

דבר אל-בני ישראל, ואמרת אליהם,  
כי תבואו אל-הארץ, אשר אני נתן לכם  
ושבתה הארץ, שבת לה'

# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT BESHALACH

13<sup>TH</sup> SHEVAT 5779

18<sup>TH</sup> & 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2019



Please continue to daven for the refuah and strength of Yeshaya Noson ben Shira Gittel



## INSPIRING TIMES

AARON RUDOLPH

SHEVET NA'ALEH

I was privileged to be part of the Ben Azzai trip in 2017 to Ghana, organised by the Chief Rabbi as a response to

the UK Jewish communities limited awareness of the challenges of the developing world. The purpose of the trip was for us to learn about their culture and challenges, with the main aim being to promote a concept of outward-looking social responsibility on our return. From this, we launched the inaugural Social Responsibility Week, which is currently happening.

While on the trip, Tzedek, the charity who ran it, placed a large emphasis on sustainable development and how projects are designed to allow people in the developing world to help themselves in the long run. We see an example of this attitude in parashat Beshalach. After the Bnei Yisrael reach the sea and panic that they will either be killed by the Egyptians or drown, Moshe cries out to God. God replies saying 'Why do you cry out to me? ... lift up your staff and stretch out your arm over the sea and split it ... And I will strengthen the heart of Egypt and they will come after them.' (Shemot 14:15-17)

The Gemara (Sotah 37a) expands on this and says 'Each Tribe was unwilling to enter the sea until Nachshon ben Aminadav sprang forward and descended in. At the time Moshe was praying, so God said 'My beloved are drowning in the sea and you prolong a prayer to me?' Moshe then said 'Lord, what is there in my power to do?' And God replied with the Pasuk above. God was trying to set up the Bnei Yisrael to be able to help themselves by making sure that they are the ones who make the moves- both with Nachshon jumping into the sea and with Moshe himself splitting it.

But is there a good example of a person helping others in a sustainable way? I think the best example takes place after this incident, at the beginning of next week's parasha, Yitro. The story begins with Yitro asking permission from Moshe to join the Bnei Yisrael and Moshe gladly accepting, followed by Moshe recounting to Yitro what had happened to the Bnei Yisrael when they left Egypt and Yitro announcing to the whole of Bnei Yisrael that he acknowledges God as the Supreme Being.

The next day Yitro sees that Moshe is solving all the people's disputes single-handedly. He realises this will tire Moshe out and so he suggests to Moshe that he choose capable men to be leaders and judges of the people. Moshe himself picks the men since he knows his people better than Yitro does.

This is the perfect model for social responsibility. Yitro is first accepted into the Jewish people, he then learns about their history and culture and acknowledges to the people what he has learnt. Only afterwards does he suggest a way they can develop as a people, before letting Moshe implement the suggestion in his own way.

The aim of charities like Tzedek is to help improve people's lives in a sustainable way and allow them to help themselves. These examples show that this approach stems from the Tanach, as at a time when Bnei Yisrael were still finding their feet, God and Yitro gave them the confidence to make their own decisions and set themselves up as a nation.

I think the models of sustainability laid out here are perfect catalysts to make us think about the challenges faced in the developing world and to make us realise that Social Responsibility is an inherent Jewish value, which are the key aims of this week.

**AARON WAS A SGAN ON GIMMEL SUMMER MACHANE 5778**

London In: 16:07 Out: 17:17

Manchester In: 16:07 Out: 17:17

Cambridge In: 16:04 Out: 17:14

Oxford In: 16:11 Out: 17:20

Bristol In: 16:17 Out: 17:27

Birmingham In: 16:10 Out: 17:20

Leeds In: 16:03 Out: 17:13

Liverpool In: 16:10 Out: 17:20

Jerusalem In: 16:20 Out: 17:51

# SELF-REFLECTION IN THE MODERN DAY: A GROWTH ORIENTATION

RAV AHARON HERSKOVITZ | RAV SHALIACH



*This piece is the sixth in a series on self-reflection in the modern day, based on the book "Musar for Moderns" by Rav Elyakim Krumbein*

Many have described to me that there are different periods in their lives where they felt motivated to grow and change, to seek out new challenges and push themselves. For many of us, these time **periods** were exactly that: **stages**, that were relevant for one time of their lives, but not beyond that. At a certain point we may feel, as one person put it to me: "I've done enough growth; now, **I just need to be normal**, to chill." The challenge with trying to grow is that it leads to a certain level of inevitable tension within one's self: if I say that there are things that I want to change, that I want to push to change, that means that I'm not there right now. On the negative end of this scale, it's possible that it will push us down into despair and depression due to not reaching the standards we believe we should reach.

