

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Winter Machane** applications are open! To apply, please go to bauk.org/camps. For more information, please email camps@bauk.org.

- **Israel Machane madrichim applications** are open! Apply at <https://form.jotformeu.com/92955366587375>.

- **Israel Machane** applications open THIS THURSDAY 21st November - head to bauk.org/israel for details of how to apply.

- **Student Bet Midrash** continues every **Thursday night at Kinloss!** Come along at 7.45pm for a great opportunity to hear amazing speakers, eat great food and learn with friends or madrichim! Email Chana at chinuch@bauk.org for more details or if you have any questions.

- **Student Bet Midrash** is thrilled to launch our brand new **Women's Jewish Educator Programme - ללמוד וללמד**. We are looking for highly-skilled female leaders aged 18-21 to be trained as educators within the Jewish community. For more information and for an application form please contact hreuben@theus.org.uk. Deadline 25th November.

- Sign up for our **Mega Siyum in memory of Marc Weinberg** now! Part 1 of the Siyum aims to complete Tanach by Winter Machane. All welcome to join at bitly.com/megasiyum. For more information contact chinuch@bauk.org.

- **Applications for Hachshara** are open for a short time longer! Apply at worldbneiakiva.org/application before 1st December 2019.

- Bnei Akiva are proud to send a delegation of Bogrim on **March of the Living UK's** 10th

anniversary trip including a trip to Bergen-Belsen. Sign up at marchoftheliving.org.uk. For further information email mazkir@bauk.org.

- THIS SUNDAY 17th November is **Mitzvah Day!** In London we're joining Camp Simcha UK and The Joely Bear Appeal for a **blood drive**, as well as supporting GIFT **food donations** outside Brent Cross Tesco. For more information or to sign up, please contact Zoe at svivot@bauk.org.

- To get involved with your local sviva please contact Zoe at svivot@bauk.org.

- **2019 marks the 80th birthday of BAUK!!** Keep an eye out for events in your local community! For information on our **'80for80'** campaign and to set up a standing order head to bauk.org/bachad.

- Sign up now for **Mas Chaver** for 5780! To apply head to bauk.org/mas-chaver.

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (bneiakivauk)** to get regular updates with what is going on in the Tnuva.

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

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. What is symbolised by the bread and water that Avraham offers his guests? (See **Aderet Eliyahu on 18:4**)
2. What was Lot's intention when he offered his daughters to the mob? (See **Rabbeinu Chananel on 19:8**)

SHABBAT SHALOM!!!

WINTER MACHANE 5780

Join us this Winter for a special celebration!
Celebrate Chanukah with Bnei Akiva and enjoy our final BA80 Birthday Party!
Date: **23rd-30th December 2019**
Price: **£449**
Sign up today!
02082091319 - bauk.org/camps - camps@bauk.org



#LIGHTUPYOURWINTER

TO SPONSOR AN EDITION OF SHABBAT LASHEM OR FOR ANY QUERIES PLEASE CONTACT CHANA AT [CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org)

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

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK



LESSONS FROM LOT
JAKE FRIEZE
SHEVET OROT

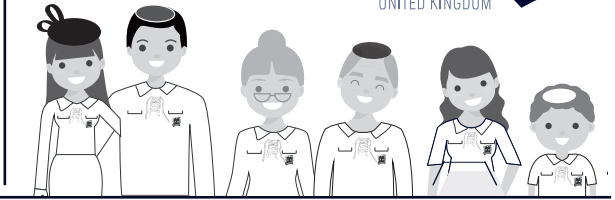
The Torah writes in Parashat Vayera, "God remembered Avraham; He sent Lot away from the midst of the upheaval" (Bereishit 19:29). According to the Midrash, "God remembered Avraham" because God remembered that when Avraham and Sara came to Egypt under the guise of siblings, out of fear that the local inhabitants might otherwise kill Avraham to make Sara eligible for marriage; Lot remained silent and did not tell the truth about Avraham and Sara. It is for this merit that God rescued Lot from the destruction of Sedom.

Several writers have questioned why the Midrash does not point to another merit of Lot namely his gracious hospitality, as evidenced in Parashat Vayera when he invites the two angels into his home, feeds them, and tries to protect them from the locals. One answer comes from Rav Aharon Kotler's Mishnat Aharon, in which he asserts that Lot's hospitality did not originate from a conscientious desire to assist people but rather had become second nature due to the years living with Avraham, whom he had observed do the same. Therefore, such a merit did not suffice to spare him the devastation that God brought upon Sedom.

