

זכור אתיום השבת לקדשו.  
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל-מלאכתך,  
יום השביעי שבת לה'

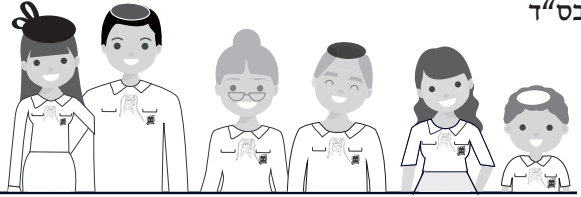
PARASHAT BO  
6<sup>TH</sup> SHEVAT 5783  
27<sup>TH</sup> & 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023  
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בס"ד

# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK



## WHY THE RUSH?! SOPHIE HARRIS SHEVET MORASHA

We are all familiar with the story of the dough which had no time to rise, resulting in the food that characterises *Pesach* itself - *matza*.

Indeed, straight after *makkat bechorot*, *Bnei Yisrael* pick up dough 'when it was not yet leavened' (*Shemot* 12:34) and bake it as *matza* on their way out of Egypt. An often-asked question is: surely these slaves of 210 years could have simply waited a few extra hours to gather their possessions - or even 20 minutes more to bake some bread for the journey?? Rashi explains that, 'When the time of redemption arrived, God did not delay the Exodus even for as much as the blink of an eye', despite the fact that we know He had orchestrated all of these events far in advance, telling Avraham about them in *parashat Lekh Lekha*.

This episode comes to teach us an important idea:  
Don't let an opportunity pass you by.

When the chance comes up for positive change, don't sit there dwelling on it for so long that it may disappear. Instead, the Torah teaches us to charge our enthusiasm - to reach out and grab opportunities in life before it's too late. We should try to do so whilst we retain our sense of excitement, and this should power us through life. Don't let yourself become stagnant.

Jewish thought values '*zerizut*' (enthusiasm) as a positive character trait! As long as we are not reckless, the sages tell us that a lack of laziness means we will 'race to fulfil the *mitzvot*', performing them more fully. We learn this lesson from the angels, who are praised for doing Hashem's word before even hearing it!

Of course, we do not possess supernatural powers. But the *chakhamim* tell us that 'when a *mitzva* presents itself, don't put it off.' So too, when Hashem tells *Bnei Yisrael* it is

time to go - they leave as quickly as possible, setting the Jewish people off on the right foot from the very beginning, and teaching them the ideal type of relationship to have with Hashem.

But, we can argue that the Jews leaving Egypt in a hurry was not simply in order to fulfil the word of God... Instead, it is an element deeply embedded in the fabric of the Exodus narrative.

Hashem instructed *Bnei Yisrael* to eat the *Korban Pesach* "hurriedly", a term which Rashi picks up on. This rush is not just limited to the Israelites; the Torah emphasises how the Egyptians attempted to force the Israelites out, almost in a single moment. Pharaoh calls for Moshe and Aharon at night, without even waiting for daybreak, to 'get up and get out... go' (12:31). The Torah then describes how the Egyptians 'hasten to send [*Bnei Yisrael*] out of the land'.

This rush on both sides, Egyptian and Jewish, emphasises a second message: If you are faced with a task which seems frightening, overwhelming or challenging, jump into it before you back out.

Pharaoh, a man who had changed his mind multiple times previously, realises here that he must expel the Jews immediately - or once again he will come to rescind his decision. So too, the Jews who had to make the frightening, and potentially dangerous leap of trust out of Egypt and into the desert, had to do so immediately in order that they did not protest, dwell on it, and wish to stay in slavery. This rush meant that they had no choice but to make the leap.

May we all come to realise the value of *zerizut*, the power of doing as much good as we can with our time, and have the bravery to step into the unknown in our own lives.

## SOPHIE IS IN SHEVET MORASHA AND WAS SGANIT OF MAPOEH 5783

London	In 16:26 Out 17:33	Cambridge	In 16:24 Out 17:34	Oxford	In 16:32 Out 17:41
Manchester	In 16:29 Out 17:41	Nottingham	In 16:27 Out 17:38	Birmingham	In 16:32 Out 17:42
Leeds	In 16:25 Out 17:37	Brighton	In 16:30 Out 17:38	Bristol	In 16:38 Out 17:47
Thaxted	In 16:24 Out 17:34	Liverpool	In 16:32 Out 17:44	Jerusalem	In 16:33 Out 17:48

# SHLICHA'S CORNER: WOMEN IN TANAKH II - BATYA

## THE FIRST TO GIVE A NAME



Out of all the characters at the beginning of *Sefer Shemot*, it seems that Batya, Pharaoh's daughter, symbolises something special and extremely meaningful for us.

The book of *Shemot* opens with a description of *Am Yisrael* in Egypt, and the harsh slavery they endured there. From the name '*Shemot*', 'names', we would think that this book would ascribe a very significant place for the names of the people within it.

