



# SHABBAT LASHEM

תנועת בני עקיבא  
BNEI AKIVA UK

## THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

THE MOST WIDELY DISTRIBUTED YOUTH TORAH PERIODICAL IN THE UK

### WHAT IS LIFE?



RAV AHARON HERSKOVITZ | RAV SHALIACH

At the beginning of this week's parsha, Hashem commands Avraham to go "to the land that I will show you." Instead of viewing Avraham as wandering aimlessly, merely waiting for Hashem to reveal which land has been chosen, the midrash ascribes an inner dialogue regarding Avraham's hopes for Hashem's choice (Bereishit Rabbah 39:8):

Rabbi Levi said: When Avraham was journeying in Aram Naharayim and Aram Nachor, he saw them eating and drinking and acting recklessly. He said "I hope that my portion is not in this land." Once he arrived at the cliffs of Tyre (in the north of Israel) he saw them involved in weeding during the time of weeding, hoeing during the time of hoeing and said "I hope that my portion is in this land." Hashem said to him "I will give this land to your descendants."

Avraham's hope that Hashem tell him that Eretz Canaan be the chosen land was motivated by the work ethic of the people living there. Instead of being engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, on their temporal enjoyment, the people of Canaan were engaged in the work they needed to be doing at that time. In an article published in "By His Light", Rav Aharon Lichtenstein zt"l expands this idea to point out that

part of the original mission Hashem gives to man in the Garden of Eden (and by extension, the world) is to work there, and thus tend to it (Bereishit 2:15). The basis of man's mission in this world is not to extract as much enjoyment as possible, but to work on Hashem's world.

Instead of aiming to focus on his "free" moments when he is finally able to engage in his leisurely pursuits which he regards as the pinnacle of his existence, man is called upon to invest effort and work hard.

I remember once asking someone if he was looking forward to coming closer to retirement age, when he could finally take off time and engage in activities he'd been waiting to do; he looked at me as if he didn't understand the question. "If I didn't feel like my work now was worthwhile and meaningful, I wouldn't be doing it! I enjoy other activities as well, but I don't live my life waiting for those moments of leisure."

In our day and age, with the myriad activities we are able to engage in thanks to modern technology and relative prosperity, it is important to remember what we were put in Hashem's world to do: to work, and work hard, at maintaining it, tending to it and improving it.

ומה חיינו? תורה ועבודה  
What is our life? Torah and Avodah.

Volume 24  
Issue 03

October 28  
Cheshvan 8  
5778

Shabbat  
Times

London  
In: 17:28  
Out: 18:29

Manchester  
In: 17:27  
Out: 18:33

Leeds  
In: 17:23  
Out: 18:29

Oxford  
In: 17:27  
Out: 18:34

Cambridge  
In: 17:22  
Out: 18:28

Bristol  
In: 17:34  
Out: 18:40

Birmingham  
In: 17:28  
Out: 18:34

Jerusalem  
In: 17:14  
Out: 18:43

PARASHAT NOACH / ISSUE 02

# THE DUST OF THE EARTH AND THE STARS OF THE HEAVEN

Penina Myerson | Bogeret Dvar Torah

Lech Lecha is full of encounters between Avraham and God and sets the stage for the events of the rest of Sefer Bereishit. Avra(h)am and Sara(i) set out on a journey that continues for generations and engage in various covenants with God resulting in promises of a great nation whom despite their suffering will, conditional upon their obedience to God, be rewarded with prosperity in their own land.

Throughout the parshah, Avraham expresses his worries that he has no child to continue his legacy and in response to these concerns, God makes two different promises as to the size of the nation that will come from Avraham's direct line.

'And I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth, so that if man is able to count the dust of the earth, so too shall your descendants be counted.' (Bereishit 13:16)

'And He took him outside, and He said, 'Look now towards the Heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So will be your descendants.' (Bereishit 15:5)

The basic reading of the text gives a metaphor for numerical value, in the same way that both the dust and the stars are present in the world in huge quantities, and are unable to be quantified by man, Avraham's descendants will exist in large numbers.

