

Shabbat Times

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London	16:02	17:06	Cambridge	15:54 17:07
Manchester	16:02	17:10	Leeds	15:56 17:06
Birmingham	16:02	17:13	Liverpool	16:15 17:16
			Jerusalem	16:02 17:19

MEET THE BIG IDEAS
THAT WILL BLOW YOUR MIND.



Shabbat Debate

Every week we will be writing weekly debates to discuss over Shabbat. The debates will then be continued, Sunday at 14:00 on Facebook.

Avraham and Sarah spoke out against their community challenging social norms. Do you think it is possible to be an Avraham in the modern world?

Coming up....

- Applications for Winter Machane are open to apply go on tinyurl.com/wintermachane5777
- Israel machane reunion is on the 2nd December for more details email Ollie@bauk.org
- Shabbat Ha'irgun for Bogrim is on 25th and 26th November stay tuned for more information
- The Mazkirut roadshow is coming to a campus near you.



Welcome to our new Northern Shlichim Benaya and Mayan Cohen who arrived from Israel on Sunday

SHABBAT



LASHEM

שבת לה'

פרשת לך לך

PARASHAT LECH LECHA

תנועת בני אקיבה
BNEI AKIVA UK

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

The Journey of Avraham

Amy Landes

This week's Torah reading starts with God's commandment to Avraham: "Go forth from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you."

At this point in time Avraham and Sarah are already an elderly couple, 75 and 65 years of age respectively. But up until now, we know nothing about them other than their ages.

Avraham and Sarah's early years were extremely productive. Avraham was raised in a pagan home and society, yet at the age of three he used his deep intelligence to conclude that there is one G-d, who cannot be seen or heard, who created heaven and earth. Talmudic and Midrashic sources tell us that King Nimrod gave Avraham an ultimatum: to abandon his one G-d, or be thrown into a fiery furnace. Avraham chose the latter, but miraculously was unharmed by the fire. Afterwards, Avraham and Sarah publicized their newfound beliefs and gathered together a large following. Yet the Torah skips their courageous start in life & chooses to begin their life story with G-d's command to embark on a journey.

Although Avraham and Sarah had a spiritually comfortable and fulfilling life before their journey to Israel, G-d demanded them to drop everything and travel on an open-ended trip, intentionally neglecting to inform them of their destination. The aged couple's willingness to comply with this "irrational" request was more precious in G-d's eyes than their previous decades-long exemplary service.

Our sages tell us that "the story of the fathers is a sign for the children." The first story the Torah relates about the first Jews is a powerful lesson for their descendants, teaching us how to approach our Jewish mission in life.

A Jew must never be comfortable with his or her spiritual standing. No matter how much has been accomplished, it is incumbent upon every Jew to embark yet further in the journey towards the promised land. And this journey must be open-ended. One should never set limits on personal spiritual growth. The journey must always continue; just as God is infinite, so too the journey to reach Him is infinite.

Amy Landes is in Shevet Na'aleh and was a madricha on Gimmel Summer Machane 5776



Avraham's Search

Parashat Lech-Lecha is the beginning of the Torah's shift-of-focus from the collective to the specific. It ceases to describe the events that brought mankind into being, and begins to focus on the foundations of our faith specifically. It no longer describes merely what it means to be a human being, the Torah now describes what it means to be a Jew.

The Jewish journey begins with Avraham's journey; when he answers Hashem's call of "lech-lecha" (Bereishit 12:1). The fundamental question asked is, why was Avraham chosen for this role? Many answers to this question have been offered. Rambam suggests that Avraham grew into the role. He suggests the following historio-psychological sketch of Avraham's upbringing (Avodat Kochavim 1:3):

"Though he was a child, he began to think [incessantly] throughout the day and night, wondering: How is it possible for the sphere to continue to revolve without having anyone controlling it? Who is causing it to revolve? Surely, it does not cause itself to revolve. He had no teacher, nor was there anyone to inform him ... his heart was exploring and understanding. Ultimately, he appreciated the way of truth and understood the path of righteousness ... He realized that there was one God who controlled the sphere, that He created everything, and that there is no other God among all the other entities."

