

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

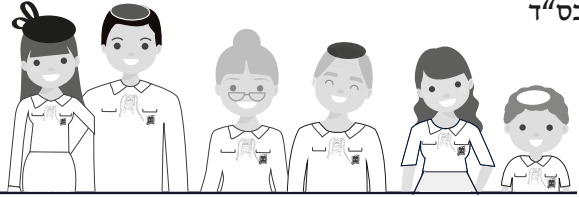
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בס"ד

# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK



## STARTING AFRESH?

SIMON RAVID  
SHEVET HINEINI

This week's *sedra* starts by continuing on from last week's *sedra*, with Hashem asking Moshe

to enter the *mishkan* that he had just finished and had been building in last week's *parasha*. Given that we are continuing from where we left off last week, a few different questions come to my mind as I am sure they may do to you:

1. Why are we starting a new *parasha*?
2. Why are we starting a new *sefer*?

One reason for this break comes from Rashi, who claims that up until now we have been focusing on the exterior and the interior from the perspective of building the *mishkan*, rather than actually using the *mishkan*. Rashi believes that this break exists as now Hashem is commanding Moshe to go into the *mishkan* in a way that only he is privy to hearing. While the rest of Bnei Yisrael are still unable to enter as a way as a way of Hashem to thank Moshe. The Ramban on the other hand claimed that Moshe needed to wait until he was told that he was allowed to enter the *mishkan* by Hashem as a sign of respect and that resulted in Moshe being reluctant to enter until he was told to do so. This is one reason for the separate *sedra* and the start of the new *sefer* of *Vayikra*.

Another reason for this could be with the change in what we are talking about as we move away from the building of the *mishkan* to the use of the *mishkan* and then how to repent once a sin has been committed and how to conduct the sacrifices. As a result, our *sedra* starts with:

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֵלָיו מֵאֵלֶּה מוֹעֵד לְאֹמֶר:  
דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אָדָם כִּי-יִקְרִיב מִקָּמָה

קָרָבָו לַה' מוֹהֲבֵהֶמָּה מוֹהֲבֵקָר וּמוֹהֲצֵאָו תִּקְרִיבוּ אֹתָו  
קָרָבָנָם:

'Hashem called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying: Speak to the Israelite people, and say to them: When any of you presents an offering of cattle to Hashem: You shall choose your offering from the herd or from the flock.'

From this we see that throughout our *sedra* we learn that what we are sacrificing has to come from something that we own. Our *sedra* lists the different purposes and reasons that would make someone have to bring a sacrifice to Hashem. It starts by referring to guilt or a public outburst detrimental towards somebody else (*lashon hara*), through all of these means when someone becomes impure they would need to produce a *korban* (sacrifice) to the *mizbeach* (altar) to repent for their sin.

The Ramban tries to focus on what a sacrifice entails. He says that the person that is giving the sacrifice should kill it with the intention of it being offered as a sacrifice to Hashem, knowing that they are essentially in the place of this animal, in order to show Hashem that they were repenting for their sin.

Our *sedra* continues by going into detail about each form of offering, which include:

- A guilt offering,
  - An offering once someone becomes impure,
  - An offering if someone is neglectful,
  - A violation of someone else's property,
  - Other offences where one brings a *korban* to repent.
- Although these were all atoned for back then via sacrifice, they are offences that we still see today being committed without a *mishkan*, and we are unable to bring a sacrifice.

## SIMON IS IN SHEVET HINEINI AND WAS T.O. ON MEGA-MACHANE 5783

London	In 18:06 Out 19:09	Leeds	In 18:14 Out 19:22	Birmingham	In 18:15 Out 19:21
Manchester	In 18:17 Out 19:24	Nottingham	In 18:12 Out 19:19	Liverpool	In 18:20 Out 19:27
Thaxted	In 18:06 Out 19:11	Brighton	In 18:07 Out 19:11	Bristol	In 18:17 Out 19:22
Cambridge	In 18:07 Out 19:12	Oxford	In 18:12 Out 19:17	Jerusalem	In 18:17 Out 19:30

# SHALIACH'S CORNER: UNDERSTANDING OUR ROOTS

## RABBI AKIVA PART 5 - WE LOVE HASHEM, HASHEM LOVES US!



"Rabbi Akiva said: How fortunate are you, Israel; before Whom are you purified, and Who purifies you? It is your Father in Heaven, as it is stated: "And I will sprinkle purifying water

upon you, and you shall be purified" (*Yechezkel* 36:25). And it says: "The mikveh of Israel is God" (*Yirmiya* 17:13). Just as a *mikveh* purifies the impure, so too, the Holy One, Blessed be He, purifies Israel." (*Mishna Yoma* 8:9)

