



CHOVERET CHINUCH #11 5784

What Kind Of Leader Are You



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

Hi Madrichim,

These next two weeks we'll be learning about two different individuals who have shown great leadership in the Jewish world. The Chanichim will see that there is more than one way to be a leader, and that each person in their unique way can make a big difference.

Shabbat Shalom,

Shani Becker



Week One:



This week we'll hear about an extraordinary modern day Jewish leader, who fought for what he believed in and never gave up hope or belief.

Background:

The Soviet Union was a big country in Europe and Asia that lasted from 1922 to 1991. The government had a lot of power over what people could and couldn't do. If someone didn't agree with the government, they could get in trouble, and even sent to prison. Jews in the Soviet Union faced discrimination and were often not allowed to practice Judaism openly. The government also made it difficult for Jews to leave the country and move to places like Israel. These restrictions led to many Jews fighting for their rights. These brave Jews who dared to fight back against the Soviet authorities were known as Refuseniks.



Meet Natan Sharansky: Anatoly Sharansky, who was later known as Natan Sharansky, was born in 1948 in Ukraine. After finishing his studies, he wanted to make Aliyah to Israel, and applied for an exit visa, but the Soviet government wouldn't let him go, saying he knew information vital to Soviet national security. Instead of giving up, he started speaking out for Soviet Jews who also

wanted to leave and go to Israel. He was an impassioned speaker, smart, eloquent and brave. He met his wife (Natalia, later known as Avital) in 1973, and she too had applied for an exit visa to Israel. Her visa had been approved. They married in 1974, one day before Natalia's exit visa to Israel was going to expire. The day after the wedding, she left for Israel and they hoped that he would soon get permission to join her there. Not only did he not get permission, but he was arrested and found guilty in 1977 for treason. The Soviets made this up and said he was working with the CIA, even though the U.S. government said it wasn't true. Sharansky was sent to prison for thirteen years, including solitary confinement and hard labor. Before the court announced his sentence, Sharansky bravely said, "I don't have anything to say to the court, but to my wife and the Jewish people, I say 'Next Year in Jerusalem!'"

Being sent to a Soviet prison is really tough. You have to live in harsh conditions, with little food, and no visitors allowed. Natan Sharansky managed to survive this difficult time by concentrating on two important things:

1. Tehillim Book:

While in prison, his wife, Avital Sharansky, managed to smuggle a small Tehillim book to Natan. Even though he didn't know much Hebrew, nor much about being Jewish, he spent years studying the book, trying to understand the words. It gave him strength, and he still carries that same Tehillim book with him today.



2. Playing Chess:

Sharansky's mother taught him chess when he was just 5 years old. He became very skilled at the game and dreamed of becoming a famous chess player. During his imprisonment, with very little to occupy him, especially when he was alone in solitary confinement, he would play chess in his mind, against himself, and always came out a winner! This helped him feel free mentally.



During the time that Natan was in prison, Avital campaigned with courage for her husband's release. She met with important government leaders (senators, congressmen, the secretary of state and the vice president) in the U.S. and all around the world.

After nine years in prison (and 405 of these days in a punishing cell), Anatoly Sharansky was finally released on February 11, 1986, thanks to international pressure and his wife Avital's campaign. A memorable moment in his first moment of freedom is when he stepped off the KGB airplane in Germany and the guards ordered him to walk in a straight line.



In defiance of the guards' orders, Sharansky chose to zigzag across the tarmac. He moved to Israel and arrived in Jerusalem the same day. In Israel, he continued fighting for Soviet Jews' freedom. He joined the government, started a political party, and served as a minister in the Knesset. Later, he worked at the Jewish Agency. Sharansky received the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal in 1986

and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2006 for his human rights work. Natan Sharansky became a symbol of Jews fighting for justice and freedom. He has spent his life speaking up for human rights.

Natan Sharansky is known around Israel and the world as a man who fought for what is right and didn't give up. He is a big inspiration for many, as he continues even today to write and participate in public events, and to inspire Israelis and Jews worldwide.



