

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

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT LEKH LEKHA

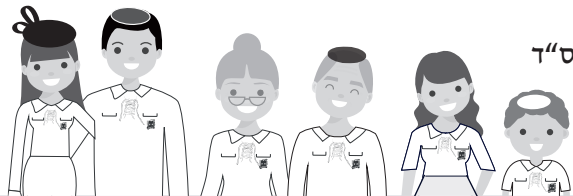
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בס"ד



STARBLIND
SAM ROTHSTEIN
SHEVET MORASHA

As part of Hashem's promise to Avraham about his descendants, the famous comparison is brought of the *Bnei Yisrael* being like the stars in the sky. "And He brought him outside and said, 'Look to the heaven and count the stars, if you're able to count them,' and He said to him, 'so shall be your descendants'". Rav Avigdor Nevenzahl gives an amazing interpretation of the last few words of the *pasuk* - "so shall be your descendants". It means they will literally be like stars: from a distance, stars are small and seem so numerous and insignificant from our perspective. But if we were to be nearer, we would all see the stars in their full blazing glory, shining brightly and powerfully; it's just the distance that makes them feel small to us. The Jewish people are the same - they have amazing inner spiritual strength, but many people don't realise this since they are so distant from who they really are, their inner person. All one needs to do is realise their potential and their ability to be the best version of themselves.

I think there's a reason this comparison was given specifically to Avraham. Avraham was a man who found God himself, without any push or influence to guide him. There are two opinions as to when Avraham found Hashem; the Rambam says age 40, while the Ra'avad says age 3. Rav Soloveitchik combines the two and says he was pulled towards God at 3, but didn't finish exploring and delving into deep philosophy until he was

40 years old. Avraham actively sought out God and found Him, and then kept on growing, eventually to *Lekh Lekha*, and all the 10 tests. He really fulfilled his potential in a society which distanced him from themselves, and despite this distance, he still was a success in bringing Hashem into this world.

The key to Avraham's success may be as follows. In the *pasuk* we brought, Hashem tells Avraham to look at the heavens and count the stars. But then the *pasuk* suddenly says "and He said to him, 'so shall be your descendants'". Why does Hashem have to start talking to Avraham again? What was the break here? I once heard the answer that Avraham, in response to Hashem saying so, actually started to count the stars. Hashem therefore had to reengage in conversation with Avraham since he stopped doing this. Surely Avraham knew that this was an impossible task? But he still tried. He attempted it even though it seemed impossible because Hashem said to do it. Avraham was not daunted by these kinds of challenges. This tenacity shows across all of Avraham's endeavours and is an incredible attribute to have.

B'ezrat Hashem we should all be able to grow and develop to our full potential and realise the huge impact we can have on the world in our own unique way without being deterred by challenges, just like Avraham.

**SAM IS IN SHEVET MORASHA AND WAS SGAN OF
BET CHALUTZI MACHANE 5782**

London In 16:14 Out 17:16
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SHLICHA'S CORNER: IMOTEINU - WOMEN IN TANAKH

RIVKAH IMEINU



When a person asks for a favour, although we may do what they asked, we probably won't do more than that. Not so Rivkah Imenu; Avraham, our father, sends Eliezer his servant to find a wife for his son

Yitzchak, and when Eliezer arrives at Rivkah's house after the long journey with his camels, it is clear to Rivkah that she is going above and beyond to help he who comes her way, as is written:

הַגְּמִיאִינִי נָא מֵעַט מַיִם מִכַּדָּךְ. וְתֹאמֶר שְׂתֵה אֲדֹנָי וְתִמְהַר וְתֵרֵד כְּדָה עַל יָדֶה וְתִשְׁקֶהוּ. וְתִכַּל לְהִשְׁקֹתוֹ וְתֹאמֶר גַּם לְגַמְלֵיךְ אֲשַׁאֵב עַד אִם כָּלוּ לְשִׁתֹּת. וְתִמְהַר וְתֵעַר כְּדָה אֶל הַשְּׂקִית וְתִרְץ עוֹד אֶל הַבְּאֵר לְשַׁאֵב וְתִשָּׂאֵב לְכָל גַּמְלָיו. וַיֹּאמֶר בֵּת מִנִּי אֵת הַגִּידִי נָא לִי הִישָׁבֵת בֵּית אָבִיךָ מְקוֹם לָנוּ לָלֶיךָ. וְתֹאמֶר אֵלָיו גַּם תָּבוֹן גַּם מִסְפּוֹא רַב עֲמָנוּ גַם מְקוֹם לָלוֹן

The servant ran toward her and said, "Please, let me sip a little water from your jar."