But the opposite is true: beyond the list of Ya'akov's sons who went to Egypt and are mentioned by name, no names are mentioned at all in the beginning. This is done in a very prominent way, for example, the Jewish midwives are not called by their names but by Shifra and Puah. Then the Torah records that 'a man from the house of Levi married a daughter of Levi.' Why are their names not mentioned? The question becomes even more acute when *chazal* reveal that these are none other than Amram and Yocheved, people who hold prominent roles. Why are their names hidden and why are they described only by pronouns?

Next: the man and his wife had a son. What is this boy's name? He has no name. He doesn't even have a nickname. Sometimes he is called a boy, sometimes a son, sometimes a lad. But not once does the Torah tell us his name. The woman hides this child for three months, and then hides him in a box on the riverbank. Who guards it? His sister. What's her name? We do not know. There are no names in the book of Names! The Torah deliberately omits the names of all the important people in the story.

It's not for no reason. The Torah wants to convey a message to us and teach us about the treatment of the Jews in Egypt at that time. If you were a Jew in Egypt during this difficult period of slavery - then you didn't have a name. You had no personality. You had no meaning. You were just a number. Who knows? Maybe they even put a number on your arm. But you are nothing more than a number. You are nothing.

The beginning of the Book of Names is the anti-Semitic prototype for all the Jew-hating tyrants

that will come later through the generations. First: eliminate the person's personality - trample their identity, their dignity, their status and the importance of their existence.

The truly unfortunate thing is that this attitude is not only expressed externally, but it is also demonstrated internally. Chazal, and historians, tell us that "Pharaoh" was not the name of the king of Egypt, but a title that was given to the ruler. So, what was the king's name? It is not important. And this king has a daughter, but this daughter does not have a name either, because the Torah chooses to call her "Pharaoh's daughter". Again, she has no personality, no meaning, no importance to her own existence. She is the king's daughter. This is how she is defined, and that is her entire existence.

But this pharaoh's daughter is also the first not to accept this reality. Pharaoh's daughter is no longer willing to look at other people as numbers and nothing more. She wants to see the value of every person, the good they bring to the world, the special meaning that every creature has.

Therefore, when the Hebrew boy grows up and is brought to her, she calls him Moshe, and she also explains the meaning behind this name. She is telling us that every person has a meaning to their life. Everyone has a name, don't ignore it. That is why Pharaoh's daughter also receives a name - Batya, the daughter of God.

It is fitting, therefore, that Moshe, the redeemer of *Am Yisrael*, should grow up with someone who refuses to accept as a fact this anti-Semitic view of human beings. She wants to see beyond, to what's inside. And we, as the successors of her adopted son, are also called to this task - to see in every person before us a special being, with a unique meaning and personality, with a special role and style only for them, and that there is no other person like them in the world.

**RABBANIT AVIYA GOODMAN IS IN SHEVET SHVUT AND IS THE RABBANIT SHLICHA OF BNEI AKIVA. TO CONTACT THE RABBANIT, PLEASE EMAIL [RABBANIT@BAUK.ORG](mailto:RABBANIT@BAUK.ORG)**

**"THERE ARE NO NAMES IN THE BOOK OF NAMES! THE TORAH DELIBERATELY OMITTS THE NAMES OF ALL THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN THE STORY."**

# TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

YECHIEL YA'AKOV WEINBERG | YAHRZEIT 4<sup>TH</sup> SHEVAT

♪ "We all came out to Montreux, on the lake Geneva shoreline

To learn Torah from a Rabbi, we didn't have much time" ♪

After that brief musical interlude, you may have surmised that we shall be boarding flight BA2738 leaving Gatwick [LGW] at 09:50 and arriving at Geneva Airport [GVA] at 12:35. Then we hop on the IR90 train from Genève-Aéroport to Montreux...

Yechiel Ya'akov Weinberg, better known by his *magnum opus* 'Seridei Eish', was a renowned 20th century Rabbi who walked the narrow path between the traditional Jewish and academic world, whose innovative opinions were sought on all kinds of halakhic matters.

The *Seridei Eish* was born in Poland in 1884 and studied at the new Slobodka *yeshiva*, where he grew close to Rav Nossou Tzvi Finkel, the *Alter* of Slobodka. However, on his visits home he would read through prominent *haskala* (enlightenment) literature, expressly forbidden by the *yeshiva*. A few years later, he, along with the *Alter's* son Eliezer Yehuda, travelled to the Mir *yeshiva* to spread the teachings of *mussar* (self-improvement), where the latter would later become the *Rosh Yeshiva*.

Things didn't go so well from here. After receiving *semikha*, Weinberg was forced into marrying the daughter of a recently-deceased communal rabbi whose position he was to take over. Esther Levin, unlike the more intellectually aware young women whom Weinberg had known in his home town, was uneducated and he did not want to marry her. However, due to pressure from his parents and former teachers in Slobodka, he felt unable to refuse this position. Along with his wife, his mother-in-law and her two young children moved in and Weinberg felt like a stranger in his own home. His mother-in-law also took all of the income he received, and frequently he would avoid sleeping at home. Despite this, due to social and communal pressure, he felt unable to ask for a divorce, such a thing being rare in Lithuanian Jewry at the best of times and practically unheard of in the Rabbinate. When he did finally broach the topic, his parents and in-laws blamed him for the failure of the marriage and stated that his wife would not accept a get. It would be 16 years before he was granted a divorce.

