

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

# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

SHABSHAT VAYEIRA

18<sup>TH</sup> CHESHVAN 5783  
11<sup>TH</sup> & 12<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022  
VOLUME 33 ISSUE 4



בס"ד



## AVRAHAM'S LEGACY LILY HARARI SHEVET OROT

This week's *parasha* begins with two seemingly unrelated stories: Avraham and Sara receiving

the news of their unborn son, followed by the destruction of Sodom. But both stories fit rather well within a larger idea or theme surrounding *parashat Vayera*. The *parasha* is a series of trials from Hashem to Avraham, but what are these trials working towards? What if every test or event in this week's *parasha* is setting a precedent for Avraham's descendants, the future "גוי גדול"? Looking back into *parashat Lekh Lekha*: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great" (Bereishit 12:2). The pasuk is in the future tense, as at this point in Bereishit Avraham and his descendants still need to become great. This can be seen as an active phrase, that Hashem will mould Avraham and create greatness in him and his descendants.

Turning to the first *perek* of *Vayera*: "כי ידעתיו למנוח אשר" (Bereishit 18:19). The JPS 2006 translation on Sefaria reads, "For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of Hashem." A different translation of the word "ידעתיו" could be "I have destined him", from the root of the word "to know". Again, there is this sense of the future, "destined"; Hashem has not singled out Avraham based solely on who he is, but who he will become and consequently who his descendants could become.

So, if an established theme surrounding this *parasha* is setting a precedent for behaviour to the future nation, each event must be able to establish ideas of faith in

Hashem, moral behaviour, strength of character, etc. Firstly, the impending birth of Yitzchak signifies the larger birth of a nation and the continuation of Avraham's name, so now that the future of the "גוי גדול" is established, the moulding to fit that greatness can begin. Starting with the events surrounding Sodom: Avraham petitions and questions God throughout the story to save the whole of Sodom, not just the righteous that might live there. Rabbi Menachem Leibtag argues that Avraham's petition itself, although a failure, sets up God's hope for his nation to be a model society that is righteous not for its own sake, but to uplift other nations around it. As well as this, the tradition of *tzedaka umishpat*, 'righteousness and justice', is established and passed on to Yitzchak, and, uncoincidentally, the absence of this tradition was why Sodom was destroyed. The story of Sodom also reveals what is important in the Jewish tradition of faith. In many ways, Avraham is the archetype for how his descendants should express and have belief in God. The fact that Avraham initially challenged Hashem's destruction of the city and was not punished for it is a testament to the rejection of blind faith in Judaism.

Yet, *parashat Vayera* ends with the *Akeida*. By sacrificing his child, Avraham is not only going against his moral beliefs but also sacrificing the future nation he was promised. There is a sense of irony that the idea of his son being born at the beginning of the *parasha* led Avraham to display such strength of character towards Sodom, as opposed to the idea of his son dying that led to such acquiescence. The story of the *Akedah* leaves more questions than answers, one of which being: if each event in this *parasha* went on to form an ideal or pillar of society for the future Jewish nations, what legacy did Avraham's near sacrifice leave behind?

## LILY IS IN SHEVET OROT AND WAS A MADRICHAN ON GIMMEL MACHANE 5782

London In 16:02 Out 17:06  
Manchester In 16:06 Out 17:14  
Cambridge In 16:01 Out 17:07  
Brighton In 16:07 Out 17:11

Oxford In 16:08 Out 17:14  
Bristol In 16:14 Out 17:19  
Birmingham In 16:08 Out 17:15  
Nottingham In 16:03 Out 17:11

Leeds In 16:02 Out 17:10  
Liverpool In 16:09 Out 17:17  
Alkham In 16:00 Out 17:05  
Jerusalem In 16:07 Out 17:20

# SHLICHA'S CORNER: IMOTEINU - WOMEN IN TANAKH

## RACHEL IMEINU



This week we marked the death of *Rachel Imeinu*. Rachel was one of a kind because she united *Am srael* more than all the other forefathers and foremothers did.

Rachel is buried on the way to Efrat, in Beit-Lechem, as the *pasuk* describes: "I [do this because], when I was returning from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, while I was journeying in the land of Canaan, when still some distance short of Ephrat; and I buried her there on the road to Ephrat"—now Beit-Lechem." (*Bereishit* 48:7).

