

דבר אלבני ישראל ואמרת להם
כי תבאו אלהארץ אשר אני נתן לכם
ושבתה הארץ שבת לה'

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT KI TAVO

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A POSITIVE CONFESSION

DANIEL ROSS
SHEVET MORASHA

At this time of year, *teshuvah* is on our national consciousness. Rambam, in *Hilkhot Teshuva* (1:1), intrinsically links *teshuvah* with *vidui*, confession, writing:

"All the *mitzvot* of the Torah, whether they be positive or negative, if a person violates any one of them, either intentionally or accidentally, when they repent and turn away from their sinful way, they are obliged to confess before God, blessed is He!"

It is with this that we usually associate *vidui*; however, we are exposed to a radically different form of *vidui* in our *parasha* this week, that of *vidui ma'aser*. Literally meaning the 'tithing confession,' this occurs every three years, and consists of an individual going to Yerushalayim and publicly declaring, or 'confessing', that they have acted appropriately with regards to *terumot* and *ma'aserot*, the agricultural tithes given to the *Kohanim*, *Levi'im* and the poor.

Unlike the *vidui* of *teshuvah* which takes a negative approach and focuses on the sins we have done and the *mitzvot* which we have not, *vidui ma'aser* focuses instead on the *mitzvot* we have done and the sins we have not, as we see from the fixed wording of the confession presented by the Torah:

"I have removed the holy things from my house, and I have also given it to the *Levi*, to the stranger, to the orphan, and to the widow, just as You commanded me; I have neither transgressed nor neglected any of Your commandments: I have not eaten of it while in mourning, I have not cleared out any of it while I was impure, and I have not deposited any of it with the dead. I have obeyed Hashem my God; I have done just as You commanded me." (*Devarim* 26:13-14)

Rav Kook, in *Ein Aya (Ma'aser Shenit)*: 15), teaches a number of lessons we can learn from this unusual confession.

Firstly, we need to appreciate our achievements. Whilst we need to have fixed times for the *vidui* of *teshuvah* in order to improve and develop, we must also rejoice in our accomplishments; the *mitzvot* we perform and our successes in overcoming negative temptations; the attainment of our spiritual goals.

Secondly, Rav Kook points out why specifically the *mitzvot* separating and giving *teruma* and *ma'aser* have a confession. The beauty of tithing is that it encompasses all aspects of the Torah's obligations. It contains both positive and negative commands: the obligation to distribute *ma'aserot*, as well as the prohibition not to eat untithed produce. It involves our responsibilities *bein adam lachaveiro*, towards others (gifts to the *Levi'im* and the poor), as well as responsibilities *bein adam lamakom*, towards God (the special holiness of *teruma*). And it also reflects both obligations of the individual (the farmer's obligation to tithe) and society as a whole (our support of the *Kohanim* and their spiritual service for the nation). This stresses the importance of unity and a balanced religious life.

Thirdly, *vidui ma'aser* emphasises the importance of humility and modesty. The Gemara teaches that it must be recited quietly, unlike the loud declaration of *bikkurim*, and we delay this public self-praise until the very last applicable moment - the end of the last day of *Pesach*.

So, in summary, *vidui ma'aser* teaches us three things according to Rav Kook. We learn the importance of recognising and rejoicing in the achievement of our spiritual goals. We learn about the importance of a balanced religious life, and we learn about the importance of humility and modesty.

**DANIEL WAS A MADRICH ON ISRAEL MACHANE
GROUP 2 5782**

London In 19:00 Out 19:58
Manchester In 19:10 Out 20:13
Cambridge In 19:00 Out 20:01
Brighton In 19:00 Out 20:00

Oxford In 19:05 Out 20:06
Bristol In 19:10 Out 20:11
Birmingham In 19:08 Out 20:10
Nottingham In 19:05 Out 20:08

Leeds In 19:08 Out 20:11
Liverpool In 19:13 Out 20:16
Thaxted In 18:59 Out 20:00
Jerusalem In 18:08 Out 19:19

SHALIACH'S CORNER: TESHUVA WITH RAV AVICHAJ PART ONE



Sometimes I imagine how life would be easier with a time machine, and whenever I made a mistake, I could immediately go back and fix it. Of course, life isn't that simple and we all

know that such a time machine doesn't exist, at least not today. It is part of being a grown-up human being.

Over the next newsletters, I would like to explore going back in time and changing the past, AKA "Teshuva". Because, when it comes to Elul, suddenly all that I started with fades away; we accept that we can go back in time and change the things we've done in the past.

