

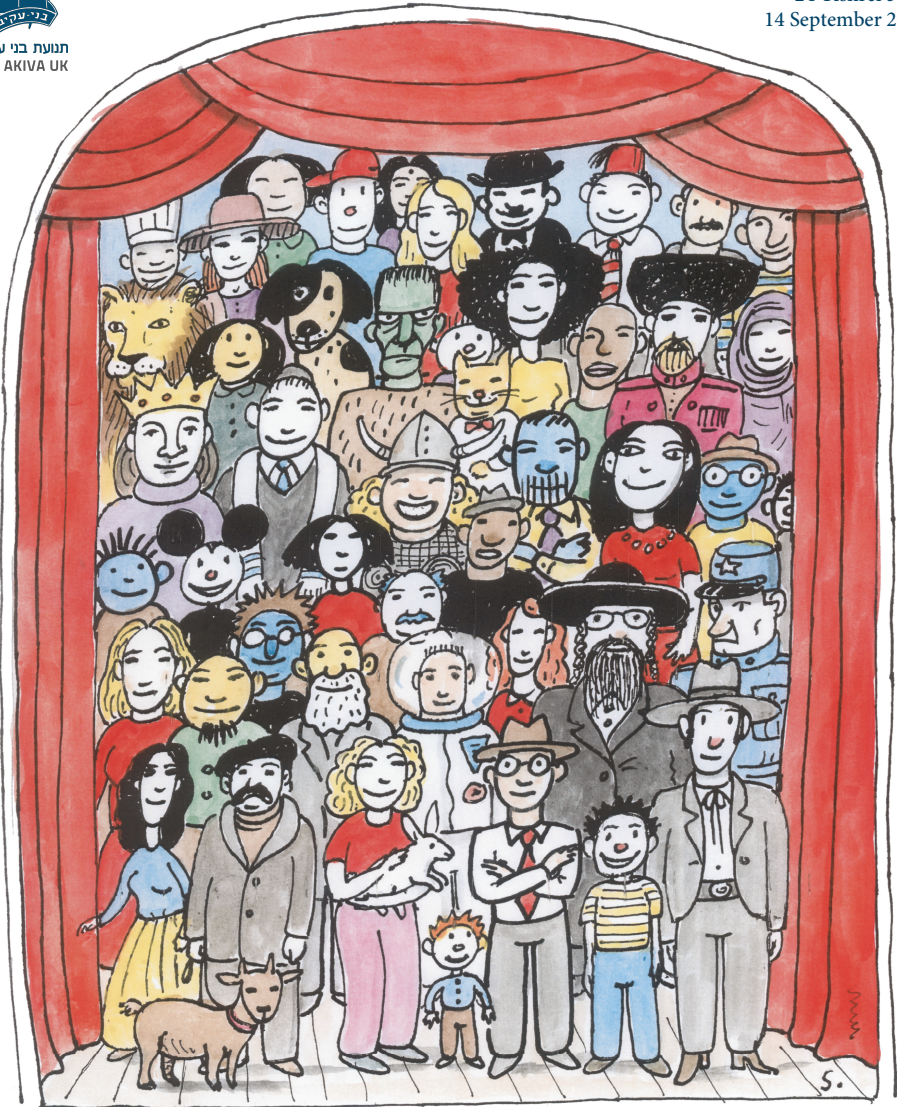
SHABBAT LASHEM



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We must believe not only that all **people** are created equal
but also that all **peoples** are created equal. - Natan Sharansky

BEREISHIT / ISSUE 1

TESHUVA: WHAT TO DO NEXT?

HARRY SALTER | ROSH NIVCHAR

During the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services we say: ‘Teshuva, Tefillah and Tzedaka can avert the evil decree’. The word Teshuva is generally translated as the word ‘repentance’. But this translation is not entirely accurate. Rather, the word Teshuva comes from the word ‘Shuv’, meaning ‘return’.

In Parashat Bereshit, we are told two stories of sin. The first is of Adam and Eve eating from the tree and the second of Cain killing his brother Abel. In both episodes, God asks Adam and Cain two similar questions: ‘Hashem God called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” (Bereishit 3:9) and ‘Hashem said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” (Perek Daled, Passuk Tet). Rashi comments on the first Passuk saying that God knew where Adam was and was asking this to open a conversation with him so that Adam could explain his behaviour. The Sforno similarly explains that the question of “Where is Abel your brother?” cannot be interpreted literally and is a subtle opening given to Cain to confess and repent.

Both Adam and Cain miss their opportunity given by God to recognise their sins. Adam attributed his guilty act to Eve instead of repenting and Cain responded with the famous saying: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”, also losing his first chance to repent.

