

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

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

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בס"ד



GROWTH IN CONTEXT

GIDEON DAVIS
SHEVET MORASHA

Over summer *machane* I was introduced the phrase '*achrayus complex*' to describe Bnei Akiva *bogrim* who give up so much of themselves that it begins to encroach upon their ability to take care of their own health and personal growth.

We take a brief interlude at the beginning of this week's *parasha*, away from talking about the *Beit Hamikdash*, so that God can command Moshe to collect a half-shekel from every male over the age of twenty. God delivers this command by saying "*ki tissa et rosh bnei yisrael*" ("when you will raise the head of the children of Israel"). In addressing the exact intention here, the Sforno focuses on the words *venatenu* and *kofer* in the continuation of the *pasuk* to explain that the function of this half-shekel is to atone (*kofer*) for the sin of the golden calf via the creation of a personal lacking (*venatenu* = and they gave) – a monetary sacrifice.

Meanwhile, Rashi and his grandson the Rashbam focus on the repeated use of the root פקד. Rashi takes the literal meaning (count) to explain that the function of the half-shekel was the count the nation in a permitted way, on the other hand the Rashbam textually connects us to the beginning of *parashat Pekudei* where the same root is used to address the vessels of the *mishkan*, hence the primary function of the half-shekel must be as a fundraiser for the *mishkan*. In addition to the linguistic similarity, the answers of our favourite grandpa/grandson duo also share a thematic similarity in that they both believe the *machatzit hashekel* was there for the individual to contribute to something larger than themselves

(that they are a mere half-shekel and not by themselves whole).

When the Torah at the beginning of our *parashah* specifies that only the males above 20 will be counted, Rashi states that from here we learn that one only drafts at 20. However, this seems to build off a pre-existing assumption that only soldiers would be counted. Where does Rashi find this?

If we remind ourselves that the counting process was serving as a reminder to the individual that they only exist as a cog within a much larger system, we will understand why it is reasonable to assume that only those who put their hands up and said that they are willing to give everything they have (body, mind, personal freedom and, if need be, their lives) to the nation, are those being counted as completely part of the nation.

Yehudah ben Teima in *Pirkei Avot* 5:21 specifies what religious goals one should have in life. Up until 18 he describes only individual goals in learning and mitzvah observance, however at 18 one should get married (take responsibility over a family unit) and at 20 draft into the IDF (take responsibility for national security). *Baruch Hashem*, as part of the *geula* process we have been able to rediscover *Am Yisrael* (the nation of Israel) in its natural form (in the land of Israel) and have therefore understood what it means to sacrifice oneself (in a military, political or social context) for the good of the nation as a whole; however Yeudah ben Teima is there to remind us that this takes place as part of a process: growing as part of an individual and then simultaneously growing as part of a family and finally simultaneously as part of a nation – the ultimate aim.

SGT. GIDEON IS IN SHEVET MORASHA AND WAS ON THE SENIOR TZEVEV OF BMP 5782

London	In 17:42 Out 18:45	Leeds	In 17:48 Out 18:55	Birmingham	In 17:50 Out 18:55
Manchester	In 17:51 Out 18:57	Nottingham	In 17:47 Out 18:53	Liverpool	In 17:54 Out 19:00
Thaxted	In 17:41 Out 18:46	Brighton	In 17:44 Out 18:47	Bristol	In 17:53 Out 18:57
Cambridge	In 17:42 Out 18:47	Oxford	In 17:48 Out 18:52	Jerusalem	In 17:07 Out 18:21

SHALIACH'S CORNER: UNDERSTANDING OUR ROOTS

RABBI AKIVA PART 4 - VISION AND HOPE



"On another occasion they were ascending to Jerusalem. When they arrived at Mount Scopus and saw the site of the Temple, they rent their garments. When they arrived at the Temple Mount, they saw a fox that emerged from the site of the Holy of Holies. They

began weeping, and Rabbi Akiva was laughing. They said to him: For what reason are you laughing? Rabbi Akiva said to them: Why are you weeping? They said to him: This is the place about which it is written: "And the non-priest who approaches shall die", and now foxes walk in it; and shall we not weep?

Rabbi Akiva said to them: That is why I am laughing, as... in the prophecy of Uriah it is written: "Therefore, for your sake Zion shall be ploughed as a field," (*Micah* 3:12), where foxes are found. In Zechariah it is written: "There shall yet be elderly men and elderly women sitting in the streets of Jerusalem" (*Zechariah* 8:4). Until the prophecy of Uriah was fulfilled I was afraid that

the prophecy of Zechariah would not be fulfilled, as the two prophecies are linked. Now that the prophecy of Uriah was fulfilled, it is evident that the prophecy of Zechariah remains valid. The Sages said to him: Akiva, you have comforted us; Akiva, you have comforted us."

