

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

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

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בס"ד



DOING OUR BIT SAM PRAIS SHEVET AVICHAI

וישב אֱלֹקִים אֶת־הָעָם דֶּרֶךְ הַמִּדְבָּר יָם
סוּף וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרָיִם:

"And G-d led the people the way of the desert to the Sea of Reeds, and the Children of Israel were armed when they went up from Egypt." (Shemot 13:18)

Whilst there are many explanations of the word וַחֲמִשִּׁים, the way we have translated it, based on Rashi's explanation, is that the Bnei Yisrael were armed when they left Egypt. This seems a bit strange. The Bnei Yisrael have just witnessed the incredible miracles that Hashem performed for them. Why do they need weapons? Do they not have faith that, if they run into trouble, Hashem will be able to save them again? Surely they could rely on Hashem even if they weren't armed?

Rav Moshe Feinstein answers this question with the concept of Hishtadlut and Bitachon. One should not think that a miracle consists of simply doing nothing. That, as in the case of the Bnei Yisrael, their enemies will simply fall in front of them. Instead, one must put the effort in; go out to war and fight, whilst acknowledging that whatever success they have is down to Hashem.

In the first kvutza of Aleph Chalutz Machane we were taught (at least we were a few years ago!) about Hishtadlut and Bitachon. Hishtadlut is defined as the effort which we are required to exert in order to make things happen in our lives. Bitachon is putting our faith in Hashem to help us out. The Chomer relates this notion to the Hesder programme, an opportunity for young men in Israel to do five years of national service; roughly three and a half years learning in yeshiva and one and a half years serving in the army. This

can be seen as a perfect synthesis of Hishtadlut and Bitachon; doing the ground work whilst in the army, and learning in yeshiva so that we will merit Hashem's help and be successful.

Having recently sat my final year exams at university, I am all too familiar with attempting to get this balance right. In the weeks leading up to my exams, I was often faced with one of my weekly chavrutot or shiurim coinciding with times that I would otherwise be revising. Surely I should just cancel them for that week? These exams are important, and maximising my revision time can only improve my grade? Well, actually, no. How can I possibly expect Hashem to help me through my exams and achieve the grade that I am capable of if I can't even take one hour out of my day to learn? Having said that, if during the lead up to my exams I just sat and learnt Torah all day, I wouldn't be familiar with the material on which I was being examined, and I definitely would not have achieved my potential.

Furthermore, the importance of having both Hishtadlut and Bitachon has rarely been as visible in society as it is today. Due to the pandemic, we have often inserted extra tefillot into our davening. Whilst no one can argue that this is unimportant, and that nothing will return to "normal" without the help of Hashem, it is equally important for us to follow the national guidance in order to stop the spread of the virus.

This balance explains the apparent lack of faith that the Bnei Yisrael had when leaving Egypt. Although they took practical weapons with them, it was not because they thought they were going to be without help from Hashem in the desert. It was because they knew that if they wanted help from Hashem, they needed to put in the effort themselves. Nobody gets something for nothing, and our relationship with Hashem is no exception.

SAM WAS ROSH OF WINTER MACHANE IN MANCHESTER 5781.

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|------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| London | In: 16:29 Out: 17:41 | Oxford | In: 16:30 Out: 17:45 | Leeds | In: 16:24 Out: 17:42 |
| Manchester | In: 16:31 Out: 17:45 | Bristol | In: 16:36 Out: 17:51 | Liverpool | In: 16:31 Out: 17:48 |
| Cambridge | In: 16:23 Out: 17:38 | Birmingham | In: 16:30 Out: 17:46 | Jerusalem | In: 16:35 Out: 17:50 |

MANNA FROM HEAVEN

RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG | RAV SHALIACH



There could hardly be a greater miracle than food falling from the sky every day for 40 years. As Bnei Yisrael travelled through the desert, the place usually associated with

starvation and thirst, they were miraculously sustained by the manna which fell from Heaven.

Yet surprisingly, the way the Torah describes the manna is not just as a miraculous comfort, but also as an excruciating ordeal.

הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים ויצא העם ולקטו דבר יום ביומו למען אנסנו הילך בתורתך אם לא

"I will rain down bread for you from the sky, and the people shall go out and gather each day that day's portion—that I may test them, to see whether they will follow My instructions or not." (Shemot 16:4)

Later on, in Parshat Ekev, this description goes even further when we are told that the purpose of the manna was: למען ענותך ולמען נסותך *"In order to afflict you and in order to test you"* (Devarim 8:16)

It seems difficult to understand how the luxury of food from Heaven could be viewed as a source of affliction, or at the very least as a test of faith. The mefarshim offer various explanations. According to Rashi, the ordeal was not in the fact of the manna itself, but in the mitzvot associated with it. The test was whether the people would keep the extra commands they had been given – not to be greedy and collect too much, and not to go out on Shabbat to collect. For some this might prove too difficult.

Other commentators say that the test was in the very fact that their food fell from the sky. Ironically, it was the ordeal of wealth. When Bnei Yisrael received their sustenance without having to lift a finger for it, would they use their free time the right way? Being free from having to earn a livelihood, would they invest their energies correctly, or would they see themselves as free from Torah as well?

The Ramban suggests a third approach. Although of course the manna was a luxury,

its ordeal lay in the fact that Bnei Yisrael were dependent on it falling every day anew! What if one day they woke up and the manna didn't fall? They were stuck in the desert and would be left with nothing. Yes, it had always fallen before, but nothing could be kept from the previous day "just in case". There must always have been the thought in the back of their minds that maybe today, or maybe tomorrow, for once the manna wouldn't fall. To live with that degree of dependence on Hashem for 40 years was a true test of faith.