Says Rashi: "Know, however, that I buried her there by the command of God". Future events proved why God had commanded him to do this: in order that she might help her children when Nebuzardan would take them into captivity. For when they were passing along that road, Rachel came forth from her grave and stood by her tomb weeping and beseeching mercy for them, as it is said (*Yirmiyahu* 31:15-16):

כֹּה אָמַר ה' קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים  
רָחֵל מְבֻכָה עַל-בְּנֵיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהִנָּחַם עַל-בְּנֵיהָ כִּי  
אֵינָנּוּ: כֹּה אָמַר ה' מְנַעֲי קוֹלָךְ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדְּמְעָה  
כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לְפַעֲלֶיךָ נְאֻמָּה וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב:  
וְיִשְׁתַּקְוָה לְאַחֲרֵיךָ נְאֻמָּה וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגִבּוֹלָם:

'A voice is heard in Rama, the sound of weeping... Rachel weeping for her children', and the Holy One, blessed be He, replied to her 'There is a reward for your actions, says the Lord... for your children will return to their own borders.'

Why is it specifically Rachel's request to forgive Am Israel that Hashem listens to? What is it about Rachel that her *tefilla* was answered, and *Am Yisrael* was promised that it would be brought back to Israel?

The Midrash explains that the reason is because of Rachel's special *mesirut nefesh*, roughly translated as 'willingness to sacrifice', which was expressed in several ways. First, Rachel sacrificed her spiritual world by allowing Leah to marry Yaakov, taking the risk that she would

not fulfill her spiritual destiny. It should be noted that Avraham was also ready to sacrificed his spiritual world at *akeidat Yitzchak*, but there he was commanded by Hashem to do so, unlike Rachel, whose devotion was of her own initiative. Secondly, Rachel's *mesirut nefesh* played an important part of her giving away to Leah the secret signs she and Yaakov had. In doing so, she demonstrated love of the other - a strong *ahavat chinam*.

We can therefore see that Hashem agreed to forgive *Am Yisrael* for their *sinat chinam*, thanks to the *ahavat chinam* and dedication of Rachel, who stood and davened in tears before Hashem to have mercy on his children.

**"HASHEM AGREED TO FORGIVE AM YISRAEL FOR THEIR SINAT CHINAM, THANKS TO THE AHAVAT CHINAM AND DEDICATION OF RACHEL"**

And lastly, Rachel named her son 'Yosef', which means 'more'. After the birth of her son and after going through the agony of childbirth, Rachel - who has not yet recovered from the pains of childbirth - gives her son a name with an important meaning: Yosef. Rachel asks Hashem to give her another child for the continuity of the nation.

In light of all this, we see that only someone who was willing to sacrifice her soul, to give up her spiritual world, to daven out of pain for *Am Yisrael's* continuity - someone like that can stand before Hashem and daven to Him for His children, for the nation of Israel. Even if they have sinned and even if they deserve to go to exile, He shall bring them home. Hashem answered her: 'Restrain your voice from weeping, your eyes from shedding tears; for there is a reward for your actions, says the Lord: They shall return from the enemy's land (*ibid.*).'

With great expectation that the prayer of Rachel, our mother, will stand for the *zechut* of *Am Yisrael*, may all her children return home.

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

# ISRAEL - HACHSHARAT KIVUN INTERVIEW:

This week, our dedicated Israel correspondent got in touch with Sammy Schajer, a participant on Bnei Akiva's Hachsharat Kivun programme, to see how he's finding his gap year experience...

**How has the start of your year been?**

There's been more going on than I expected there would be! On top of the stuff I knew would be happening, we've had cool experiences I didn't even think we'd be doing, for example, the leadership seminar, going to different concerts and a Shabbaton in Efrat.

**What part of the programme are you doing at the moment?**

I'm doing an internship at Honest Reporting, which has allowed me to learn about the current state of affairs in Israel, while not being too intense and allowing me to still socialise and keep up my hobbies.

**What part of the year have you enjoyed the most so far?**

Kibbutz - my two highlights were being a mesameach at a wedding, and going on a water hike! Kibbutz allowed me to see another side to the Zionist story, the more physical fulfilment of the Zionist dream through *chalutziyut* - the

'*avodah*' in Torah Va'Avodah.

**What part of the upcoming year are you most looking forward to?**

Magen David Adom. This is a tangible way for me to give back to Israel and the society, as well as teaching me skills that I'll be able to take with me. I'll get to see another side of Israeli society - not the usual, polished side that you can see as a tourist, but the more raw, emotional side of the people living here.

**What's it like to be on a Hachshara programme with Bnei Akiva?**

It feels like I'm moving on to the next natural step in my Bnei Akiva journey. I'm with people with whom I was on camp as a chanich, and now I'm progressing to Hachshara, living the Zionist dream with them.

**TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR ISRAEL PROGRAMMES, VISIT [WWW.BAUK.ORG/HACHSHARA](http://WWW.BAUK.ORG/HACHSHARA), OR CONTACT [ISRAEL@BAUK.ORG](mailto:ISRAEL@BAUK.ORG)**



## TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD HAKHAM BEN-ZION ABRAHAM CUENCA | NAHALA 16<sup>TH</sup> CHESHVAN

Unfortunately, Algeria doesn't recognise the existence of the State of Israel. Therefore, we'll need a connecting flight, departing Algiers' Houari Boumediene Airport [ALG] and landing at Istanbul Havalimani [IST] in Turkey, before flying on to *medinateinu artzeinu* Ben-Gurion Airport [TLV]. From here, we catch the train to Yitzchak Navon station, and then the light-rail to *Halrya*, and walk into the Old City.