More Information for Madrichim:

[How I Survived Prison in Soviet Russia](#)

[זוכה פרס ישראל נתן שרנסקי - מה אפשר ללמוד משחמט](#)



Discussion Points:

- How did studying the Tehillim book help Sharansky during his time in prison?
- What do you think Sharansky meant when he said, “Next Year in Jerusalem,” before his sentencing? Why was this statement significant?
- What can we learn from Natan Sharansky’s story?
- Who else do you look up to for inspiration?
- Do you think you are capable of inspiring others?



Ideas For Activities:

- Debate
- Multiple Choice

Debate: *In this activity, chanichim will showcase their skills of persuasion by engaging in debates.* Chanichim will be called up two at a time and assigned a topic to debate. They will have two minutes to persuade the rest of the group that their stance is correct. After both sides present their arguments, the rest of the chanichim will vote on which side they agree with. To add an extra challenge, participants should avoid using the words “and” and “um” during their speeches.

Sample Debate Topics:

Coke vs. Pepsi. Should schools have dress codes? Is a hot dog a sandwich? Does technology add to our life or take away? City vs. Suburbs.

Interactive multiple choice questions: Write out on individual sheets of paper true and false, and put each sheet of paper in an opposite corner of the room.

Ask the following questions (feel free to add your own) and have the chanichim run to the paper that they think is the correct answer.

- Natan Sharansky spent 9 years in prison? (true)
- Natan Sharansky had a little Tehillim with him in prison, once he was released the guards didn't agree to return it to him.(False)
- When Natan Sharansky was released from prison, the first thing he did was head to Yerushalayim. (True)
- Avital didn't move to Israel alone. She waited in the Soviet Union to come along with her husband. (False)

Week 2:

What words come to mind when you think of a leader? We spoke about Natan Sharansky last week. He was strong, defiant, brave, outspoken.

Can a leader be someone quiet, who doesn't like standing in front of a crowd?

This week we'll be talking about a special man, who became a leader in the quietest of ways, by doing many good deeds that helped and affected many people's lives.

Meet Rav Aryeh Levin:



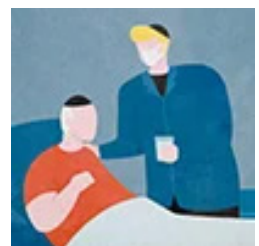
Aryeh Levin was born in 1885 in Russia. From a young age, he studied at the famous yeshivot of Slutsk, Volozhin, and Brisk. At the age of 19 he made aliyah to Eretz Yisrael, during the British Mandate, settling in Yerushalayim and marrying Tzipporah Shapira.

Rav Aryeh Levin quickly became known as the "Tzaddik of Yerushalayim", as he visited the poor and sick, always had a smile on his face and made each person who he encountered feel special. He became very close with Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, and was asked by him to be the Chaplain in the Jewish Prison in the Russian Compound in Jerusalem. Rav Aryeh agreed, on condition that he would receive no pay. He visited members of the Jewish Underground who were imprisoned by the British, fighters who devoted their lives to Eretz Yisrael. He would bring them news from their families that would lift their morale, pray with them and inspire them.

Rav Aryeh passed away in 1969, leaving behind a legacy of Chesed, being a leader in a modest and quiet way and changing the day to day lives of many.

Three short stories about Rav Aryeh:

- **Respecting others:** Rav Aryeh became accustomed to visiting patients in the hospitals in Jerusalem every Saturday evening. He would shake their hands, wish them a "speedy recovery" and encourage them with warm words. Once he went to the hospital for "Bikur Cholim" to visit a certain patient, who was hospitalized in one of the wards. He wandered down the long corridors looking for that patient's room.



A bearded cleaner, who was dressed in a white robe and had a broom in his hand, noticed that Rav Aryeh couldn't find his way. He immediately approached him and asked if he could help him out. Rav Aryeh looked at him and said: "Thank you for your willingness, but first may I ask: with whom do I have the honor to speak?"

Years later, the same cleaning worker said to Rabbi Raphael Levin, son of Rav Aryeh: "It's been over thirty years that I've been working at the hospital, and never, simply never, has a person honored me in his conversation with me, as your father did, may his memory be blessed..."

- **My Name is Aryeh:** One day, when a heavy rain was falling in Yerushalayim, Rav Aryeh was on his way back from the kotel when he saw a woman trying to protect her young child from the biting winds, and the downpours. He took off his coat at once and gave it to her so that she could wrap her baby in it.



