

# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF  
BNEI AKIVA UK  
THE MOST WIDELY  
DISTRIBUTED YOUTH TORAH  
PERIODICAL IN THE UK



Rafi Kleiman | Boger Dvar Torah

Judaism is founded upon responsibility. 'Na'aseh V'nishma' (Shemot 24:7) - our prime acceptance of Jewish responsibility. 'Ashamnu, Bagadnu' ('Vidui' in Jewish liturgy) - our confession of absolving that status of responsibility. 'Hashivenu Hashem Alecha v'nashuva' (Eichah 5:21) - our statement of desire to return to the height of responsibility.

What is with this? Are Jews just uber-obsessed with embracing responsibility instinctively, or is there something deeper to this phenomenon?

The opening verses of Behar discuss the laws pertaining to Shmittah. These laws appear to be founded upon the phrase 'V'shavta ha'aretz Shabbat Lashem' - 'The land shall observe a Sabbath rest for Hashem' (Vayikra 25:2). From this verse we see that it is clear that there is a link between Shabbat and Shmitta, indeed the Torah makes use of the root 'Sh-V-T' 7 times in the space of 6 verses. However it is also suggested that this idea of making a 'Shabbat Lashem' has a direct connection with Parashat Bereishit and creation. Several commentators ask - if it is connected to Parashat Bereishit, where does that leave the Shabbatot we observe consistently on a weekly basis? If Shabbat is connected to Shmitta and Shmittah is connected creation, are our regular Shabbatot also connected to creation?

In answering this question, the Ramban adds another element to Shmitta. He connects the phrase 'Shabbat Shabbaton' (Vayikra 25:4) with verses in earlier chapters, where, in reference to Yom Kippur, the same term is applied to describe the day itself. The placing of Yom Kippur and Shmittah on the same pedestal would seem to suggest an extra importance to Shmittah, more than that of any regular Shabbat in the year.

The Shabbat-Shmittah relationship, therefore, appears particularly special. As he continues his Peirush, the Ramban outlines the nature of this relationship, highlighting the six years of a farmer working his field (prior to the seventh year) as a reflection of the creation of the world in six days, culminating in Shabbat, the Day of Rest. Due to this link, the Ramban derives a significant lesson. Paraphrasing his words, one who fails to adequately observe the laws of Shmittah is effectively rejecting 'God's creation of the Universe and [the existence of] the World to Come'.

The sharp teaching of the Ramban strikes home when discussing the fundamental leadership trait of responsibility for the Jewish people. Jews have dual responsibility. This exists in 2 critical spheres: that of the closer Jewish circle and also the universal one. Perhaps, Shabbat and Shmittah reflect this paradigm exactly. Jews are stewards for both spheres - we can never forget that. Thus practically, Jews have the requirement to look after the physical environment (relating to Shmittah) whilst simultaneously protecting its spiritual framework, by being custodians of Hashem's Torah, engrossed in its study and energised to carry out the 613 Mitzvot; Shabbat being just one of them.

Consequences of forsaking this role is specified in the following Parasha. 'V'tiretz et Shaboteteha bohshema may'hem' - '[the Land] will be appeased for its sabbaticals having become desolate of them' (Vayikra 26:43) - our seeming rejection of God's Six Days of Creation.

Yes, it does not look pretty. Yet, if we muster up the strength to stand up to the challenge, the task is an exciting and fulfilling one of that.

Shabbat Shalom!

# Yom Yerushalayim!



Rav Aharon Herskovitz | Rav Shaliach

At the beginning of the coming week, we will celebrate Yom Yerushalayim, the 51st anniversary of the great miracle Hashem performed that allowed not only renewed access and sovereignty over Jerusalem and other holy sites, but was also an unexpected contrast with the predicted heavy losses and forecasts of impending disaster.