Radak, Rabbi David Kimchi, writing in the late 12th century references a Midrash Aggada, explaining the use of dust and stars as metaphors in these instances.

This text suggests that this is a prophecy as to the behaviour of Avraham's future descendants; there will be times when they are behaving correctly where they will shine like the stars of the sky, providing light in times of darkness. However, there will also be times when their behaviour makes them comparable to the dust of the earth, in these times they will be treated harshly and occupy a lowly place on the earth, just like the dust which is constantly stepped on.

In addition, these are basic elements of nature. Avraham's descendants are not compared to supernatural phenomena but rather to things that are part of the basic blueprint of the world. This is not a promise of a nation which will have its moment of glory and then be eclipsed but rather of a group of people who will, despite rising and falling, will remain a constant presence in the world.

I would like to also offer a third suggestion, the use of these two metaphors combine the heavens, represented by the stars, and the earth, represented by the dust. Whilst during the story of creation God made a separation between these two elements, establishing the polarity, the descendants of Avraham will dwell in both the heavenly and the earthly realm, finding a way to live a life grounded in earthly matters whilst maintaining spirituality and a relationship with God. The ideal is not to choose between the dust of the earth and the stars of the heavens but to be a nation combining these two ways of living.

Shabbat Shalom.

# 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.

Israel Machane Reunions are on the 10th and 11th of November. To find out more contact [joe@bauk.org](mailto:joe@bauk.org).

Shabbat Bogrim is the 24rd and 25th of November. Cost: £15.00. At: Stoke-on-Trent. With a special program for Balfour 100. For more information contact [hannah@bauk.org](mailto:hannah@bauk.org).

Campus visits from the Rav Shaliach and Rabbanit Shlichah started this week at Birmingham to kick off Limmud.

Contact [rav@bauk.org](mailto:rav@bauk.org) to arrange a visit to your campus.

Our Advanced Hadracha program has started!

Sign up for the upcoming sessions here: [bit.ly/ba-hadracha](http://bit.ly/ba-hadracha)

## SVIVOT NEWS!

There are 18 Svivot (groups) around the country educating and empowering over 700 chanichim each week. This week we hear from Finchley Bnei Akiva and have some photos from Mill Hill Bnei Akiva's fundraising car-wash!

Finchley Bnei Akiva  
Roshim: Avital Nevies and Leora Blitz

Bnei Akiva started off with a bang this year with an incredible turnout to our annual sukkah crawl! Weekly sviva has been great, with everyone learning a lot about Bnei Akiva and the weekly parshah. The chanichim are having lots of fun and the madrichim enjoy it just as much! We hope to continue with great numbers and a great atmosphere all year round.





*The new Shlichim go on their first campus visit to Birmingham. Both Rav Aharon and Rabbanit Shira gave shiurim to students on campus. Back in London, former Rav Shaliach Ari Faust went out with Bogrim in London.*

## DVAR HALACHA: WEEKLY QUESTION

Starting this week we'll be featuring a weekly halacha question. Feel free to email [rav@bauk.org](mailto:rav@bauk.org) with any question you want answered!

**Q:** Does the ba'al koreh (person reading from the Torah) need to wear a tallit? If so, would wearing tzitzit/tallit kattan on the outside of all ones clothes be sufficient?

**A:** The Shulchan Aruch paskens that the way of sages and their students is to pray when covered up (91:1). Additionally, there is a series of halachot regarding the person meant to lead the congregation in prayer, which should include the ba'al koreh (located in Siman 53). Part of the laws relate to the character of the leader, their literacy and fluency, and physical attributes.

Additionally, the Shulchan Aruch mentions that a person wearing torn clothes or whose arms are exposed should not be the shaliach tzibbur (53:13). The custom has developed that the shaliach tzibbur wear a tallit as an expression of kavod hatzibbur, respecting the congregation. The custom differs from community to community and place to place. For example, in most Ashkenazi and Yemenite communities the shaliach tzibbur wears a tallit for mincha and maariv, while in Chabad and Sefardi communities he does not.

In communities in which the tzitzit are normally worn as an undergarment, wearing them outside would most likely be the opposite of an expression of kavod hatzibbur.