashem’s Will with purity always experience miracles? The answer is that Hashem doesn’t necessarily employ His special hashgachah to create this public

kiddush Hashem for individuals; rather, this is the way He reacts when there are multitudes of Yidden reflecting His Will. This is discussed at length in a later lesson.

THE FINAL GEULAH

This is precisely what will happen when the final Geulah arrives: Hashem will demonstrate in the clearest possible way that the Jewish people are His chosen people. He will bring us to Eretz Yisrael and shower us with the benefits of His Presence and His Providence. (This will be addressed further in a later lesson.)

ANALOGY: PARENTAL PRIDE:

Many common interactions between parents and children can be seen as an analogy for this concept. What happens when several children are playing in a playground, with all of their mothers watching, and one of the children misbehaves in a way that embarrasses his mother? A typical mother will do one of two things: either scold the child or avoid acknowledging that she is his mother, since she is ashamed by his behavior. But if the child does something laudable, something that evokes his mother's pride, she might very well rush to his side and embrace him to demonstrate her affection; she would want to take credit for his actions.

When Hashem exerts special Divine Providence for our benefit, it is also a show of affection. But our Father in Heaven would want to show us special affection only when our behavior makes Him proud, so to speak, and when we truly reflect the way that He wants us to live.

MIRACULOUS ANECDOTES:

A baby was born at Maayanei HaYeshuah Hospital in Bnei Brak. Though he was critically ill at birth, the baby recovered. When the grateful parents thanked the hospital staff on the day the baby was discharged, the head of the ward, an irreligious woman, responded, "There is no medical explanation for what happened with your child. However, I can tell you why it happened. When this hospital was first founded, the Steipler Gaon gave a brachah to its founder that no baby should ever die in the maternity ward. To this day, thousands of children have been born in this hospital, and not a single baby has died in the maternity ward here." Because the Steipler Gaon was a devoted servant of Hashem, he had the power to give a brachah that would come true. This revealed, even to an irreligious doctor, that Hashem controls the events of His world.³



During World War II the Mir Yeshiva took refuge in Shanghai. Shanghai was a military port controlled by the Japanese and was a target for American bombing raids. The students of the yeshiva asked if they should leave the city, but Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, the Mirrer mashgiach, said that he would take responsibility for their safety and they could stay put. Not one person from the yeshiva suffered any injuries! Hashem's special protection was so evident that the local Japanese people would run to stand next to the yeshiva students during the bombing raids!



³ *Inside Their Homes* by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer

During the Gulf War, Iraq fired deadly Scud missiles into heavily populated areas in Eretz Yisrael. These missiles carried powerful warheads that had the power to cause massive damage. Incredibly, over the days that Eretz Yisrael was bombarded by the Scuds and its people were forced to race to their bomb shelters over and over again, no Jewish people were killed, although some buildings and houses were severely damaged. This frustrated the Arab enemy. In a prominent newspaper, an Arab was quoted as exclaiming, "What can we do? Their G-d is protecting them; He is obviously on their side!"

ACTIVITY: STORM REPORTING

Imagine that it is a stormy winter day in the 21st century. A peaceful neighborhood is being battered by a massive hail storm, and the roofs of most of the homes are destroyed by the hail. When the storm is over, the residents come out of their homes and rub their eyes in disbelief. Every single roof in the neighborhood has been destroyed, with the exception of the roofs of the Jewish homes and schools. It is an undeniable miracle!

This is a fictional scenario, but imagine what would happen if this actually took place and the world was forced to admit that they had witnessed a Divinely ordained miracle!

News reporters would rush to the city and would visit schools, institutions, and homes in order to find out about the Jews and the Jewish students. They would research the Jews' behavior and interview their neighbors, eager for clues as to what caused these Jews to be worthy of such a miracle. They would ask if the Jews were pleasant and kind, and they would scour the internet for information about them and their community, searching for details about how they lived, the moral values they observed, what sort of entertainment they enjoyed, and how they conducted business, all with the aim of discovering the Jewish "secret."