Over the past fifty one years, Jerusalem has flourished, growing vastly in size and population. We can not help but think of the prophesy of Yeshayahu (54:1-3), normally read over the course of the summer as a comfort after Tisha B'Av:

Shout, O barren one,  
You who bore no child!  
Shout aloud for joy,  
You who did not travail!  
For the children of the desolate wife shall outnumber those of the married one –said Hashem.  
Enlarge the site of your tent, extend the size of your dwelling, do not hold back!  
Lengthen the ropes, and strengthen the pegs.  
For you shall spread out to the right and the left;  
Your offspring shall dispossess nations and shall populate the desolate towns.

In addition to the obvious joy and thanks we must experience, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein zt"l points out the importance of three balancing acts between different visions of "Jerusalem." The first regards the physical development of Jerusalem mentioned above. As a city steeped in thousands of years of history, we must be mindful of its past, present and future. The past contains so much of our own nation's history and development, but if our only goal is to maintain it, we may be lost

in the memories and not continue to build. However, if we only focus on the present, we are liable both to erase too much of the past, and forget the vision of Jerusalem's future: the goal is not for the city to be a city like all others, but there is a unique vision for it.

The second balance regards the place of Jerusalem as the spiritual capital of Israel and of the Jewish world. We have much to rejoice in the fact that Torah learning, yeshivot and midrashot are more widespread in Jerusalem than perhaps any time in history. We see the beginning of the fulfillment of "For from Zion will Torah come out, and the word of Hashem

"We have much to rejoice in the fact that Torah learning, yeshivot and midrashot are more widespread in Jerusalem than perhaps any time in history. We see the beginning of the fulfillment of "For from Zion will Torah come out, and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem. (Yeshayahu 2:3)" However, if we focus only on the religious development of the city, we are at risk of alienating those for whom the religious nature of the city is not only not attractive, but a reason to detach from it."

from Jerusalem. (Yeshayahu 2:3)" However, if we focus only on the religious development of the city, we are at risk of alienating those for whom the religious nature of the city is not only not attractive, but a reason to detach from it. We must remember that together with developing the Torah world, we must still strive to fulfill the vision of Jerusalem as being a city that "For there the tribes

went up, the tribes of Hashem" (Tehillim 122:4), referring to all the tribes of Israel, the Jewish nation as a whole. Before coming on shlichut, I was excited to see new communities growing in Jerusalem that encompassed groups from the whole range of Israel's diverse palette.

Thirdly, we must remember that stressing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the heart of the Jewish world should not come at the expense of the vision of Jerusalem as an international, universal focal point. In Shlomo HaMelech's prayer at the consecration of the Bet HaMikdash, he prays to Hashem

(Melachim I 8:41-43): "Or if a foreigner who is not of Your people Israel comes from a distant land for the sake of Your name—for they shall hear about Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm—when he comes to pray toward this House, oh, hear in Your heavenly abode and grant all that the foreigner asks You for. Thus all the peoples of the earth will know Your name and revere You, as does Your people Israel; and they will recognise that Your name is attached to this House that I have built." This vision is not just of the Bet HaMikdash, but for all of Jerusalem. The vision of Jerusalem is one relevant not only to the Jewish people, but to the world as a whole. The verse quoted

above "For from Zion will Torah come out..." is also said in the context of a universal push to learn from Hashem (Micha 4:2): "Many nations will go and say "Let us go to the Mountain of Hashem and to the House of the God of Yaakov, and He will teach us his paths so that we may walk on His roads, for Torah will come from Zion and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem."

The sovereignty that Hashem has granted us over Jerusalem is not just an opportunity from which we only reap benefits: it is a challenge that He puts before us. Will we be able to balance all of the visions of Jerusalem while still pushing its development forward?

## Dvar Halacha: Weekly Question .....

Have a question? Please email [rav@bauk.org](mailto:rav@bauk.org) or call/message Rav Aharon at 07976642135.

QUESTION: My friend asked me last night what night of the Omer it was, and I accidentally told him "38", forgetting that I hadn't yet counted. What should I have done?

