

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

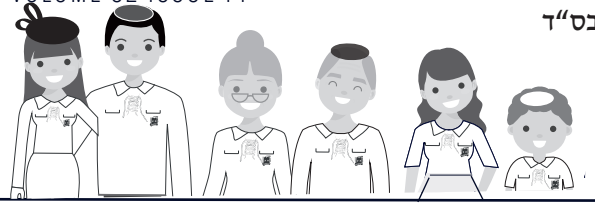
# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

**PARASHAT MISHPATIM**  
27<sup>TH</sup> SHEVAT 5782  
28<sup>TH</sup> & 29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022  
VOLUME 32 ISSUE 14



בס"ד



## **ETHICAL MITZVOT** ISABELLA GOLDMAN SHEVET DOROT

Parashat Mishpatim teaches us many mitzvot and because of this there is a risk of getting lost in the commandments, leading us to lose sight of the overall purpose of our Torah observance. Therefore, I feel it's less necessary to discuss the 53 mitzvot given to the Jewish nation in this parasha and more necessary to focus on how these mitzvot are carried out in the present. It's so vital to remember the original purpose for why we carry out G-d's commandments: to help Jews to treat other people with respect. 30 of the mitzvot in Mishpatim are prohibitions and the other 23 are imperative commandments. However, what the majority of these have in common is being mitzvot between people.

The way which we carry a mitzva out and how we treat other human beings in the process is what's most important. Therefore, I think one should carry a mitzva out in a humble way, showing humility before and after. This is what really matters most, regardless of how 'holy' our actions may be. I think the discourteousness displayed by some who are punctilious about the mitzvot they do needs to be prevented. This way of observing Judaism valorises, and pays attention to, halachic detail, whilst forgetting about basic politeness.

A couple of key examples jump to mind. Firstly, Jews who may be extremely careful when regularly davening and who can recite the prayers fluently but then resort to lashon hara as soon as there is a gap in the service. Secondly, Jews who may be so set on venerating the Torah that they literally knock people over on the way to giving the Torah a kiss. These examples highlight why when carrying out a mitzva it's important to strive to achieve

both moral and spiritual perfection as opposed to solely spiritual.

Rashi focuses on this idea in his first comment on Parashat Mishpatim when he discusses the 'va' at the start of the phrase:

**וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תָּשִׂים לִפְנֵיהֶם**

*And these are the commandments that you shall place before them (Shemot 21:1)*

To begin a sentence, and an entire parasha portion with the word 'and' seems unusual. Our sages explain that whenever the word 'and' is used it is to connect a passage with the previous portion of the Torah. Since in last week's parasha we studied the giving of the Ten Commandments there is a clear message inherent in this connection that just like G-d gave the Ten Commandments at Sinai, so too the civil laws were given at Sinai. A lesson can be learnt from highlighting that these were given in the same place. The 53 mitzvot are equally as important as the foundations of our religion, the Ten Commandments. When reading the parasha and seeing the 'va' at the beginning we are reminded that the many mitzvot given in Mishpatim stem from the Ten Commandments and that they should be taken just as seriously. At Har Sinai every person saw and felt the holiness in all other Jewish people. This teaches us to connect our conception of Sinai to how we carry out a mitzva.

G-d gave us Torah and mitzvot as tools to pursue the goals of treating others correctly to bring about national unity. We must focus on this goal by performing mitzvot and observing the commandments, leading us to rekindle the spiritual experience of both the holiness and unity of Sinai.

From reading Parashat Mishpatim and looking at Rashi's comments on it I feel that if the whole Jewish world knew, and lived by his comment, the Jewish people would be kinder, more ethical and more dignified when carrying out the mitzvot.

**ISABELLA IS SGANIT OF SALFORD SVIVA**

## **SHABBAT TIMES**

London	In 16:27 Out 17:39	Oxford	In 16:28 Out 17:43	Leeds	In 16:21 Out 17:40
Manchester	In 16:28 Out 17:43	Bristol	In 16:34 Out 17:49	Liverpool	In 16:29 Out 17:46
Cambridge	In 16:21 Out 17:36	Birmingham	In 16:28 Out 17:44	Glasgow	In 16:24 Out 17:45
Johannesburg	In 18:43 Out 19:39	Sydney	In 19:45 Out 20:44	Jerusalem	In 16:34 Out 17:49

# Q&A WITH RABBANIT SARAH

**Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE OF HOW BEST TO NAVIGATE THE SOMETIMES OVERWHELMING WORLD OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND DOES THE TORAH HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ON THE MATTER?**



**A:** There is no doubt that social media has changed our lives and it's worth reflecting from time to time on just how we relate to it. Last week I made the mistake of spending too much time on LinkedIn.