If their investigations indeed showed that the Jewish people represented Hashem and His values, a major kiddush Hashem would result. They would understand that G-d loves these people and wishes for the world to take notice of their actions, and they would conclude that that is the reason that He allowed them to be spared.⁴

Divide the class into pairs of students and have each pair write an op-ed or article (from the vantage point of a non-Jewish journalist) discussing a hypothetical miracle. They may use this scenario or make up their own miraculous story. The article may include imaginary interviews with a secretary in the Jewish school and with neighbors of the Jews, to provide different perspectives. Have students think about what these people observed about the Jews and what they would believe was the cause of this miracle. They can end the news article with a call to action, such as, "After seeing these miracles, perhaps we should stop and think what lessons we might learn from the Jews and their lifestyle."

MAKE IT PRACTICAL

What improvements can you make in your life to become a better reflection of the ratzon Hashem, giving Hashem more of a reason to shower His blessings on you as an expression of His love?

⁴ Although this is a fictional scenario today, it may well become the reality in the future. The more we make ourselves into reflections of Hashem's Will, the more Hashem will bestow His *hashgachah* upon us and reveal Himself to the world through us.

CONCLUSION

How does kiddush Hashem result from mitzvos whose rationale is not understood by the human intellect? Moreover, how do mitzvos that are done privately, which no one sees, create more kiddush Hashem in the world? If our job is to enlighten the rest of the world about Hashem's existence and sovereignty, how do any of those mitzvos help accomplish that task?

The answer is that our task isn't necessarily to actively preach and enlighten the world about Hashem's existence. Every Jew must focus on making himself worthy of reflecting Hashem's attributes through his own behavior. When we improve ourselves, Hashem will shine the spotlight on us and demonstrate His hashgachah by performing incredible acts of kindness for us. Our job is to create the reflection of Hashem's attributes through our actions, and Hashem Himself will then create the demonstration of His love for us.

Once a person behaves in a way that manifests Hashem's Will, whether in public or in private, he becomes a vessel for hashgachah and for more opportunities to bring kiddush Hashem into the world.



NAME: _____

HANDOUT A

אם היו נושעים לעולם באמת אז השכילו כל העמים שה' אחד ושמו אחד, ויזנחו עצביהם ופסיליהם ויעשו שכם אחד לבא אל האמת. לכן אמרו 'וכל החיים יודוך סלה ויהללו את שמך באמת' - אימתי יגיעו לזה? בזמן ש'הא-ל ישועתינו ועזרתינו סלה', שלא יראה שום השפלה לעובדי א-ל באמת. וזה הביאור של הפסוק 'הללו את ה' כל גוים שבחוהו כל האומים', בשביל שבאתם לידיעת האמת ולעבוד ה' שהוא לבדו המשגיח והמהווה כל, ולא מסר שום כוח לזר רק ה' לבדו ולו לבדו ראוי להתפלל, **בשביל זה שאתם רואים 'כי גבר עלינו חסדו ואמת ה' לעולם'.**

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ובמשך חכמה בפרשת יתרו כתב: "והייתם לי סגולה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ... הנה [הגויים] מכירים השם יתברך, אבל משתתפים אחרים, ואינם מכירים אמיתותו יתברך... וזה שיקרה כשבני ישראל מושפלים ונרדפים. אכן

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL SOURCES

ענין תפילתנו לישועת ה': "למען שמו הגדול"

הנה כמה וכמה פעמים אנו מזכירים בתפילה שיצילנו ה' מצרותינו בעבור שמו הגדול. ב'אבינו מלכנו' אנו אומרים: "אבינו מלכנו עשה למען שמך הגדול הגבור והנורא שנקרא עלינו", ובסליחות דשני וחמישי: "יכירו וידעו כל הגויים כי אתה ה' אלקינו, ועתה ה' אבינו אתה, אנחנו החומר ואתה יוצרנו, ומעשה ידך כולנו, הושיענו למען שמך, צורנו מלכנו וגואלנו. חוסה ה' על עמך ואל תתן נחלתך לחרפה למשול במ גוים, למה יאמרו בעמים איה נא אלקיהם. ידענו כי חטאנו, ואין מי יעמוד בעדנו, שמך הגדול יעמוד לנו בעת צרה. ידענו כי אין בנו מעשים, צדקה עשה עמנו למען שמך". ובתפילת מעריב בברכת 'ברוך ה' לעולם' אנו אומרים: "כי לא יטוש ה' את עמו בעבור שמו הגדול כי הואיל ה' לעשות אתכם לו לעם". וצריך להבין, מה השייכות של ישועת והצלת כלל ישראל לשמו של הקב"ה, ואיך יעמוד לנו שמו של הקב"ה בעת צרתנו.

