



OBJECTIVE

Students will gain an appreciation for our מסורה, amass a wealth of general ידיעות, and gain mastery of the chronological order. Students will demonstrate mastery by creating a mini-timeline of their own and by participating in weekly cumulative testing.

PURPOSE

No longer will you hear a student ask incredulously, "Did חנוכה really happen after פורים?" or, "רש"י was a real person? When did he live?"

This comprehensive timeline incorporates all the events that our students learn about in יהדות, פרשת השבוע, נביא, חומש, and other קודש subjects, and weaves them into a full, clear picture. Students will build their understanding of when the events they are currently learning about actually took place and how the different events in our rich history are interconnected.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Newspaper Clipping Poster
- Timeline Poster
- Timeline Poster Cards
- Student Timelines (one per student)
- Historia Outline Booklet(s)
- 1 pad 1x2-inch sticky notes for each student (optional: 2 different colored pads)
- Scotch tape for each student
- Student Timeline Cover

ANTICIPATORY SET

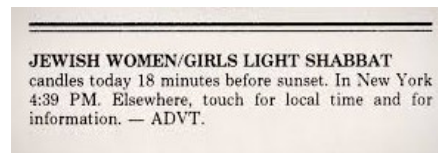
We don't usually turn to the New York Times for inspiration. However, one edition issued by the New York Times was quite unusual and worth noting.

On January 1st, 2000, the New York Times ran a Millennium Edition. It was a special issue that featured three front pages. One had the news from January 1, 1900. The second was the actual news of the day, January 1st, 2000. The third front page was a peek into the future—an imaginary page from the January 1st, 2100 edition. Included on the page were news items like the welcoming of Cuba as the fifty-first state and a debate as to whether robots



should be allowed to vote or not. At the very bottom, the following was printed:

Hang the Newspaper Clipping Poster on the board.



Reportedly, when asked why the New York Times included such a surprising entry, the Irish Catholic production manager stated, "We don't know what will happen in the year 2100. It is impossible to predict the future. But of one thing you can be certain: that in the year 2100, Jewish women will be lighting Shabbat candles."

LESSON

INTRODUCTION

We, the Jewish nation, are an Eternal People. We are an integral part of the past, and undoubtedly key players in the future.

Discuss

How is each individual an important link in the history and future of עם ישראל?

After listening to students' responses, conclude: Each Jewish person is a link in the chain from מתן תורה until the times of משיח because each individual carries the important role of passing on the מסורה to the next generation.

What is the שורש of the word מסורה, and how does that hint to the word's meaning?

מסורה has comes from the שורש מ.ס.ר., meaning "to give over." The מסורה is what is given over from generation to generation: The תורה, with its מצוות and guidance on how to live the way that Hashem wants us to live. Our job is to give over that מסורה to the next generation.

Discuss

Why is it important to pass on the מסורה?

After listening to students' responses, conclude: It is crucial that the מסורה be given over to



the next generation, so that the תורה will continue to be learned and kept in the world.

The world cannot exist without the תורה! We see this clearly in the נבואה that Hashem gave to ירמיהו:

כֹּה אָמַר ה': אִם לֹא בְרִיתִי יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵה, חֻקֹּת שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ לֹא שִׁמְתִּי (ירמיהו לג:כה)

Hashem said the following: "If not for My Torah being learned day and night, I would not up-keep the laws of nature for the existence of heaven and earth!"

(translation according to 'פסחים ס"ח:ב')

אילמלא תורה לא נתקיימו שמים וארץ שנאמר: אם לא בריתי יומם ולילה חקות שמים וארץ לא שמתי

The פסוק expounds on this בפש החיים:

והאמת בלתי שום ספק כלל, שאם היה העולם כולו מקצה עד קצהו פנוי ח"ו אף רגע אחת ממש מהעסק והתבוננות שלנו בתורה, כרגע היו נחרבים כל העולמות עליונים ותחתונים והיו לאפס ותהו חס ושלום. (נפש החיים שער ד, פרק יא)

The following is true without a doubt: If the whole world, from one end to the other, was devoid of our involvement in and study of the תורה for even one moment, חס ושלום... at that moment, all the worlds-in the heaven as well as this world, would become empty nothingness, חס ושלום.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

What is the מסורה?