ANSWER: The Shulchan Aruch (489:4), based off of the Avudraham, says that after nightfall, one should not respond to such a question by saying "Today is such and such", but rather "Yesterday was such and such" (and their friend should be able to do the addition by themselves). Interestingly, this halacha is likely one of the more well-known ones regarding Sefirat HaOmer, probably because of its prominent role in shul announcements. If one does say "Tonight is 38 days", the Shulchan Aruch says that we are concerned they have fulfilled their obligation already; therefore, they should count again without a bracha (counting again lest they did not fulfill their obligation, but without a bracha in case they did). However, there are certain exceptions to this general rule:

- a) if one just said the number without noting the days (i.e. they answered "38", not "The 38th day"), they may still count that night with a bracha (Mishna Berura, ibid, sk 20).
- b) Additionally, if the count has passed the

one-week mark and one did not respond noting the weeks as well, but only the days, they may also still repeat the count with a bracha (Mishna Berura, ibid, sk 22). In other words, even if they responded "Tonight is the 38th day", they may still count with a bracha as long as they did not say "Tonight is the 38th day, which is five weeks and three days." The reason for this is that the proper way to count is to mention both days and weeks. Before one week, though, merely stating "Tonight is the 6th day" would not allow them to count again with a bracha.

The reason for these exceptions to the rule is that at a base level, we assume that the person responding to help out their friend is not intending to fulfill their obligation of Sefirat HaOmer. Generally, mitzvot require intention to fulfill one's obligation (Shulchan Aruch OC 60:4), and this intention is clearly lacking in our case (see the Magen Avraham, Taz, Mishna Berura and others on OC 489:4). Although the proper practice is to respond by noting yesterday's Sefira count, in the majority of cases one who responded not according to this practice may likely still be able to count that same night with a bracha.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO A Q&A WHATSAPP GROUP WITH RAV AHARON PLEASE EMAIL [ELI@BAUK.ORG](mailto:ELI@BAUK.ORG).

# Community Updates .....

YOM YERUSHALYIM in LONDON: This Sunday 13th May Bnei Akiva is partnering with Alei Tzion, YAM and Mizrachi UK for a Yom Yerushalayim Tefillah Chagigit followed by breakfast. We will be joined by Rav Horn from Yeshivat HaKotel who will be giving a talk. Shacharit starts at 8:15 and breakfast and talk from Rav Horn at 9:00. Location is Alei Tzion and there will be craft

activities for any children present! We hope to see you there!

YOM YERUSHALYIM in MANCHESTER: Bnei Akiva Salford are hosting a Bake Sale on Yom Yerushalayim between 10:00 and 15:00 at the Manchester Bayit. There will also be shwarma and falafel for sale. All the proceeds are going back into Salford BA, so please donate generously!



WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF SVIVA!  
Whether you are a Chanich, Madrich, Boger or parent we want to hear from you.  
To be entered into our prize draw to win a £50 Amazon Voucher  
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## Roshim Profiles .....

Over the next few weeks we're going to be profiling some of our amazing Sviva Roshim. They all do such brilliant work and we thought you would like to get to know them a bit! First up is KOBİ WEINER, CO-ROSH BNEI AKIVA LEEDS WITH SHIRA COLLINS:

"I'm a Politics student, Warden of Leeds Hillel House and most important of all, Leeds BA Rosh. I've attended Sviva since Year 1 (first at South Hampstead, then Kinloss), and have been a Madrich, Sgan and now Rosh. I also love Machanot and edit the BA Bogrim's blog Yediot (if you have something to write, hit me up!).

Leeds BA has been somewhat challenging for Shira and me as Roshim, being a smaller Sviva than we're used to and a very long walk on Shabbatot! However it has

been so rewarding as well. Blessed with enthusiastic and creative madrichim, we've had a fantastic year - highlights included our Sukkah crawl and Shabbat Ha'Irgun. Leeds also has a great tradition of cross-communalism, and we enjoyed taking part in Leeds' Shabbat UK and Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations. B'ezrat Hashem, Leeds will continue to go from strength to Strength!

I hope to be involved in BA for a few years yet. I particularly value the role we have in contributing to conversations in Anglo-Jewry and hope we can continue to lead in offering an engaged and progressive vision for UK Religious Zionism.

Alo Na'ale!"

MAKE SURE TO CHECK OUT NEXT WEEK'S SHABBAT LASHEM FOR OUR NEXT PROFILE!