

## Shabbat Times

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London	16:26	17:33	Cambridge	16:19	17:35
Manchester	16:14	17:26	Leeds	16:20	17:32
Birmingham	16:26	17:43	Liverpool	16:27	17:45
Oxford	16:26	17:41	Jerusalem	16:32	17:46

# SHABBAT



תנועת בני עקיבה  
BNEI AKIVA UK

# LASHEM שבת לה'

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

פרשת וזרא

PARASHAT VAEIRA

### Comparing two great leaders

Akiva Gluck

With the official inauguration of US president Donald Trump this week, people from all over the world have been criticizing him for his leadership ways and his unsuitability as US president. Throughout the Torah we have also always criticized our leaders and the way in which they have led the Jewish people.

Moshe is considered to be the greatest leader of all time. With the powerful story of the exodus of Egypt and his upbringing is famous around the world with all religions and nations.

It's a common theme that we compare different leaders throughout the Torah, generally between Noach and Avraham. As Avraham was a man who would go out and seek redemption and try get people to believe in God Then there is Noah a simple man who was told to simply build an ark and didn't bother to go out and try save the world.

I would like to share a couple parallels between the two leaders of Noah and Moshe as there are hidden attributes between the two leaders.

As we look through both stories of Moshe from last few parshiot we see Moshe as a baby, put into a basket and sent along the river. He is then given to Pharohs daughter who then raises him until he is old enough to perceive the slavery of the Jewish people around him. He kills an Egyptian and runs off and then encounters the episode with the burning bush. Numerous commentaries explain that when G-d instructs Moshe to go down to Egypt, Moshe constantly argues with G-d saying how he is not worthy enough to be the leader. And asking g-d why would the Jewish people listen to me?

Is this the way a leader should act? Moshe, who turns out to be the greatest of all time?

Now on to Noach, Noach is a simple man who also encounters interaction with G-d. Noah one day is working when he suddenly hears the heavenly voice of G-d instructing him to build an Ark and that the whole world is going to be destroyed.

We later on see in the parsha that Noach takes a long time building the ark. There are many midrashim which talks about the encounters between the people and the town where Noach was living. When the town would come up to Noach and ask "What are you building? Noach would simply Respond, " I am building an ark, G-d has instructed me to do so and the world will be destroyed" which then shows the members of the town would listen and laugh.

With Noah understanding that the world would be destroyed why didn't he bother to ask G-d and plead with him for forgiveness, knowing that the entire world would be destroyed, not even knowing his family would survive?

These two different leaders leave us questioning if they became great leaders, Rav Soleveitchik offers us an answer and correlation between the two leaders. In this weeks parsha as Moshe is talking to G-d he is constantly arguing and feeling down about himself, "why will Paroh listen to me? I have problem with my speech?" why is it a necessary for Moshe to say that to G-D? Surely G-d knows that. This is Moshe finding failure in himself. If a teacher or a rabbi, has a fault they shouldn't say it is due their teachers, they should be saying it is due to themselves. This was Moshe realising he isn't perfect and that he would need all of G-ds help to be able to conquer and free the Jewish people.

Noach on the other hand, was a leader who was said to have walked with G-d? Noach realised there was a G-d and someone greater than himself although he did not know how to express that within himself.

The reason why Moshe was the greatest of all time was the fact that he was able to realise his potential and be able to use it in a way Noach couldn't. Its this attribute of Moshe's leadership which eventually frees the Jewish people and makes it his legacy till this very day.

Akiva Gluck is Technical Director for Bnei Akiva

### Coming up...

-Limmud continues next week at the London Bayit on Monday starting at 7:30

- Hairgun season continues next week with Pinner, Whitefield and Golders Green Ha'irgun

### 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.

Should we take joy in our oppressor's punishment?

**BNEI AKIVA**  
NATIONWIDE HA'IRGUN TOUR

**UK INVASION 2K17**

MONTH	DATE	LOCATION
JANUARY	18	BOREHAMWOOD
	21	SALFORD FFN
	21	EDGWARE
	25	KINLOSS
FEBRUARY	4	PINNER
	4	WOODSIDE PARK
	18	HENDON
	4	GOLDERS GREEN
	25	SALFORD
	31	MINI MACHAME
	11	MILL HILL
MARCH	TBC	BARNET

E-MAIL: ZECHARIAHS@BNAUK.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Some photos from Salford and Edgware from last Shabbat





## Role of an Educator

The great American poet and educator Robert Frost once remarked, “I am not a teacher, I am an awakener.” Indeed, too often education is limited to the transmission of knowledge with the end goal of students passing standardised testing. A true educator is not one who merely conveys and teaches information, it is someone who sparks curiosity, empowers and inspires.

Our *parasha* opens with Moshe presenting the enslaved Jewish nation with the news of their imminent redemption (Shemot 6:6-8):

**“I will take you out ... I will save you ... and I will redeem you ... I shall take you unto me as a nation ... and I shall bring you to the Land ...”**

But Moshe’s positive message is not well received (v. 9):

**“They hearkened not unto Moshe for shortness of spirit, and for cruel slavery.”**

Moshe is then instructed to report to Paroh, but he is disheartened and unconvinced (v. 12):

**“Behold, the children of Israel have not listened to me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, and I am of impeded speech?”**

Rashi notes that this argument presented by Moshe is one example of a *kal va’chomer* (lit. “mild and severe”) – *argumentum a fortiori* – used in the Torah: If Bnei Yisrael – who should favour accepting the hopeful tidings due to their lowly state – didn’t listen to Moshe, then surely Paroh – for whom this statement would be negative – would refuse to pay heed.