והנה לפי כל מה שהבאנו לעיל, הרי כבוד שמו של הקב"ה מתגדל או מתמעט ח"ו לפי מצבם של ישראל, וממילא ברור שכל זמן שישראל נמצאים בגלות ואינם במצבם הטוב והנכון - הרי יש כאן כביכול מיעוט בכבוד השם ובפרסום שמו, ורק בגאולה השלמה כשיהיו ישראל נושעים תשועת עולמים, אז יהיה שמו של הקב"ה מפורסם בעולם בגדולה ובתפארת כראוי, דרך בגאולה השלמה יוכל שמו של הקב"ה להתפרסם בשלמות, שאז תשלם גם ישועת ישראל

LESSON 9

SELF-RESPECT & RESPECT FOR OTHERS

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL UNDERSTAND HOW A KIDDUSH HASHEM MINDSET CAN CREATE A BEAUTIFUL BALANCE BETWEEN PRIDE IN TORAH VALUES AND RESPECT FOR ALL HUMAN BEINGS. THEY WILL THEN APPLY STRATEGIES FOR KAVOD HABRIOS AND PERSONAL GROWTH TO THEIR DAILY INTERACTIONS.

ANTICIPATORY SET:

Rav Mendel Kaplan was once approached by a stranger holding a foreign coin. “You look like a knowledgeable person,” the non-Jew told him. “Do you know where this coin is from?” Rav Mendel admitted that he did not, but he took a pencil rubbing of the coin and took down the man’s telephone number, promising to get back to him with an answer.

Discussion: What would any of us have done in such a situation? What middos and perspectives may have caused Rav Mendel to do what he did?

In all likelihood, we would have been polite, but we would not have taken the slightest interest in a stranger’s trivial question. Certainly, we would not have exerted ourselves to contact him later with a reply. What motivated Rav Mendel? Presumably, the answer lies in a statement he was fond of making: “I try to act like our ancestor Avraham. He had reverence for every creation.” (*Rav Mendel Kaplan and His Wisdom*)

Sometimes, it seems that some religious people develop disrespect toward non-religious and non-Jewish people.

Discussion: What is it about a religious mindset that might cause a person to treat others so poorly?

THE PARADOX

Although we are taught to respect others, it often seems that some of our most important hashkafo, paradoxically, lead to deficiencies in our kavod habriyos—our respect for other people. There are several reasons for this:

1. We are proud of our Torah way of life. That pride might make us feel superior to other people.
2. We look down on immorality and aveiros. Naturally, this makes it hard to respect people who lead lives that are not in accordance with the Torah’s laws and values.
3. We are different than the world around us. This may sometimes lead us to be indifferent to others as well.
4. We place great emphasis on Torah study and mitzvos bein adam laMakom. As a result, everything else, including the laws of bein adam l’chaveiro, may fall by the wayside.

KAVOD HABRIOS CHALLENGES (POWERPOINT):

Play the PowerPoint presentation by Rabbi Shraga Freedman, which demonstrates the proper hashkafah regarding the above paradoxes and uses the difference between a lone sailor and a captain as a mashal to address the relevant challenges and proper attitudes https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jiYZMbqUiqv6sSQNd8llxy05xw5xbt9_/view?usp=sharing

The PowerPoint is approximately 25 minutes in length.

As they watch, the girls should fill in the graphic organizers (*found at the end of this lesson*), which they can use for any additional note-taking as well. (*Completed ones are provided as well.*) Pause at different points to review and solidify concepts, as needed.

PERSONAL GROWTH AND THE GROWTH OF OTHERS:

Distribute handout A, an article focusing on the proper attitude toward other Yidden regardless of their level of frumkeit. Read and discuss together.