So was the manna a test of poverty or of wealth? Was it a luxury or an affliction? The answer is that it depends on perspective. For one imbued with faith there could be nothing greater than receiving their sustenance directly from Hashem. For one who lacked faith there could be no greater ordeal.

Amazingly, the same test of perspective repeats itself later in the parasha – at the splitting of the sea. The midrash describes based on the pasuk: סוף וימרור על ים בים סוף – they rebelled at the sea (Tehillim 106:7) - that even during that miracle, two Jews would turn to each other and complain – we are surrounded by mud just as we were in Egypt. There we had to make bricks from the mud, here we have to walk through it, but essentially, it's all the same. Even the splitting of the sea can be a curse when we have the wrong perspective. To quote a sentence attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "We can complain because rose bushes have thorns or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."

The ordeal of the manna was not limited to the generation that left Egypt. It's an ordeal that permeates our lives every day. The rose bushes are all around us. They can brighten up our lives, or they can leave us stuck on the thorns. It is up to us.

Shabbat Shalom!

FOLLOW RAV JOEL ON FACEBOOK (RAV SHALIACH PAGE) AND ON TWITTER (@JOEL KENIGSBERG)

A TASTE FROM THE ARCHIVES: MUSIC OF THE HEART 5772

RACHEL KAYE | SHEVET LAVI

Bnei Yisrael embarks on the ultimate Tiyul. They've been up all night eating and preparing for the journey ahead. They're unaware of duration or direction and despite escaping slavery they're not short of complaints. They're led in circles by a seemingly lost tour guide and then reach what appears to be a dead end. Bnei Yisrael then witnesses a phenomenal, unpredictable miracle before their eyes. They're saved from their Egyptian oppressors - but are nonetheless stranded in the desert.

Having experienced such an event, how do you respond? Moshe spontaneously bursts into song and Miriam whips out instruments she's carrying; leading the women in music, song and dance. Normally, when journeying, you pack snacks and other light essentials. Kettle chips I can understand but why would anyone pack a kettle of drums? Rashi suggests that the righteous women of that generation were confident that Hashem would perform miracles for them, in anticipation they came prepared with tambourines.

The Midrash Rabah notes that until then no man had delivered song to Hashem, despite the miracles performed for them. Bnei Yisrael however, sung immediately. The Midrash links the word 'אז' of 'אז ישיר' to "אז ימלא שְׂחוק פִּינוּ" – "Then our mouth will be filled laughter" (Tehilim 126:2) indicating a moment of immense Simcha. A further comparison to "אז תלך לבטח דרכך" – "Then you will walk

on your way securely" (Mishlei 3:23) indicates a moment of absolute belief, faith and trust in Hashem.

From here onwards, song and music feature on countless occasions throughout Tanach, in times of comfort, prayer, joy, praise and personal expression. Bnei Yisrael were probably filled with a variety of emotions, requiring a vehicle to express this ecstasy. Music and song has that ability to express the 'unsayable' and unquantifiable. The beauty of music is that unlike when

three people try to talk concurrently it just creates noise, when three people sing simultaneously it creates harmony and unity.

However, Rav Amital z"l was mindful of misusing Carlebach style tunes during

Tefillah, lest our Avodat Hashem lack authenticity and become dependent on our momental mood or our 'connection' to the Tefillot. We pray because we are obligated to pray.

Music is an extremely powerful tool that we should use to enhance and express our deepest emotions; without letting our service of Hashem depend on it. One day soon we will hopefully merit to enjoy the 'Shir Chadash' of our final redemption with as much Simcha and Emunah as Moshe, Miriam and Bnei Yisrael had in our first redemption.

THE BEAUTY OF MUSIC IS THAT UNLIKE WHEN THREE PEOPLE TRY TO TALK CONCURRENTLY IT JUST CREATES NOISE, WHEN THREE PEOPLE SING SIMULTANEOUSLY IT CREATES HARMONY AND UNITY.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Applications are open for **Summer Machane 5781!** Join us from **2nd-15th August** and enjoy a fantastic Bnei Akiva experience full of fun, friends and Ruach! Sign up today at bauk.org/camps or email camps@bauk.org for more information.

- **Svivot are continuing!** Look out for updates and virtual events from your local sviva or visit www.bauk.org/svivot.

- **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Coronavirus has hit Bnei Akiva hard, costing us over £150,000. Our Mazkirut, Bogrim and Madrichim have been working tirelessly to put on a range of fantastic programming for our youth, from Machane Aviv in the Spring, to a celebration of Israel like no other on Yom Ha'atzmaut, a packed summer of programming for over 400 children, and Winter Machane. Please support our **Yad Achim Campaign**. Visit bauk.org/yad-achim for more information and to donate.

- Keep an eye out for **daily exciting virtual events** for all ages! **Stay Safe > Stay Inspired > Stay BA**

- We are excited to launch **Shabbat Ha'Irgun!** Each Sviva across all our local communities will be running a special Shabbat Ha'Irgun this year. Open to all children in **Years**

1-10, you can join your Madrichim for a weekend full of **activities, Tochniot, Ruach and more** on the **19th-21st February!** Every child will receive a **special Shabbat Ha'Irgun activity pack delivered straight to your door** with games, presents, challenges and messages from the Bnei Akiva community. Whilst you'll sign up with your local Sviva and have activities with your favourite Madrichim, you'll also get to join in with the whole country for some awesome National events throughout the weekend. **Sign up today for just £5 a person at bauk.org/shabbat-hairgun**

- **Mazal Tov to Matty Handler and Ayala Licht** (Shevet Avichai) on their **engagement!**

- **Mazal Tov to Ben Rothstein and Shoshana Cohen** (Shevet Avichai) on their **engagement!**

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