

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

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

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בס"ד



SELFLESSNESS AND HUMILITY

TAMMY KWARTZ
SHEVET TZION

This week's portion of Parashat Shemini continues on from the conclusion of Parashat Tzav with the dedication ceremony for the Mishkan and the inauguration of the new kohanim who are Aaron's sons. The sons and Aaron are conducting the rituals of the ceremony and taking on their new responsibilities of bringing the korbanot.

Nadav, Avihu, Elazar, and Itamar alongside their father bring the sacrifices and Aaron blesses the Bnei Yisroel before following Moshe into the mishkan. At their emergence, something happens that has not happened to the Jewish people since they were at Mt Sinai; Hashem appears to all of the people and a fire comes down from heaven and devours the offerings on the altar. This manifestation of Hashem's presence overwhelms the people who fall to the ground.

However, Nadav and Avihu who are witnessing this astonishing display don't have the same reaction as the rest. Instead, they took pans filled with incense and fire and rush towards the Mishkan in an attempt to bring more offering onto the altar in front of Hashem themselves. They were subsequently torched by heavenly fires and consumed like the sacrifices they had placed their previously.

There are many questions that can be asked about the action of these two sons. Were they acting out of piousness or narcissism? Or perhaps out of dedication and awe? It is clear that their resulting actions were a fatal misstep but how can two newly appointed kohanim have such a large judgement of error. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch writes, "They were indeed the sons of Aaron but did not consult their father about their ideas; or perhaps because they were the sons of Aaron they thought they were above all advice. But they were only Nadav and Avihu, only

individual members of the nation, and did not seek advice from the leader of the nation; or it was just the value that they put on their own individual personalities that made them think they were self-sufficient" (Hirsch, Commentary on the Torah, 252). Instead of acting with humility and falling to the ground alongside the Bnei Yisrael, the brothers acted with a sense of entitlement and according to Vayikra Rabbah 20 "they did not consult one another . . . each one acted individually on his own." The sacred duties that should be conducted with care and precision were overtaken by a lack of communication which is essential to maintain the holiness and exemplify being a part of a larger community.

After the deaths of the two sons and Moshe's wisdom, we are told, 'וידם אהרן' - 'and Aaron was silent.' What is the meaning of his silence at this point. One may quickly assume it could be a response to the shock of the loss of two of his children. His emotions have turned from pride watching his sons be inaugurated as kohanim to a sudden mourning for these perilous deaths. The word used for "silent" connotes not only lack of speech, but a kind of existential silence that one only really experiences in times of grief.

It is an intrinsic part of Judaism which we are taught from a young age that if we do something wrong, we have an opportunity and an obligation to repent. Through meaningful teshuva and taking responsibility for one's action, Hashem can forgive us for our actions and we have an opportunity to turn ourselves in the right direction. The journey of being human is grieving and healing. Without mending from times where we have felt broken or lost we are not truly whole.

There are many lessons we can learn from this parasha. We can see how essential communication is and how it is imperative we are aware of our own limitations. Staying humble and modest and acting in the best interest of others and not of oneself is often an easy trait to forget, but one that is essential for the betterment of the community and strengthening us as a people.

TAMMY IS A NIVCHERET HANHALLA 5781.

London In: 19:32 Out: 20:42
Manchester In: 19:44 Out: 20:57
Cambridge In: 19:29 Out: 20:43

Oxford In: 19:34 Out: 20:47
Bristol In: 19:39 Out: 20:52
Birmingham In: 19:38 Out: 19:52

Leeds In: 19:39 Out: 20:55
Liverpool In: 19:44 Out: 21:00
Jerusalem In: 18:28 Out: 19:42

SHEMINI 5781: KEEPING THE EXCITEMENT ALIVE

RAV JOEL KENIGSBURG | RAV SHALIACH



At the end of chagim it's only natural to feel a sense of anti-climax. After weeks of intense preparation: days of cleaning, scrubbing, searching for chametz in every nook and cranny and getting everything ready for the Seder, Pesach has gone as

quickly as it came.