"He used to say: Beloved is man for he was created in the image [of God]. Especially beloved is he for it was made known to him that he had been created in the image [of God], as it is said: "for in the image of God He made man" (*Bereishit* 9:6). Beloved are Israel in that they were called children to the Almighty. Especially beloved are they, for it was made known to them that they are called children of the Almighty, as it is said: "you are children to the Lord your God" (*Devarim* 14:1)." (*Pirkei Avot* 3:14)

Rabbi Akiva said: Far be it! No man in Israel disputed that the Song of Songs [saying] that it does not defile the hands [therefore indicating its sanctity]. For the whole world is not as worthy as the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; for all the writings are holy but the Song of Songs is the holy of holies. (*Mishna Yadayyim* 3:5)

Overtly humble and modest, boundless sacrifice to a higher cause, an otherworldly commitment to prophetic visions of redemption – so far these are the insights that we have had into the character of Rabbi Akiva. Based on this, one might assume that his vision of the religious personality was that of one cowering in the awe of the Divine might. Of coldness, of consuming fear and trepidation, trying as best as one can to live up to the impossible demands of a distant and vengeful God.

But this couldn't be further from the truth. For Rabbi Akiva, the religious experience is surely made up of awe and trepidation, but

it is characterised primarily by one emotion – love. Rabbi Akiva introduces us to encounter the divine as one who seeks out our presence and our company – like the lover seeks out the beloved so Hashem seeks us to be close with Him "Draw me after you, let us run! The king has brought me to his chambers." (*Shir HaShirim* 1:4).

Though the demands upon us are great and burdensome, we know Hashem is merciful, that He will forgive our mistakes, and right our step when we stumble. Yes, we live as servants of Hashem. But we do so with joy and warmth, reciprocating the way in which Hashem feels towards us.

In these teachings Rabbi Akiva informs us that Hashem is close, that Hashem cares, and that Hashem loves us. Are we expected to sacrifice, to dedicate our lives to Hashem's will and His Torah? Yes. Do we place Him at the centre of our world, and walk with humility and restraint before Him? Yes. But we also feel the warmth, we feel His support, and we feel His guiding hand as we walk boldly into the future to work to bring

about the visions of the *nevi'im*.

But more than that, the teachings of Rabbi Akiva guide us in how to perceive our fellow. For if every person is beloved in the eyes of Hashem, how could they not be beloved in my eyes, too? And if every Jew is one of Hashem's children, then each and every one of them is my brother or sister.

We strive to live lives of warmth and love – not separate from or despite our religious convictions – but because of them! If we can feed off of Hashem's love for us, if we can truly feel it, recognise it and appreciate it – then we shall surely be able to channel it to the people around us as well.

**"THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IS SURELY MADE UP OF AWE AND TREPIDATION, BUT IT IS CHARACTERISED PRIMARILY BY ONE EMOTION – LOVE."**

**ELAD ESHEL IS IN SHEVET LEHAVA AND IS ONE OF THE NORTHERN SHLICHIM OF BNEI AKIVA.  
TO CONTACT ELAD, PLEASE EMAIL NORTH@BAUK.ORG**



# TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

## LEON DA MODENA | YAHRZEIT 27<sup>TH</sup> ADAR

Catching the no.10 tram, we head back up towards Kraków, Dworzec Autobusowy MDA and settle in for a 15-hour overnight bus. Passing through the Czech Republic and Austria, we end up in Italy at Venice Mestre where we hop on the train to quickly arrive at Stazi-one di Venezia Santa Lucia. Now it's just a ten-minute walk to the Jewish ghetto, home of Venetian Jewry for hundreds of years.

Leon (Hebrew name Yehuda Aryeh) da Modena (1571-1648) has a backstory straight out of fiction. He was a child prodigy, already translating works between Italian and Hebrew and by age 13 had composed a dialogue between two characters as a polemic against the vices of gambling, entitled *Sur Mera*. He was appointed one of the rabbis of Venice and at various points in his life worked as a printer, publisher, teacher, theatre manager and musical director. His skills as an orator were unparalleled, drawing in crowds of Jews and Christians to listen to his sermons; his pleas for the poor of the community were capable of raising large sums of money overnight. As a teenager he wrote a poem, the words of which could be read in both Hebrew and Italian. He wrote prolifically in all areas of literature, ranging from an index and commentary on the aggadic collection *Ein Ya'akov* and defences against attacks on Judaism and the rabbis, to a contemporary adaptation of the Purim story in the form of a play incorporating midrashic embellishments and the first translation of the *haggada* into Italian.

Now couple these high achievements with a tragic life: his first fiancée died before they were married, when he was 19. After marrying, two of his children died in infancy. One adult son was killed by a Jewish gang after fighting over a woman, and another son abandoned him and went to South America. Leon da Modena himself developed a gambling addiction which stayed with him his entire life, losing all the money he had made from his published works. He tried all sorts of things to make more money, including alchemy which led to the death of his son Mordechai from chemical exposure. Da Modena opened his biography *Chayyei Yehuda* with the words 'Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life in this world,' quoting Ya'akov Avinu.

Having presented the introduction of this man of contradictions, we will confine ourselves to examining two fascinating aspects of his life. To begin with, he was incredibly musically adept, serving as cantor in the synagogue in Venice. He was a friend of Salomone Rossi of Mantua, a prolific musician who, in 1622, composed the very first scored synagogue music. (Rossi himself was a colleague of Monteverdi and known for his compositional and performance skills in the courts of Mantua and

Padua. He was innovative as well, one of the first composers to make use of the diminished fourth.) The synagogue music strongly resembled the popular and religious music of the time, in the period of transition between the modal Renaissance and diatonic Baroque, with Rossi writing madrigals comprised of intricate contrapuntal textures, with up to eight different vocal parts. This perceived innovation, however, was not without its challenges – both Christians and Jews criticised this style of synagogue music, thus da Modena wrote the first *haskama* (approbation) to Rossi's compositions, which were entitled *HaShirim Asher LiShlomo*. In his approbation, da Modena described how the beauty of the music of the time could be used to add to the sanctity of the synagogue service, and that this would be permitted as these songs were sung for the glory of God.



Secondly, da Modena wrote a work that would remain circulated in manuscript, unpublished, for over 200 years. This piece was called *Ari Nohem* and was the first 'modern' critique of the *Zohar* and its authorship. Fascinatingly, da Modena spoke well of the *Zohar* in terms of its literary narrative (*peshat*), its hints (*remez*) and its homiletical interpretations (*derash*). But observant readers may have noticed that he has pointedly left out the final level of kabbalistic exegesis, that of the secret (*sod*); da Modena's problem with the *Zohar* was its claim to esotericism and its pseudepigraphic authorship in attributing its teachings to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. He wrote that to call this study '*chokhmat hakabbala*' (the wisdom of received tradition) is a misnomer – it is neither true 'wisdom' nor is it a received tradition going back for centuries. In da Modena's eyes, the real esoteric study was that described by Rambam in the *Guide of the Perplexed*, and he attempted to restore the stature of Maimonides as intellectual hero of the Jewish people, championing philosophical inquiry, guiding them away from the popular study of *kabbala* that had taken its place.

It would appear that in both these ventures - that of religious synagogue music in contemporary style, and that of removing the obsession of the masses with kabbala - he was ultimately unsuccessful in his time, although in more recent centuries there has been a resurfacing of both.

# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Shabbat shoutout** to **Belmont** and **South Hampstead** sivot, holding their Shabbat Ha'irgun this week!

- **Lishmah** for bogrot and sixth-form women continues this **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March!** Join this **dynamic makom torah** for women!

- Join our **matza-baking** event for **sixth-form** and **bogrim** this erev pesach! Come and make some *shemura matza* at the shlichim's house and use it at your seder!

- **Yom Ha'atzmaut** is approaching! The service

at **Kinloss** will begin at **18:45** and is free. To join us for the **celebratory dinner**, or if you would like to sponsor a message in our special publication, please visit [bauk.org/yh-5783](http://bauk.org/yh-5783).

- **Summer Machane** applications are open! Visit [bauk.org/camps](http://bauk.org/camps) to sign up.

- **Tafkidim** for **Summer Machane** are open! Visit [bauk.org/tafkid](http://bauk.org/tafkid) to sign up.

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

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BEN AT [CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG](mailto:CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG)**

SAVE THE DATE  
**YOM HAZIKARON & YOM HA'ATZMAUT**  
25TH APRIL 2023 / 5TH IYAR 5783  
CELEBRATE  
75 YEARS OF ISRAEL  
WITH BNEI AKIVA

MIZRACHI KINLOSS

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SUMMER MACHANE**

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**Join for free!**

You can order flour (prices are in the form) and take Matzah home with you for seder.  
More details in the sign-up form.

Scan the barcode

Where- @ the Goodmans.  
When- erev pesach, 05/04, 13:30

**LISHMAH**

Bnei Akiva invites all Bogrot and sixth-form women to join our Lishmah Beit Midrash Programme!

What? Open Bet Midrash followed by a choice of Chaburot, led by educators and peers

Where? 2 Hallswele Rd

When? Every Tuesday evening 8-10pm

Come and be part of this dynamic Makom Torah!

Contact [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org) for more info!

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