"You need this coat for yourself", the woman protested. "Just look at the rain".

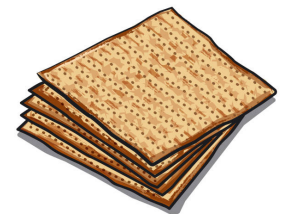
"Oh, I'll surely find shelter until the storm is over" said Rav Aryeh.

"But how will I return the coat to you? I don't even know you".

"My name is Aryeh Levin. I live in the Mishkenot neighborhood. When you happen to come there, you can return the coat to me".

- **Respecting others:** One year, on the first night of Pesach, after the Seder late at night, one of the neighbors knocked on the door of Rav Aryeh's house and told him that he had noticed a thief in the area who had broken into a neighborhood store. But he was afraid to shout and chase him away, worried that the burglar may harm him.

Rav Aryeh walked over to the store, approached the burglar and whispered to him: "My son, have you forgotten what is written in the Torah: 'Thou shalt not steal'?"



The thief looked at Rav Aryeh's face, lowered his eyes, put down the goods he had taken from the store and said goodbye to the rabbi...



Discussion Points:

- What positive traits about Rav Aryeh can we learn from these simple encounters?
- What Mitzvot can we learn from Rav Aryeh?
- How can we take these traits of Rev Aryeh and bring them into our own life?



Ideas For Activities:

- Debate
 - Multiple Choice
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- **Leadership game:**

Before the peula, take a plastic bottle, cut off the top, and poke holes into the bottle. attach a rope to each hole (enough for the amount of chanichim). Print out on 4 separate sheets of paper the letters A,B,C,D and place them around the room.

Have the chanichim stand in a circle, each holding one one string. Each chanich on their turn will need to answer a multiple choice question they are asked by leading the rest of the group to pull the bottle to the answer they agree with. Emphasize to the chanichim that there is no one right answer to the questions. Madrich reads the question aloud and then gives a copy to the chosen chanich so they can reread and decide.

Questions:

1. Do you think that anyone can be a leader?

- A. Absolutely not, not everyone can be a leader
- B. I think this is a correct sentence
- C. Not everyone can be a leader. Who will be led if the whole world are leaders?
- D. All answers are correct

2. You are asked to lead a program in front of your school. You usually don't do that. How will you answer?

- A. If you think I can be a leader, does that make me a leader?
- B. I don't usually do these kinds of things - so no.
- C. If you think I can be a leader - that makes me a leader!
- D. I think I'm good at this even though I'm not a leader. Maybe I could actually be a leader at this point.

3. How many leaders could there be in a group?

- A. Anyone can be a leader, even in a group of leaders
- B. Two, each pulling in a different direction
- C. Four - like a chair that stands on four legs
- D. One - one leader for one group

4. What does it take to be a leader?

- A. To be bossy
- B. To be skilled at something
- C. Desire to be a leader
- D. All answers are correct

5. A substitute teacher who doesn't know you, asks you to help quiet your friends who are disturbing the class. You are not the 'leader of the class' - you are just a shy student who behaves well in class. What will you do?

- A. I will try to do what I can, but I don't think I will succeed.
- B. I'll tell her that I'm not a leader and I don't have the ability to do that.
- C. I will tell my friend to please quiet down.
- D. I will try to ask a different friend that I am close with, to help out

6. You are passing by the road and two vehicles in front of you got in an accident. The offending driver asks you to say he is in the right, but you know he is wrong. How will you react?

- A. I will not respond, it is their business and not mine.
- B. I will help those who asked me for help.
- C. I will say what I think. It is my opinion and I have the right to think like that.
- D. I will try to convince the offender that he is wrong.

- **Leadership game:**

This peula comes to show the chanichim the importance of choosing and honoring the wise and skilled leaders that help our community. In this game, we learn the importance of learning from and respecting these talented leaders.

Have all the Chanichim stand in a circle, each grabbing the back of their chair, with the chair standing on its two front legs only.

When the Madrich says 1, all the Chanichim move to the chair to their right, without letting the chair they reach fall.

When the Madrich says 2, all Chanichim move to the left, without letting the chair they reach fall.