



It's More than a Poster- It's an Opportunity

Ideas for Integrating *Finding Our Roots* into your Teaching

Below we have listed each word builder shown on the poster, a verse from the *Tanakh* in which the root appears in some form, and a follow-up question.

Here are a few ways to use these materials:

- Give each student a root and the chapter and verse where it is found. Ask them to find it in the *Tanakh* and read it aloud. Keep in mind that:
 - Some verses have more than one root word
 - In some verses, not all letters of the root word appear
- Give students a copy of all of the verses. Ask them to circle the places where they can see all of the letters of the root word.*
- Give each student a root and the corresponding verse and ask them to find the root in the verse. Ask students to find the root in a different book or group of books after they have found in the verse you gave them. (They might use a concordance or www.sefaria.org.)
- If you teach prayer Hebrew, ask the students to find as many of these words as they can in a prayer. The *V'ahavta*, for example, contains a number of them.
- As a class, explore one root each week, reading the verse, and answering the question as a class. Alternatively, have the students read and discuss in pairs. They can all discuss the same question or answer different questions and share their thoughts with the group.



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אכל
Eat

Deuteronomy 8:10

דברים ח:י

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ

You shall eat and be satisfied and bless Adonai your God for the good land which God has given you.

You will eat and be satisfied and will bless. How often do you feel satisfied when you are eating or have eaten? Is blessing God when we are satisfied different than blessing God when we are not satisfied? How or why?

אמר
Say

Amos 2:6

עמוס ב:ו

כֹּה אָמַר יְקֹנֵק עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֶשְׁיבֶנּוּ עַל־מִכְרָם בְּכֶסֶף צְדִיק וְאֶבְיוֹן בְּעֶבֶר נַעֲלִים

Thus said Adonai, "For three transgressions of Israel and for four, I will not reverse it because they sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes."

This beginning of this sentence is often translated as "Thus said Adonai." There are many synonyms for "to say" in the *Tanakh*, among them "speak" and "tell." In this case, God is saying something harsh. Why does Amos use only the word, "אמר," and not use words explaining God's anger? In English-language literature, what words are used to signal that the speaker is angry? Do you think those words would suit a text about God?

בוא
Come

Exodus 15:23

שמות טו:כג

וַיָּבֹאוּ מִרְיָתָה וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְשִׁתּוֹת מַיִם מִמֶּרְהָ כִּי מָרִים הֵם עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ מֶרְהָ

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah.

We see the verb "to come" a lot in the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy as the story of the Israelites traveling through the dessert is told (or retold). We are often told that the Jewish people "came to" or arrived at one place or another, often where a battle or character-defining event occurred. What are the important places you have "come to" in your life? What makes them important?



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דבר
Speak

Numbers 21:5

במדבר כא:ה

וַיִּדְבֹּר הָעָם בֵּאלֹהִים וּבְמֹשֶׁה לֵּמָּה הֵעֲלִיתָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לָמוֹת בְּמִדְבָּר כִּי אֵין לָחֶם וְאֵין מַיִם וְנַפְשֵׁנוּ קָצָה בַּלֶּחֶם הַקָּלָקָל

And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, and there is no water; and our souls loathe this light bread."

In the next verse, God sends fiery serpents, which bite the people, resulting in some deaths. Based on the punishment, their act of defiance was quite serious. Why do you think speaking out or speaking against someone is so powerful? Can you think of a time when speaking against someone was warranted?

היה
Be

Exodus 3:14

שמות ג:יד

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶהְיֶה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם

And God said to Moshe (Moses), "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh [literally: I will be what I will be];" and God said, "Thus shall you say to the children of Israel, 'Ehyeh has sent me to you.'"

In the *Tanakh*, God has many names. Ehyeh Asher Eyeh is one that can be more complicated or difficult to understand. What do you think "I am what I am" or "I will be what I will be" means? Which of God's names do you relate to the most? If you had to give a name to God what would it be? Why?

הלך
Walk

Genesis 6:9

בראשית ו:ט

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלָּךְ נֹחַ

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous and wholehearted man in his generations; Noah walked with God.

The *Tanakh* talks about God using human terms. Why do you think the *Tanakh* speaks about God in this way? Does God really have feet? What does it mean that Noah walked with God? Do you know anyone who walks with God? What do they do that makes you think so?



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ילד

Give birth

Genesis 11:26

בראשית יא:כו

וַיְחִי־תֵרַח שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה וַיֻּלְּד אֶת־אַבְרָם אֶת־נָחוֹר וְאֶת־הָרָן.

