

## Shabbat Times

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London	16:13	17:22	Cambridge	16:07 17:24
Manchester	16:02	17:15	Leeds	16:07 17:21
Birmingham	16:13	17:26	Liverpool	16:14 17:33
Oxford	16:14	17:30	Jerusalem	16:26 17:40

### Coming up...

-Limmud and Shiur with Rav Ari on the weekly Haftorah continues on Monday at the London Bayit beginning at 19:30

- on Sunday the 22nd of January, at 10am at the London Bayit we are launching our brand new learning programme - Yeshivat Torah v'Avodah. This programme will be for everyone in years 12 and 13 and will cover a broad scope of topics surrounding contemporary Judaism. For more info contact Dena on [dena@bauk.org](mailto:dena@bauk.org)

-Israel Machane forms are now out, for more information contact Ollie on [ollie@bauk.org](mailto:ollie@bauk.org)

- Hairgun season continues next week with Leeds Ha'igun

### Shabbat debate

Every week we will be writing weekly debates to discuss over Shabbat. The debates will then be continued on Facebook, on Sunday at 2pm.

Was slavery in Egypt really that bad? If it was, why were so many Jews reluctant to leave?



# SHABBAT



# LASHEM שבת לה

פרשת שמות

PARASHAT SHEMOT

תנועת בני אקיוו  
BNEI AKIVA UK

The most widely distributed weekly Torah periodical written by our youth in the United Kingdom.

### Looking at the Good

Dalia Herszaft

This week's parasha is Shemot, it's the end of an era of the 12 tribes. The parasha begins by saying 'and Yosef died and all his brothers and the entire generation'. The Ohr Hachayim explains that the enslavement of the Israelites by the Egyptians occurred in three stages, first Yosef died, the Israelites lost their power. Then the brothers died, as long as even one of the brothers were alive, the Egyptians still honoured them. Even afterwards, as long as the first generation was alive, the Egyptians considered them important and could not treat them as slaves. Rabbi Chayim Shmuelvitz comments on this that there are two parts to this; one is the side of the Egyptians, that they were unable to treat the Jewish people as slaves, as long as they considered them important. The other aspect is on the side of the Jewish people themselves. As long as they were considered important and worthy of respect by themselves, the Egyptians were not able to treat them in an inferior manner. Only when they personally considered themselves in a lowly manner could they be defeated by others. Rav Chayim relates this to the Yetzer Hara and Tov, which teaches us a very important message. The evil inclination tries to have a person feel inferior and guilty. Once this is achieved a person is an easy prey for being trapped by the evil inclination. A person should strive to internalise elevated feelings about himself, when a person has these feelings of elevation they will be a cautious not to do anything that could lower their level and therefore overcome their Yetzer Hara.

'A new king arose over Egypt who did not know about Joseph, he said to his people "Behold the people of Israel are more numerous and stronger than we are, get ready, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they increase and a war befall us and they join our enemies"' 1:8-10

This seems to be very similar to what Martin Luthor wrote thousands of years later called 'the Jews and their lies' which includes untrue claims that the Jews are trying to take over the world and can be categorised as baseless anti-Semitism. Many argue that Hitler took ideas from this book. This in itself teaches a very important message. Jews stand out due to success in the world, and as stated in shema that if we keep to G-d's commandments He will provide for us. It also teaches that Jews cannot be comfortable anywhere except for Israel. All seemed good in the previous few parashot when Yosef was in charge in Egypt however as soon as that generation died, we were in slavery showing comfort outside of Israel can only happen for so long.

Shifra and Puah saved the lives of the baby boys even though they were commanded by Pharaoh to kill them. As a result it says 'it was because the midwives feared G-d that He made them houses' one commentary says that this doesn't mean physical houses, in fact it means that the midwives lineage would be guaranteed to be continue. I believe this a good interpretation as the midwives ensured that baby boys were kept alive therefore allowing the Israelites' lineage to be continue so as a result the midwives were rewarded in a similar way, this is a good example of G-d rewarding 'mida kneged mida'. Moving through the parasha a bit further when talking about Moshe when he was born the text says 'The woman conceived and gave birth to a son, she saw that he was good and hid him for three months'. A big question is asked about the word good, 'tov'? What does it mean that the baby was good? One explanation by Rav Hirsch says that it means the baby didn't cry as a result of this, the baby could successfully be hidden by his mother, Jochebed. However there is a different opinion held by the Ramban who says that in fact good means that Jochebed saw in Moshe some unique quality which was foreshadowed that a miracle would happen to him and that he would be saved, as a result of this she applied herself and thought of ways to save him. Moshe's mother saw a final goal and followed it however extreme and risky it may have seemed, putting her son in a basket in the Nile but she had faith in G-d and carried through and of course the end results are successful. An important lesson can be taken from this for us, that if we persevere and trust in Hashem, pretty much anything is possible!

Dalia Herszaft is in Shevet Eitan and was a Madricha for Haroeh-Gimmel 5777





One of the memorable stories in every child's mind when learning the story of the slavery and redemption from Egypt is the revelation at the burning bush. It is a scene shrouded in mystery, mysticism and magic.

What we often don't notice is that the scene of the burning bush is quite possibly the main focus of our parasha, and a central influence in the story of the exodus. Not only is Moshe told to be the redeemer, but the entire ensuing discussion of Moshe's eligibility all takes place at the burning bush. Thirty-nine pesukim spanning seven days (according to Rashi) pass at the burning bush. Moreover, the mountain itself – where Am Yisrael ultimately receives the Torah – becomes named "Sinai" from the word "s'neh" – the burning bush.

