



Any text in BLUE is intended as a guide for the teacher

This lesson plan was created as part of a unit on Bireishit, specifically the *Brit Bein HaBetarim*. The purpose of this lesson is for the students to discuss the unique nature of the Jewish people that stems from the *Brit Bein HaBetarim*, along with the responsibility and challenges, as well as the larger topic of antisemitism.

1. Bereishit 17:7

והקמתי את בריתי ביני ובינך ובין זרעך אחריו לדרתם לברית עולם; להיות לך לא-להים ולזרעך אחריו:
And I will establish this covenant between Me and you, and your children after you;
throughout their generations it shall be an eternal covenant, that I shall be G-d to you
and your children after you.

Rashi 17:7

והקמתי את בריתי. ומה היא הברית? להיות לך לאלהים-
AND I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT — And what is this Covenant? To be a G-d
unto thee.

Seforno 17:7

להיות לך לאלהים ולזרעך אחריו ליחד שמי עליכם כמו שהוא מתיחד על כל הנצחיים כאמרו כי כל אשר
יעשה האלהים הוא יהיה לעולם כי אמנם הנפסדים באשר הם נפסדים אינם פעולתם בלתי אמצעי אמר
א"כ שבהקמת הברית ושמירתו יהיו הוא וזרעו נצחיי' באיש לפניו:
To accept Me as your exclusive deity, without any intermediary, just as G-d is the sole
G-d of all the enduring phenomena in the world (the planets, stars, etc.) Solomon
phrased it thus in Kohelet 3-14. This verse proves that anything which G-d has created
without intermediary is eternal, enduring, whereas when we see creatures and other
phenomena disintegrate, this is proof that they were brought into existence by
intermediaries of G-d, by His agents, not by Himself. Observing the terms of this
covenant was concluded with G-d directly, not with an intermediary

Netziv 17:5

ולזה נוצר ... עם ישראל להיות לאור גוים, לתקן כל עם באמונה ... וזהו תכלית הבריאה "למען דעת כל
עמי הארץ את יד ה' כי חזקה היא למען יראתם את ה'". ההתחלה לזה בימי יהושע שנצטוו לכתוב על
האבנים תורה שבכתב בשבעים לשון, ואח"כ בא והגיע ע"י הפיזור הגדול של ישראל לזה התכלית, ולזה
מבואר דאברהם וכל זרעו אבות המון גוים הם. וכל זרעו "אבות המון גוים הם".
Therefore, the nation of Israel was created to be a light unto the nations, to rectify each
nation with faith ... this is the purpose of the entire Creation: "So that all the nations of
the world will know that the Hand of G-d is strong; that you will fear G-d." The beginning
of this process was in the days of Joshua, who was instructed to write the Written Law
in seventy languages, and it continues by means of the dispersion of Israel among the
nations, such that Avraham, and all his descendants, are "fathers unto multitudes of
nations".

What is the covenant between G-d and Avraham? What different perspectives does the verse and different commentaries offer?

2. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Ceremony & Celebration, pp. 85

The majesty and mystery of Judaism is that, though at best Jews were a small people in a small land, no match for the circumambient empires that periodically assaulted them, Jews did not give way to self-hate, self-disesteem or despair.”

What does it mean that Judaism is a “majesty and mystery?”

How is Rabbi Sack’s statement reflected in the *Brit Bein Habetarim*?

3. Devarim 8:5

G-d’s treatment of the Jewish people is like a father trying to educate his child.

וידעת עם לבבך כי כאשר ייסר איש את בנו יקוק אלהיך מיסרך:

You should know in your heart that just as a man will chastise his child, so the Lord your G-d chastises you.

How is G-d’s relationship to *Bnei Yisrael* like a father-son relationship?

What other comparisons can be used to describe the relationship between G-d and *Bnei Yisrael*? Explain!

4. Devarim 28:66-67

והפיצך יקוק בכל העמים מקצה הארץ ועד קצה הארץ ועבדת שם אלהים אחרים אשר לא ידעת אתה ואבתיך עץ ואבן: ובגוים ההם לא תרגיע ולא יהיה מנוח לכף רגלך ונתן יקוק לך שם לב רגז וכליון עינים ודאבון נפש: והיו חייך תלאים לך מנגד ופחדת לילה ויומם ולא תאמין בחיך:

G-d will scatter you among the nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will serve idolaters who worship gods of wood and stone, unknown to you and your fathers. Among those nations you will feel insecure, and there will be no place for your foot to rest. There G-d will give you a trembling heart, eyes full of longing, and a soul full of distress. Your life will hang in suspense. Day and night, you will be so terrified that you will not believe that you are alive.

What aspect of the covenant is described in these verses?

How is this verse connected to the *Brit Bein Habetarim* in Bereishit?

5. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Radical Then, Radical Now, p. 184

If you were to ask what our response to the Holocaust should be, I would say this: Marry and have children, bring new Jewish life into the world, build schools, make communities, have faith in G-d who had faith in man and make sure that His voice is heard wherever evil threatens.

How is Rabbi Sack's statement connected to the *Brit Bein HaBetarim*?

How should we act when experiencing antisemitism? Is Rabbi Sack's statement specific for the Holocaust, or is it relevant to all (even personal) experiences?

6. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, "The Mutating Virus: Understanding Antisemitism," Keynote Speech in the European Parliament (September 22, 2016)

Jews were hated because they were different. They were the most conspicuous non-Christian minority in a Christian Europe. Today they are the most conspicuous non-Muslim presence in an Islamic Middle East. Antisemitism has always been about the inability of a group to make space for difference. No group that adopts it will ever, can ever, create a free society.

So I end where I began. The hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews.

Antisemitism is only secondarily about Jews. Primarily it is about the failure of groups to accept responsibility for their own failures, and to build their own future by their own endeavours.

Rabbi Sacks spoke these words addressing the European Parliament. In your opinion, would he have said the same thing to the American Congress? Explain!

Does the *Brit Bein Habetarim* guarantee or predicate anti-semitism as an eternal issue?