Drink, my lord," she said, and she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and let him drink.

When she had let him drink his fill, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking."

Quickly emptying her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels, the man silently wondering whether Hashem had made his errand successful or not.

When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold nose-ring weighing a half-shekel, and two gold bands for her arms, ten shekels in weight.

"Please tell me," he said, "whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

She replied, "I am the daughter of Betuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nachor."

And she went on, "There is plenty of straw and feed at home, and also room to spend the night."

Rashi says: "[When he asked to stay the night,] he said 'lalin' - meaning one night, and [when Rivkah replied,] she said 'lalin' - meaning several nights."

Eliezer asked to drink a little water, while Rivkah brought him a full pitcher, while also taking care of the camels and giving them water. Eliezer then

asks for her permission to spend one night at her house, and she does not hesitate, according to Rashi even offering him the option to stay for a few nights.

We see here that Rivkah Imenu has a special ability to 'see beyond', an ability to read between the lines, understand one thing out of another and act accordingly. Rivkah understood that Eliezer needed more help than he asked for and she didn't wait for him to ask for it - she spared him that unpleasantness and gave generously, from the bottom of her heart.

This characteristic of Rivkah's kindness is also mentioned in Midrash Rabbah. The Midrash says:

"All the days that Sarah was alive, the doors [of the tent] were wide open; once Sarah died, that wideness stopped. Once Rivkah came, that wideness returned".

The door to Avraham and Sarah's tent was always open to every guest. The Midrash tells us that after Sarah's death, the comfort present in their famous hospitality ceased. But when Rivkah arrived, the *kedusha* that existed in the days of Sarah returned, and with it the level of *chesed* and hospitality too. Welcoming guests is a great

kindness, and Rivkah, as mentioned, intensified the attribute of it.

From Rivkah we learn that when we are asked for help, we should always check what else we can do for that person beyond what they asked for. What else do they need? Perhaps they were ashamed to ask; what else can make that person happy? That is full-scale *chesed*.

When we give of ourselves, we also receive back. Beyond the fact that we do a *mitzva*, we also become better people, and are filled with joy and satisfaction. We will end with the sentence said by the late Rabbi Sacks: "Our worth is what we are willing to share with others" - our ability to give is actually a reflection of who we are.

Shabbat Shalom!

RABBANIT AVIYA GOODMAN IS IN SHEVET SHVUT AND IS THE NEW RABBANIT SHLICHA OF BNEI AKIVA. TO CONTACT THE RABBANIT, EMAIL RABBANIT@BAUK.ORG.

"OUR WORTH IS WHAT WE ARE WILLING TO SHARE WITH OTHERS" - OUR ABILITY TO GIVE IS ACTUALLY A REFLECTION OF WHO WE ARE.

ISRAEL - HACHSHARAT TORANI INTERVIEW:

This week, our dedicated Israel correspondent got in touch with four participants on Bnei Akiva's Hachsharat Torani programme, one from each institution, to find out how they're getting to grips with their year of study.

How have you found the start of your year of study?

Amy Maurer, Midreshet HaRova: Incredibly intense – I've developed so much and discovered a lot about myself and my limits. I'm starting to understand just how much I can handle in terms of focus and learning. I've been exposed to a whole new way of living, and we mix with people from all around the world – the diversity in Harova is unique compared to other midrashot.

Ethan Harris, Yeshivat HaKotel: Living in the old city is intense! But it's an intensity I really like.

Sophie Seitler, Midreshet Amit: Amit has been so welcoming and is a perfect balance of fun, chesed and learning. The newly refurbished building of the bet Haya'el creates a really homely atmosphere, and combined with the familiarity of BA on torani, it has been easy to settle in and have a smooth start to the year.