Rav Nachman viewed this possibility as negative, as stemming from the Yetzer Hara, that "through that, it wants to make him fall into sadness and melancholy" (Likutei Moharan 28). He writes when encountering these feelings, one must instead search for at least one positive thing about themselves: "to seek out and search within himself, every time, some small amount of good." This is a teaching that is very central to Rav Nachman's thought.

This makes it seem like the tension needs to be resolved one way or the other: either slide into depression or focus on the positive.

While there certainly are times when a resolution is necessary (and hopefully to the positive side), there is also a certain strength that comes from being able to hold onto that tension. My Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Amital zt"l used to say that a part of becoming

older and more mature was the necessary realization that some questions you have may be better than any answers you could provide to them: the challenge is learning to live with those questions and contain them.

The idea of tension is present in Rav Soloveitchik's thought as well. He writes that there is inherent conflict necessary in being a human being motivated to serve Hashem. There are many aspects of a "dual nature of Man" that he writes about in various places. This dual nature is sometimes expressed as a conflict between the universal and the particularly Jewish, between emotion and reason, and between other pairs, with Man "swing[ing] like a pendulum between two poles." (Majesty and Humility). This tension is necessary because, through it, a person is able to achieve greatness and creativity. If we were solely situated at one of the poles, we would lead a relatively peaceful life, but one that is ultimately simplistic and denying the greatness of which we are capable.

**TENSION IS NECESSARY  
BECAUSE, THROUGH IT,  
A PERSON IS ABLE  
TO ACHIEVE  
GREATNESS AND  
CREATIVITY**

This type of approach has even been described regarding parenting styles. My professor, Esther Cohen (together with others) presents a dialectical model of parenting, in which the end goal isn't that

the parent's word or child's word is achieved in the end, nor is it that they meet somewhere in the middle: but that there is a certain level of containing that difference and tension. This act enables further creativity and growth. The ability to say "We are different from each other and feel differently, and that's okay" enables both parent and child to grow from the interaction.

There are definitely points at which we may need to reduce the tension that we experience, for otherwise (as Rav Nachman pointed out) it could be overwhelming. But we should not run from tension as we would from fire: tension and complexity are what enable us to be creative and to grow tremendously. We must use those feelings to push ourselves onwards and upwards.

**TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO  
EMAIL RAV AHARON AT [RAV@BAUK.ORG](mailto:RAV@BAUK.ORG)**

# DVAR HALACHA - WEEKLY QUESTION WITH RAV AHARON



**Question:** Is one meant to answer "amen" to someone who is in the process of converting after they make a beracha?

**Answer:** Chazal write about the importance of responding "amen" to a beracha, with Resh Lakish saying that one

who responds "amen" with all their strength has the gates of Gan Eden opened for them (Shabbat 119b). Rabbi Chanina explains that "amen" is an acronym for קל מלך נאמן: God, Who is a Faithful King. In other words, it is a statement of faith that one has in Hashem.

The Gemara in Berachot (51b) writes "And we answer "amen" to a Jew who makes a beracha, and don't answer "amen" to a Kuti who makes a beracha until one hears the entire beracha."

## TU BISHVAT 5779: WHY THE ALMOND?

*Tu Bishvat is this coming Monday! So another excuse to have another Dvar Torah from Rav Aharon!*

The popular children's song regarding Tu Bishvat goes as follows:

השקידה פורחת ושמש פז זורחת,  
צפורים מראש כל גג מבשרות את בוא החג.  
ט"ו בשבט הגיע חג לאילנות...

*The almond tree is blossoming, and the golden sun is shining. Birds from the top of every roof announce the coming of the festival: Tu Bishvat has come, the festival of the trees...*

What is the connection between the almond tree, Tu Bishvat, and this week's parasha?

Many point out that the almond is unique in that it blossoms and flourishes before all the other trees (Radak Yirmiyahu 1:12). In that sense, it announces the coming of the new season, a new time period in which growth will take place.