Whilst casually perusing the job options in my field for when we finish our Shlichut, I was also unwittingly scrolling past photos of people's impressive swag from their new jobs, receiving notifications to congratulate my contacts for their work anniversaries, and was bombarded with links to the latest scientific article someone in my bachelor's degree had just published during their post-doc. Whilst I didn't think this had affected me much at the time, I ended up spending the rest of the day feeling quite down. I suddenly realised that LinkedIn had done to me what Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and Facebook do to teenagers (OK, maybe not Facebook), and potentially adults on a regular basis. Constantly comparing ourselves to others on social media, together with the false portrayal of things as better than they actually are, can have the damaging effect of making us feel mediocre or even inadequate.

Whilst there may not be a Siman in the Shulchan Aruch containing 'Hilchot Social Media,' the Torah has eternal principles that can help guide us through this emotional quandary and look after our own wellbeing. The Rambam writes

**כָּל אָדָם רָאִי לוֹ לְהִיטֵּת צְדִיק כְּמוֹשֵׁה רַבֵּנוּ**  
*Each person is capable of becoming a Tzadik like Moshe Rabeinu*

At first glance this statement can seem quite shocking. How can every Jew, or in fact any Jew, aspire to reach the heights of Moshe Rabeinu, our greatest ever leader? One explanation given is that a Tzadik is not an objective image of greatness but rather someone who fulfils their personal mission and actualises their unique potential. We are each given our own mission in this world and are uniquely equipped with all the

tools we need to complete it. We are not meant to match the achievements of Moshe Rabeinu – that would be impossible. But rather, in the same way that he fulfilled his unique potential, so too are we meant to fulfil ours. Judaism requires that we judge ourselves based on our own potential – rather than in comparison to others. As Albert Einstein reportedly said, “if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing it's foolish.”

This may also help to explain one of the Ten Commandments – **לֹא תַחַנּוּד** (Do not covet). Once we realise that we are each given precisely what we need, the temptation to be jealous of the things possessed by others – material or otherwise – should fall away.

**OUR TIME AND ATTENTION ARE TWO OF THE MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCES THAT WE HAVE**

These insights can hopefully help us foster a healthier attitude towards social media. When we internalise that everybody is unique with their own successes and challenges then we can start to genuinely be happy for others and celebrate their successes

rather than coming away feeling bitter that we haven't achieved the same thing.

Additionally, I would recommend to be very selective about who you 'follow.' Social media has created some amazing opportunities. Torah ideas can be spread with unprecedented ease and we have access to incredible teachers and role models from across the world. We have even seen social media used to raise awareness and help bring about meaningful change on a range of issues, from Agunot to abuse survivors. We should definitely utilize these tools for good, but we shouldn't let them take over our lives. Not every influencer needs to be let into our feed, and ultimately into our consciousness, no matter how many likes or followers they have. Is their content appropriate? Is it productive? Will it help me to become the best me that I can be? Our time and attention are two of the most precious resources that we have, and we can control how we use them more than we often realise.

**DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR RABBANIT SARAH? SEND IT IN TO RABBANIT@BAUK.ORG.**

# THE WEEK IN PICTURES



Bogrim enjoy a Tu B'Shvat Seder with Northern Shlichim Lani and Elad Eshel in Manchester



Rebbeztzin Emma Taylor speaks to the new Lilmod U'flamed Cohort as part of their first session



Shevet Hashachar plan a fundraising initiative for Camp Simcha at the London Bayit

## MY MAZKIRUT EXPERIENCE

**With Mazkirut 5783 applications open, this year's Mazkirut give our Shabbat Lashem correspondent an exclusive insight into what the job is really like.**

### Why did you apply for the Mazkirut?

**Sam:** I have gained an enormous amount from Bnei Akiva and every time I am involved, I continue to gain and grow. For me, the Mazkirut was and is an incredibly opportunity to continue growing in the Tnuva and provide opportunities for others to learn and grow with Bnei Akiva.

**Ariella:** I have personally gained so much from Bnei Akiva from such a young age including, excellent educational experiences, leadership skills and life long friends. The opportunity to make the Tnuva a place where others can gain the same things I have is one I couldn't pass up on.

