

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו.
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך,
יום השביעי שבת לה'

SHABBAT LASHEM

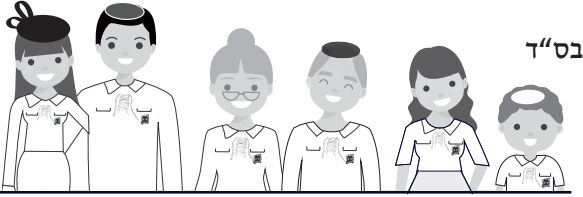
THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT BEREISHIT

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THE EARTH WAS ? AND ?

AVISHAI MARCUS
SHEVET TZION

תהו ובהו. These two words are incredibly complicated to translate. For thousands of years, *rishonim*, *acharonim*, philosophers, linguists, theologians, and academics have grappled with these two words. Why? It is tantamount to me asking you to imagine a new colour. We have never experienced a reality of **וּבְהוּ**, so it is next to impossible to imagine what that looks like. I would like to explore three approaches from three very different people.

Sforno

Sforno explains (through a Kabbalistic interpretation) that the raw materials from which Hashem created the are called **תהו** and the external appearance of those raw materials is **בהו**. In other words, *tohu* is used to indicate that at that point, the world was merely potential; however, the potential had not yet materialised.

The proof he brings is from *Shmuel Aleph* (12:21) when Shmuel is rebuking the people. He says that they should not turn to worthless things because **בְּיַתְהוּ הַקִּינָה**, i.e., the phenomena merely existed in imagination, not in reality. We don't see **תהו** clearly because it lives in the abstract, we only see **בהו** because it's the manifestation of that potential.

Jordan Peterson

In his Bible series, Jordan Peterson explains these words to associated with the notion of endless,

profound potential. The literal translation often given is chaos and order. For order to follow chaos, chaos must have potential. He explains (citing Mesopotamian mythology) that chaos and order must be locked together for God to create the world.

Whilst both these thoughts are incredibly complex, and I most certainly do not understand them fully, it seems as though they are getting at the same idea. The world was once potential and a manifestation of potential. It was from this that God went forth and made the world.

Ba'al Haturim

A slightly more traditional approach is offered by the Ba'al Haturim (only if you're a fan of *Gematria*). He brings the Midrash (*Bereishit Rabbah*), which explains that the words "and the earth was chaos and void" has a numerical equivalent of 'two thousand years without Torah.' i.e., the first two thousand years of the world, where there was no Torah (see *Sanhedrin* 97b)

What does this all mean for us? One may be able to make the jump to say that humans are a microcosm of the Sforno/Jordan Peterson suggestion. In our thoughts, we may have specific desires, goals and wishes. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we told Hashem about our aspirations. This is, in the understanding of the aforementioned thinkers, the 'chaos' that exists within us. It is unrealised potential. May we merit to turn our 'chaotic' potential into an 'orderly' reality.

AVISHAI IS IN SHEVET TZION AND WAS A MADRICH ON SEENAI MACHANE 5781

London In 17:40 Out 18:40
Manchester In 17:47 Out 18:51
Cambridge In 17:40 Out 18:42
Brighton In 17:44 Out 18:44

Oxford In 17:46 Out 18:48
Bristol In 17:52 Out 18:54
Birmingham In 17:48 Out 18:50
Nottingham In 17:44 Out 18:47

Leeds In 17:44 Out 18:48
Liverpool In 17:50 Out 18:54
Thaxted In 17:40 Out 18:41
Jerusalem In 17:25 Out 18:37

SHALIACH'S CORNER: TESHUVA WITH RAV AVICHAJ PART FIVE



After seeing different aspects of *teshuva* and describing it as one of the most wonderful experiences of our religious lives, we might still feel that connecting to *teshuva* isn't easy for us. We might think

that *teshuva* is a *mitzva* of *yamim noraim* only, or maybe it is just a way to get back on track after we sin.

I think that by exploring a bit about the world Hashem put us in, we will learn that this is a mistaken thought; as Rav Kook states in *Orot HaTeshuva* (chapter 5, paragraph 1) "*teshuva* is the most healthy feeling of the soul".