The תורה which is given over from one generation to the next.

Why is it so important that the "chain" of מסורה-the link from one generation to the next-not be broken?

If the תורה would not be learned and kept for even one moment, the world would cease to exist.

TIMELINE

If we are an important link in the chain, and we are passing on the מסורה to the next generation, then we should know: When did the מסורה start? How was the תורה, with all its מצוות and הנהגות, passed down to us today?



Let's create a complete timeline of the world, from the time of its creation. We will see how all of the different events in our history coincide—in what order they took place, and how the תורה was passed down to our generation.

Hang Timeline Poster on the board.

Why does this timeline have six rows?

Every row represents 1,000 years. Each box represents approximately 100 years.

It is important to note to students that some events are in their approximate, not exact, location on the timeline, because too many details would lend to confusion.

How could we possibly know how long the world will exist?

As is always the case, the תורה illuminates the answer for us. The following fascinating גמרא gives us a little peek into Hashem's Master Plan for this world:

תנא דבי אליהו: ששת אלפים שנה הוי העולם. שני אלפים תהו, שני אלפים תורה, שני אלפים ימות המשיח. (עבודה זרה ט, א)

This was taught in the yeshiva of Eliyahu: This world exists for 6,000 years: 2,000 years of emptiness, 2,000 years of תורה, and 2,000 years of ימות המשיח.

What does this mean?

1. שני אלפים תהו:

2,000 years of emptiness. [Point to the first 2 rows on the timeline.]

During the first 2,000 years that the world was in existence, the תורה had not been given yet. A world without תורה is an empty world! The world was "waiting," so to speak, for בני ישראל to accept the תורה.

2. שני אלפים תורה:

2,000 years of תורה. [Point to the next 2 rows on the timeline.]

Then, בני ישראל accepted the תורה in the year 2448. The world was transformed into a world of תורה! Finally, after over 2,000 years, the reason for the world's existence was fulfilled! After accepting the תורה, בני ישראל went to ארץ ישראל and soon afterward, they built the בית המקדש. It was a time period of נביאים and מלכים guiding בני ישראל on the right way to lead their lives. What a glorious time period in our history!



Then, because of the עבירות of בני"י, Hashem brought the חורבן-the destruction of the first המקדש בית. After a short גלות in בבל, בני"י built the second המקדש בית. Although we no longer had נבואה, we still had the most קדוש place in the world rebuilt-we could come close to Hashem in the המקדש בית once again. Towards the end of this time period, because of חינוך, the second המקדש בית was destroyed, and we were sent into the long גלות which we are still in now. And that brings us to the last section of the timeline:

3. שני אלפים ימות המשיח:

2,000 years of המשיח. [Point to the last 2 rows on the timeline.]

This is a time period that has the potential to be ימות המשיח-the days when משיח is our leader and the המקדש בית is rebuilt! Until משיח comes, we find ourselves in a long and painful גלות, filled with tragic events and wandering to different lands. These challenges are all necessary steps towards the coming of משיח, when we will be able to rebuild the מקום השראת השכינה-the place where we can deepen our bond with Hashem in a way that is beyond our imagination-in the המקדש בית. We do not know exactly when that will be, but we do know that the time will come before the end of the 2,000-year period called "ימות המשיח."

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

In the words of the גמרא, what are the first 2,000 years of the world called? What are the next 2,000 years called? And the last 2,000 years?

ACTIVITY - HISTORIAH RACKO

Test students' prior knowledge of history. Hand out colored sheets. Instruct students to cut the paper into ten cards of equal size and write down one historical event on each card.