The supercommentary to Rashi, Siftei Chachamim, challenges the preposition that Moshe’s argument is in fact *a fortiori*:

**“The reason Bnei Yisrael rejected Moshe’s words is because of their shortness of spirit and cruel slavery...”**

Siftei Chachamim argues that the logic is diffused, for there is an additional reason for Bnei Yisrael rejecting Moshe’s proclamation that doesn’t apply to Paroh. Bnei Yisrael had “*shortness of spirit*” due to their “*cruel slavery*”, which Paroh certainly didn’t suffer from. Moreover, Siftei Chachamim questions the correlation between the *kal va’chomer* and Moshe’s speech impairment; Moshe’s *a fortiori* argument would have been understood without stating that he is “*of impeded speech*”?

I believe Moshe isn’t merely quibbling about the unfeasibility of his task, but of his illegitimacy as leader and educator of the people: Moshe’s speech impediment is not a simple expression of a physical disorder, it is essential to his character. When first charged by Hashem at the Burning Bush that he is to lead the nation, Moshe argues that (4:10):

**“... I am not a man of words ... I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.”**

Moshe is a man of great spirit and vast, profound wisdom. He sees reality with complete clarity in terms of absolute truths. For Moshe there is no grey matter, only black and white. To communicate such great idealism and empirical truth requires incredible personal strength. Time again, Moshe expresses his concern that he is unable to translate the vision of reality he perceives into a language that is compatible with others. “*I am no man of words ... I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue*”.

It would be expected that an enslaved people would be inspired and overjoyed to hear that their salvation is near. But it is crucial that the harbinger speak in a tone that the listeners desire to hear; they must use the words that will inspire the masses from their lowly state. Moshe argues with God: I couldn’t even find the words to move Bnei Yisrael – who are downtrodden to the point of shortness of spirit and cruel slavery – to believe in the imminent redemption, how then will I find the words to convince Paroh to become receptive to this redemption?

The role of an educator is not only to communicate knowledge, and transmit empirical truths. An educator is an “awakener”, they are an inspirer. It is imperative that the educator choose the methodology and wording that is appropriate so that their students will be inspired. He mustn’t only transmit God’s words, rather Moshe must do so in the way that is appropriate and relevant to the people considering their particular condition. Moshe certainly learns to choose his words (Devarim 1:1), and becomes a master of education; indeed we refer to him as “Moshe Rabbeinu”.

The great challenge when we find ourselves at the cusp of redemption is to find the words that awaken us to this reality. We all have greatness inside that yearns to be revealed, if we just find the keys that open the doors to our soul and allow our full potential to manifest.

## The Week that Was...

Last Shabbat was the Salford family Friday night and the Edgware Ha’irgun, thank you to all those involved for making them such a success.

On Sunday we had our first Yeshivat Torah v’Avodah our monthly learning programme for six formers.

On Wednesday Rav Ari, with the Mazkirut visited Bogrim in Birmingham for a lunch and shiur Shabbat Shalom to all those in Leeds this Shabbat for the Shabbat Ha’irgun

## Rosh Chodesh Shvat

Aron White – head of Shalhevet programme

This Shabbat is Rosh Chodesh, and we begin the month of Shvat. This month features one of the most interesting days on the Jewish calendar – Tu BiShvat, the new year for trees. Actually, according to one opinion in the Mishna, this day should actually be observed today, on the first of the month, though as we know, the final Halacha is that we observe the new year for trees on the fifteenth of the month.

What does it mean that we celebrate a new year for trees? Why even celebrate trees at all? And if we are going to celebrate them, why do this in the middle of the winter?

Rabbi Samson Refael Hirsch points out that we actually already have many days in the Jewish calendar that are linked to the agricultural cycle – Pesach is Chag HaAviv, the time when the produce ripens, Shavuot is called Chag HaKatzir, the time when the produce is harvested, and Sukkot is called Chag HaAsif, the time when all the produce is gathered in from the field. So why have another day called Tu BiShvat?

Rabbi Hirsch answers that on those other days we celebrate a finished product – we thank God for the new harvest, or the new fruits that are gathered into the home. But Tu BiShvat is a celebration of the beginning of the process. The Rabbis said that the new year for trees is celebrated in the middle of the winter, because under the surface, this is the moment when the growth and development of the new fruits begin. The final products may come later in the year, in the spring and summer, but Tu BiShvat is a day of celebrating the beginning, the first moments that the fruits begin to grow, the fresh start of another year of produce.

A similar message also contained in the very word we use to describe this whole time of year. The Hebrew word for winter is *Choref*, but Rabbi Hirsch points out that in the Tanach (Iyov 29:3), the word *Choref* means youth. We should look at winter, a time that seems to be bland and unexciting, with a different perspective - winter, just like youth, is when new processes are beginning, and beneath the surface, new fruits have started to grow.

**The Shalhevet programme is also about beginning something new. We want to give the opportunity to any Jewish student from the UK, in Year 13 or in University, to come to Jerusalem, and spend two weeks immersed in Jewish learning. We will be learning in the classroom and learning out of the classroom, seeing with our own eyes where our Jewish History happened and is continuing to happen in the land of Israel. The atmosphere will be one that is open minded, where students can ask questions, discuss, debate, and really develop their understanding of and connection with Judaism. The program will help both deepen knowledge of some familiar topics, as well as expand horizons by learning about new ones. The mix of exciting teachers, the unique opportunity to stay in the Old city of Jerusalem, as well as fabulous trips and Shabbatot, means that participants can experience Judaism and Torah learning in a fresh way, leaving more knowledgeable and inspired. We are looking forward to welcoming you for an amazing summer!**