

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

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT VAYEITZEI

12TH KISLEV 5781

27TH & 28TH NOVEMBER 2020

VOLUME 31 ISSUE 7

BNEI
AKIVA
UNITED KINGDOM



בס"ד



This week's edition of Shabbat Lashem is dedicated *lilui nishmat HaRav Ya'akov Zvi ben David Arielev, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt'l. May his family be comforted among all the mourners of Zion.*



YA'AKOV AVINU'S UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER SASHA COHEN SHEVET MORASHA

In this week's Parsha, Vayetzei, Ya'akov has a dream about a ladder that stretches up from this world, all the way to heaven. This ladder comprises of angels of Hashem, ascending and descending throughout the way. Hashem then gives Yaakov Avraham's blessing, and says "I am the L-rd, the G-d of Avraham your father and the God of Yitzchak - וַיֹּאמֶר, אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם - וַיַּחֲקֵךְ" (Bereishit 28:13).

After receiving such a historic message from Hashem, it is surprising that Ya'akov only arose and commemorated the event the next morning, instead lying back down after his initial shock and awe.

This idea is explored by my Rabbi at Harova, Rav Bailey who analyses the second passuk of the Parsha. It states, "He [Yaakov] arrived at the place and decided to rest there because the sun was setting". It then continues to say "the place" three times in one verse, which would imply that something is being emphasized, this time an anonymous place. At the end of the scene, Ya'akov names the place Beit El, yet it already had a name 'Luz', so why was it called 'the place' three times? Rav Bailey proposes that the Torah is trying to make sure we understand that this is how Yaakov related to the place; he was completely unaware of its significance. Upon waking, Yaakov exclaims "surely there is G-d in this place and I had no idea" (Bereishit 28:16), therefore showing that he now realises the holiness of the area, waking the next morning to

name it 'Beit El', aptly reflecting this new understanding.

However, why did G-d have to appear to him to make sure Ya'akov genuinely understood the Divine characteristic of the area?

An answer to this is that the second aspect of Avraham's blessing is that the land would be promised to his descendants, yet Ya'akov never ventured out of his personal areas, and therefore never truly experienced nor appreciated the outside world and his surroundings. However, now during his first trip into the outside world, alone on his way to Padam Aram, Hashem wanted Ya'akov to experience the real significance of the land he has lived in. In order to properly continue Avraham's legacy, both the aspects of the Divine promise (numerous descendants and a promised land) must be significant to Yaakov.

Rabbi Sacks zt'l shares a similar idea to Rav Bailey, where he analyses the wording of the pasuk. The verb used at the beginning of the passage, "he came upon a place", in Hebrew וַיִּפְגֵּעַ בְּמָקוֹם (Bereishit 28:11), also means an unexpected encounter, demonstrating the fact that nothing had prepared Ya'akov for this. Additionally, in rabbinic Hebrew the word 'the place' (הַמָּקוֹם) came to mean 'G-d'. Therefore, in a poetic way, the phrase could be read as 'Ya'akov had an unexpected encounter with G-d' which can teach us that our deepest spiritual experiences can arise when we are least expecting them, or when we are closest to despair. Rabbi Sacks writes a beautiful idea that it is when we are most fully open to Hashem, that He is most fully open to us, which I believe is a mindset we should all adopt.

**SASHA WAS A PARTICIPANT ON TORANI 5780
AT MIDRESHET HAROVA.**

London In: 15:42 Out: 16:54

Manchester In: 15:41 Out: 16:56

Cambridge In: 15:35 Out: 16:51

Oxford In: 15:42 Out: 16:58

Bristol In: 15:49 Out: 17:04

Birmingham In: 15:42 Out: 16:58

Leeds In: 15:34 Out: 16:53

Liverpool In: 15:42 Out: 17:00

Jerusalem In: 16:00 Out: 17:15

MORE THAN JUST THE HERE AND NOW

RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG | RAV SHALIACH



In the 1960's Walter Mischel created the now-famous "Stanford Marshmallow Experiment" - a psychological study to investigate whether the ability to delay gratification might be an indicator for success in later life. Children were placed in a room with a marshmallow in front of them and given a choice - either to eat it immediately or to wait 15 minutes while the instructor left the room. If they chose to wait, they would be rewarded with two marshmallows rather than one. Predictably, many couldn't wait. When faced with something we really want, time often seems to slow down.