Challenge students to put the cards into chronological order.

A teacher's feedback: "It was interesting to see what the students did and did not know! It was also a great way for them to keep track of their own growth in learning, as this game can be played at the conclusion of these lessons as well."



Distribute the first two pages of the Student Timeline. Show students how to tape pages together to create one long page. Distribute the next two pages and have students tape them together. Then show students how to tape both pieces together to create a full timeline.

Explain to students that they will be transferring the events featured on the timeline on the board into their own personal timeline. As you post each Timeline Poster Card in its correct spot on the board's timeline, each student should write the event on a sticky note and place it in the correct box on her timeline. Some events span over 100 years; those events should be written across 2 or 3 sticky notes, as demonstrated in the Historia Outline Booklet.

Alternatively, students can be put into partners. Every set of partners can receive a Historia Outline Booklet, and use the information provided to fill out their timeline. Once students have completed their timelines, you can review and ensure accuracy by placing the Timeline Poster Cards onto the big timeline on the board/classroom wall.

As you post each Timeline Poster Card, you can provide background information:

שני אלפים תהו. א.

1. Note how the עשרה דורות מאדם עד נח take up the first thousand years and עשרה דורות מנח עד אברהם take up the second thousand years.
2. There was no תורה yet!
3. You will notice that there are several blank lines between נח and his children. Interestingly, Hashem did not want נח to have children for 500 years. This way, they would not have too many years in which to do עבירות and still be worthy of entering the תיבה.
4. Believe it or not, אברהם אבינו was already living during the time of דור הפלגה! He tried to give them מוסר and discourage the building of מגדל בבל, but his words went unheeded.

שני אלפים תורה. ב.

1. בנימין שבטים except all-חרן ran away to יעקב. ארץ ישראל were born in יעקב and יצחק were born there. Then יעקב and his family returned to ארץ ישראל, where בנימין was born. גלות מצרים at the time of the רעב. This was the beginning of מצרים. יצחק's family went down to מצרים.
2. You can show students how שבעוד מצרים was supposed to be 400 years. Hashem had רחמנות on ישראל and began counting the 400 years from יצחק לידת. You can see the span of 400 years from יצחק לידת until יציאת מצרים.

זכור ימות עולם

הספרי של עם ישראל

3. Many important events took place in this momentous time period. This is why there is a pull-out section of the crucial events in the year 2448, when **תן תורה**, **יציאת מצרים**, and **חטא העגל** occurred, as well as **הקמת המשכן** in 2449. Just 40 years after that, Hashem brought **בני** into **ארץ כנען**.
4. (In reality, תקופת השופטים spanned more than 300 years, however I gave it only two boxes for the sake of clarity.)
5. **בית ראשון** stood for 410 years. Show the girls how this time span is represented in an approximate way, over 4 boxes, representing about 400 years. (One box is in אלף השלישי and three are in אלף הרביעי.)
6. When the **בית המקדש** was destroyed, **בבלי** were brought to **בבל**. During **גלות בבל**, the miraculous events of **נס פורים** took place. It's clear to see how **נס פורים** happened before **נס חנוכה** (which occurred during the second **בית המקדש**), even though **פורים** is after **חנוכה** in our calendar year.
7. **בית שני** stood for 420 years. Although we no longer had **נבואה**, we still had the most **קדוש** place in the world rebuilt—we could come close to Hashem in the **בית המקדש** once again.
8. During this time period, **נס חנוכה** took place.
9. Towards the end of this time period, because of **חינם**, the second **בית המקדש** was destroyed, and we were sent into the long **גלות** which we are still in now.
10. **חורבן בית שני** took place in the same time period as **עשרה הרוגי מלכות**. Students can write this event in beneath the post-it displaying the **חורבן**.

