

## Coming Up...

Full details of all our events are available on our Facebook page, or call the Bayit on 0208 209 1319 to speak to one of the team.

- Watch out for Winter Machane applications, which are out now! For full information, contact Yehuda at camps@bauk.org
- For those in Shevet Eitan and above, Winter Tafkaid Machane applications have opened! Apply through our website: www.bauk.org
- The Mazkirut Campus Roadshow is coming to Manchester on Monday and Leeds on Tuesday morning.
- There are information evenings about Hachshara taking place on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November in London, and Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November in Manchester. For full information about both of these events, contact Esther at israel@bauk.org
- Calling Shevet Ne'eman... Israel Machane reunion Shabbatonim are on 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> November! Spend one more amazing Shabbat with your group! Contact Esther at israel@bauk.org for details.
- Come along to the Bogrim's shiur with Rav Ari on Thursday evenings! Email rav@bauk.org for more information.

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Volume 21 - No 3  
8<sup>th</sup> Cheshvan 5775  
1<sup>st</sup> November 2014



# Shabbat Lashem 'ושבתה הארץ שבת לה

לך לך - Lech Lecha

## Focus In, Focus Out

Yossi Hambling

In a rather painful ending to this week's Parsha we learn that Hashem commanded Avraham to circumcise himself and all the other males in his household. Whilst it is evident from the pasukim that Avraham willingly carried out the will of Hashem, the Midrash Tanchuma offers a slightly different version of events, in which Avraham asks his three friends, Aner, Eshkol and Mamrei, whether or not he should go through with the Brit Mila. Aner and Eshkol discourage him, as they are concerned that it would be too dangerous, but Mamrei encourages him to fulfil Hashem's word, which Avraham duly does.

This Midrash is rather surprising. Why would Avraham ask his friends whether or not he should listen to Hashem?

The Avnei Nezer (Rabbi Avraham Bornstein) offers a pertinent answer to this question. He notes that Avraham had dedicated his life to outreach work, persuading all who passed his tent to believe in Hashem. He knew that by undergoing a circumcision he would be physically setting himself apart from everyone else in the world, and this worried him. Would he still be able to connect with those he was trying to reach out to? This was the real question he was asking his friends. Aner and Eshkol were certainly not against Avraham listening to Hashem's command, but they did share his fears. Mamrei, on the other hand, believed that he would still have sufficient impact on the wider world, despite the fact, or perhaps even because of the fact, that he was now evidently different from them. Indeed, a mentor holds influence because his greater experience sets him apart from his student.

At first glance, Avraham's attitude here appears to stand in stark contrast to his actions at the beginning of the Parsha, in which he gladly follows Hashem's command to go to Eretz Yisrael "for his own benefit and good." (See Bereishit 12:1 and Rashi, ibid.) To the best of my knowledge, no Midrash exists on this Passuk in which Avraham fears he can no longer impact wider life in Charan!

In truth, though, this is not a contradiction. As we read in Kohelet a few weeks ago, there is a time for everything. Sometimes we have to take a stand, ignoring the people around us and following what we believe in. Other times, however, we can stay true to our beliefs whilst also adopting a more outward focus, considering others' perceptions. Our challenge is to decide when to focus in and when to focus out.

Yossi Hambling is in Shevet Hagevurah and was the Technical Organiser of Bet Base Machane 5774.

Celebrating a simcha? A special birthday coming up? Include Bnei Akiva in your celebrations by sponsoring Shabbat Lashem! For details email [shabbat@bauk.org](mailto:shabbat@bauk.org)

## Editor's Corner

Shalom!

We wish Shabbat Shalom to our sixty chaverim from Shevet Eitan, who are at our pre Hachshara shabbaton in Borehamwood and Elstree synagogue!

Our Bogrim brought incredible ruach to the Western Marble Arch community over ShabbatUK, leading inspiring davening and communal meals.

Additionally, our svivot across the UK made key contributions to ShabbatUK by running exciting educational activities for thousands of people. Kol hakavod to our Roshim, Sganim and Madrichim!

Shabbat Shalom!

### THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

	🕒	🕒
London	16:21	17:22
Manchester	16:23	17:28
Birmingham	16:24	17:31
Cambridge	16:16	17:24
Leeds	16:15	17:24
Liverpool	16:24	17:34
Jerusalem	16:11	17:27

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## Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

### How To Make A Soul

We all strive to live our lives in complete devotion to the Torah. But what does it mean to live a Torah lifestyle? What is the underlying message that the Torah teaches?

Avraham is called upon to set-out on a life-changing journey to Israel. Interestingly, we are told very little about Avraham's history prior to "Lech lecha"; in fact, only one *pasuk* alludes to what he and Sarah did before establishing the foundations of our faith. We are told that Avraham answered Hashem's call to go to Israel, and collected his belongings in order to travel (Bereishit 12:5):

**"And Avram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the souls that they had made in Charan; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."**

That Avraham journeyed with his family and possessions is understood. What, however, is the meaning of the "souls he made"? This is a unique expression is found only here in the whole of the Tanach. While the reference could be to the slaves that had been acquired whilst in Charan, this would not be a sufficient explanation: first, slaves could just as well be included in "all their possessions that they had gathered". Second, the acquisition of a slave is in no way the *making* of a soul!

