

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

# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT VAYEITZEI

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בס"ד



## DELVING INTO THE DREAM

TAMMY KWARTZ  
SHEVET TZION

This week's *parasha* follows Ya'akov fleeing from his family in Be'er-Sheva after angering Esav. He heads to Charan to find Lavan (Rivka's brother)

and ultimately to seek out a wife. After travelling for some time, he lies down and proceeds to have a dream, in which angels are moving up and down a ladder. Hashem appears to Ya'akov in his vision and promises to look after him on his journey ahead and to return him back to the land of Israel.

This story opens itself to many questions. The significance of the ladder and the message that we are to take away from this are what I will focus on. We can interpret the idea of the ladder as a bridge between a Godly heaven and a material world; by drawing a direct line from earth to heaven, it shows that our connection to Hashem is something to which we must ascend by our own efforts. This can only be done through our actions on earth – Torah study, *tefilla*, *mitzvot*, *chesed* etc. Through living a life following the words of Hashem, we bring ourselves closer to Him through elevating ourselves.

Rashi explains that the angels represent God's divine protection. The angels ascending the ladder were the angels that had protected Ya'akov in the land of Israel. Now that he was about to leave the land, they were replaced by another set of angels as the first had fulfilled their mission. Angels are the servants of Hashem and manifest His interactions with the world. As they are not independent beings and are extensions of Heaven, we can appreciate how Hashem is looking after us in the physical world in everything that we do.

What exactly were the angels doing as they ascended and descended the ladder? The Gemara (Chullin 91b) comments that the angels were ascending to heaven "to look upon his [Yaakov's] image above" and when they came down towards earth they were doing so "to look

upon his image below." Why were the angels tasked with this? Rav Soloveitchik *zt"l* explains that Yaakov is being viewed in two ways: his 'heavenly image' refers to his potential. Who is he going to become? What will he achieve in his lifetime? These are the parts of ourselves Hashem decides and knows before we do. Ya'akov's 'earthly image' is about the work that Ya'akov puts in on earth. These are the things that we have direct control over and choose to rise to the occasion to achieve. The angels' movement between the two images was to ensure Ya'akov could actualise his potential as a righteous man, sowing the seeds for the birth of *Am Yisrael*.

There is a further explanation from Abrabanel based in part on a comment in the Midrash that associates Yaakov's dream with the Beit Hamikdash. After emerging from the dream Yaakov exclaims: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven" (*Bereishit* 28:17). The *me-farshim* explain that upon waking, Ya'akov realised that the place where he slept is the future site of the *Beit Hamikdash*. The midrash claims that the angels moving up and down the ladder represent the kohanim who would conduct the sacrifices at the altar and therefore walk up and down the altar's ramp. The ascending angels also symbolise the smoke from the korbanot rising to heaven whilst the descending angels represent the divine providence that *Am Yisrael* can receive through serving and worshipping Hashem.

Overall, the dream is to solidify Hashem's reassurance to Ya'akov that the blessings he received from his father will come true. The first word of our *parasha*, "*vayeitzei*," means "and he left." With Ya'akov leaving the comforts of his family and about to head to a land foreign to him, the vision Hashem showed him was necessary to prove to Ya'akov that he was to be the one to connect the lowest parts of the earth to the heaven. A big responsibility, but throughout which he now knows he will not be alone.

**TAMMY IS IN SHEVET TZION AND WAS ROSH OF ALEPH MACHANE 5782**

London In 15:39 Out 16:47  
Manchester In 15:41 Out 16:54  
Cambridge In 15:38 Out 16:49  
Brighton In 15:45 Out 16:54

Oxford In 15:45 Out 16:55  
Bristol In 15:52 Out 17:02  
Birmingham In 15:44 Out 16:56  
Nottingham In 15:39 Out 16:51

Leeds In 15:36 Out 16:50  
Liverpool In 15:44 Out 16:57  
Thaxted In 15:38 Out 16:48  
Jerusalem In 15:59 Out 17:15

# SHALIACH'S CORNER: Q&A WITH RAV AVICHAH



## Question:

I forgot to say *netilat yadayim* this morning. Am I allowed to say it when I get to school?

## Answer:

In two places in *shas* we find the need to wash our hands in the morning.

The first is in *Massekhet Berakhot* (60b) where, as part of listing the *berakhot* one should say in the morning, we are told that **when washing our hands, we must make the berakha "al netilat yadayim"**. The second place is in *Massekhet Shabbat* (108b-109a), where Chazal describe **bad outcomes that will occur to anyone who touches the orifices of their body before washing their hands** three times. According to this, we wash our hands in the morning as protection from some form of danger.