But in reality, Pesach is only the beginning. On Seder night we recall the physical freedom we achieved when we left Egypt, but it wasn't until 50 days later when we received the Torah, and then built the Mishkan that the spiritual purpose for which that freedom had been given was finally achieved. As the culmination of the redemption process, there couldn't have been a greater cause for celebration than the Chanukat Hamishkan (inauguration of the Mishkan) that we read about in Parashat Shemini.

But in an instant, it turned to tragedy. In the midst of the celebration, Aharon's sons Nadav and Avihu, Kohanim and revered leaders of the people, were struck down. The Torah tells us that they lost their lives because they brought an "esh zara" – an alien fire. Exactly what this means is a subject of dispute, but nearly all the commentators agree that their sin lay in a blurring of boundaries. They brought an offering that they weren't meant to. Through their enthusiasm and zeal to come close to Hashem – they came too close. And the result was tragic.

The subsequent command given to Aharon, as we read in Acharei Mot, is the exact opposite. As the Torah provides a detailed description of the Avodah of the Kohen Gadol inside the Kodesh Kodashim (Holy of Holies) on Yom Kippur, it begins with the instruction "וְיָאֵל יִבְרָא בְּכָל עֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ" – "and he shall not enter the Holy at any time". This was a command about drawing boundaries. In order to create the ultimate closeness between Hashem and the Jewish people, Aharon and his sons would have to know how to stay away. Only by internalising when it was clearly off-limits would they be allowed to enter when it was required.

Rashi explains why it was so essential to stay away every day of the year barring one – "לכפי שגילוי שבירתו" –

"שם, יזהר שלא ירגיל לבא" – the Kohen Gadol had to be careful not to get used to going inside, that it shouldn't become habit.

Facing the *gilui Shechina* (revealing of God's presence) was an awesome experience. And precisely because of that it had to be restricted. The danger of it becoming routine, of losing its thundering impact, was so acute, that anything more than one day a year would simply have been too much.

In a similar way, the pasuk in Yechezkel (46:9) tells us that anyone who came to the Beit Hamikdash had to leave through a different gate to the one they had entered. Even seeing the same gate just twice carried the risk of it becoming too familiar, of downgrading the experience of being in that miraculous setting. Such is the power of habit to dull our senses, that it takes constant vigilance to combat it, even when one is surrounded by miracles.

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As we approach Yom Ha'atzmaut, the time is particularly apt to reflect on this message. 73 years ago, the State of Israel was reborn. The prophecies of kibbutz galuyot – of a people scattered across the world returning

to its ancient homeland, began to be fulfilled. The "atzamot yeveshot" – the dry, bones of which Yechezkel Hanavi speaks (in the haftara of Chol HaMoed Pesach) arose from the dust and started walking again. Anybody who witnessed those events could not but be struck by the magnitude of the miracle. But over the passage of time habit kicks in and it becomes easy to forget what miraculous times we live in.

Over the past 12 months, we have had the unique challenge and opportunity to break our daily routines. To rethink so many of the things we take for granted in our personal lives. As we enter the month of Iyar, let's do the same for our national lives. Let's not be blinded by the force of habit but take cognizance and give thanks for the constant miracles and fulfilment of prophecies taking place around us.

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TORANI UPDATE: PESACH 5781

RAPHAEL KASTNER | SHEVET AVICHAI



Hi! My name's Raphael and I'm at Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi. I've been in Israel now for 7 months and I can't believe how quickly it has gone. It's been the most amazing year and I have learnt so much. Because it's the Pesach

break, I'm with Torani! This is our first meeting of the year because of Corona and the social gathering rules from the institutions and the government. We hadn't met as a group all year, but everyone was very excited for the program.

We started with a three day seminar in Jerusalem where we had some really interesting speakers. The first day had the theme of Am Yisrael, Rabbi Dov Lipman spoke to us about his role in Israeli politics and trying to create unity across the spectrum of the Jews living in Israel. It was really interesting to hear how a religious Jew was able to join a secular, liberal party with the common goal of creating a more unified country. Later that day we went to Ammunition hill which was one of the fiercest battles that took place in Jerusalem during the 6 day war. We heard incredible stories about the unity and brotherhood that the soldiers had, they were willing to sacrifice themselves for their friends and comrades in the battalion, for the greater good. It was a very inspiring tour, to hear stories about the bravery and selflessness of the soldiers who fought in the war.