Takeaway: The only way to impact others is to have true respect for others. We must recognize that we cannot judge others by their level of religiosity; the true measure of a person is the extent to which he is growing, and we can never really know the extent of another person's growth. If we understand these points, we will be able to show respect for all human beings.

MANTRA ACTIVITY:

After the students have read the article, have students create mantras that capture the proper attitudes. They should develop adages that are easy to remember and relatable in order to convey the relevant concepts.

If you wish, you can add a little competition to this activity. Have students create and display posters with their mantras, or create banners with Google Slides. The girls should vote to choose the best posters, and the three winning pieces should be displayed in a central place in the school building.

MAKING IT PRACTICAL:

- Learn to praise growth rather than status. Don't speak highly of people only because of their knowledge, talent or obvious accomplishments; express your admiration for anyone who works hard, tries hard, or has grown in his or her own way.
- Children and students should be praised for their effort and growth, even if the results are not apparent. Try this out on siblings, peers, etc.
- Find one person with whom you interact regularly and whom you tend to look down on, and apply these lessons to that individual. Work on really shifting your perspective in order to feel true respect for them. (It does not have to be a girl in your class or school.)

CONCLUSION

1. Why does a person deserve to be respected if he or she does not keep the Torah way of life?

a. We can never know the extent of any person's potential. Even if a person is not keeping the mitzvos now, he has the potential to become an eved Hashem.

b. Hashem values growth, not status. We don't know the person's background, what level he started from and how much he has grown. Our inborn qualities and the things that we do out of habit and rote do not make us greater than someone who wasn't trained from a young age to behave in that way.

2. If everyone is deserving of respect and everyone is important, how can I feel unique and proud of what I have?

*We can recognize that each one of us has a unique role and mission in life that makes us valuable. **We don't need to devalue everyone else in order to feel proud of who we are.** Everyone has value in their own right. As members of the Jewish People, we are proud of being chosen to fulfill a lofty responsibility - being mekadshei Hashem.*

3. How is it possible that someone who does not keep the Torah might be on the same or even above the level of a Rav Moshe Feinstein?

We don't know anyone else's challenges and nisyonos, and we can never measure someone else's yetzer hara!

4. How will this understanding and perspective enhance your interactions with others?

NAME: _____

CONQUERING NEW TERRITORY

-Excerpted from A Life Worth Living

In order to have an impact on others, we must treat them as equals. We must show that we do not judge them or consider ourselves superior to them. At the same time, in order to be mekareiv others, we must give them the impression that the Yiddishkeit we possess is something crucial that is lacking from their lives. How can we do that without seeming to hold ourselves above them?

The Gemara states (Sanhedrin 74a) that it is forbidden to sacrifice another life in order to save one's own. The Gemara explains this with a simple rhetorical question: "Why would you consider your blood redder than [the other person's] blood?" This is a blanket rule, meaning that even the gadol hador would not be permitted to save himself by taking the life of any other person. The message is clear: Although it may seem to us that some lives should be more precious than others, the Torah does not agree. There is no way that we can assess any person's life as more valuable than another's.

Chazal teach us, "Hevei shfal ruach bifnei kol adam — Be humble before every man." This statement is quoted by Tanya (ch. 30), which points out that the Mishnah makes no distinction between different types of people; it instructs any person, however great he may be, to feel humbled and unimportant in the presence of others, regardless of their levels of observance. How can this be possible?

There is a famous parable in Michtav Me'Eliyahu that explains the nature of our struggles in life. In any war, Rav Dessler explains, the opposing armies meet on a battlefield in the disputed territory. Each country has a specific piece of land that is considered its home turf, areas behind the lines that are safe from the enemy. It is the battleground itself, the place where the front lines are located and the armies combat each other, that will be conquered by one of the two sides. When the war is over, the victor will be the country that expanded its territory through battle. Even if the size of the winning country remains smaller than its opponent, it can still claim victory by virtue of having seized territory that it did not possess before the battle.

Rav Dessler explains that this analogy reflects our situation in this world. Every person is at war with the yetzer hara, but every individual's war takes place on a different "battlefield." Every person comes to this war with a specific quantity of "home turf"; this represents the virtues and practices that come naturally to him and that he does not have to fight to master. But a person is not judged based on the things that are inherently ingrained in him; rather, he is judged on the actual battles that he fights.