And Terach lived seventy years and begot Avram (Abram), Nahor and Haran.

This verse is one of more than twenty in this chapter devoted to detailing the lineage between Noah and Avraham (Abraham, here still known as Avram). Why do you think the Torah is so obsessed with ancestry and lineage? If you could know who the members of your family were up to ten generations back, would you be interested in knowing? Explain your answer.

יצא

Go out

1 Samuel 13:10

שמואל א יג:י

וַיְהִי כְּכַלְתּוֹ לְהַעֲלוֹת הָעֹלָה וְהִנֵּה שְׁמוּאֵל בָּא וַיֵּצֵא שְׂאוּל לְקָרְאֵתוֹ לְבָרְכּוֹ

And it came to pass that, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Shmuel (Samuel) came; and Sha'ul (Saul) went out to meet him, that he might bless him.

Sha'ul was the first king of B'nei Yisrael (the Israelites). Shmuel was the prophet who anointed him and relayed God's wishes to him. How do you think Sha'ul felt about Shmuel that he went out to greet and bless him? Does it help to know that Sha'ul was a king and Shmuel was a prophet? Do you ever see someone from the window of your home or from the place you are sitting at school and get up and rush to greet them? How do you feel about these people?

ישב

Dwell/Sit

Psalms 23:6

תהלים כג:ו

אֵךְ טוֹב נְחֻסָּד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית יְקֹנֶךָ לָאֶרֶץ יָמִים

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I shall dwell in the house of Adonai forever

This is the last line of Psalm 23, often read at funerals. It is meant to comfort people in times of worry and sadness by assuring them that God will always be with them. Some people think the phrase "dwell in the house of Adonai forever" refers to the present life while others think it refers to life after death. What do you think? Describe your idea of dwelling in God's house.



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לקח
Take

Job 1:21

איוב א:כא

וַיֹּאמֶר עָרִם יָצֵאתִי [נִצָּאתִי] מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי וְעָרִם אָשׁוּב שָׁמָּה יִקְוֶה נָתַן וַיִּהְיֶה לִּקְחֹה יְהִי שֵׁם יְקֻוֹק מְבָרָךְ

And he (Iyov/Job) said, "I came out of my mother's womb naked, and naked shall I return; Adonai has given and Adonai has taken away; Blessed be the name of Adonai."

This verse is at the end of the first chapter of the book of Iyov, after all of Iyov's children have been killed and all his possessions destroyed. After losing everything, instead of cursing or giving up on God, he simply says God gives, and God takes away. What do you think of this attitude? Do you think God gives and takes away things as God chooses?

מות
Die

Genesis 2:17

בראשית ב:יז

וּמִעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת

...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

In referring to the consequences for eating from the Tree of Knowledge, the text uses the root מ-ו-ת twice. Why is death noted twice when once might have been sufficient to get the point across? Are there times when someone needs to hear something twice in order for it to sink in?

נשא
Carry/Lift

Psalms 121:1

תהלים קכא:א

שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יִבָּא עֲזָרִי

A Song of Ascents. I will lift up my eyes to the mountains: From where shall my help come?

In this poetic phrase, the author "lifts up" his eyes to find God. What does it mean to "lift up" your eyes? Why does the author not use a simpler word like *look*?



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נתן
Give/
Allow

1 Kings 5:9

מלכים א ה:ט

וַיִּתֵּן אֱלֹהִים חֲכָמָה לְשֹׁלֹמֹה וְתְבוּנָה הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד וְרֹחַב לֵב כַּחוֹל אֲשֶׁר
עַל־שֹׁפֶת הַיָּם

And God gave Shlomo (Solomon) great wisdom and understanding, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.

King Shlomo was famous for his wisdom. This verse suggests that God gave it to him along with understanding and a large heart. Do you think that our traits are God-given? Why or why not? Why would Shlomo need understanding and a large heart with wisdom? What happens if someone has only one of those traits?

עבר
Cross over

Numbers 35:10

במדבר לה:י

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן

Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, "When you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan..."

The root meaning "to cross over" is also used to mean "transgress." (This doesn't mean that the people who crossed over the Jordan River in the verse above transgressed.) Using both definitions, the root is sometimes used to indicate a spiritual change. What is it about being in a new place or transgressing that changes a person's spirit? Give a personal example.

עלה
Go up

Exodus 24:18

שמות כד:יח

וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הָעָנָן וַיַּעַל אֶל־הָהָר וַיְהִי מֹשֶׁה בְּהָר אֲרָבָעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים
לַיְלָה

And Moshe entered into the midst of the cloud and went up to the mount; and Moshe was on the mount forty days and forty nights.