It is not haphazard that Moshe's revelation occurs at the burning bush. This scene is what propels Moshe; it is the impetus driving the redemption and the foundation and catalyst to receiving the Torah.

In the famous Mishnah describing the dissemination of Torah (Avot 1:1), the source of the Torah is described in a curious manner:

“Moshe received Torah from Sinai.”

Why is Sinai recorded as the source of the Torah? Surely Moshe received the Torah from Hashem, not from the mountain it was given upon? It would seem once again the s'neh is central to the receiving of Torah. This notion is strengthened by the pasuk that reads (Devarim 33:16):

“[God's] Will resides in the s'neh.”

What is the essence of the burning bush? What is its great significance?

It is beyond the scope of this article to assess the identity of the s'neh, or to review the scope of opinions describing its symbolism. Suffice to say that the s'neh is understood to be a short, thorny bush. It represents the lowly, depreciated state of the Jewish People in their bondage, and the challenges involved in being liberated thereof. Moreover, the burning bush represents the motivation of every single Jew to contribute their part in this process, no matter how difficult this may seem.

At the s'neh, Moshe undergoes profound soul-searching. He hears the voice of God calling, challenging him to fulfil his purpose and embrace his destiny. At first he denies this calling, and shuns his destiny. “Who am I?” – Moshe questions his ability, his worthiness and his significance. But ultimately, the calling is too compelling; once he became aware of the burning inside of himself, it became impossible to run away and hide from his mission.

This scene is not a one-off occurrence. Throughout life we all undergo moments of doubt, and face crossroads where we must make difficult decisions. We reflect and ask “who am I”? What is the right path to follow? What direction shall I take in life?

The burning bush is a place inside each and every one of us. It is the inner-space where we encounter Hashem, and hear His calling. It is the voice that calls upon us to see reality as it is, and to recognize the role we each are called upon to play in order to realize reality's full goodness and our full potential. The burning bush is the crossroads where fate and destiny meet; it is where we stop running from our calling and undertake our divine mission. The burning bush is the impetus driving Jewish history forward; it is the force behind every positive and ideologically motivated decision, every resolution to be part of the movement to better the world.

Moshe isn't the only one to receive Torah at Sinai – the place of the s'neh. We all did. And every time we become aroused to embrace our destiny we are hearing Hashem's voice calling-out from within the burning bush.

### The Week that Was...

Last Shabbat we had our Israel Machane reunion in Belmont, Chigwell and Pinner.

This Shabbat Salford BA are having their annual Family Friday Night.

This week is the Edgware Hairgun. We wish Shabbat Shalom to all those involved



## Sviva Spotlight

Dvar Torah and Update from one of our Svivot

### Bushey BA

*Bushey BA meets weekly at Bushey Shul from 3-5 pm for years 1-9.*

*Bushey BA has its own song which they sing every week at mifkad, their Shabbat Ha'irgun is on 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> February with Family Friday Night on the 24<sup>th</sup> save the date!!!*

*As well as Ha'irgun there are many other activities throughout the year for chanichim, so keep an eye out!!*

### What's in a Name?

One of the key themes within this week's parasha is names. Names are, and always will be a key feature of a person's identity, as well as being the embodiment of the qualities which are found in their נשמה. In fact, the root of the word נשמה is 'שנ' which means 'name'. According to Kabbala, when naming a child, the parents are filled with Ruach HaKodesh, because, somehow, that child's destiny is wrapped up in the combination of Hebrew letters that make up his or her name.

This, however poses the question of 'If a name means something strange, will my child have those qualities?' To answer this question, we have to look at a few examples. Rachel, one of the most common names in Jewish society, means 'Ewe'. Does this mean that all girls who are named Rachel will suddenly act like sheep as that is what is in their נשמה? Or that a girl named Chana will be graceful? Not necessarily. Girls who are named Rachel may grow up to be like Rachel, one of Imahot. They could grow up to be as selfless as Rachel was when she gave up Yaakov in order not to shame her sister Leah, whilst girls named Chana may not be the most graceful of girls, but could grow up to be as inspirational and revolutionary as Chana was in their own generation.

An example of someone who merited the name they were given was Batya. Batya, the daughter of Pharaoh, rescued Moshe from the Nile, the saviour of the very people her father was trying to enslave. In the Pesukim where we first learn about Batya, she is simply referred to as 'the daughter of Pharaoh'. She isn't even given an official name. She only receives the title of Batya later. As we know from the way to which she is referred to in the past, Batya was Pharaoh's daughter, meaning she grew up in his household following his gods. However, Rashi says that Pharaoh's daughter decided to convert to Judaism and the reason she was at the Nile that day was to bathe in the waters, so she could complete the conversion process, where she saw the baby boy in his basket and realised it was one of the Jewish boys. Batya risked her life to save a Jewish baby boy, by saving him and bringing him into her father's home, even though she had no connection to him. She deserved the name she was given, and her reward was that the name she gave to Moshe, out of all the names he was given, is the one used in the Torah.

Further proof that names are a powerful thing can be found in Shemot. We learn that whilst the Bnei Yisrael were in Egypt, they refused to take on Egyptian names. They kept their Jewish names which were a key part of their Jewish identity, which is part of the reason why they managed to stay such a cohesive people and played a part in their redemption. The fact that they refused to change their names, their clothes or their language, when everyone else around them was trying to change them and mould them into their version of how the Jewish people should be sets a good example for how we should try to behave today where sometimes we feel pressured not to showcase our Jewish identity, whether that is through our clothes, our language or our names.