In Parshat Vayeitzei, the Torah tells us how Lavan made Ya'akov work for 7 years in order to marry his daughter Rachel. It would only seem natural if for Ya'akov those years felt like an eternity, yet the Torah tells us precisely

the opposite - *"ויהי בעיניו כימים אחדים - and they were in his eyes like a few days"* (Bereishit 29:20).

Akeidat Yitzchak writes that it would have been far more easily understood had the Torah stated that they seemed in Ya'akov's eyes like a thousand years. How could he have felt the time passing so quickly?

Sforno suggests that these words are an indication of Ya'akov's deep love for Rachel. He would have been willing to work for her for much more than 7 years had he needed to. Not, as the simple translation suggests, that the years passed quickly but that they were a trivial price to pay.

But perhaps there is another answer. The

stories of Ya'akov Avinu's life, which make up this parsha, seem to have little to do with the spiritual and more to do with the mundane. Most of the details the Torah records are about how long he worked, how much he earned and who he married. Rather than tests of faith from which we can learn, we are faced with a biography and employment history. Why does it all matter?

The answer is that Ya'akov was not just any individual - he was a Patriarch of the Jewish nation. The story of his work and marriage are not just the story of his life, but the story of an entire people - the story of how Am Yisrael was founded and began to fulfil their mission set by Hashem in this world.

IN A WORLD THAT CELEBRATES THE MOMENT AND SO MUCH IS FOCUSED ON THAT WHICH CAN BE INSTANTLY ATTAINED, THE TORAH TEACHES US TO HAVE A BROADER PERSPECTIVE. TO VIEW OURSELVES AS PART OF A COLLECTIVE DESTINY.

Ya'akov Avinu knew that. He knew that everything he was doing would fit into the bigger picture of Am Yisrael and their role in the world. He knew that his marriage would continue that chain and perpetuate the Jewish people, and that was a mission

that would take not days or weeks or even a lifetime to complete, but rather the entire span of Jewish history. In the context of that story - 7 years really were like just a few days.

In a world that celebrates the moment and so much is focused on that which can be instantly attained, the Torah teaches us to have a broader perspective. To view ourselves as part of a collective destiny and to realise that every moment has meaning, not just for ourselves, but as part of a bigger story.

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

THE INHERITANCE OF FORWARD THINKING

EMMA CREEK | SHEVET AVICHAH



The Parsha begins with Ya'akov running away from Eisav and he is in a seemingly terrible situation. He has been stripped of all his possessions, his twin brother has sworn

to murder him and he is heading to his uncle Lavan's house who Ya'akov knows is a deceiving person so it won't exactly be a cheerful family reunion. And on top of all of that, Ya'akov needs to sleep outdoors with a rock for a pillow making him vulnerable to the elements and wild animals. And that is only the very beginning of the Parsha! One would think that Ya'akov would be drowning in despair and hopelessness. But that is not the case. Ya'akov wakes up and keeps on moving. He meets his wives and works and works even through Lavan's trickery. Where does he get all of this strength from to keep moving forward?

Reb Yehoshua Weitzman gives an explanation. He quotes a Medrash in Bereshit Rabba which looks at Ya'akov's oath that he took when he woke up: *"לִי לֵאלֹהִים" And Hashem will be a G-d to me.* (Bereishit 28:21)

The Medrash says that Hashem took those words and from then on made every good thing that will come to Ya'akov's descendants, Am Yisrael, begin with the word "v'haya" - and it will be. The Medrash goes onto quoting many passukim from Tanach all beginning with "vehaya" that introduce upcoming simcha and happiness for our nation in those times.

So what is it about this word that makes it so special? It just means 'and it shall be'. Why was it this word that from then on will introduce great things for Am Yisroel?

Reb Weitzman quotes an explanation he

heard from Rav Tzvi Yehuda HaKohen Kook. 'Haya' means 'it was' - past tense. However, in Tanach, when the letter 'vav' is placed before a verb the word's tense is reversed making past become future or the future become the past. The 'vav' flips the tense. 'Haya' means it was but 'v'haya' means 'and it will be' - indicating optimism, turning away from the past and looking forward to new opportunities, growth and development with anything being possible. This is what Reb Weitzman said, is what gave Ya'akov his strength.

