

SHABBAT LASHEM

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תנועת בני אקיבא
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JORDAN BERNSTEIN | BOGER DVAR TORAH

As we become acquainted with Yosef in this week's parashah, we see that he brings a fundamentally different dynamic to the story arc of Bereishit, both individually and in terms of his relationship with others. Avraham founded an entire monotheistic tradition. Yitzchak devoted himself to his father's divine mission, willing to die for it at the akeidah. Yaakov obtained the birthright from his dastardly brother against all odds, later meriting the name Yisrael, Jews identifying themselves as his children for generations to come.

And what does Yosef do? Instead of devoting himself body and soul to his father's tradition, he appears to become steadily more distant from it, being rebuked in no uncertain terms by Yaakov only 10 Pesukim into the parashah: 'And he related [the dream of sheaves bowing down to him] to his father... his father scolded him, and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamt? Are we to come... to bow down to you in the ground?" Even worse than this, while each of the forefathers in their own way led an existence where Hashem was firmly at the centre of their universe, Yosef seems, more than once, to forget God. Chazal tell us that one reason for the years Yosef spent in jail was that he failed to credit Hashem for his ability to interpret dreams. Though we are later told that Yosef, upon release, did not forget God and continued to be a mindful Jew in a secular world, there is something that does not sit quite

right with Yosef from those that have come before him, and perhaps even the great people that will come after him. One question we can ask, after all of this, is: Why is Yosef the first biblical character who merits the title 'Hatzadik'? Was Avraham not just as righteous? What about Yitzchak? Or Yaakov?

The title, I would suggest, has an aptness relative to the particular circumstances in which Yosef found himself. Make no mistake, the events in this week's parashah have shattering consequences for the entirety of Jewish history. Yosef's sale into slavery in Egypt cements the fate of the remainder of Bnei Yisrael to end up there with him only a few years later. On a wider level, it is this sin of the brothers that provides the justification for the Romans to later slaughter the Ten Martyrs as recompense, part of a crusade culminating in the churban.

What the story of Yosef is here to show is that the Golden Age of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov is over. Hashem is no longer visibly guiding each step of the way for the characters of Bereishit, and it is Yosef upon whom the spotlight now falls. Yosef was not a tzadik because he was perfect; he was a tzadik because despite his hurtling at high speed through the darkest woes, beginning in this week's parashah, he emerged the other side as someone fit to help carry the legacy of his – our – ancestors. Shabbat Shalom.

PARASHAT VAYESHEV | ISSUE 09

Volume 24
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December 09
Kislev 21
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Shabbat
Times

London
In: 15:47
Out: 16:46

Manchester
In: 15:32
Out: 16:39

Leeds
In: 15:27
Out: 16:35

Oxford
In: 15:37
Out: 16:44

Cambridge
In: 15:30
Out: 16:38

Bristol
In: 15:43
Out: 16:51

Birmingham
In: 15:35
Out: 16:43

Jerusalem
In: 15:55
Out: 17:25



RAV AHARON HERSKOVITZ | RAV SHALIACH

As Yosef's brothers prepare to do the unthinkable to Yosef in this week's parshah, planning on killing him and throwing his body into a pit, Reuven takes action:

"And Reuven heard them and he saved him from their hands. And he said "Let us not strike him down". And Reuven said to them: "Don't spill blood, throw him into this pit in the desert, but don't actively harm him." He said this in order to save him and eventually return him to his father."

We can learn much from Reuven's intervention, and about our responsibilities when found in a group setting. Firstly, he is aware of what is going on around him, hearing the brothers' plan, and acting on this knowledge. Sometimes, we may have a tendency to ignore what others around us say or are planning, feigning ignorance when perhaps we should be responding and protesting.

Secondly, Reuven is wise enough to realise that a direct debate about his brothers' plans is unlikely to succeed. Instead of immediately acting upon his end goal of returning Yosef to Yaakov, he attempts to get the brothers there by stages, firstly arguing that it would not be right to directly cause Yosef's death. He tries to speak his brothers' language in order to eventually bring them around to his plan. He does so by appealing to their self-images as righteous people. In the phrasing of the Ramban (Bereishit 37:22): "I was going to go along with your plan when you thought to kill him as part of a plot, for I as well hated him and wanted him to die at the hands of others, but you should not spill blood with your own hands!"

However, Chazal also suggest a lesson to learn not from Reuven actually did, but from what he did not do (VaYikrah Rabbah 34:8):

Rabbi Yitzchak said: the Torah teaches us the proper way to act, that when a person fulfills a command he should do so with a happy heart, for if Reuven had known that Hashem was writing "And Reuven heard

them and he saved him from their hand" he would have picked him up and carried him to his father.