The other days had themes of Eretz Yisrael and leadership and Bnei Akiva. We heard from various speakers from World Bnei Akiva about what they do, plans for the future and how to get more involved in the movement. One person who was known for their leadership was Menachem Begin, so we went to his museum to learn more about his life and his involvement in the State of Israel. We also went to Shiloh which was where the Mishkan stood before the Beit Hamikdash was built. There was also a very interesting talk from Gil Hofman who is the political editor for

the Jerusalem Post, he spoke to us about the (then upcoming) election.

After the seminar we went to Kibbutz Ein Hanatziv. It's in the Jordan valley and is surrounded by greenery, water and history. We've been working on the kibbutz for the last week doing all sorts of tasks such as: milking cows, cleaning a grain silo and fixing a complex irrigation system for some fields. They've all been really fun and it's been a great chance to get outside after being in lockdown most of the year. There is also a beautiful maayan (natural spring) which we've been able to swim in every day. It has been an amazing opportunity to participate in the ideology of Bnei Akiva- learning in OBM every evening and working the land during the day.

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The highlight of the kibbutz was the seder night! It was an incredible night full of singing, dancing and divrei Torah. Everyone shared their minhagim and we had an Afikoman scavenger hunt, where everyone gave someone else a present. We didn't finish seder until 6:15 am! It really felt like we were the Rabbis in the haggada who stayed up until dawn and davened. It was an

amazing experience that everyone loved.

We then had a little break during the rest of Pesach, but it wasn't for long as we met up again straight after for three very busy but amazing days. We went up to the North of Israel, passing at the Ghetto fighter's memorial house because Yom Hashoah had just passed. We then continued up to the beautiful Rosh Hanikra. The next day was a tour of Akko and then the prison, we then drove up to Tzfat before doing a water hike. The day ended with an uplifting tisch on the Kinneret. Finally, we ended this part of Torani with a beautiful and fun water hike and then kayaking on the Jordan River.

It's been an incredible experience and everyone had a great time together. We can't wait to meet up again for more!!

RAPHAEL IS A PARTICIPANT ON TORANI 5781 AND IS CURRENTLY LEARNING IN YESHIVAT ERETZ HATZVI.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Applications are open for **Summer Machane 5781!** With the Government's roadmap in place we are looking forward to a fantastic Summer Machane, with some epic residential Machanot and day camps for children in Years 3-10. Spaces are filling up fast, so if you haven't yet signed up make sure you do so as soon as possible and join us for a summer experience not to be missed! Join us from **2nd-15th August** and enjoy a fantastic Bnei Akiva experience full of fun, friends and Ruach! Sign up today at bauk.org/camps or email camps@bauk.org for more information.

- Calling **Shevet Hineini** (Year 13!) Join us on **The Bet Midrash L'Manhigut Programme!** A unique leadership (Manhigut) experience to develop your learning through Shiurim and Chavrutot and leading others through Tochniot and Chaburot! **Apply now - www.bauk.org/bmp-tafkid/** For more information about the programme or other options this summer please email - Chinuch@bauk.org or Camps@bauk.org

- **Svivot are continuing!** Look out for updates and virtual events from your local sviva or visit www.bauk.org/svivot.

- **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Coronavirus has hit

Bnei Akiva hard, costing us over £150,000. Our Mazkirut, Bogrim and Madrichim have been working tirelessly to put on a range of fantastic programming for our youth, from Machane Aviv last Spring, to a celebration of Israel like no other on Yom Ha'atzmaut, a packed summer of programming for over 400 children, and Winter Machane. Please support our **Yad Achim Campaign**. Visit bauk.org/yad-achim for more information and to donate.

- Join **Rav Joel's Torat Rav Kook Chabura! Monday's at 8:30pm** in the BA Zoom Room for all Bogrim!

- Keep an eye out for **exciting virtual events** for all ages! **Stay Safe > Stay Inspired > Stay BA**

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

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

SHABBAT SHALOM!!!



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