Avraham was on a constant journey of soul-searching. He was searching relentlessly for the source of the soul, the source of self, the source of all. Where something comes from is not only a question in physics, it is first and foremost one in metaphysics. The Kuzari (1:68-76) sees that the world is made-up of infinite sequences of causes-and-effects; this is what we call nature. He challenges us, though, to look beyond these sequences and to ask what is the source of nature?

Aristotle believed this "source of nature" was what he called the "unmoved mover" – God. According to Aristotle, all comes from God but has existed eternally due to the eternity of God. There is no creation, no starting point. According to Aristotle, there is no interaction between man and God. We came into being due to God's existence; we are not consciously and specifically created. We are the product of cause and effect, not the careful work of the master artisan.

It was not only the "where" that Avraham was looking for; he wasn't merely searching for God. The people of his time found many Gods. Aristotle found one God. Avraham was searching for the "why"; he was searching for the God in man. Avraham was searching for purpose and meaning.

Our faith is born of the belief that we are created with a purpose. What is this purpose is the question Avraham encourages us all to ask. Being Jewish is not necessarily about finding our purpose, it's about believing in it and looking for it.

It is for this reason that Shabbat is such a central pillar in Jewish life. Shabbat observance is the systematic rejection of the cause-and-effect world we live in. Life isn't about blind, laborious acts; it is about meaning. Our cessation of our weekly routine, is the declaration that we are in control of our ambitions, and our acts do not control us. Nothing says we were meant to be better than Shabbat, the penultimate declaration that there is meaning to life, and we were created with purpose.

It is therefore so appropriate that this week we are all coming together to celebrate Shabbat under the Chief Rabbi's Shabbat UK. This Shabbat, Bnei Akiva has some 200 *madrichot* and *madrichim* volunteering to enhance the experiences in over thirty communities across the nation. But it's not only about the bombastic celebrations this week, Shabbat is an opportunity every week. It's the gift we have to protest the rout and reject the cause-and-effect lives we live in order to appreciate those who are dear to us and all that we have achieved. Shabbat is the time to celebrate our purpose and meaning.

The Week that Was..

- On Tuesday, Bogrim volunteered, providing ruach and joining in with the celebratians at the Shabbat UK concert for all the Jewish primary schools in London.
- On Wednesday we had our first Drash and Dram event, a whiskey tasting evening followed by some words of Torah given by Rav Ari
- Over 200 Bnei Akiva Madrichim are volunteering across the country this Shabbat look out for them in your community

Hello Hachshara

Catching up with our hachshara programme in Israel

Hi everyone, Elijah Golding here from Shalhevet Neriya (aka Lehava) 2016-17!

I am having an incredible time so far, been to some amazing places and done some life-changing things!

We have about 20 boys and girls on our program from all over the world such as France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Switzerland and USA. I am learning so much from these people and about their culture, I'm sure I will stay friends with all of them for a long time! We started our program in Jerusalem where we mainly did team-building exercises to get to know one another. One of the activities we did was at Machane Yehudah where we had to work together as a team to complete challenges like taking selfies with strangers, find and take pictures with specific foods and generally running around. This was great fun! After the first week we then moved to Kibbutz Ein Hanatziv, near the Jordan Valley. We were there until recently for 6 weeks working, eating and getting to know the local people on the Kibbutz. I worked for most of my time at the olive fields which involved growing, picking, gathering, crushing and lots of sweating! I also did work at the factory on Kibbutz, called the 'Foamotive'. Creating foam-based products such as yoga mats and also parts for cars too! There were other options for work, people worked with the cows on the Kibbutz, the kitchen and the kindergarten.

As you read this I am living at Mechina, in Ma'aleh Addumim. Mechina is an army preparation program which includes lots of learning like shiurim and chavrutot for many hours of the day and intense physical training like early-morning running and late-night Crossfit training. I have been living there for just over a week and we have about 2 and a half weeks left. Lastly, after Mechina and for the remainder of 2016, I will be working with Magen David Adom with their ambulance service for two months, then going to Poland. I am having the time of my life! Shabbat Shalom from Israel, hope to hear from you all soon!

