

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

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARSHAT TOLEDOT

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בס"ד



BEFFUDLED BLESSINGS TOVA LIEBERT SHEVET MORASHA

This *parasha* is rife with morally questionable and puzzling behaviour displayed by our *avot* and *imahot*, most notably Ya'akov deceiving his father to gain Yitzchak's blessing, and Yitzchak's decision to bequeath the blessings to the evil Eisav, instead of the *tzaddik* and father of the Jewish nation, Ya'akov. However I would like to focus on and suggest an interpretation of Rivka's questionable actions: her choice to pressure her son to disobey and beguile his elderly blind father, putting both herself and Ya'akov at the dangerous peril of the mighty and furious Eisav. Why didn't she just talk to her husband and convince him that Ya'akov was the son that merited the birthright, and not Eisav? My understanding of Rivka's actions, based on certain *mefarshim*, help paint a clearer picture of what was really going on here.

There were two disparate aspects to the inheritance that Yitzchak was to pass on to his sons:

1. The *bechora* (birthright): this related to the leadership of the family and the continuation of the spread of ethical monotheism - a spiritual blessing;
2. The *berachot* (blessings): this related to the double portion of the land.

When Eisav comes in from the field after a hard day's work, famished, it is the birthright, the spiritual mission and leadership role that he relinquishes. He is not interested in the future of the Jewish people and their mission. Eisav was only interested in the physical, double portion of the land that came with the inheritance. The fact that Ya'akov chose to buy the birthright, the spiritual

leadership, as opposed to the double portion, is a reflection of Ya'akov's integrity and commitment to the Jewish people, caring for the future of *Am Yisrael* rather than his physical wealth. Clearly he is deserving of the leadership role, and not Eisav. Contrary to the misconception that Yitzchak planned on giving both aspects of the inheritance to Eisav, Yitzchak knew that Ya'akov was entitled to the birthright and planned on giving it to him. According to the Malbim, Rivka did in fact approach Yitzchak and try to reason with him that he should give the double portion of the land to Ya'akov. However, Yitzchak was worried that Ya'akov would be too involved in the spiritual elements of the Jewish people to be able to manage the physical responsibility of the land as well, and therefore decided to bequeath the physical roles of the land to Eisav.

Rivka, however, understood that the spiritual message cannot be realised without the physical aspect of the land - we can only be a God-fearing and serving nation with a physical land where we can serve God. She therefore saw it as absolutely necessary for the future of the Jewish people for Ya'akov to receive both the physical and spiritual aspects of the inheritance. She utilised the only means at her disposal: deception. Once Yitzchak saw that Ya'akov had successfully carried out this physical action of obeying the words of his mother, and that he had done so with wisdom and intelligence, Yitzchak realised that Ya'akov was also capable of taking physical and political responsibility. Consequently, he gave Ya'akov both aspects of the inheritance, knowing in fact that he was giving it to Ya'akov and not to Eisav.

TOVA IS IN SHEVET MORASHA AND WAS CO-ROSH OF BET MIDRASH PROGRAMME 5782

London In 15:45 Out 16:51
Manchester In 15:47 Out 16:58
Cambridge In 15:43 Out 16:53
Brighton In 15:50 Out 16:57

Oxford In 15:51 Out 16:59
Bristol In 15:57 Out 17:05
Birmingham In 15:52 Out 17:00
Nottingham In 15:45 Out 16:55

Leeds In 15:43 Out 16:55
Liverpool In 15:50 Out 17:01
Thaxted In 15:45 Out 16:52
Jerusalem In 16:00 Out 17:15

SHALIACH'S CORNER: Q&A WITH RAV AVICHAH



Question:

Hi Rav, if Hashem is a supreme being that does everything for a reason and makes no mistakes, how is it possible that *Moshe Rabbeinu* managed to 'change God's mind' after the sin of the golden calf (where Hashem threatened to wipe out *Am Yisrael*)?