It seems Chazal emphasize how much Teshuva contains an element beyond logical explanation. In the midrash (*Yerushalmi, Makkot*, Chapter 2 *Halakha* 6) the harsh question is raised:

**BOTH WISDOM AND
PROPHECY DON'T
ACCEPT THE ABILITY
TO DO TESHUVA...
HASHEM ACTS BEYOND
REASON OR LOGIC TO
HAND US THE ABILITY
TO CHANGE THE PAST**

"They asked Wisdom: 'What is the punishment of the sinner?' She told them, 'Evil will pursue sinners.' They asked Prophecy: 'What is the punishment of the sinner?' She told them, 'The sinning soul is the one which will die.'

Chokhma (wisdom) and Nevua (prophecy) have a very straightforward answer to what should happen to one who sins: punishment, even death. No forgiveness or pardon.

Wisdom understands one cannot go back in time and change what has already been done - **את הנעשה אין להשיב**. Seeing as there is no technical way to change the past, there can be no place for Teshuva.

In addition, Prophecy has a major problem with Teshuva from a moral aspect. With the special vision the prophet has, he can see and understand how severe and harmful our sins are. As Ramchal states (*Mesilat Yesharim*, chapter 1), every sin pulls us away from Hashem, spiritually speaking. The sinner, and the world with him. There is no such thing as an easy sin;

the consequences of any sin are horrific. Rav Kook dives even deeper (additions to *Orot HaTeshuva*, chapter 5) and reminds us that we don't even understand how, in Hashem's eyes, our sins are so severe. Can we understand why it was moral to demolish the entire world with a great flood for the sins done back then?

In the eyes of the prophet, the answer is yes! He can see the real damage our sins do.

So, both wisdom and prophecy don't accept the ability to do Teshuva.

The midrash continues:

They asked the Holy One, blessed be He: 'What is the punishment of the sinner?' He said to them, 'Let him repent and it will be atoned for him.' That is what is written: 'He teaches the way to the sinners, the way to repentance.'

The answer Chazal give to the inquiry is that Hashem acts beyond reason or logic to hand us the ability to change the past. This is a massive Chesed that Hashem does with us, as stated in the opening to Rabbeinu Yona's book, *Sha'arei Teshuva*.

We are put in this world by Hashem, each one with his or

her mission to accomplish. and there is no way to go through our lives without sinning. There was never such a person and there never will be. Hashem, with great mercy, knows that for us to thrive in His world and get closer to completing His missions, we need to have a way of cleaning our past and getting rid of our bad deeds.

This is the essence of Teshuva.

In the next weeks we will, please God, dive into different aspects of it, but for now - let's acknowledge the special gift Hashem has presented to us.

**RAV AVICHAJ GOODMAN IS IN SHEVET SHVUT
AND IS THE NEW RAV SHALIACH OF BNEI AKIVA.
TO CONTACT THE RAV, EMAIL RAV@BAUK.ORG**

MEET THE MAZKIRUT

RAFI KLEIMAN | SVIVOT AND HADRACHA WORKER



Hi, my name is Rafi Kleiman and I am Svivot & Hadracha Worker (SAHW) for 5783. I am truly honoured to be taking on this role – Sviva has been a central part of my Bnei Akiva journey, having gone through the Leeds Sviva ranks, from Chanich through to Rosh, following a stint as Rosh at Salford Sviva in 5780. Ultimately, I thank my Sviva journey for bringing me where I am today – almost hitting 24 years old and working for BA on the Mazkirut.

Over the past few years, I have been studying towards a **BA** Youth Work & Community Development degree at Leeds Beckett University whilst working as a Mental Health Youth Worker for JAMH (Jewish Action for Mental Health) in Manchester. In my spare time, you can find me listening to Jewish acapella music throughout the year, continually in denial that I still very much want to be the latest addition to the Maccabeats.

As SAHW, my aims this year focus on empowering our Svivot to provide value in several different forms. Social value – to enable Madrichim and Chanichim to feel at home at their local branch of Bnei Akiva UK with like-minded peers at Shabbat afternoon each week, Personal developmental value – to provide the opportunity for our Chaverim to grow their leadership credentials within their local communities and perhaps most importantly, ideological value – to give our Sviva Tsvatim and Chanichim a tangible sense of ‘why’; a sense of educational drive that fuels their individual Jewish identity journeys.

CONTACT RAFI AT SVIVOT@BAUK.ORG

After experiencing over 11 machanot, from Years 6-12, I can say that this machane was one of the best. I really enjoyed being on the technical Tzevet mainly because the kitchen was a vibe to be in (most of the time, apologies for the pre dinner stress!) and everyone was there to support each other. Whilst on machane you find yourself entering a bubble; whether that be of support, friendship or camp songs. I found Tisha b’Av on camp particularly meaningful, as it was incredible to see how much work the madrichim put in to make the day meaningful and inspiring for the chanachim. I can’t wait for my next machane experience!