The fact is that all creation is based on this method of *teshuva* if we understand *teshuva* in the right way. Rambam states (Shemona Perakim, chapter 1) that one must understand the soul in order to treat it correctly, what is good for it and what is not, exactly like the doctor must know how different parts of the body work in order to heal them with the correct method. Rav Kook learned from this principle that *teshuva* is not only about getting back on track after sinning, but it is the generator of everything in our life. Every aspect of our life needs to be balanced and adjusted to the current situation.

Living a balanced life, while making sure that every need is filled without anything missing from it – that is living a life of *teshuva*. *Teshuva* is not relevant only after sin; it is what prevents the sin, what gives us the power to restart after a sin and it is the life force of everything we have and do in life.

Let us explore some examples and start with our very own bodies: every one of us is made up of billions and billions of cells. When we look at ourselves, or at others, it seems that the body doesn't change much. However, we know that in fact changes are made all the time; dead cells are kicked out and, in their place, new cells are

created. A healthy body must adjust and maintain a healthy balance between dying cells and new cells – this is our bodies practising *teshuva*.

Nature around us does the same: we know that the air around us is a mixture of different components. Some of these are good for us and we need to get access to them, but some are bad, and we need to keep away from them. One such unhealthy chemical is CO₂. Hashem created our bodies in such a way that when we breathe in air, we use the oxygen and breathe out the CO₂.

When we think about it, if this working method would continue for a long time, the oxygen in the air around us would eventually become depleted

and the air itself mainly comprised of CO₂, which would obviously be very dangerous for us. But Hashem 'planted' the solution to the problem. Trees and plants do the exact opposite of what we do: through photosynthesis, they "breathe in" the CO₂ in the air for their growth, then "breathe out" the oxygen back into the open air. In this way, Hashem made sure that the balance would be kept.

**LIVING A
BALANCED LIFE
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OF TESHUVA...
ALL CREATION IS
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METHOD OF
TESHUVA**

All of these equilibria are maintained in what we now understand to be a form of *teshuva*.

In the same way that nature around us keeps its balance and adjusts itself when needed, that is how we need to live too.

In the *Kuzari*, R' Yehuda Halevi defines the *chasid* as one who controls all aspects of his life, making sure no need goes unattended – that is how we want to live. That is what a life of *teshuva* looks like all year long.

May we merit to live that life.

**RAV AVICHAJ GOODMAN IS IN SHEVET NETZACH
AND IS THE NEW RAV SHALIACH OF BNEI AKIVA.
TO CONTACT THE RAV, EMAIL RAV@BAUK.ORG.**



TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

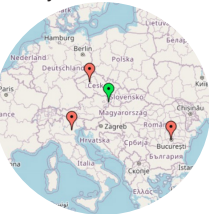
CHATAM SOFER | YAHRZEIT 25TH TISHREI

Continuing our European adventures, we head back on the bus to Venice and board a train from Santa Lucia station to Vienna Meidling. We now need to move across Venice on the S-Bahn to Schwedenplatz harbour to catch the Twin City Line, that runs between Vienna and Bratislava. We dock at Novy Most in Bratislava, from where it's a ten-minute walk to the Ibis hotel at the end of Zamocka street, former house in Pressburg of Rabbi Moshe Schreiber.

Rabbi Mosher Schreiber was born in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1762. He studied under the famed Rabbi Nathan Adler (after whom the former Chief Rabbi of Britain, Rabbi Nathan Adler, was named) and became the Rav of Pressburg, modern-day Bratislava. He is known as Chatam Sofer after his work *Chiddushei Torat Moshe Sofer*, *sofer* being the Hebrew translation of *Schreiber*.

In Pressburg, he became known for his strong stance against the nascent Reform movement. The Chatam Sofer is often credited as being the founder of the Chareidi movement, with his rallying cry of *chadash asur min hatorah*, 'anything new is forbidden from the Torah' (originally a quote from the laws of *chadash*, the new year's grain, that is forbidden until the *Omer*-offering is brought). Part of the initial ideology of the reform movement identified certain elements of Jewish practise that were 'essential' and others that were 'peripheral' and hence discarded. In response to this, the Chatam Sofer took two extreme positions: (1) he viewed all current customs and practices as binding upon the community with no possibility of being overturned in the future (for example, the Ashkenazi practice of not eating *kitniyot* on *Pesach*); and (2) he maintained that all aspects of the current *halakha* were an integral part of the tradition received by Moses at Sinai, thus negating the concept of the time-axis of *halakha* and indeed any concept of halakhic development.