Many of the actions we do are simply actions that come naturally to us. Many of

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our mitzvos, our good deeds and virtuous practices, are the result of our upbringing or our desire to fit into our communities. But if we go through our lives without winning a battle, without achieving something beyond the norms we have learned from society, then we may never actually have accomplished anything. Our mission in life is to fight for growth beyond our starting point, to add to the “territory” that comes to us automatically. For every person, that has a different meaning.

An irreligious Jew typically spends his life fighting different battles than a frum Jew. But while it is true that he enters the fray with far less spiritual “territory” of his own, that makes no difference in terms of how he is judged. A person who is not frum may be battling his natural inclinations and winning the war, while some of us may spend our lives far removed from the “front lines” of our own personal wars, never even trying to overcome the yetzer hara.

The struggle of an irreligious Jew, for instance, may be in the realm of *sur me’ra* — avoiding serious sins. A person who was not raised in an observant environment may be far more susceptible to temptations that the typical frum Jew is used to resisting, and those temptations may be the focus of his battle in life. A frum Jew, on the other hand, might have to struggle with the concept of *aseh tov* — increasing his positive actions by giving more *tzedakah*, learning more hours even when it is difficult for him, adding to the *chessed* he performs, and so forth. If he fails to conquer this new “territory,” then he

may be considered less successful than the irreligious Jew who seems to be on a much lower spiritual level.

In addition, a frum Jew who has been trained to go through the motions of Jewish observance — davening, performing mitzvos, reciting berachos and so forth — may still be challenged by the need to fill those actions with meaning and emotion. His task may be to infuse his davening and berachos with *kavanah* and to develop an emotional attachment to mitzvos; his battle may lie in the “*avodas haleiv*” of *Yiddishkeit*, while another person may struggle to master the actions themselves. And there are other possibilities as well: Sometimes, a religious Jew may be accustomed to living an observant lifestyle, but he may still succumb to sins that are taken lightly even in frum circles — such as *lashon hara*, *onaas devarim* (causing others emotional pain through words), or *bittul Torah*. If a person was raised religious, he should feel a greater sense of responsibility and accountability; rather than looking down on those who were not as fortunate, he should recognize that his upbringing makes him subject to much loftier expectations.

We are all familiar with the tendency to group people into the categories of BT (*baal teshuvah*) and FFB (*frum from birth*). I once heard of a new acronym, FFH, which stands for “*frum from habit*.” That is hardly a category in which we would want to find ourselves; I can only wonder what would happen if the standard *shidduch* research began to include the question “Is he (or she) an FFH?”

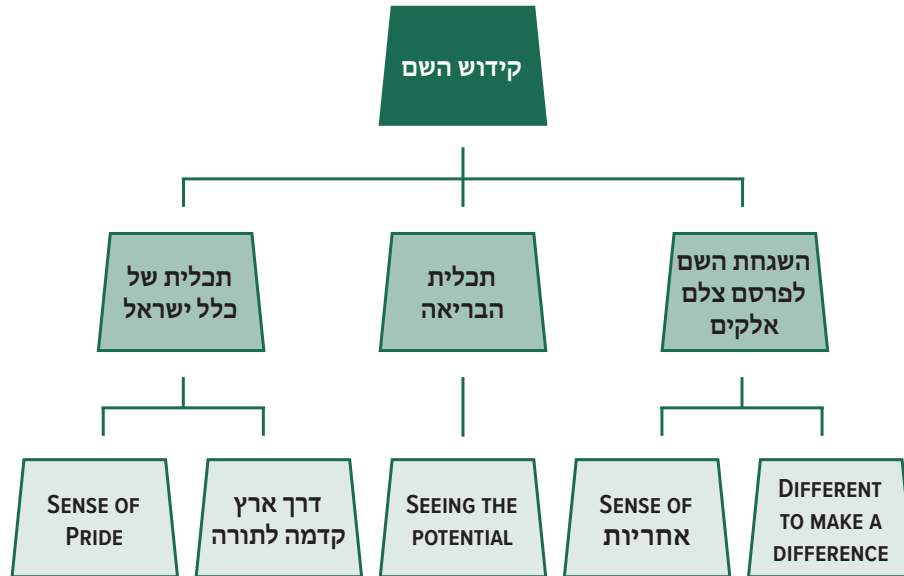
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How much of our avodas Hashem is actually a product of habit, rather than the result of our own hard work? Such habits are good, of course, but we can credit only our parents or grandparents for them; we ourselves do not earn a deeper relationship with Hashem or a loftier place in Olam Haba through the things we do by rote. Our task is to continue pushing the front lines of battle further into “enemy” territory, to constantly improve ourselves and our deeds. We are defined not by our level of observance, but by the journey we took to arrive at it.