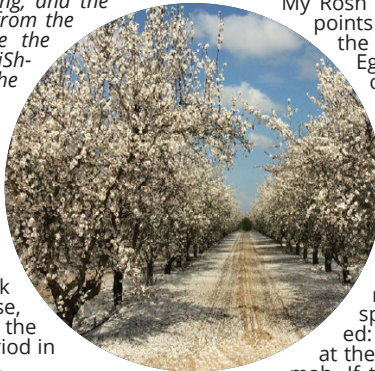
Starting with parashat Shemot, we are told repeatedly about Moshe's mateh, his staff. Its role is so extensive, that it is almost another character in the stories! In this week's parasha, Hashem tells Moshe to lift up his staff and use it to split the sea (Shemot 14:16). The staff accompanies Moshe in the desert as well, sometimes used by him and sometimes by Aharon, as it was in Egypt. But do we know what this staff was made of?

We find out in sefer Bamidbar, following the punishment of Korach and his followers. The

Rashi there explains that the reason for this difference is that we are concerned that the Kuti adds in other entities to their beracha, and therefore one should not answer "amen" to their beracha unless one is certain that only Hashem was mentioned. The Rema paskens this way (OC 215:2), writing that one should respond "amen" to a beracha made by a non-Jew if the beracha was heard in its entirety (eliminating the concern that other deities were mentioned along the way). Although the Taz writes that answering "amen" in this situation is not an obligation, merely a permitted act, one can certainly do so.

In the situation you describe, there is even more reason to respond "amen" enthusiastically, as a way of encouraging your friend and showing that you support and accept them on the difficult journey they have chosen, part of the fulfillment of the command ואהבתם את הגר, you shall love the convert.

leaders of the tribes all bring their staffs to the mishkan, and, together with the staff of Aharon, they are placed next to the Aron. In the morning, the staffs are removed and the staff of Aharon has blossomed. It had: sprouted, and brought forth buds, and blossomed, and yielded almonds (Bamidbar 17:23). Almonds grew from it because it was from an almond tree!



My Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yaakov Medan, points out that the almond staff is the sign of the redemption from Egypt because its symbolisation of quick-moving redemption is exactly what is stressed: that the entire process happens very quickly, as the blossoming of the almond. We see this also with regards to matzah, which we eat "for you left Egypt in haste" (Devarim 16:3).

This quick redemption is necessary since Bnei Yisrael's spiritual state was so degraded: Chazal tell us that they were at the second-to-lowest level of tumah. If they slipped one level lower, there was a chance they could not be saved. The redemption needed to be quick, as a delayed one could have drastic consequences.

There are dangers in having a hasty and speedy redemption, in not going through a process in a slow and measured way, but sometimes it is necessary. This is the symbol of the shaken, the almond: of speed and haste, of the feeling that it's not something that can wait.

May Hashem grant us redemption with the speed of the shaken and ensure that it is enduring.

# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Summer Machane applications are NOW OPEN for Ari, Aleph, Aleph Chalutz, Bet Base, and Gimmel. For more information please email Rafi H at [camps@bauk.org](mailto:camps@bauk.org)

- Student Bet Midrash continues every Thursday night at Kinloss! Come along for a great opportunity to hear amazing speakers, have some great food and learn with friends or madrichim! Please feel free to email Eli at [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org) for more details or if you have any questions

- Israel Machane applications are NOW OPEN. For more information or a brochure please contact Chana at [israel@bauk.org](mailto:israel@bauk.org)

- Svivot are continuing all over the country and it's Shabbat Ha'Irgun season!!! To get involved (or to even start a sviva) please email Rafi C at [svivot@bauk.org](mailto:svivot@bauk.org)

- There was a thank you reception at the Bayit this past Sunday for all the Madrichim from Winter Machane and saw everyone reminiscing great stories from machane and looking forward to doing more amazing things in the

Tnuva. Thank you again to everyone!!

- 2019 marks the 80th birthday of BAUK!! Keep an eye out for events in your local community!

- SHEVET AVICHA! SHABBATON ON THE 22nd/23rd February! Join us for an amazing Shabbat full of ruach, delicious food and great friends. For more information please email Hannah at [mazkira@bauk.org](mailto:mazkira@bauk.org)

**Shabbat Shalom!!**

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT



1. Is there a significance in the paragraph describing Pharaoh's change of heart ending by talking about how Bnei Yisrael left Egypt with "an upraised arm"? (See **Sforno on 14:8**)

2. Why does the Torah twice mention the fact that they were in the desert in pesukim 16:1 and 2? (See **Ramban, Or HaChaim, and Sforno**)

3. Why was Moshe commanded to specifically tell Yehoshua about the commandment to wipe out Amalek? (See **Rashi and Or HaChaim on 17:14**)



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