Answer:

This is a **great question** with an even greater one hiding between the lines, so to answer I want to explain a bit about the meaning of *tefilla*.

There is a special *halacha* that when we daven to Hashem **we must know before whom we are standing** when davening. "דע לפני מי אתה עומד". The reason for this halacha is simple: one must be sure that he or she is praying to Hashem and not to some idol.

We must ask ourselves: **how can we know that we are actually standing in front of Hashem?** Do you know Him? **Can** we know him? After all, Hashem is infinite, He has no body nor the image of a body and is not attainable from our point of view. So, how can we be confident that we are praying to the right persona?

Let's say that I have the same problem with emails: there is someone that I want to reach via email, but I don't have the address. How can I get in touch?

Well, the best way is if that person sends me an email, and then I can respond.

The same with Hashem!

As human beings, he is out of our reach. But, if he reaches out to us we can respond. This means that if Hashem doesn't address me first, I can't address him back.

So, **the only ones that can daven are those to whom Hashem spoke, AKA *nevi'im*, prophets.** Once Hashem speaks to them, they can answer back.

This also answers a serious question: **how do we dare tell Hashem how to rule the world?** Where do we get the chutzpa to think we know better than him what to do, and give him our advice?

The *nevi'im* do! They know how Hashem wants to rule the world because they talk to Him, they hear directly from Him what He wants and how, so they know to daven.

"THE ONLY ONES THAT CAN DAVEN ARE THOSE TO WHOM HASHEM SPOKE, AKA NEVI'IM, PROPHETS. ONCE HASHEM SPEAKS TO THEM, THEY CAN ANSWER BACK."

If we search through the Tanach for the people that daven to Hashem, **they are always *nevi'im*.** Distinctly, we can find this principle with Avimelekh seeking healing, and Hashem told him that Avraham will pray for him **because** Avraham is a prophet.

So, back to Moshe: According to all of the above, we must say that **Moshe**

Rabbeinu knew that Hashem wants him to save *Am Yisrael* by his davening.

Chazal even see this within Hashem's words:

"הָרַף נִמְנִי וְאַשְׁמִידֵם".

"Now, let Me be"

Chazal understand this as a hint to Moshe: 'let me go so that I can destroy them,' meaning that **if Moshe doesn't let go (as if he is holding on to Hashem), Hashem won't hurt *Am Yisrael*.**

So, Hashem's intention was that Moshe would daven and save *Am Yisrael*. Moshe knew that because he is a prophet who knows Hashem's desires. **Hashem never changed his mind.**

RAV AVICHAH GOODMAN IS IN SHEVET NETZACH AND IS THE RAV SHALIACH OF BNEI AKIVA. TO CONTACT THE RAV, OR TO BE ADDED TO THE Q&A WHATSAPP GROUP, EMAIL RAV@BAUK.ORG.

TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

HAKHAM DAVID IDAN | NAHALA 1ST KISLEV

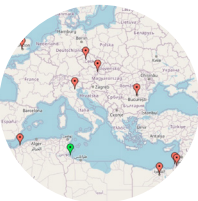
Time to leave Egypt (#shemot14:13) on a plane bound for Tunis-Carthage Airport [TUN], and don't worry, I've given us a whole day to explore the ruins before we board our connecting flight to Djerba-Zarzis International Airport [DJE]. Apparently there are no public transport connections from the airport so everyone just takes a taxi, so we'll expense that to BA and drive to the الحارة الصغيرة, where the El Ghriba synagogue has stood for over two millennia.

The island of Jerba has been home to Jews for over 2,500 years. When the first temple was destroyed in 586 BCE, the *kohanim* who were serving there at its destruction fled to Jerba, allegedly taking with them a piece of the temple. For this reason, in some Jewish literature Jerba has been known as the 'Island of *Kohanim*'; modern genetic tests have confirmed the presence of the Cohen Modal Haplotype in the *kohanim* there. The El Ghriba synagogue in Jerba has been in use since the *kohanim* arrived there, and, according to legend, the stone taken from the first temple was incorporated into its structure.