ג. שני אלפים ימות המשיח

- **תורה** began to flourish. During תקופת האמוראים, **תלמוד בבלי** and **תלמוד ירושלמי** were written so that **תורה** would not be forgotten in **גלות**. Examples of אמוראים that students may be familiar with are listed, for example **רב יוחנן**, **רבי שמואל**, **רבי אשי**, **רבי**, **מר בר רב**.
- During תקופת הגאונים, a tremendous amount of **תורה** was learned. Famous גאונים are listed: **חרם דרבינו גרשם** (whom students may recognize from the **רבינו גרשם** and **רבינו סעדיה הגאון**).
- The next time period is called תקופת ראשונים. At that time, famous תלמידי חכמים wrote **מפרשים** on the **תורה** (many of which students may be familiar with). **בעלי תוספות**, **רש"י** הקדוש, **בעלי תוספות**, and the **רמב"ם** are some of the well-known ראשונים, so their names are on the timeline.
- The Crusades took place during this time period; it was a time filled with bloodshed, as the Christians headed toward Eretz Yisrael and killed many Jewish people on their journey.

Please note that only select events were put onto אלף השלישי of the timeline. Feel free to add as you see fit, depending on the level of your students.

זכור ימות עולם

הספרי של עם ישראל

- Twenty four wagons, loaded with precious, priceless ספרים were burned at a public gathering and caused deep mourning amongst our nation. This event took place before the time of the printing press, so each ספר represented a tremendous amount of work. Many were the only copy that existed! (In fact, in those days the libraries would chain their important scholarly works to their desks so they should not get stolen.) Therefore, much irreplaceable תורה knowledge that had been written down went up in flames.
- The Spanish Expulsion and Inquisition is yet another painful chapter in the history of our people. Many Jews heroically stood strong and refused to convert to Christianity, and chose instead to wander to unknown lands, or even be killed על קדוש השם.
- Two great חכמים, spiritual giants, were sent to spread the light of תורה in these troublesome times: ר' יוסף קארו and אריז"ל. The אריז"ל taught the secrets of קבלה to his תלמידים, while ר' יוסף קארו wrote his famous ספר, the שלחן ערוך. Most הלכה that we follow today is credit to ר' יוסף קארו, who wrote down הלכה in a clear format.
- was a time of enormous suffering. The wild Cossacks, led by Bogdan Chmielnicki ימ"ש, rampaged through the Jewish towns with unprecedented cruelty and wrought destruction across Eastern Europe. This set the background for the unfortunate story of שבתי צבי. The אידן were convinced that all the suffering they had been through was surely the last stage of גלות before the coming of משיח. They allowed themselves to believe שבתי צבי was משיח, even when he began doing things that were clearly wrong.
- Hashem then sent the בעל שם טוב and his תלמידים to revive the people's flagging spirits and inject a spirit of חסידות and שמחה. Almost simultaneously, the ווילנא גאון and his תלמיד לימוד התורה began the Yeshiva Movement, strengthening התורה.
- The Enlightenment, known in history as the Enlightenment, was a time of spiritual darkness. Many Jewish people left the mesorah and joined the movements that swept across Europe, movements which encouraged people to question religion and reject the ways of old.
- The greatest of his generation, probably the greatest חפץ חיים, wrote many ספרים, amongst them the משנה ברורה that clarifies almost all areas of הלכה applicable to us in גלות, as well as ספר חפץ חיים, which teaches the הלכות הרע of לשון הרע, and ספר שמירת הלשון, which inspires us to improve our speech.
- The Enlightenment was closely followed by World War I. Soon afterward was the שואה, also referred to as the Holocaust, a tragedy which we are intimately familiar with. So many heroically held onto their אמונה and בטחון in Hashem, even in those unimaginably painful times. So many gave up their lives על קדוש השם. And then came rebirth, growth and the responsibility to carry on the flame of אידישקייט.
- If you'd like, you can put a class picture in the next box. This is it- it's up to us, the דור, to bring the final גאולה closer. May it come speedily in our days-אמן!