God was not asking Adam and Cain where they physically are, rather God was asking what are they going to do next? The Lubavitcher Rebbe said that Shabbat Bereishit influences the entire year, with every day receiving light and vitality from this Shabbat. Parashat Bereshit includes these two stories to highlight that repentance is not a one-time a year event between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, but is something we should do throughout the year. We are told in Yechezkel that Hashem does not desire anyone to die, rather they should ‘turn back from his ways and live’ (Yechezkel 18:23/32). We must recognise what we have done wrong and return to the way we were before sinning.

Harry Salter is Rosh Nivchar and in Shevet Eitan.

Editor’s Corner

Shalom!

Welcome to the newly designed Shabbat Lashem. We hope you enjoy the new look and content. We’re very excited about Shabbat Lashem and have planned some fascinating and insightful columns.

If you would like to write an article for Shabbat Lashem please do be in touch on the email below. We welcome all contributions.

If you have any thoughts or comments on anything you read in Shabbat Lashem that you would like to share please do be in touch on the email below.

To help support the new Shabbat Lashem please consider placing an advert, sponsoring an issue or donating. We need your help!

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom,
Eli Gaventa
eli@bauk.org

London: 17:57 & 18:57
Manchester: 17:58 & 19:04
Leeds: 17:55 & 19:00
Jerusalem: 17:29 & 18:57



SHIRA HERSKOVITZ | RABBANIT SHLICHA

I had the zechut of davening on Yom Kippur at the Bayit with a large number of Bnei Akiva Bogrim. It has sadly been many years since I have been able to make it to shul on Yom Kippur. **For the half an hour that I attended Neila I was overcome with emotion and my eyes filled with tears. Asking myself 'when's the last time that I heard a whole room of people pouring out their soul to Hashem?'** It was a profoundly inspiring moment. It is not easy as a mother to find time and the mind space for prayer. I took that moment and have been trying to hold on to it.

A few years ago I was privileged to work on a tefillah curriculum. The book, created for secondary school students, is over 600 pages. I had never spent that amount of time throughout my Jewish education learning about prayer. It seemed like something that we do without thinking. Part of our Jewish lives that we never spend much time on. For that reason, I'd like to examine different aspects of prayer in this column over the coming months. Let's start with a simple question. How would you translate "Tefillah"? Take a moment to think about it. I think most people would translate "Tefillah" as "prayer" (I know I would). The problem with the word "prayer" is that it is lacking a big element of our tefillah. The word "prayer" comes from the Latin word "precari": to ask earnestly, to beg, to entreat. When we daven to Hashem, we are not just asking or begging; **we are involved in something much more profound.** It is important to point out



that the Hebrew word "lihita'pal" is in the Hebrew construction "hitpa'el", meaning that it is a reflexive action, an action done to one's self. As an example to illustrate this, the Hebrew verb for "to wear" can be expressed either in the simple "lavash" "he wore", or in the hitpa'el form of "hitlabesh" "he got (himself) dressed". In other words, "lihita'pal" is indicative of an action that we are doing that is affecting ourselves.

The first time the Shoresh (root) of the word "lehita'pal" is found is in Parshat Vayechi. During his last days, Yaakov

recalls that he thought that he would never see his son again. "רָאָה כִּפְנֵיךָ לֹא פָלַגְתִּי" Rashi translates the sentence as "I never filled my heart to the thoughts".

According to Rashi the idea of "lehita'pal" is to actively allow our hearts to think about what we

want, about how we envision our future. Rabbi Twerski explains the novelty of this idea beautifully: "This is a most interesting concept. It means that one does not have to generate Godly thoughts. They are there before us. We just have to allow them to enter".

Hashem is constantly sending us blessings and it is our responsibility to actively fill our heart to be able to receive them. When we pray the question is not if Hashem hear us, but rather did we hear what we said? Is it changing us and bringing us closer to Him? **The amidah is said silently but we are supposed to be able to hear ourselves. It is a one on one with Hashem but it is imperative that we are also listening.**

THE JOY OF RENEWAL



RAV AHARON HERSKOVITZ | RAV SHALIACH

What a special opportunity to be able to not only begin the new reading of the Torah immediately after completing the previous cycle, but to fully read the first parsha just a day later!

The happiness and feasting associated with Simchat Torah are based on the Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah. The Midrash learns from the feast and sacrifices Shlomo HaMelech brought after being granted wisdom by Hashem that **”מִכֵּן שְׂעוּשִׁים”** “סְעוּדָה לַגְּמֵרָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה” “From this we learn that a feast is made upon completion of the Torah.”