Speaking of Torani, what have you enjoyed about it so far?

Joel Handler, Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi: It's good fun! Really

nice to be with other Brits you've known from BA camp, it gives sense of community here even in a different environment.

AM: It's nice to have that extra element of exploring the country, and to get a change of scenery from the old city – as amazing as it is, you can get very closed off from everything so it's nice to get out. I've always had ties with BA so I'm happy that I can keep that relationship going even on my gap year. (Covid, felt disconnected from true, but now rebuilding connection.)

What do you enjoy the most about your studies?

JH: The range of choices available and range of speakers we can hear. It's not all Gemara, each seder is very different; something distinguishes each one. There's a lot of freedom in the afternoon and night sederim compared to other places.

EH: The exposure to an incredible amount of Torah that you've never been exposed to before; you only realise the depth and diversity of how much there is to learn once you're actually in yeshiva of midrasha.



TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD MANITOU | NAHALA 9TH CHESHVAN

It's surprisingly difficult to get from Lisbon to Oran - there aren't any direct flights, so it's a train and the metro for us back to Humberto Delgado Airport [LIS] for a flight to Madrid [MAD], then a flight to Aereoport de Almería [LEI] in Spain. Now we wait for a bus to take us to the port, from where we catch a ferry across the Mediterranean to the Algerian city of Oran...

Hakham Yehouda Léon Achkenazi was born in 1922 in Oran, Algeria, son of the Chief Rabbi of Algeria David Achkenazi, and grandson on his mother's side to a *mekubal* and *dayyan* of Oran. He studied in both *yeshiva* and university in Algiers, as well as studying *kabbala* in Marrakech for a short time. In 1943, he joined the French Foreign Legion and served in the infantry corps, where he was wounded in the Battle of Strasbourg. After the war, he moved to France and joined the French Jewish Scouts and was there given the name 'Manitou', which refers to the basic life force in Algonquin Native American and roughly translates to 'Great Spirit'.

Manitou then taught for over a decade in France, within the French School of Jewish Thought, which intended to teach Torah against the backdrop of modern, academic, universal thought. Its proponents included figures such as Elie Wiesel and Emmanuel Levinas. In 1968, Manitou made aliyah and moved to Jerusalem, becoming a major figure in the French Jewish community, and establishing two educational institutions for it. Manitou was well-known on the international stage, meeting with the Dalai Lama and

travelling annually to teach President Paul Biya of Cameroon.

Manitou was influenced by the Torah of Rav Kook, after being introduced to his works by his son, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook. Manitou saw many of the developments of the Israeli state as a herald of the *geula*, writing that 'When [Sepharadim] heard of the blue and white flag, the *Hatikva* anthem, and the Israeli soccer team, we immediately saw in them signs of national redemption and integrated them in a natural way into the community.'



He also pointed out the difference in Jews' perception of their own identity in the diaspora compared to in Israel. Originally, Abraham is *Halvri*, 'the Hebrew', but in exile that national identity shifted to primarily focus on religion, and Jews adopted other facets of national identity depending upon the nation in which they found themselves. Now that the redemption has begun, Jews can once again develop a Jewish national identity, but one in which the diverse identities collected over the extended exile can be amalgamated into it, beginning the process of world peace within itself.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Birmingham SBM** partnered with the **Senior Rabbi's Office** to host Rabbi Dweck as a guest speaker this week (picture below)!
- Shoutout to **Shevet Seenai** who have their shevet shabbaton this Shabbat!
- **Lishmah**, our women's beit midrash programme, continues this Tuesday, 8th November!
- London **Student Bet Midrash** continues on Thursday 10th November!
- Final call for bogrim to sign up for the **Student Bet Midrash Shabbaton** in Alkham, Kent! Taking place over the **11th-13th November**, visit www.studentbetmidrash.co.uk for more details.

- **Winter Machane** applications are open! To sign up and for more information, visit bauk.org/camps.
- **Winter Machane tafkidim** applications are still open! For junior tafkidim, visit bauk.org/junior-tafkid, for senior tafkidim, visit bauk.org/senior-tafkid.
- To give any **feedback** to Bnei Akiva, please visit www.bauk.org/feedback
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