Interestingly, Jews (and Muslims) living in Jerba observe unique Jewish practises. Many Jews wear a black belt around their waist as a sign of mourning for the destruction of the temple. On *erev shabbat*, they bake their bread in a communal oven and bring their pots to a local baker who will keep them warm over Shabbat, and the *hakham* of the community sounds the *shofar* to announce the onset of Shabbat. Strangely, the Muslims in the region also observe some Jewish practices, such as lighting a candle on Friday night.

Hakham David Idan was born into this unique Jewish community in 1873, the son of Moshe Idan, a well-known *dayan* in Jerba and Gabès. However, Moshe Idan died when Hakham David, his son, was just 18 years old, the customary age of marriage for men in Jerba. Thus when he got married to his wife Mazal-Tov, the burden of sustaining his mother and siblings also fell to him and he began to work. He managed to accrue a large amount of

real estate, which allowed him to dedicate more of his time to study. Hakham Idan was appointed as *nasi* of the Jerban community, and also set up the first publishing house there, which he called *HaD'fus HaTzioni*. This publishing house became a magnet for many works from across North Africa. In 1919, he and a few other *hakhamim* set up a Zionist organisation called *Ateret Tzion*, to develop the Zionist sentiment within the Jerban community. At the end of his life, he tried to make *aliyah*, but his application was rejected by the Israeli Ministry of Health. He died shortly after, and his wife died the following day.



Hakham Idan believed that the main purpose of Torah was to actualise its practise. He writes that one should not be a 'pious fool' who sits and learns all day, not fulfilling any *mitzva* because of the statement of the *hakhamim* that 'Torah study is equated to all other *mitzvot*.' He writes further that especially one who is engaged in communal work has a greater obligation to neglect the study of Torah and even of *tefilla* if required, in order to tend to the needs of the community. He also spoke publicly about how it is not enough to be an armchair Zionist (no he didn't use those exact terms). He called for a mass *aliyah* and encouraged anyone who could afford it to do so, especially while still young, in order to build up the land and play an active role in its resettlement. No matter how much is built and planted by the Zionists and others, we have not fulfilled our obligation; every one of us must strive to build and plant, whether by physically doing so or by monetarily supporting these endeavours.

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES:



Clockwise from left: Bogrim learning in memory of Rabbi Sacks, *havdalla* at the SBM Shabbaton, bogrot studying at Lishmah and *motza'ei shabbat* at the Shevet Seenai Shabbaton.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Shoutout to our **Dor L'Dor** programme, rejuvenating the community in **Kenton** this week!
- **Lishmah**, our women's beit midrash programme, continues this **Tuesday 29th November!**
- **Vaad**, for male bogrim, will be continuing the discussion of the **shalosh shevuot** with Rav Avichai on **Tuesday 29th November!**
- London **Student Bet Midrash** continues on Thursday 1st December!

- **Winter Machane** applications are still open! To sign up and for more information, visit bauk.org/camps.
- **Israel Machane** applications will open on **Wednesday 7th December!** Visit bauk.org/israel to register interest.
- **Mazal Tov** to our Northern Shlichim **Lani and Elad Eshel**, on the birth of a **baby girl!**

WINTER MACHANE 5783
22-29 DECEMBER

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REGISTER YOUR INTEREST
bauk.org/israel

BNEI AKIVA ISRAEL MACHANE 5783

more than just a tour

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THE JEWISH EDUCATION TRUST FINANCES PART FOR ISRAEL 'AKIVA!

UKA Israel Experience is organised by the Jewish Agency for Israel and supported by UKA

LISHMAH תשפ"ג

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

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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](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org) for more info!

VA'AD

Join Rav Avichai learning through the *shalosh shevuot* (three oaths), and how these relate to Zionism

Monday Nights
10:15pm

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