Rav Moshe Soloveichik is recorded as saying (הַרְרֵי קִדְּם אֶ:קִּנּו) that **the main cause of the joy is not the completion of the Torah itself**, but that the completion has allowed us to attain greater strength

and revitalized us to begin the reading anew with **בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹקִים**. **In other words, the focus of the joy is not on the completion but on the renewal.** This is reflected as well during the **סִיּוּם** we make upon completing a **סִפּוּר**, expressing a prayer that we be able to return to the book again, looking at it with eyes that are on the one hand fresh, but also have the experience of having seen it before.

Beginnings are able to act as an expression of a wish and prayer for how we hope the rest of a process will turn out. Think, for example, of the custom of **סִיּוּמִיּוֹת** on **רֵאשִׁיט הַשָּׁנָה**, eating various foods while expressing wishes regarding the coming year. In this way, beginnings are acting creatively, in the hopes that the rest of the process will continue in the same fashion. In addition to acting as a time to creatively

WINTER MACHANE 5778

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Applications for chanichim are now available!

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formulate such wishes, beginnings also act expressively, signalling what is important to us. For example, when planning a large event, someone will try and first arrange those aspects of the event that are most important to them. When arriving home after a long journey, many people will tend to immediately do what they have missed the most whilst away. This aspect of beginnings is reflected in הלכה as well, which sets certain parts of our morning routine as needing to precede other parts: thanking Hashem for returning our soul to us before speaking or engaging in other matters, reciting our morning תפילות before eating etc.

Tishrei is a month of new beginnings, and we must realize that Simchat Torah and the reading of פראשת בראשית are also a part of this series of beginnings. They allow us to set new goals for our work in Bnei Akiva and for our Torah study; to make plans to reach these goals and begin along these new paths with the hope that

we move towards the goals. This is the creative beginning.

Additionally, we must remember the expressive aspects of the beginning: *As we begin a new year of work in Bnei Akiva and a new year of Torah study, the beginning is expressive of what is most important to us.* A story that has stuck with me for many years regarding my rebbe, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein zt"l: On Tisha B'Av, in addition to the five prohibitions that exist on Yom Kippur, there exists as well a prohibition on learning Torah. Rav Aharon found this prohibition most difficult, and upon conclusion of the fast would not run home to quickly eat, but would open up a gemara and begin learning. The way we begin things shows what is truly important to us.

May we all reflect on our priorities, and experience success in actualising those priorities in this world.

שבט שלום and חג שמח!

UK Ambassador David Quarrey hosted our Hachshara groups in the Succah.





COVER IMAGE DISCUSSION | THINKER: NATAN SHARANSKY

Every Rosh Chodesh for the coming year the Choveret will be a special bumper issue where we showcase some of the amazing art created for the Voices and Visions project. **The project is about using art combined with powerful messages to start conversations about Jewish identity.** Each of the pieces has been specially created for the project and is accompanied by a commentary text, biographies of the thinker and artist and questions to prompt discussion with family and friends.

One of the most difficult challenges we face in the twenty-first century is whether we should advocate for, and even impose, our values such as democracy and civil rights, upon others in our world. Pluralism demands that we celebrate our world's remarkable diversity of culture and religions. **But does pluralism require that we tolerate tyrannical forms of government, religious beliefs that promote violence and oppression, cultures that suppress human freedom?**

Sharansky, a former refusenik and champion of human rights, offer us an answer. While the U.S. Declaration of Independence speaks of equality of all people – “all men are created equal” – Sharansky expands this idea to all peoples. One the one hand, the equality of peoples supports the principle of pluralism. **There is self-evident, inalienable right for each people within our world of nations to develop and sustain its own unique culture and national identity.** On the other hand, the very right of equality also requires of

each people that it values and upholds fundamental human dignity and civil rights by governing itself through some form of democracy. Fear societies that govern through terror and tyranny need to be replaced by free societies that give voice and vote to the equality of people and peoples. By defending the freedom of peoples, Sharansky also legitimates the national rights and Zionist aspirations of the Jewish people and Israel, along with those of every people and country. Sharansky challenges us to promote personal freedom and advance peace among peoples.



We must believe not only that all people are created equal but also that all peoples are created equal. -Natan Sharansky

About Natan Sharansky:

Natan Sharansky (b. 1948) is an Israeli politician and human rights activist who serves as Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Anatoly (later Natan) Sharansky achieved international fame when the Soviet regime denied him an exit visa to Israel and imprisoned him. His wife, Avital, travelled the world from 1977-1986,

meeting with world leaders and leading the struggle to earn freedom for her husband and other Soviet Jews. Sharansky was released in 1986 and moved to Israel.