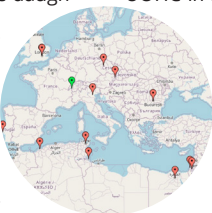
In 1914, Weinberg travelled to Germany for medical treatment, and was caught there at the outbreak of WW1. During this time, he was exposed to the highly intellectual climate of German Judaism, especially in Berlin, where he mixed with figures like S.Y. Agnon and Gershom Scholem. He also met Rav Kook at the start of the war, who helped Weinberg financially and emotionally. Towards the start of his stay in Germany, Weinberg records the 'shocking' practice he has observed, even in the houses of great Torah scholars, where women sing the *zemirot shabbat* at the *shabbat* table with men! It is highly emblematic of Weinberg's own personal transformation that by the end of his time in Germany, he had written a responsum defend-

ing this practice. With the emancipation of women well underway, issues of male-female interaction and *halakha* would feature prominently in some of the questions sent to him.

Whilst still in Germany, Weinberg studied in Giessen University under famed Semiticist Paul Kahle (future editor of what would become the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) and prepared a PhD on the exegetical methods of the *Peshitta*, the Syriac translation of the Bible, whilst simultaneously lecturing in Tanakh, Mishna and Gemara. Despite never submitting the final revised version of his dissertation, Kahle still referred to him as 'Dr Weinberg' in correspondence. After this, Weinberg became head of the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary, where he trained among others Eliezer Berkovits, the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rav Yosef Tzvi Dunner of the UOHC in Stamford Hill. Weinberg records a fascinating story in *Seridei Eish* (2:8) involving the Rabbinical Seminary and the growing role of women in society. Rav Yisrael Salanter was visiting Germany, and he saw Rav Azriel Hildesheimer delivering *shiurim* in Tanakh and *halakha* to young, unmarried women. He then declared: 'Were one of the Rabbis of Lithuania to conduct such a practice in his community, he would certainly be removed from his position, rightly so. Nevertheless – may my portion in *Gan Eden* be with Rabbi Hildesheimer!'

With the rise of Nazism, one early problem that had to be addressed was a German decree banning any meat that was not stunned before it was killed. This presented major problems for *shechita*. After much deliberation, Weinberg wrote a *teshuva* that would address this issue and potentially permit the consumption of meat slaughtered after stunning, but he would not publish it without external Rabbinic support. However, neither Rav Chaim Ozer nor Rav Kook wished to grant approbation to this radical *teshuva*, and so Weinberg did not issue this halakhic ruling.

After the war, seeing the intense destruction wrought across Europe, Weinberg felt completely and utterly alone. Both his eastern- and western-European Jewry had been obliterated. One of his students arranged for Weinberg to live with him in Montreux, Switzerland, but tragically the student died in a train accident shortly after Weinberg's arrival. Weinberg chose to remain in a kind of self-imposed exile there, but wrote prolifically in all kinds of areas of Jewish law, his opinion being sought on matters ranging from artificial insemination to copyright infringement, until his death in 1966.



# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Shabbat shoutout to **Stanmore BA**, who have their **Shabbat Ha'irgun** this week!

- **Birmingham SBM** resumes this week! Join us on **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January** at the usual location.

- **London SBM** continues this **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February** from 7pm at Kinloss, with guest speaker Rabbanit Tehila Gimpel!

- **Lishmah** for bogrot and sixth-form women continues this **Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January!** Join this **dynamic makom torah** for women!

- Lani and Elad will be holding a **Tu Bishvat Seder** on **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February** at the Manchester Bayit!

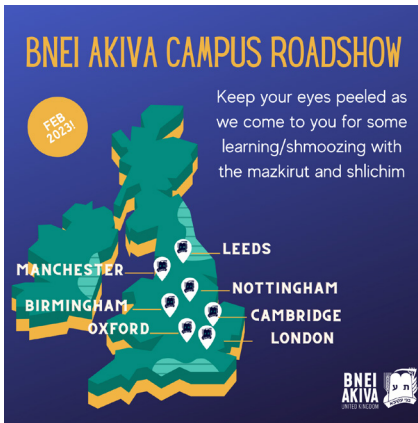
- Bnei Akiva will be **back on the road this February!** The Mazkirut and Shlichim will be travelling the length and breadth of the country's Jew-niversities on the **Campus Roadshow**. See you there!

- **Shabbat Bogrim** is happening on **17th March!** Join us for a Shabbaton catered by Met Su Yan in Coventry!

- **Israel Machane** applications are still open! To view the brochure or sign up visit [bauk.org/israel](http://bauk.org/israel).

- To give any **comments** or **suggestions** to Bnei Akiva, please visit [bauk.org/feedback](http://bauk.org/feedback)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BEN AT [CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG](mailto:CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG)**



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