With this mindset, we can seek to influence others without viewing ourselves as a spiritual elite. If we understand what Hashem values in our behavior, then we will recognize that anyone who is growing, regardless of where they come from and how they were raised, is truly precious in His eyes. And since no person can ever assess the value of another person’s growth, we can never consider ourselves superior to any other human being. If we master this mentality, then we can achieve the respect for all people that is crucial for us to be mekadesh Shem Shamayim.

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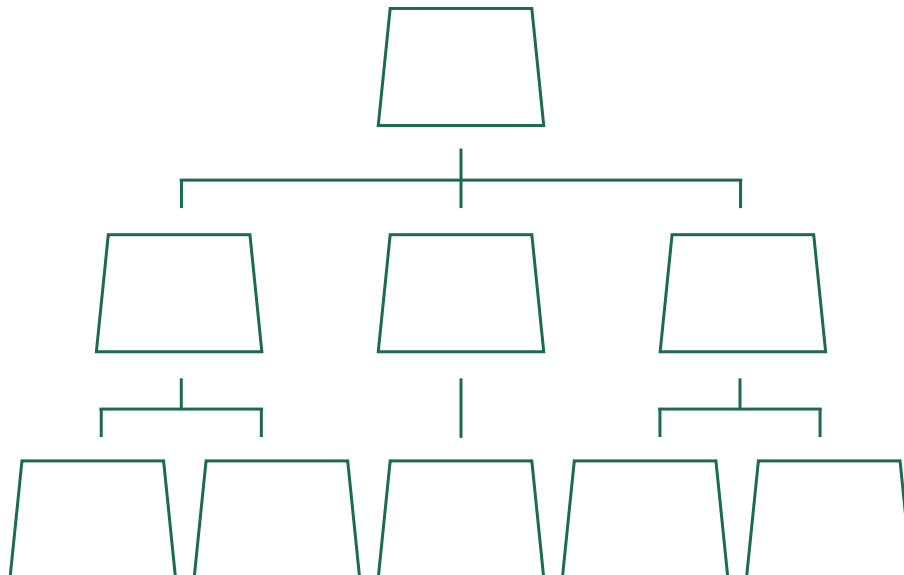
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SECTION 3 • LESSON 9 • HANDOUT B