The midrash is expressing that though Reuven was acting in a way that seems wise, cool and collected, a smart way of dealing with his hot-headed brothers, the situation called for something different. At that point, he should not have been thinking about what others thought was right, about how his actions would be perceived, or about who might stand in opposition to him: he should have ignored those concerns, picked Yosef up on his shoulder and carried him off to safety.

What would have allowed Reuven to go about his mission in such a way, able to stand up to his brothers and actively and directly stop them? If he had known that Hashem was writing down his story. In other words, if Reuven had realised the power of this moment, not viewing it as just an incredibly acrimonious fight between brothers, but in event that was historic in nature, affecting כלל ישראל for generations, an event that would be recorded in the Torah itself, he would have acted very differently, happily saving Yosef instantly.

The midrash continues to explain that we should not think this motivation is reserved solely for those whose stories are actually recorded in Tanach, but should be how we live our lives as well (VaYikrah Rabbah, above):

Rabbi Cohen and Rabbi Yehoshua the son of Rabbi Simon say in the name of Rabbi Levi: In the past a person would do a mitzvah and the prophet would write it down, now when a person does a mitzvah who writes it? Eliyahu and the Mashiach, and Hashem signs it, as it says "Then those who fear Hashem will speak to each other and Hashem will listen and write it down in a book of memory in front of Him."

We should remember that our actions as well can have momentous consequences, and realise that certain moments call for us to use the courage that such a realisation can provide.

DVAR HALACHA: WEEKLY QUESTION

Have a question? Please email rav@bauk.org or call Rav Aharon at 07976642135.

Question from Roshei Machane: In winter machane, davening ends a few hours before the time we normally have dinner. Are we able to have a peulah before kiddush on Friday night?

Answer: There is a mitzvah to make kiddush and eat immediately upon completing davening (SA OC 271:1) in order to fulfill the obligation זכרהו בכניסתו, remembering the Shabbat at its beginning. This kiddush would then require one to eat immediately (273:3). However, the Magen Avraham (271:1) quotes the Rama MiPanu who says that if a person is not yet hungry, they may wait, as they have already mentioned Shabbat in shul (i.e. already fulfilled the Torah command of זכור). The Magen Avraham backs up this opinion by quoting sources seeming to indicate that the Friday night meal is not

eaten directly at the beginning of Shabbat. The Mishneh Berurah (271:1) paskens like this opinion, but cautions a person from delaying the meal when this would cause strife in the home or cause a poor guest to wait, and that their ability to fulfill the mitzvah in the best way (i.e. to only eat when hungry) should not cause suffering to those who depend on the person.

Having Shabbat dinner immediately following davening would entail having the meal much earlier than usual, and it is reasonable to surmise that people will only actually be hungry once regular dinner time approaches. For this reason, it would be fine, and perhaps preferable, to have a peulah before dinner time. However, it is important to educate the chanichim (as well as madrichim) that one should not eat or drink until we make kiddush. If the existence of a peula before dinner causes hardship for chanichim in general, we should re-evaluate the schedule.



Applications for Tafkidim for camp are still open!
Contact hannah@bauk.org to apply.



**WINTER
MACHANE
5778**

21st-28th December 2017
To apply: www.bauk.org/machanot
For more information: hannah@bauk.org

COMMUNITY UPDATES

Our **Golders Green Sviva** had their Shabbat Ha'irgun this past week! Our **Sviva Fieldworker**, Josh Zeltser, was there to support them and wrote:

Last week we experienced the highlight of the year at **Golders Green Bnei Akiva**, their Shabbat Ha'irgun. Over 30 participants attended activities throughout the Shabbat, enjoying the incredible ruach created by their amazing Madrichim. Shabbat was followed by a Chanukah fair where Chanichim started their Chanukah preparations, making Chanukiot and filling doughnuts. Well done to the Roshim for making it happen!

Our **Rav and Rabbanit Shaliach Aharon** and **Shira**, visited **Manchester** and our **Salford Sviva** for Shabbat. There, together with our **Northern Shlichim Maayan** and **Benaya**, they had a Melave Malka for 30 bogrim and ran peulot for **Shevet X** on the topic of different ways to connect to Israel. Shira said that "one of the highlights of the Shabbat was hearing over 100 young people singing Hatikva at the end of Sviva.

It was very emotional to see this expression of connection to Medinat Yisrael by so many chanichim".

Our **Mazkir**, **Joe Boxer**, visited **Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls JSoc** and **Yavneh College** to run Lunch and Learns.

An open evening for **Israel Machane** took place this week. For more info and to apply for **Israel Machane** contact joe@bauk.org