From a cursory reading of this story, especially in full, one could argue that what distinguished Rabbi Akiva from his peers, and what led to their divergent reactions, was simply his superior knowledge of the text. One line of a prophecy here, another over there, and a third linking the two together – something that anyone could have figured out, had they only had his breadth of knowledge.

Much more likely, however, is that it reflects the unique elements of Rabbi Akiva's character. The sight before their eyes as they crested *Har Hatsofim* (Mt. Scopus) was a stark and bleak image that encapsulated the terrible destruction that the Jewish people – including

Rabbi Akiva himself – had experienced. Seeing foxes run through the area of the *Kodesh HaKodashim* raises the impossible question – has Hashem left us? Can there ever be a return?

In our current fortuitous circumstances, it is hard to contemplate the depth of hopelessness that pervaded the people at the time. And so, they cried, of course they cried. But maybe they wouldn't have if they could see then what we see now: that we have returned, that Yerushalayim no longer stands a barren ruin, and its streets are filled with young and old. But they couldn't – except for Rabbi Akiva.

Only he had the depth of vision to see past the view that was in front of his eyes. Only he could perceive not just what is, but what could be. Not to be trapped in the despair of the loss, but to hope, to believe, that Hashem had not truly left us, and that one day he would lead us back to Him to rebuild His city.

“RABBI AKIVA LIVED THE WORDS OF THE NEVI’IM. THEY WERE NOT SIMPLY WORDS ON A PAGE, BUT A REALITY BEING PLAYED OUT BEFORE HIS EYES.”

What gave him his courage and his insight? Rabbi Akiva lived the words of the *nevi'im*. They were not simply words on a page, but a reality being played out before his eyes. The historical arc of the Jewish People captured his imagination, and he was able to perceive the world from this vantage point of the supernal, divine timeline. For him, the words of the *Tanakh* were not simply ideas, they shaped the reality in which he lived.

As Bnei Akiva, we strive to adopt the hope, the vision, and to live the words of the *nevi'im* as Rabbi Akiva did. Though the path forward lies shrouded in mystey, and even in our times, we do not understand how to overcome the darkness, we must strive to laugh and smile with joy and wonder as Hashem guides the way forward.

ELAD ESHEL IS IN SHEVET LEHAVA AND IS ONE OF THE NORTHERN SHLICHIM OF BNEI AKIVA.

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SVIVOT - HA'IRGUN INTERVIEW:

This week, our dedicated Sviva correspondent got in touch with Sam Niman, Rosh of Salford Sviva, to ask him how their Ha'irgun went...

Talk me through your Ha'irgun activities.

We began with Friday night *davening* led by BA, followed by *tochniot* for high school-aged chanichim. We had dinner with really strong *ruach*, and then a tisch – we didn't finish until midnight! The next morning, we davened at the Bayit and made *kid-dush*, then we taught *ruach* songs to the younger years so that they wouldn't feel left out at the meal.

Lunch was followed by *tochniot*, *mifkad* and *kriyot* (songs) and then *seuda* for madrichim and bogrim. On Motzaei shabbat, we ran a massive wide game murder mystery, followed an inflatable obstacle course. On Sunday, the younger years had the inflatable course with more activities, face-painting and wrote cards for IDF soldiers to send in *mish-loach manot*.

What was the theme for the Ha'irgun?

We used a Disney theme. The *madrichim* of each age group had to come up with a different film, and write a *kriya* from that film as well as decorate their rooms in that style. We had Frozen, the Lion King, Mulan and Aladdin among others.

What was your favourite part of the Ha'irgun?

The *ruach!* *Ruach* was on point, my voice and others' are almost gone from singing over shabbat.



TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD
MOSHE SHMUEL GLASNER | BORN 21ST ADAR
Back to Pisa, and we hop on a flight to Bucharest Henri Coandă International Airport [OTP] (haven't been here since the Malbim!) for our connection to *Avram Iancu Cluj International Airport* in Cluj-Napoca, better known in Jewish circles as Klausenberg, where served Rabbi Moshe Glasner.

Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Glasner was born in Pressburg in 1856, but shortly thereafter moved with his family to Klausenberg, where his father was appointed rabbi. His mother, Raizel, was the eldest granddaughter of the *Chatam Sofer* (see *SL Bereishit*), making Rabbi Glasner the fourth generation (the *Chatam Sofer* being the first) in this dynasty – hence his *magnum opus* is titled *Dor Revi'i*, meaning 'fourth generation', taken from the pasuk in *Bereishit* 15:16.