The commentators therefore all agree that this expression points to Avraham and Sarah's endeavors before embarking on the journey to Israel. As Rashi notes:

**"They took them in under the wings of the Divine Presence. Avraham would convert the men and Sarah would convert the women."**

Against the backdrop of a world influenced by the idolatry, Avraham and Sarah inspired a revolution in faith, introducing mankind to a refreshing new way of looking at reality and suggesting a set of values millennia ahead of their time. In this way, they gave people "new life", empowering them to see the G-dliness within by believing in the G-d that transcends. Thus, quite literally, making their souls.

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 9a) offers a strange assertion, that Avraham and Sarah's "soul making" initiated the epoch of Torah in the world:

**"The world will last for six-thousand years: Two-thousand of confusion, two-thousand of Torah and two-thousand of the days of Mashiach ... When did the two-thousand years of Torah commence? From 'the souls that they made in Charan'."**

Why is this point considered to be the introduction of Torah in the world? A more obvious time would have been the actual receiving of the Torah at Sinai, nearly three-hundred years later. Alternately, according to tradition, Noach, Shem and Ever all studied Torah – why not indicate their time, close to a millennium prior to Avraham's birth, as the beginning of the epoch of Torah? What was unique about Avraham's contribution?

In contrast to those who preceded him, Avraham refused to keep the Torah to himself. While the faithfulness of Noach, Shem and Ever was steadfast, Avraham took his belief to a whole new level. For Avraham, not only was the Torah a means for personal connection to G-d, but it provided a holistic system to make all of reality more G-dly. It is not enough to believe in One G-d, and to "learn Torah", by living Torah we can actually change all of reality.

Torah is not to be aloof and disconnected from reality, rather it is meant to be fused with reality, and to uplift it. Avraham doesn't ask us to become spiritually high, rather he empowers us to change the world by offering an inspirational message expressed through a transformational lifestyle.

Avraham calls upon us to recognize the brilliant and empowering message of Torah, and thus to "make souls" – our own, and the collective soul of reality. By doing this we truly usher in the grandness of Torah into the world.

Rav Ari Faust is in Shevet Yechiam, and is Shaliach for Bnei Akiva and the Jewish Agency for Israel

Catching up with our gap year programmes in Israel...

Hello Hachshara!

### Shalom from Israel!

As part of the Hachshara Southern Tiyul, we went on a night hike to Har Tzfachot. I was expecting to see impressive mountain scenery once we climbed to the top, but I was surprised with a breathtaking view of Eilat and the Red Sea. From there we could also see Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt! Pictures just couldn't capture the beauty of the sunrise as we davened Shacharit there.

It was great to meet people from different programs and different countries - it was interesting to see exactly how much French I'd retained from GCSEs!

### From Rivky Posner

Rivky Posner is in Shevet Na'aleh, and is on Hachsharat Torani at Midreshet Harova,



### Talking to Bogrim who have made Aliyah

Leah Palmer (nee Steene)

#### WHAT WAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH BNEI AKIVA UK?

I was a madricha on machanot for as long as I lived in England, and sganit in Borehamwood sviva, but even after I moved to Israel, I stayed involved with Bnei Akiva UK by participating in your gap year programme, Hachsharat Torani in Midreshet Harova, and by writing the occasional article for Shabbat Lashem.

#### WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO MAKE ALIYAH?

I decided I wanted to make Aliyah on Israel Machane, and from the age of 16, nothing could change my mind. I finished my A levels and got on a plane to Israel the next day! Israel Machane was my first experience of Israel and Israeli society beyond the tourist destinations, and since then, all the time which I have spent in Israel has just increased my connection to the land and my desire to live here. My decision to make Aliyah was strengthened by going to Midreshet Harova and understanding the depths of the connection between Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. The final push for me to make Aliyah was when I saw that in Israel there are literally thousands of Bnei Akiva bogrim just like me who had made Aliyah in the past and were now living very happy lives in Israel- I felt that if they could do it, so could I!

#### WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN ISRAEL NOWADAYS?

I recently moved to Yerucham (45 minutes from Be'er Sheva- in the Negev) where I'm studying in Ulpan and teaching English, and my husband is in the hesder yeshiva here, combining Torah study and army service. I'm also studying to take the psychometric exam - the entrance exam for Israeli universities.

#### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THOSE CONSIDERING ALIYAH?

I really suggest working on your Ivrit as much as you can before you make Aliyah- the younger you are, the easier it is to learn, and good Hebrew will make your absorption into Israeli society so much easier!

Leah Palmer is in Shevet Hagevurah, and made Aliyah in 2013