Yes, Ya'akov could focus on where he came from - seemingly dark and despaired times, vulnerability. But Ya'akov was 'v'haya' - focussed on the future. He chose to look forward and trust in Hashem that today will be brighter than yesterday. It was that forward thinking of "And Hashem will be a G-d to me" that Yaakov had which he passed down to us.

**CHOSE TO LOOK
FORWARD AND TRUST
IN HASHEM THAT TODAY
WILL BE BRIGHTER THAN
YESTERDAY. IT WAS THAT
FORWARD THINKING OF
"AND HASHEM WILL BE A
G-D TO ME" THAT YAAKOV
HAD WHICH HE PASSED
DOWN TO US.**

Additionally, a key point in Ya'akov's phrase is recognising that it is Hashem who will bring his salvation. We end Shema with the first of the 10 Commandments. Hashem is stating He is our G-d who took us out of Egypt. But why when proclaiming His Omnipotence does He go with taking us out of Egypt as opposed to creating the whole world? Surely it would denote more power? Egypt is a metaphor for our lives. Moments of struggles and fear. Hashem wants us to know Him as the one who took us out, that He isn't unattainable when we are going through our own challenges. We can't just know that He exists, we must actually feel Him in our lives. Not only did Hashem create the world but He is in control and runs it every day too! Whenever you are in a moment of struggle it will only be Hashem who can ultimately help you.

EMMA WAS ROSH OF MACHANE TZAFON 5780.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **We are excited to bring you exciting virtual activities over Lockdown.** Keep an eye out for details on the Bnei Akiva social media pages.

- **Svivot are continuing over lockdown!** 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. Over the last six months our Mazkirut and Bogrim 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, and now a packed summer of programming for over 400 children. Please support our **Yad Achim Campaign.** Visit bauk.org/yad-achim for more information and to donate.

- Applications are open for **Winter Machane 5781!** Join us from **21st-28th December** and enjoy a fantastic Bnei Akiva experience full of fun, friends and Ruach! **NEW THIS YEAR: Machane Seenai for Year 11!** Sign up today at bauk.org/camps or email camps@bauk.org for more information.

- **Winter Machane Tafkidim** have opened! Sign up at www.bauk.org/camps.

- **SBM is back!** Look out for updates on social media of the different chaburot being given on a

variety of topics and keynote speakers. If you are looking for a chavruta please get in touch!

- Our **Kadima programme** is up and running! **Year 3-4 will delve into the stories of Tanach** in an experiential way through fun, games and tochniot! **Year 5-6 will engage with Israel** in an enjoyable, interactive and experiential way surrounded (at a distance) by their friends! **Year 7-8 will enhance their Bar and Bat Mitzvah years with a community engagement theme!** **Year 9 will connect with Israel,** learning about the country's history, significance and culture! Sign up at bauk.org/kadima!

- On the **10th of December** a cross-communal Chanukah event for Jewish youth to stand in solidarity with Uighur Muslims in China is happening. Sign up now: www.tinyurl.com/ZYC-UighurSolidarity

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (@bneiakivauk)** to stay informed of our online content!

- To receive weekly copies of **Shabbat Lashem**, sign up for our mailing list at bauk.org/contact.

- Visit bauk.org/feedback for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!

SHABBAT SHALOM!!!

Unite against genocide this Chanukah

JEWISH YOUTH UIGHUR SOLIDARITY

Thurs 10th Dec
18:00-19:15
Sign up now
Follow QR code

Join us this World Human Rights Day:
-Hear Uighur testimony
-Learn how you can help
-Light Chanukah candles together

WEEKENDS OF 7/11, 5/12, 23/1, 20/2, 20/3
FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SIGN UP PLEASE VISIT
WWW.BAUK.ORG/KADIMA

Joint project of the Youth Movements of the Zionist Youth Council of the UK together with the support of the UIA

TO SPONSOR AN EDITION OF SHABBAT LASHEM OR FOR ANY QUERIES PLEASE CONTACT DANIEL AT CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG