



MACHSHAVOT

Parashat Vayishlach

[Our Website](#) • [Upcoming Events](#) • [Donate Now](#) • [World Mizrachi](#) • [Contact Us](#)



Our Dual Challenges

Rabbi Andrew Shaw
Chief Executive, Mizrachi UK

This Shabbat I am looking forward to once again davening in Shul. It has been so special to return this week, and hopefully, with a vaccine on the horizon, there will be no need to leave again.

Thankfully, we all know that the reason we were not allowed to have minyanim over the last month was to protect ourselves and others. This is in contrast to many times in our history, very recently in Soviet Russia, when we were forbidden from davening in shuls, and clandestine minyanim had to be formed, sometimes at great risk to people.

That is not, thank God, the reality today, when the government is and hopefully always will be, so supportive of the observance of Judaism in this country.

However, as we know, the dangers to our Judaism are not exclusively anti-Semitism.

The Beit Ha Levi brings this idea home with a powerful analysis of a statement of Yaacov as he prays to Hashem to protect him from Esav.

'Hatzileni na miyad Achi, Miyad esav' Save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav.

The Beit ha Levi asks, why repetition? He only has one brother why not just say the hand of Esav? Why add in the hand of my brother?

His answer is this. Yaacov is afraid of Esav, the man who had sworn to kill him, he is afraid of anti-Semitism.

However, he also afraid of 'Achi', my brother, a friendship with Esav that could allow the value systems of Esav to seep into the family of Yaacov – that too terrified him.

There are two minor chagim that highlight these dual challenges, *miyad achi* and *miyad eisav*. Purim and Chanukah.

Purim which happened first chronologically, was about Mordechai and Esther praying to Hashem to save us from genocide. No one in the story of Purim, once Haman took charge, was in any doubt where the danger lay. We were under attack from *'miyad Eisav'*.

Similarly, throughout history when our enemies attacked as '*miyad Eisav*' there was no grey, it was clear what the danger was and we had to act appropriately.

A few hundred years later, we come to Chanukah, which begins this Thursday night.

Here, it was very different. Many Jews at the time embraced the Hellenistic ideas, were taken in by the allure of Greek Culture. However, it is not so simple to condemn, there was plenty to admire about the Greeks.

As Winston Churchill once said:

'No other two races have set such a mark upon the world. Each of them from angles so different have left us with the inheritance on its genius and wisdom. No two cities have counted more with mankind than Athens and Jerusalem. Their messages in religion, philosophy and art have been the main guiding light in modern faith and culture. Personally I have always been on the side of both.'

Chazal don't disagree! In fact, there is a remarkable ruling in Halacha that a Sefer Torah may be written in Hebrew or Greek! (Megilah 8b)

The source of this Halacha is the bracha that Noach gave to Yefet. 'May Hashem expand Yefet and may he dwell in the tents of Shem' Bereishit 9:27.

Miyad Achi is not so simple, there is much to be gained from the various societies we have engaged with over the millennia, the challenge has always been to realise that unless we have a strong, confident Judaism, the society at large will overcome our frailties and assimilation will be the likely outcome.

However, that does not mean that we should not engage.

Rabbi Sacks zt"l, as always put it beautifully.

"Neither the biblical nor rabbinic tradition allows a prolonged retreat from the tense, unpredictable, ongoing dialogue with contemporary culture, with society in its Israeli or diaspora dimensions, and with the Jewish people as a whole. Renewing that holy argument is the future task of Jewish thought. For at stake is the fate of Torah whose living commentary is the Jewish people in dialogue with its covenantal calling. "

I don't think there was anyone in the modern era who understood both Athens and Jerusalem and was able to transmit that to the world around him. He said specifically about the Greeks and the Jews,

"The Greeks worshipped human reason, the Jews, Divine revelation. The Greeks gave the West its philosophy and science. The Jews, obliquely, gave it its prophets and religious faith."

As society grows ever more fragmented in terms of politics, culture and media – we have to fortify ourselves in Torah, to see the world through the prism of Torah, to make sure that we are protected from '*Miyad Achi*' while at the same time learning and growing from the areas that can inspire and motivate us.

We have lost the leader that guided us on that difficult, challenging yet crucial path – let us make sure to strengthen ourselves for the challenge ahead.

Shabbat Shalom

P.S We are delighted that next week the Jewish Weekly will be distributing the Chanukah Edition of Ha Mizrachi with their newspaper. The magazine is dedicated to Rabbi Sacks ztl. Please pick up a copy.

Mizrachi UK Chanukah Campaign

FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS WE HAVE...

SHLICHIM

BROUGHT **16** EDUCATORS FROM ISRAEL TO LIVE IN THE UK TO HAVE A HUGE IMPACT IN **9** SCHOOLS, **18** SHULS AND **6** CAMPUSES.

FELLOWSHIPS

INVESTED A TOTAL OF **£350,000** IN **16** YOUNG ADULTS WITH **RABBINICAL TRAINING** IN ORDER TO CREATE THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF THE UK.

SPEAKERS

BROUGHT **72** DIFFERENT LEADING EDUCATORS FROM ISRAEL TO THE UK TO TEACH **TORAT YISRAEL** IN **49** COMMUNITIES INCLUDING OUR FLAGSHIP **'WEEKEND OF INSPIRATION'** WHICH OVER THREE YEARS HAS HAD **1500** PARTICIPANTS.

PUBLICATIONS

PRINTED **50,000** COPIES OF **HAMIZRACHI** & DISTRIBUTED TO **44** DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES. SOLE DISTRIBUTOR OF ALL **TZURBA M'RABANAN** BOOKS IN THE UK ALONG WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER PUBLICATIONS.



PRESENTATIONS

CREATED **6** ONLINE PRODUCTIONS WITH **77,000** VIEWS & **4** LIVE SHOWS EXPLORING IDEAS FROM OUR **CHAGIM** AND OTHER DAYS OF **SIGNIFICANCE** ALONG WITH OUR HIGHLY ACCLAIMED **'DREAMS OF A NATION'** WHICH HAS BEEN PERFORMED IN **16** COMMUNITIES.

MAJOR EVENTS

TAKEN **250** PEOPLE TO JERUSALEM TO CELEBRATE **YOM YERUSHALAYIM**. TOURED **4** CITIES WITH **YAAKOV SHWEKEY** PROVIDING CONCERTS FOR **3000** PEOPLE. HOSTED **3 'SHABBATONIM @ HOME'** ACROSS **82** COMMUNITIES WITH **68,400** VIEWS ON THE PRE & POST SHABBAT EVENTS ONLINE.

...NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO HELP US!!! BECOME A FRIEND OF MIZRACHI

- VISIT WWW.MIZRACHI.ORG.UK/CHANUKAH
- CLICK 'SET UP A MONTHLY DONATION'
- FILL IN THE AMOUNT YOU CAN SUPPORT US WITH
 - FOLLOW THE STEPS
- WATCH OUR SMALL TEAM CONTINUE TO TRANSFORM THE JEWISH COMMUNITY



@mizrachiuk



@mizrachiuk



@mizrachiuk



@mizrachiuk

The Chanukah HaMizrachi will be included with next week's Jewish Weekly!



A Light Unto the Nations

A SPECIAL CHANUKAH EDITION
REMEMBERING RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS





JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY TZURBA M'RABANAN LEARNING PROGRAM NOW IN ENGLISH!

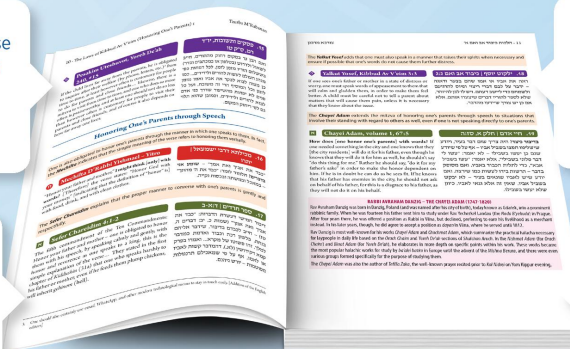
VOLUME 6 AVAILABLE SOON!



OVER 20,000 LEARNERS IN HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD

A systematic and concise learning method, from the Talmudic source through modern-day halachic application

Cover 300 major topics in Shulchan Aruch, learning once a week during a four-year cycle



Clear and concise introductions and a modern English translation alongside the original Hebrew text

Color-coded sections, icons and elucidation to guide the learner, in addition to in-depth essays and responsa to complement the learning



Tzurba M'Rabanan is available as a podcast on all major platforms, including iTunes, Spotify and Google

VISIT WWW.TZURBAOLAMI.COM TO ORDER BOOKS OR TO FIND A LOCAL SHIUR

Connect with Mizrahi