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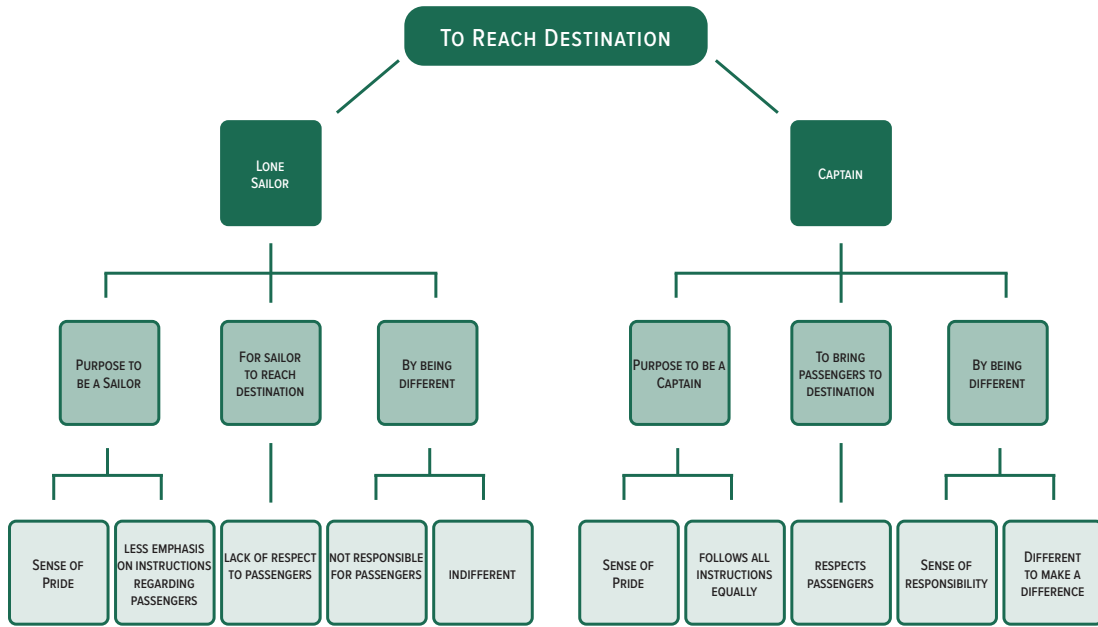
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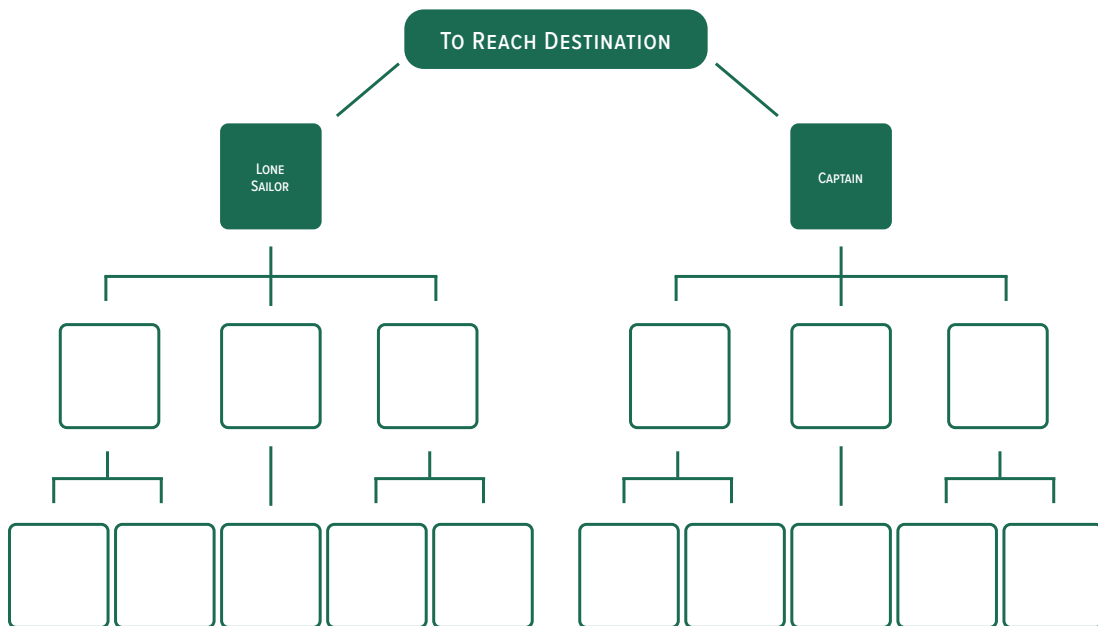
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