At first glance, we might think that we can link the two sources. But *Arukh HaShulchan* (*Orach Chaim*, *siman* 4 paragraph 4) explains that it **isn't halakhically appropriate to establish a berakha on an act we do that isn't a mitzva**. If washing our hands is just protection, then there is no reason to make a *berakha* before it.

According to him, this is why the *Rishonim* gave **different reasons** why we wash our hands in the morning. We find these reasons given in the following *Rishonim*:

The *Rosh* (*Massekhet Berakhot*): while asleep, our hands move around, and obviously they **touch our intimate areas**. So, when we wake up and want to get going with our daily routine of *tefilla* and learning Torah, we need to wash our hands first. According to this understanding, **washing our hands is a preparatory measure for tefilla**.

The *Rashba* (*Responsa*, vol 1, *siman* 191): when waking up in the morning we are like a new creation, as if we were just born. In light of that, we should **start our "new life" with kedusha**, just like the *kohanim* would start their work in the *Beit Hamikdash* by washing their hands.

I might add, there might be some **evidence in Chazal** for *Rashba's* explanation. In the *Zohar* (part 1, page 184b), *Rashbi* teaches us that at night, while we are sleeping, the *neshamah* ('soul') leaves the body and returns to Hashem until the morning. At that time when our *neshamah* has gone, a '*ruach tum'ah*' ('spirit of impurity') settles in our bodies until the *neshamah* returns in the morning. The first thing that comes to mind when hearing that the *neshamah* leaves the body is the idea of death. Accordingly, when the *neshamah* returns in the morning it is some kind of birth, just as the *Rashba* claimed.

**"WE SHOULD WASH OUR HANDS TWICE EVERY MORNING: ONCE IMMEDIATELY WHEN WAKING UP, AND THE SECOND TIME BEFORE SHACHARIT."**

Anyway, halakhically, the *Mishna Berura* (*siman* 4, *seif katan* 1) quotes both *Rishonim* and *paskens* that we obey both explanations. Therefore, we should wash our hands **twice every morning**: once immediately when waking up, and the second time before *shacharit*. The *Mishna Berura* quotes the *Chayyei Adam* and the *Gra*, who both agree that the main reason we wash our hands is as an introduction to *tefilla*, so we must **say the berakha adjacent to the second netila**.

And that is exactly what I do every day - I get out of bed and immediately do *netila* the first time, **without a berakha**. After I get dressed and leave for *shul*, I do *netila* a second time as I start *birkhot hashachar*, but this time **making a berakha as well**.

**RAV AVICHAH GOODMAN IS IN SHEVET NETZACH AND IS THE RAV SHALIACH OF BNEI AKIVA. TO CONTACT THE RAV, OR TO BE ADDED TO THE Q&A WHATSAPP GROUP, EMAIL RAV@BAUK.ORG.**

# BNEI AKIVA IN THE COMMUNITY:

Last Shabbat, Bnei Akiva joined Kenton shul in our first 'Dor L'Dor' Shabbaton, in which the children and grandchildren of the community returned to Kenton and Bnei Akiva led the tefilla and children's services. Our dedicated communities correspondent, Joel Kaufmann, who helped run this inspiring and invigorating shabbaton, reports:

Forty years ago, Kenton had the largest Bnei Akiva *sviva* on the British Isles. Unfortunately, over the last forty years there has been a mass migration of the younger Jews to areas such as Edgware and Woodside Park. The number of young families in Kenton has been steadily decreasing. As a result, now in 2022 this community no longer has the same level of popularity it once did.

*Dor L'Dor* is a new Bnei Akiva programme in which, every few weeks, we send a some *bogrim* into various small communities to spice things up for the congregants, rejuvenating the communities and

giving them a boost of youthful energy and joy to the *shul*. We launched *Dor L'Dor* last week (25-26th November) in Kenton.

At Kenton we got to know lots of the locals and we led the services. We also asked all the congregants to bring their grandchildren to shul and we ran a lovely children service on shabbat morning. We rekindled the fire of Kenton shul this shabbat and it was a huge success - so much so, that they asked us to come back and run another *Shabbaton* in the near future.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ARRANGE A DOR L'DOR SHABBATON FOR YOUR COMMUNITY, PLEASE CONTACT RAFI AT SVIVOT@BAUK.ORG**



## TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD NETAN'EL IBN FAYYUMI | CA. 1090-1165

Unfortunately, due to the terrible war and humanitarian crisis currently going on in Yemen, it's not easy to get there. There was a period of time when all commercial airports were in fact shut down. So I guess we'll have to hire a private plane. Please do not be surprised to see your Mas Chaver bill going up next year...