Hakham Ben-Zion Abraham Cuenca was born in 1867 in the Old City of Jerusalem. The family name Cuenca comes from the region in Spain from which his ancestors were expelled, after which his family moved to Thessaloniki (Salonica), until his parents made aliyah in the 19th century. He was considered mature enough at age 9 to begin wearing *tefillin*, and simultaneously began to give public *shiurim*, whereupon he was recognised as a child prodigy (or *ilyu*). At age 15 he married Esther, and they moved out of the old city to Ohel Moshe, where his father supported his Torah learning for seven years. At age 22, he joined his father's business and lived combining his Torah study and his work.

In 1896, he founded a religious newspaper called *HaMe'asef* which ran for nearly 20 years. In *HaMe'asef*, Hakham Cuenca collated international rulings and debates on *halakha*, especially those which related to the laws of settling the Land of Israel. Over its entire span, Hakham Cuenca was the sole editor and compiler of all of the content of the newspaper, which was initially published as a supplement to the newspapers *HaTzvi* and *HaChavatzet*, before becoming its own monthly periodical. In 1899, at just 30 years old, he was appointed as Rosh Yeshiva of *Tiferet Yerushalayim*. Additionally, Hakham Cuenca was a member of Mizrahi and a supporter of the Zionist movement, regularly travelling to Iraq, Egypt, Greece, France, America and other countries to raise

money for Torah institutions for the Jews living in and settling the land of Israel. Rabbi Maimon, one of the founders of Mizrahi, wrote about him that '[he] was a passionate Zionist... great in Torah and in wisdom... I do not think that it would be an exaggeration to say that he will not leave anyone similar or of equal stature to him, especially of this calibre of Sepharadi Hakham.' In 1908, Hakham Cuenca set up a care home for elderly Sepharadim, and initially served as its manager. After the riots of 1929, when many of the Rabbis in Chevron were murdered, Hakham Cuenca moved there to serve as the Rav of the city, until the Arab revolt in 1936.

The pasuk in Yirmiyahu 2:3 begins **קִדְשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל** לה, ראשית תבואתה, 'Israel is holy to the Lord, the first of His produce.' This contains an allusion to the *teruma*, the first portion of produce that is separated as a 'holy' gift to the *kohanim*. Based on this, Hakham Cuenca interprets the pasuk as follows: Israel is viewed as a holy nation in its entirety, even when the majority of the people are not righteous. Instead, there need be only a righteous minority, sufficient to comprise a metaphorical *teruma* of the nation of Israel. When there are enough righteous individuals to serve as the *teruma*, then the whole nation can be considered holy. This motif is prevalent among early Zionist writers, who often defended against the polemic of anti-Zionist rabbis, who criticised Zionism *en masse* for its perceived general lack of religiosity.



# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Shoutout to the **Student Bet Midrash Shabbaton**, who are living it up in Kent this Shabbat!

- **Sixth-formers and Bogrim** are invited to an evening of learning on **Sunday 13th November** to mark the second yahrtzeit of **Rabbi Lord Sacks**. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/BARabbiSacks>

- **Vaad**, for male bogrim, will be beginning the discussion of the **shalosh shevuot** with Rav Avichai on **Monday 14th November!**

- **Lishmah**, our women's beit midrash programme, continues this Tuesday 15th November!

- London **Student Bet Midrash** continues on Thursday 17th November!

- **Winter Machane** applicataions are open! To sign up and for more information, visit [bauk.org/camps](http://bauk.org/camps).

- **Winter Machane tafkidim** applications are still open! For junior tafkidim, visit [bauk.org/junior-tafkid](http://bauk.org/junior-tafkid), for senior tafkidim, visit [bauk.org/senior-tafkid](http://bauk.org/senior-tafkid).

- To give any **feedback** to Bnei Akiva, please visit [www.bauk.org/feedback](http://www.bauk.org/feedback)

**TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS, EMAIL [CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG](mailto:CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG)**



An evening of learning Torah from  
**Rabbi Sacks**

Join Bnei Akiva in standing with communities around the world as we mark the second yahrtzeit of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

A portrait of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, an elderly man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit and a pink tie.

**BNEI AKIVA** **UNITED KINGDOM**

Sunday 13th November 2022  
at the London Bayit

A circular logo with the text 'COMMUNITIES IN CONVERSATION' and 'Jonathan Sacks' in the center.

**BNEI AKIVA**

# 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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