MY MACHANE EXPERIENCE

DALIA KREIKE



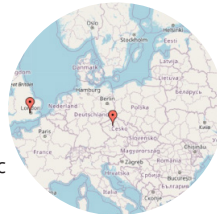
TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

MAHARAL OF PRAGUE | YAHRTZEIT 18TH ELUL

After last week’s stop at Hamilton Terrace, we hop on the Tube at Maida Vale and travel to Heathrow Airport [LHR], where we board a plane to Letiště Václava Havla Praha [PRG]. From there, it’s a quick bus and a train to the Altneu Synagogue, of the famed Maharal of Prague.

The Maharal (**M**oreinu **H**aRav Yehuda **L**oew) is a well-known figure of European Jewry, who lived in the 16th-17th centuries and occupied such prominent positions as Chief Rabbi of Poland. He was also given audience with Emperor Rudolf II of the Holy Roman Empire, where he was called to discuss Judaism, and probably the *Kabbala*. He authored many works, including a famous supercommentary, *Gur Aryeh*, on Rashi’s commentary to Torah, as well as many works of Jewish philosophy.

Fascinatingly, the Maharal’s general halakhic approach was to reject many post-Talmudic reinterpretations of the laws in the Gemara. An example of this can be found in his work *Ner Mitzva*, where he writes that one cannot use wax candles for the Chanukkah lights, because when the Gemara legislates that one must light a “**נר**”, it refers only to the lights they used at that time, which would be oil lights and not wax candles.



This is representative of the Maharal’s general position on the relationship between halakha and the Gemara. In *Netivot Olam, Netiv HaTorah* 15, he criticises those who rely on halakhic codes such as the *Shulchan Arukh* to rule on matters of Jewish law.

The Maharal writes:

“The sage has only that which his intellect provides him and allows him to learn from within the Gemara. And when his understanding and wisdom lead him to make a mistake – nonetheless he is beloved to God as long as he rules in accordance with what his intellect tells him... He is better than one who rules from one book, not knowing the reason

for the matter, walking like a blind man along the way.”

The Maharal advocated for the accomplished sage to use their own intellect in deciding matters of Jewish law, and not to be bound by other preceding sages or codes, even one as great as the *Shulchan Arukh*!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Madrichim from Summer Machane had their **Tsevet thank-you dinners** this week at both the Northern and London batim! (Picture below.)

- Welcome to **Rav Avichai** and **Rabbanit Aviya**, who have now arrived in London as our new Shlichim! (Picture below.)

- **Winter Machane** applicataions are now open! To sign up and for more information, visit **bauk.org/camps**.

- Join Bnei Akiva, Mizrachi UK and YAM for **first night Selichot** at YAM!

- Thereafter, join Bnei Akiva for a **Sicha** and **Selichot** every night at the London Bayit!

- On the 29th of September, Bnei Akiva will be running an evening of **learning and selichot** in **Birmingham!**

- Bnei Akiva will be running services over **Yamim Noraim** at the Manchester Bayit, as well as **Yom Kippur** at the London Bayit.

- **National Sviva Shabbaton** is next week! The Shabbaton in Manchester for training Sviva madrichim will be over Parashat Nitzavim 23-24th September. Visit **bauk.org/nss** for more details and to book.

- A **cocktail evening** for **Manchester and Leeds Bnei Akiva parents** will be taking place on 29th October! See poster below for more details.

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

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

SELICHOT
JOIN BNEI AKIVA UK, MIZRACHI UK AND YAM
FOR AN EMOTIVE, INSPIRING
FIRST NIGHT SELICHOT

17TH SEPTEMBER 2022
כ"א אלו תשב"ב
DOORS OPEN: 9:30PM
OPENING SICHA: 9:45PM
SELICHOT: 10:00PM

YAM
Fernhurst Gardens, Edgware

BNEI AKIVA MIZRACHI YAM

SAVE THE DATE
COCKTAIL EVENING
FOR MANCHESTER AND LEEDS BNEI AKIVA PARENTS
29.10.2022
8:30PM TILL LATE

NEW DATE

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN THE EVENT, PLEASE CONTACT ELAD - 07764450930



BUSHEY HALE EDGWARE SOUTH HAMFSTEAD
WHITEFIELD BARNET
HENDON KINLOSS
LEEDS RADLETT
STANMORE CHEADLE
MILL HILL NORRICH LEA
GOLDERS GREEN BOREHAMWOOD
BRONDSBURY PARK SALFORD WOODSIDE PARK

NATIONAL SVIVA SHABBATON

23RD/24TH SEPTEMBER
MANCHESTER

WINTER MACHANE 5783
22-29 DECEMBER

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