This explanation begs the question of whether the performance of a mitzvah in itself has any real value if it is one which is habitual in nature and performed without thinking?

An answer to that question may be found in the Saba of Kelm who addresses this issue at length. He cites a number of sources from Chazal that clearly recognise the basic but also profound value of mitz-

PARASHAT VAYERA
18TH CHESHVAN 5780
15TH & 16TH NOVEMBER 2019
VOLUME 30 ISSUE 9



vot performed with ulterior motives. By way of example, if money falls from a person's pocket and a poor man finds it and uses it to sustain himself, the money's original owner is credited with the mitzva of tzedakah.

Nevertheless, the Saba still acknowledged the fundamental difference between mitzvot performed with a deep sincere desire to serve God; and those which are done either with ulterior motives or by habit. Accordingly, in the case of Lot, whilst his hospitality was indeed something of religious value, it was not on its own sufficient to spare him the fate that befell his city. As a member of this population, he would have been included in the decree of destruction. Therefore, it was not the merit of a mitzva performed by force of habit but one which was performed consciously which saved him.

The Saba of Kelm also explained how this assessment of Lot's conduct reflects his character. Lot welcoming guests insincerely, simply because he had grown up to be hospitable was different to his loyalty to Avraham in Egypt which stemmed from a desire to do good. However, Lot's character only extended to refraining from doing harm to other people (as in not divulging the truth of Avraham and Sara's relationship) but not to proactive assistance in going out of his way to help others. He therefore went through the motions as he had been conditioned to do, but his moral conviction drove him only to abstain from hurting other people and not to act kindly and compassionately beyond this basic call of duty.

We can learn from Lot two things about mitzvot. First, that to do mitzvot with a deep sense of meaning has greater merit. Secondly the need to look at our own character and be proactive and perform mitzvot that go beyond the basic call of duty but influence the world in a more positive way.

JAKE WAS A MADRICH ON ALEPH SUMMER MACHANE

London In: 15:56 Out: 17:05	Oxford In: 15:57 Out: 17:09	Leeds In: 15:50 Out: 17:05
Manchester In: 15:54 Out: 17:09	Bristol In: 16:03 Out: 17:15	Liverpool In: 15:57 Out: 17:12
Cambridge In: 15:50 Out: 17:02	Birmingham In: 15:57 Out: 17:10	Jerusalem In: 16:04 Out: 17:18

VAYERA 5780: TITLE

RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG | RAV SHALIACH



When Avraham was told of Hashem's plan to wipe out the wicked city of Sedom, his response was almost disbelief.

האף תספה צדיק עם "רשע" - Could it be that Hashem would destroy the righteous

along with the wicked? Surely there were some tzaddikim in the city and their merit would be enough to prevent the whole city from being wiped out? The question was how many would it take?

Avraham began with the number 50 - only to be told that the city of Sedom did not contain 50 righteous individuals. And so, he continued bargaining, lowering the number each time: 45, 40, 30, 20, 10. Finally, when Avraham understood that even ten tzaddikim were not to be found he relented and accepted the Divine decree.

There's a lot to be asked about this story, but one difficulty is why Avraham gave up at the number ten. If his argument was based on justice for all, then why should any number of tzaddikim deserve to be punished? Rashi answers that Avraham knew from the days of Noach that anything less than ten wouldn't be enough. When the flood had wiped out all of mankind, only Noach and his family, numbering eight people (Noach, his wife, three sons and their wives) had been saved. This was a proof that anything less than ten wouldn't be enough to save the world as well.

Yet this answer raises a difficulty - Noach, despite being a complete tzaddik, is heavily criticized for not praying for his generation (to the extent that the flood is forever remembered by the name "מי נח" - an allusion to the fact he did nothing to prevent it.) If his prayers would

have been powerless to affect a different outcome then why was Noach at fault?

Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz answers based on a midrash describing Pharaoh's consultation with his advisers as to what to do with the Jewish people. One of the those consulted for advice was Iyov, who remained silent. As a result of his silence, Iyov went on to endure harsher sufferings than we can imagine.

But the question can be asked, what did Iyov do wrong? Even if he had spoken out for the good of the Jews, it is unlikely that his advice would have been heeded. He may even have been killed. And by remaining silent he made

sure not to play in active role in the Jewish people's suffering. Rav Shmuelewitz answers that even though speaking up wouldn't have had any effect, Iyov should have cried out when he heard of the Jewish people's distress. Whether he would have been able to affect the situation or not is a secondary question, but to remain silent in the face of such suffering means to feel indifferent.

Had he identified with their pain, he would have cried out, almost instinctively.