About the Artist: Jean Claude U.C. Soares (1942-2013) was an illustrator, graphic designer, and creative consultant whose work embellished major publications and dozens of books. Soares served as the first design director of The New York Times' Op-Ed page in the 1970s. The Voices & Visions program is indebted to Soares as creative director and artist.

Look back at the cover image on this week's Shabbat Lashem:

What do you SEE?

1. Which characters stand out to you?
Which most reminds you of yourself?
Which would you pick to represent your people?

2. Which visual elements describe individuality, "people" and which represent "peoples"?

3. Why is it significant that the people of the world have assembled on a stage?
What is happening among the characters,

and between the characters and the audience?

What do you THINK?

1. Do you agree with Sharansky that "all peoples are created equal"? Is there a necessary connection between the two beliefs that "all people are created equal" and that all "peoples are created equal"?

2. The Torah calls Am Yisrael an am segulah, God's treasured people. What does this mean to you? Can the idea of an am segulah be reconciled with Sharansky's teaching about the equality of both people and peoples?

SNAPSHOT FROM THE CHOVERET

The Choveret is the educational handbook that Bnei Akiva UK madrichim use to create their activities and discussions in Sviva each week. **For Parashat Bereishit it discusses the role of humanity in the world and the responsibility we have to 'protect and develop the world'.** As part of the Choveret the following astounding source is included:

The Sages taught the following baraita: For two and a half years, Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagreed.

Shammai said: It would have been preferable had humanity not been created rather than to have been created.

And Hillel said: It is preferable for humanity to have been created than had not been created.

Ultimately, they concluded: It would

have been preferable had humanity not been created than to have been created. However, now that they have been created, they should examine their actions that they have performed and seek to correct them.

(Eruvin 13b)

Question: Why do you think that Shammai believes that it would be better if humanity had not been created? What is it about what humanity does that leads Shammai to think the net-loss of humanity existing is more than the net-gain?

Question: What do you think about the conclusion of the Gemara? Is it a compromise between the two positions?

Question: Which side of the debate do you come down on? What do you believe?

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SVIVOT NEWS!

Every Rosh Chodesh for the coming year the Choveret will be a **special bumper issue where we showcase some of the amazing work of our Svivot**. There are 18 Svivot around the country educating and empowering over 700 chanichim each week. This week we hear from our Leeds and Mill Hill Svivot.

Leeds Bnei Akiva

Roshim: Shira Collins and Kobi Wiener

Braving the cold Yorkshire weather, 25 of Leeds' best and brightest gathered at Etz Chaim Shul this past Shabbat for the kick-off of Leeds Bnei Akiva 5778.

Each of our four groups went to three different Sukkahs, where we met our madrichim, played games and most importantly stuffed our faces with sweets and biscuits.

We also discussed what it means to be in a community, and heard some inspiring words of Torah from Rabbi Jason Kleiman. Thanks to all our Sukkah hosts and to everyone who turned up, we can't wait to start again in two week's time!

Mill Hill Bnei Akiva

Rosh: Jason Lipowicz

Mill Hill's annual Sukkah Crawl kicked off the year with an amazing 65 chanichim! The madrichim did an amazing job running activities, discussions and walking games to welcome in a new year of Bnei Akiva.

Thanks to everyone who hosted a sviva in your succah! **Over 850 madrichim and chanichim took part in a succah crawl this year** and participated in brilliant activities around the theme of 'community'.

EVENTS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

Full details of all our events are available on our Facebook page, or call the Bayit on 020 8209 1319 to speak to one of the team.

Shabbat Hachshara is on the 20th and 21st of October at the London Bayit. The Shabbat is an opportunity to learn all about our fantastic Torani and Kivun gap year programmes. We will be joined by Rav Ari Faust (previous Rav Shaliach)! Transport will be provided from Manchester.

Contact joe@bauk.org to sign up.

Israel Machane Reunions are on the 10th and 11th of November. **To find out more contact joe@bauk.org.**

Shabbat Bogrim is the 3rd and 4th of November. Stay tuned for more updates. **For more information contact hannah@bauk.org.**

Campus visit from the Rav Shaliach and Rabbanit Shlichah will be starting soon! Contact rav@bauk.org to arrange a visit.

Our Advanced Hadracha series is starting soon! The program is for all madrichim and is designed to provide the skills to really excel at Hadracha. In coordination with UJIA, LSJS and Bnei Akiva UK.

Sign up here: bit.ly/ba-hadracha