In many ways, Rabbi Glasner was an exceptional figure, especially for a Hungarian rabbi. From the age of ten, his father would wake him up before dawn with hot coffee and would teach his son by discussing the halakhic questions that had been raised to him. At 21, his father passed away and he assumed the position of rabbi of Klausenberg. His halakhic approach harks back to the time of the *Rishonim*, whose style he described as 'the ultimate in searching for the truth, without any bias or favour,' and he rejected accepting halakhic positions simply because they were stated by an 'authority'. He considered *piilpul* an invalid product of the *galut*, which had 'destroyed our capacity for straightforward thinking'. Further, his approach to halakhic innovation is strongly Maimonidean. He draws a comparison to the natural sciences, in which humans take raw materials with which to make something entirely new; similarly, with Torah, based on its principles we extract *chiddushim* never-before-seen; entirely new and yet drawn from the framework of Torah. He uses this idea to explain the statement of the *chazal*: 'Everything that even a young student will innovate before his teacher – God showed to Moshe at Sinai.' Obviously, this does not mean that Moshe was given every single piece of information, but rather that he was given the text and framework – i.e., the Torah – within which every valid *chiddush* is latent. This contrasts sharply with his great-grandfather, who rejected the time-axis of *halakha* and the idea of halakhic development. This view on halakhic innovation also connects to his position on the *galut*, similarly espoused by Maimon-

How was your overall Ha'irgun experience, and how was your first time as rosh?

Absolutely incredible. From the planning to the actual shabbat, everything was a success and we've only heard positive feedback. It went almost too well! I really enjoyed it, it was one of the best weekends I've had in a while. I'm very thankful to all *madrichim* and the *shlichim* who were there to help out as well.

ides. Rabbi Glasner advanced that the purpose of keeping the oral law oral was to facilitate halakhic development, and not freeze one rabbinic interpretation as canonical; a written text would inevitably confer this kind of authority. However, due to the *galut*, innovation became frozen, for it is impossible to undertake the level of study required for genuine innovation, within the valid framework, whilst under the 'physical and spiritual yoke of exile'.

Speaking of the exile, Rabbi Glasner was an ardent Zionist. He bucked the trend of Hungarian rabbis, angering many of them by his open support of both Zionism and Mizrachi. He was subject to many denunciations and attacks, and responded in kind, claiming that in fact the anti-Zionists are the non-Orthodox ones, ignoring the fundamental nationalistic aspects of Judaism. So strong were the attacks against Rabbi Glasner that Rav Kook wrote an open letter defending him, saying that to demean 'the greatest of the generation in Torah, wisdom, fear of heaven, ancestral merit and lofty character,' the anti-Zionists were attacking the very Torah itself. So the natural response to this was to hire a certain young rabbi by the name of Yoel Teitelbaum – the future Satmar Rebbe – to launch personal attacks against Rabbi Glasner. Even after Rabbi Glasner left Klausenberg, Teitelbaum continuing personally attacking his son Akiva, who assumed his father's position, despite the fact that Akiva had never openly expressed any Zionist sentiments and indeed sought reconciliation. Anti-Zionism hasn't come very far in 100 years.

In 1922, Rabbi Glasner and his wife Tsivia made *aliyah* to Jerusalem, where he remained heavily involved in Zionist activities. Rabbi Maimon (whom we last quoted in *SL Vayera*) wrote that when Rabbi Glasner visited a new agricultural yishuv, 'he saw our youth engaged in ploughing, planting, and harvesting, [and] was seized by a hasidic ecstasy. Tears of joy flowing from his eyes, he went out to dance with the young people, hand-in-hand, shoulder-to-shoulder.'



WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Shabbat shoutout** to **Kinloss, Edgware, and Borehamwood** who are running their **Shabbatot Ha'irgun** this week!

- **Shabbat shoutout** to **Shevet Dorot** who have a shabbaton in Israel this week!

- **Birmingham SBM** continues this **Monday 13th March!** Join us at the usual location.

- **Lishmah** for bogrot and sixth-form women continues this **Tuesday 14th March!** Join this **dynamic makom torah** for women!

- **London SBM** continues next **Thursday 16th March** from 7pm at Kinloss, with guest speaker **Rebbetzen Lauren Levin!** Make sure to sign up

so that we can order enough food.

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

- **Summer Machane** applications are open! Visit **bauk.org/camps** to sign up.

- **Tafkidim** for **Summer Machane** are open! Visit **bauk.org/tafkid** to sign up.

- **Mazkirut applications** are now open! Email **mazkir@bauk.org** for an application form.

- To give any **comments** or **suggestions** to Bnei Akiva, please visit **bauk.org/feedback**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BEN AT CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG



Join us for Shabbat in Coventry

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