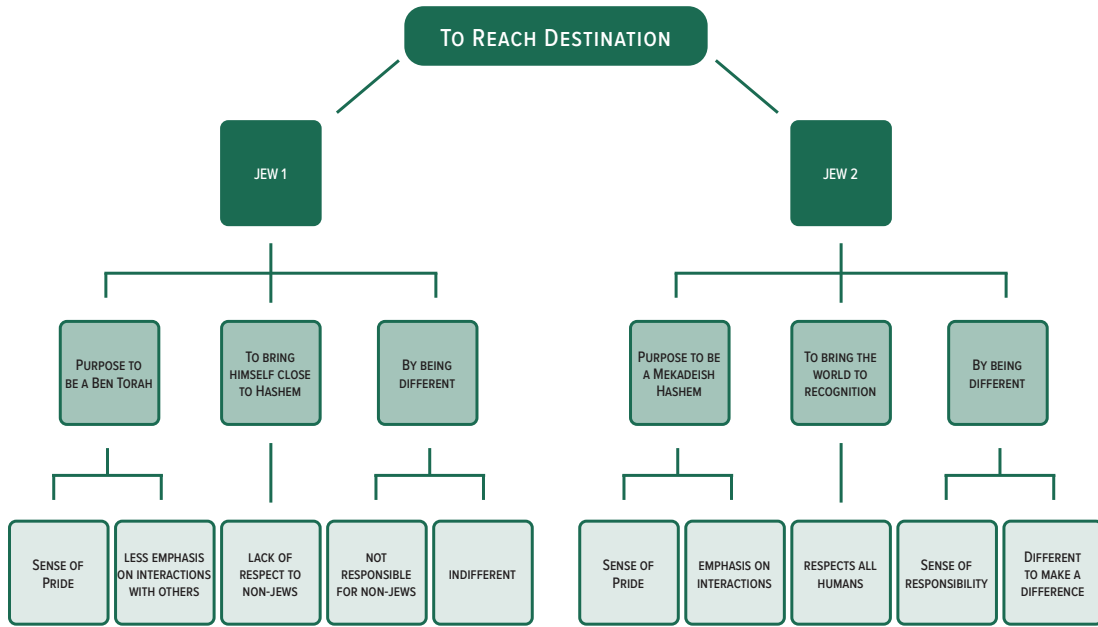
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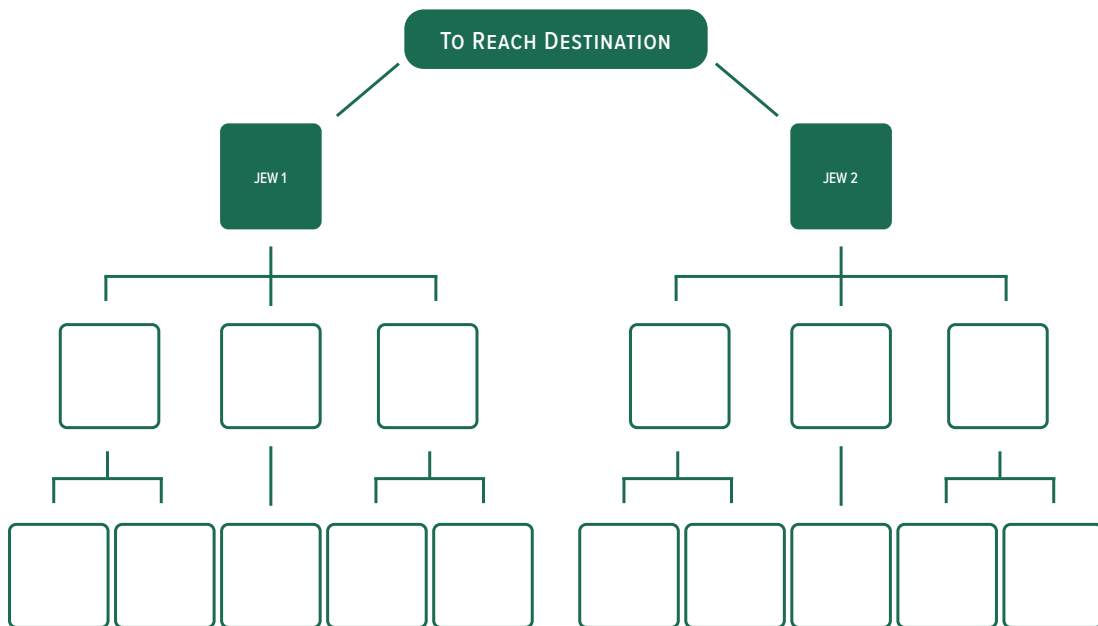
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KIDDUSH HASHEM



SECTION 3 • LESSON 9 • HANDOUT G