In a similar vein, the Chatam Sofer viewed the move to give Jews equal rights and full Hungarian citizenship as a dangerous risk to Jewish identity and observance. Interestingly, in this respect he adopted a similar position to cultural Zionist Achad Ha'am; both opposed Jewish emancipation as it would diminish Jewish national identity and connection to the national homeland of *Eretz Yisrael*. Consequently, to combat these ideals the Chatam Sofer emphasised the value of *Eretz Yisrael*, while also emphatically distinguishing between Jews and non-Jews.



Following on from this, two rulings will serve to illustrate the aforementioned position of the Chatam Sofer. Firstly, in an incredibly extreme statement, he doubts whether medicine practiced on non-Jewish patients will have the same effect on Jewish patients, as he writes that the very bodies of Jews are different to the bodies of non-Jews. Secondly, to resolve a seeming contradiction between two *sugyot* in the Talmud, the Chatam Sofer argues that it is a *mitzva* to interrupt the ever-present obligation of Torah study in order to harvest the produce of the land of Israel, as part of the mitzva of *Yishuv Eretz Yisrael*, 'settling the land of Israel' – and not only are agricultural activities included within this *mitzva*, but any and all professions that are required in a functioning state. He goes on to say that one who lives in *Eretz Yisrael* is comparable to one who wears *tefillin* all day. In recent years, these Zionist comments of the Chatam Sofer have been censored.

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES:



Clockwise from top-left: Israel Machane Group 2 reunion, Soup in the Sukkah, Lishmah, National Shiva Shabbaton, Birmingham Student Bet Midrash.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Lishmah**, our women's beit midrash programme, continues this Tuesday, 25th October!

- London **Student Bet Midrash** is resuming on Thursday 27th October!

- A Shabbaton for **Shevet Seenai** will be held at the London Bayit over **4th-5th November!** Sign up at bauk.org/shevet-shabbaton.

- Bogrim are invited to the **Student Bet Midrash Shabbaton** in Alkham, Kent! Taking place over the **11th-13th November**, visit www.studentbetmidrash.co.uk for more details.

- **Svivot** begin weekly activities this week! To find

your local Sviva, contact Rafi at svivot@bauk.org.

- **Winter Machane** applications are now open! To sign up and for more information, visit bauk.org/camps.

- **Winter Machane tafkidim** applications are now open! For junior tafkidim, visit bauk.org/junior-tafkid, for senior tafkidim, visit bauk.org/senior-tafkid

- A **cocktail evening** for **Manchester and Leeds Bnei Akiva parents** will be taking place on 29th October!



Lishmah Beit Midrash Programme

Bnei Akiva invites all Bogrot and sixth-form women to join our Lishmah Beit Midrash Programme!

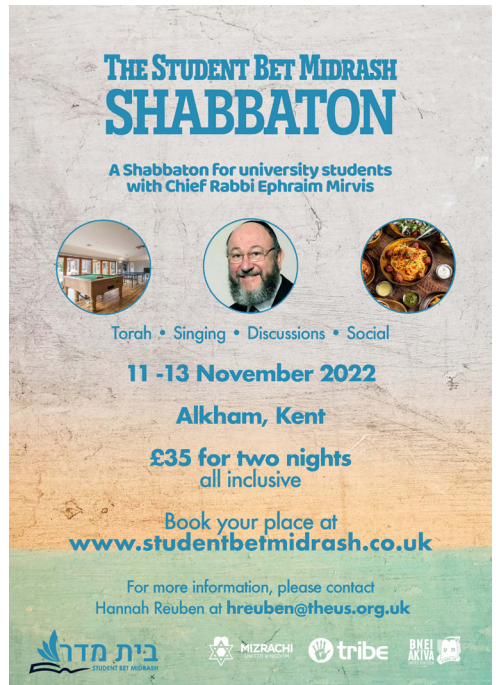
What? Open Bet Midrash followed by a choice of Chaburot, led by educators and peers

Where? 2 Hallswelle Rd

When? Every Tuesday evening 8-10pm

Come and be part of this dynamic Makom Torah!

Contact chinuch@bauk.org for more info!



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Logos: Bnei Akiva, Mizrachi, Tribe, Beit Midrash Student Bet Midrash



SHABBAT SEENAI

4 & 5 TH NOVEMBER

Year 13, lets spend an amazing shabbat together as a shevet while also having a great opportunity to hear more about our hachshara programmes!

Bnei Akiva logo

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