**Adi:** I felt like it was the next natural step in my progression within the movement. Bnei Akiva has given me so much over so many years and I felt that this was my chance to give back to the movement that gave me so much. How could I miss out on the opportunity to potentially impact someone's life through the movement, as others did to me!

### What's the best thing about your job?

**Josh:** At BA, we've always said the best way to learn is to teach and that's what I love most about my job - I'm always learning new things about Judaism, Religious Zionism and myself.

**Ariella:** Being on the Mazkirut is such a dynamic job. There are always new events and opportunities to get involved in. I have had the privilege of working with multiple charities and organisations and meeting really interesting people.

**Dania:** I get paid to learn and teach Torah!

### What's been a highlight of your year so far?

**Sam:** I have many highlights! Amongst them are attending the Israeli Ambassador's Chanukah party and, of course, the amazing machanot in the winter.

**Adi:** Salford FFN! Can't wait for Shabbat Ha'irgun season!

**Josh:** It's got to be Machane! I was lucky enough to be

*Rosh of H-Course in the winter and be a part of the formation of the next generation of BA madrichim. As a chinuch worker, I got to see all the chomrim I had been working on materialise in front of my eyes as madrichim gave over their educational messages in kvutza and beyond. There's nothing quite like it.*

### Why do you love Bnei Akiva?

**Adi:** BA is to thank for the majority of my best memories! It's the place where I made life-long friends, gained true Torah knowledge and was exposed to inspiring role models and education, that I would not have been able to access elsewhere. Now my Jewish values, ideals and identity are so much stronger.

**Dania:** The combination of serious Torah learning opportunities, Religious Zionist hashkafa, personal development and fun, all within a supportive environment where you feel part of something hugely important, is completely unique to BA.

**Josh:** No other organisation or career requires the people with it to be consistently working on themselves. Youth movements shape the people that are a part of them into more giving people. I love being a part of that community.



The Mazkirut: (From left) Ariella Herman, Shira Collins, Adi Abeles, Dania Mann-Wineberg, Sam Prais and Josh Daniel

### What would you say to someone considering applying for next year's Mazkirut?

**Sam:** Do it! It's a chance you'll never get again. It's incredibly valuable to both yourself and the Tnuva, to spend an entire year of your life giving.

**Ariella:** It's important to remember that whilst the job is so fun and rewarding, it's also a lot of work! Be prepared for the most exciting, jam packed year (or two) of your life!

**To find out more about Mazkirut applications email [mazkir@bauk.org](mailto:mazkir@bauk.org)**

# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Lishmah** is restarting on **1st February** and is now open to **all Bogrot and Sixth-Formers!** Don't miss this amazing **Torah learning opportunity!** Sign up: [tinyurl.com/Lishmah-BA](http://tinyurl.com/Lishmah-BA)

- Calling all male Bogrim! Join **Rav Joel** for a **weekly Va'ad** on Tuesday evenings at 10:15!

- **London Student Bet Midrash** is taking place weekly on **Thursday evenings** for high school and university students. For more info about London or Birmingham SBM email [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org)

- **KADIMA is back** by popular demand! Open to all in **Years 7-10**, join us for a riveting **5-part course** infused with **fun, friends and inspiration!!** For more information contact Adi at [svivot@bauk.org](mailto:svivot@bauk.org)

- Keep an eye out for **exciting Bnei Akiva updates** for all ages!

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

- Visit **[bauk.org/feedback](http://bauk.org/feedback)** for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!



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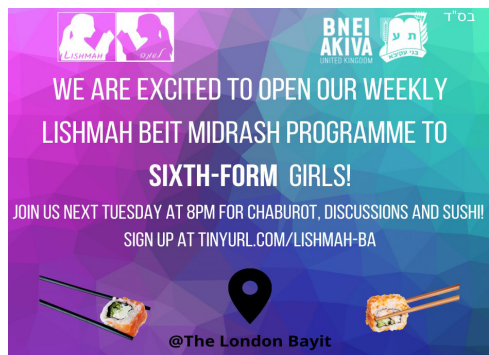
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WE ARE EXCITED TO OPEN OUR WEEKLY  
LISHMAH BEIT MIDRASH PROGRAMME TO  
**SIXTH-FORM GIRLS!**

JOIN US NEXT TUESDAY AT 8PM FOR CHABUROT, DISCUSSIONS AND SUSHI!  
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