Netan'el ibn Fayyumi (sometimes erroneously known as Netan'el (ibn) al-Fayyumi) was the foremost rabbi of Yemen in the 12th century. The name 'Fayyumi' originally led some scholars to believe that this was a family name showing that they originated from the Fayyum area of Egypt (as in Fayyumic Coptic), but many manuscripts in which Rabbi Netan'el signed his name read 'Netan'el son of Rabbi Fayyumi', showing that this was indeed a personal name. Although it may seem strange that his father was named after a location, it is probably due to the popularity which Sa'adiya Gaon had achieved in Yemen that people were named after his birthplace of Fayyum.

In order to understand the activity of Rabbi Netan'el ibn Fayyumi, it is first necessary to study the context in which he lived. Yemen had been under the reign of the more tolerant *Banū Najāh* dynasty, when a descendant of the Himyarite kings, Ali ibn Mahdi, began spreading more radical teachings, eventually overthrowing this dynasty and replacing it with his own. Part of the more radical Islamic climate now present in Yemen was the execution of Jews who denied the validity of Muhammad. The Jews in Yemen were also left disheartened when a popular calculation for the 'End of Days' had been and gone, without the arrival of the Messiah.

Within this context, Rabbi Netan'el ibn Fayyumi composed the *Bustan al-Uqul*, 'Garden of the Intellects,' a book similar in nature to the earlier *Chovot Halevavot* of Bahya ibn Paquda but with some significant differences in philosophy. Some have seen in the philosophical underpinnings of this work a forerunner to Rambam's *More Nevuchim*. It is almost certain that Rambam knew of the *Bustan al-Uqul*, as Rambam refers to the greatness of Rabbi Netan'el when writing to his son, Rabbi Jacob ibn Netan'el, the recipient of Rambam's famous *Iggeret*

*Teiman*, 'Letter to Yemen.'

Rabbi Netan'el writes that God sends prophets with different revelations to different people. For example, he argues that Muhammad was a true prophet, sent by God to the Arab lands, and attempts to prove from the text of the *Qur'an* that its purpose was not to supplant the Torah for Jews. He writes: 'Therefore, let every people practice what it has received, following its prophets, priests, and leaders; and none is left without Torah, for it is all from one God to Whom they all return, and all pray to him and look to him.' Rabbi Netan'el adduces support from this idea in the words of *Chazal*, where they say that seven prophets were sent to the nations of the world before the giving of the

Torah, including Bilam and Iyov. 'And even after [the Torah's] revelation, nothing prevented Him from sending to them whom He wished, that the world might not remain without religion.' This position is similar to the subject of Islam known as Isma'ilism, which awaits a Messiah who will show that underneath all religions is a single universal truth and who will unite the nations of the world in serving God.



This extreme pluralistic position within Jewish thought has not remained without propagation in later times. Some have seen echoes of this idea in Rabbi Sacks' first edition of *The Dignity of Difference*, in which he writes that Judaism does not have a monopoly on religious truth. Similarly, statements from Rav Kook in *Arpelei Tohar* have equated religion and heresy in the fact that neither of them can actually give over the absolute nature of the Divine truth, which by its very essence is inarticulable on this earth. However, Rabbi Netan'el nonetheless affirmed the superiority of the Jewish commandments and teachings as a method of drawing closer to God, in amongst all the other religions.

# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Lishmah**, our women's beit midrash, continues this **Tuesday 6th December!**
- **Va'ad**, for male bogrim, will be continuing the discussion of the **shalosh shevuot** with Rav Avichai on **Tuesday 6th November!**
- London **Student Bet Midrash** continues on **Thursday 8th December!**
- **Winter Machane** applications are still open! To sign up, visit [bauk.org/camps](http://bauk.org/camps).

- **Israel Machane** applications will open on **Wednesday 7th December at 17:00!** To view our brochure and sign up, visit [bauk.org/israel](http://bauk.org/israel)
- **Save the date** for our bogrim event happening on **motza'ei shabbat 10th December!**
- **Bnei Akiva** will be sending a delegation to **March of the Living** over 16th-20th April 2023. If you are interested, please contact Gidon at [mazkir@bauk.org](mailto:mazkir@bauk.org).

**WINTER MACHANE 5783**  
22-29 DECEMBER

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**LISHMAH** ת"ת

Bnei Akiva invites all Bogrot and sixth-form women to join our Lishmah Beit Midrash Programme!

**What?** Open Bet Midrash followed by a choice of Chaburot, led by educators and peers

**Where?** 2 Hallswelle Rd

**When?** Every Tuesday evening 8-10pm

Come and be part of this dynamic Makom Torah!

Contact [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org) for more info!

**VA'AD**

Join Rav Avichai learning through the *shalosh shevuot* (three oaths), and how these relate to Zionism

Monday Nights  
10:15pm

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