Of course you "go up" a mountain; there is not another realistic alternative word choice other than "climb." However, ע-ל-ה often indicates a spiritual quality. What about Moshe ascending Mount Sinai is spiritual? We use the term "עלייה" to describe someone who has chosen to move to Israel and become a permanent resident. Why do we use a spiritual term in this case?



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עמד

Stand

Genesis 18:22

בראשית יח:כב

וַיִּפְּנוּ מִשָּׁם הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ סְדֹמָה וְאַבְרָהָם עֹדֵנוּ עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

The men turned from there and went to S'dom (Sodom), and Avraham remained standing before Adonai.

Often, "taking a stand" or "standing up" for someone is seen as a positive thing. In this verse, we see Avraham standing before God and ready to challenge God about God's decision to destroy S'dom and Amarah (Gomorrah). When have you stood up for someone? Why did you stand up for that person? What was the result? How did that person feel afterwards? How did standing up for someone make you a different person?

עשה

Make/Do

Psalms 118:24

תהלים קיח:כד

זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְקֹקֵק נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בּוֹ

This is the day which Adonai has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

This verse is part of one of the Psalms that comprise Hallel, the prayers of thanks and praise recited on holidays and Rosh Chodesh. The Torah uses the root, ב-ר-א, to describe God's creation of the world. This verse uses the root, ע-ש-ה, to describe God's making each day. What is the difference between creating something and making something? What does it mean for us that God makes each day?

צוה

Command

Deuteronomy 6:6

דברים ו:ו

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶנֶכִּי מְצַוֶּנְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לְבָבְךָ

And these words, which I command you this day, shall be on your heart.

We recognize these words from the *V'ahavta*. Often, we think of a command as something we **must do**. What does it mean to take commandments to heart? How might you fulfill a command differently if you took it to heart than if you did not?



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קום
Get up

Song of Songs 2:13

שיר השירים ב:יג

הַתְּאֵנָה חֲנֻטָּה פְּגִיָּה וְהַגָּפְנִים סָמְדֵר נָתְנוּ רֵיחַ קוֹמִי לָכִי [לָךְ] רַעֲיָתִי יָפְתִּי
וּלְכִי לָךְ

The fig-tree puts forth her green figs, And the vines in blossom give forth their fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away

This sentence comes from a love song. Some people think that is between two people in love, some between God and the Jewish People. In this sentence, the speaker asks the person to come with him in a formal way, using a command. When you want someone to come with you, what words do you use? Why do you use those particular words?

קרא
Call/
Happen

Genesis 35:15

בראשית לה:טו

וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶת־שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵתוֹ שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים בֵּית־אֵל

And Ya'akov (Jacob) called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Beth-el.

Have you ever had the opportunity to name something? How does what a place is called have an impact on your experience of it? Have you ever called a place a name that was different from what other people called it? Why did you call the place by a different name?

ראה
See

Exodus 33:20

שמות לג:כ

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תוּכַל לִרְאוֹת אֶת־פָּנַי כִּי־לֹא יִרְאֶנִי הָאָדָם וְחַי

And God said, "You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."

This text suggests that seeing God's face is so powerful that Moshe will not be able to withstand it. What does it mean to truly see someone or something? Why is this experience so powerful?



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שוב

Return

Genesis 22:19

בראשית כב:יט

וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נַעֲרָיו וַיִּקְמוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל־בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם בְּבֵאֵר שֶׁבַע

So Avraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheva; and Abraham dwelled at Beersheva.

This verse occurs after Avraham nearly sacrifices his son, Yitzchak (Isaac). He returns to his servants by himself. Returning to someplace you've been before can be powerful. Describe a time that you returned from a particularly powerful experience. How were you different after you returned? How is returning someplace alone different from returning with others?

שלח

Send

Numbers 13:16

במדבר יג:טז

אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לְתוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־נוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

These are the names of the men that Moshe sent to spy out the land. And Moshe called Hoshea the son of Nun Yehoshua (Joshua).

What is the difference between being sent to do something and choosing to do something on your own? How is it different when you are sent to do something that you might have done anyway? How does being sent have a positive or negative connotation?

שמע

Hear

Deuteronomy 6:4

דברים ו:ד

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

Hear, O Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai is One.

This root is commonly translated as "hear" but in some instances, including the prayer of the same name, it can also be translated as "listen." What is the difference between asking someone to hear and asking someone to listen?