This is the claim against Noach. It's true that his prayers wouldn't have reversed the decree, but how could he not cry out when the whole world was about to be destroyed? Avraham, by contrast, heard of the decree and invested all of his emotions trying to overturn it. Only after he reached the point where his arguments no longer held any weight did he remain silent.

The lesson here is that we cannot be indifferent to the suffering of others, be it the Jewish people, or the world at large. When it is within our means to help of course we have a responsibility to do so, but even if not, the very least that is required is to cry out in prayer on behalf of those who cannot.

WHETHER HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO AFFECT THE SITUATION OR NOT IS A SECONDARY QUESTION, BUT TO REMAIN SILENT IN THE FACE OF SUCH SUFFERING MEANS TO FEEL INDIFFERENT.

TESTING TIMES: VAYERA 5756

IAN DAVIS | SHEVET ATZMAUT

Being one of the most famous incidents in the Torah, the Akeidah, the binding of Isaac, stands alone as an example of unwavering faith, performed by our father Avraham.

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹקִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי:

"And it happened after these things that God tested Avraham and said to him, "Avraham", and he replied "Here I am"." (Bereishit 22:1)

Much commentary exists on this aspect of trial endured by Avraham on ten occasions, climaxing with the commandment to sacrifice his beloved son - Yitzchak. The Rambam in Morah Nevuchim (The Guide to the Perplexed) states that the reason for all trials is to teach a person the way his/her life should proceed. A trial is not an end in itself, but rather a means to instruction and guidance. The Akeidah shows us the extent and limit of fear in God, in which Avraham was willing to perform an act contradictory to all that he believed in because God commanded it.

The Ramban expresses the opinion that the aim of God testing us is in order to translate the potential of a person's character into actions and therefore give the reward of a good deed as well as the reward of a good heart. This indicates that all trials are for the benefit of the recipient. Rav Yosef Albo, in his Sefer Halkkarim, has a similar approach to the Ramban, in that he views the trial as an experience, which leaves an indelible mark on the performer with an aim to intensify his love of God.

These commentators are therefore stressing the improvement of the subject's character, producing the ultimate result of an increased closeness with God. A tragic, yet inspiring example of this is found in the story of Rabbi Akiva (Brachot 61). Rabbi Akiva was killed in the most abhorrent way by the Romans. Even though he was enduring terrible torture, his foremost thoughts were concerning his relationship with the Almighty. It was in these, the last moments of Rabbi Akiva's life, that he was able to elevate himself above the physical and feel that he had finally understood what it meant to love God with all his soul.

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato states in Derech Hashem, "Every man's predicament in life is a challenge. The Highest Wisdom divided challenges amongst the human race in a manner decreed fitting and proper to fulfil its profound plan. Every individual therefore has his own challenge,

this is his assignment and responsibility in this world, and within its framework he must strive for success. His deeds are then judged by God's attributes of justice with true precision, depending on the responsibility that was given to him."

Many times, questions, doubts and fears enter our minds; how can a compassionate and just God allow atrocities on a national or an individual level, and many times people try to provide answers to the circumstances. It is appropriate at this point to look at a book in the Tanach which personifies the aspect of trial and suffering with no available answers at hand. The book of Iyov tells of the suffering of a righteous man who loses everything, his wealth, family and personal health. Iyov is rebuked by his friends for questioning the actions of the Almighty, however the sefer concludes with God appearing to him in a storm wind saying:

"Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like Him?" (Iyov 40:9)

Go stresses His omnipotence in contrast to the limited understanding of human beings, but, following on from this, the friends of Iyov are rebuked for condemning Iyov's questioning. God does not provide any solutions, but encourages the striving of a great human being.

Humans may not have been given the capacity to truly understand the way of God, but this does not mean we should sit back and let life's problems pass us by. We have the right to question, although answers are not always forthcoming.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato states, "The Highest Wisdom determines what should befall each individual and in the same manner determines the means through which this should come about. Everything is ultimately decreed with the utmost precision, according to what is truly best.

THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PRODUCED IN SHAB-BAT LASHEM VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4, 11TH NOVEMBER 1995. IAN NOW LIVES IN EDGWARE AND SENDS HIS DAUGHTERS TO BNEI AKIVA MACH-ANOT.

AS PART OF OUR BA80 CELEBRATIONS WE ARE DIGITISING OUR HISTORICAL RECORDS AND CHINUCH MATERIALS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SPONSORING OUR ARCHIVE PLEASE CONTACT ADAM AT OPERATIONS@BAUK.ORG.