

Shabbat Times

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London	15:52	16:57	Cambridge	15:45 16:58
Manchester	16:02	17:10	Leeds	15:45 16:56
Birmingham	15:53	17:02	Liverpool	15:52 17:07
Oxford	15:52	17:05	Jerusalem	16:02 17:15

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 on facebook, at 14:00 on Sunday.

Lot put his guests before family going above and beyond to please his guests but willing to put his daughters in danger. Should we be putting our family, first focusing on them and not the community? Or did Lot have the correct approach?

Coming up...

- Israel Machane reunion is on the 2nd - 3rd December, for more details contact Ollie on Ollie@bauk.org
- Limmud continues at the London Bayit Monday night at 7:30
- The Mazkirut roadshow is coming soon watch this space for further information.



SHABBAT



LASHEM שבת לה'

פרשת וירא

תנועת בני אקיוו
BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT VAYEIRA

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

Noach a Tzadik?

Hannah Denby

Noach and his family were the only humans saved when G-d brought the flood onto the earth. After several months of being at sea Noach needed to know if the flood had finished and he was able to return to dry land with his ark, to do this Noach sent out a dove from the ark.

"But the dove could not find a resting place for the sole of its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the water was upon the service of all the earth. So he put forth his hand and took it, and brought it to him to the ark." (Genesis 8:8-9)

When Noach sent out the dove he was hopeful that the dove would not return, signaling that it was safe for him and his family to return to dry land. However when the dove does return, Noach shows no sign of anger towards the dove, neither does he allow the dove to see his disappointment of not being able to go back to dry land. This was an uncertain time for Noach and his family however rather than showing resentment to the dove he simply "put forth his hand, and took it, and brought it back to him to the ark".

In our lives we are constantly being delivered messages both good and bad through messengers. Although often the messenger isn't the reason behind this news, if negative we almost always show some sort of frustration towards them. But Noach did the complete opposite of this, not only did he not show his disappointment, he went and embraced his messenger gently bringing him back to the ark.

This act made Noach's messenger very eager to repeat the mission a second time allowing the dove to then deliver good news. Noach is discussed as a "righteous man and perfect in his generations" (Genesis 6:9), Rashi comments on the unusual use of 'in his generations' stating that if Noach would have been in another generation such as the generation of Avraham he wouldn't be considered anything. Rashi changes the language when he discusses both views saying: was he righteous even in his generation or was he righteous only in his generation? Was Noach righteous despite his generation or was Noach righteous in spite of his generation? It could be suggested that however righteous Noach was, he was not righteous enough to fully be exempt from the pain and destruction that the flood was to bring. It seems contradictory to suggest that Noach was so righteous, as he was not told to escape to the Land of Israel which Zevachim says was protected and spared from the flood, instead being forced to build the ark and endure the flood. Therefore, it is clear that there are two opposing opinions as to how righteous Noach was. Some say that Noach was righteous 'even in his generation' such as his actions towards the message threat the dove brought. However, others believe Noach to be righteous 'only in his generation' which was why he was not completely exempt from the threat of the flood and had to endure it, albeit through the protection of the ark and Hashem.

Hannah Denby is in Shevet Lehava and was a Madricha on Isreal Machane and head cook on Bet Base Machane 5776



Avraham and Chessed

How does one connect to Hashem? There are people who profess to be atheists but treat people as if they created in the image of God. Then there are people who claim to be religious fanatics but treat other people as if they are no more than the random collision of particles.

Our *parasha* opens with a marvellous scene (Bereishit 18:1):

“And Hashem appeared to Avraham by the terebinths of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.”

Generally, God reveals Himself to man in order to transmit a message. This is the only example in all of Tanach of revelation without communication. This is an incredible moment of ecstasy, and intimate connection with Hashem; why did Avraham merit this great revelation?

Rashi suggests a strange explanation: Hashem came “to visit the sick.”

This was the third day after Avraham had performed *brit millah* on himself (17:23-26), and Hashem revealed Himself in order to perform the *mitzvah* of *bikur cholim*. Why does Rashi suggest such a fantastic explanation? What are we meant to learn from this story?

We will return to this question and address it within the general context of the storyline. Looking forward, Avraham’s revelation is interrupted when he sees three men approaching. He says (v.3):

“My lord, if now I have found favour in your eyes, pass not away, I pray of you, from your servant.”

Who were these words spoken to? Simply understood, Avraham spoke to his guests, beseeching them to sojourn in his tent. Despite the pain of his circumcision, Avraham was keen to fulfil the *mitzvah* of *hachnasat orchim*. There is a challenge to this explanation though: If there were three men, why does Avraham speak in the singular?

Here too, Rashi suggests an incredible interpretation:

“Avraham requested of the Holy One, blessed be He, to wait while he hurries to welcome the guests ...”

In the heat of the day Avraham had been sitting at the opening of his tent, scanning the horizon for travellers. He then rushes to usher them into his home, preparing food and drink for them. Avraham interrupts his encounter with God in order to welcome guests. (There are *halachic* ramifications to this interpretation as well, see Talmud Shavuot 35b.)

What happened to the ninety-year-old man who had needed for God Himself to visit due to his circumcision three-days earlier? It doesn’t seem like Avraham was so sick that Hashem needed to perform *bikur cholim*?

Moreover, how could Avraham interrupt the moment of unparalleled revelation in order to welcome guests? Wasn’t Avraham’s behaviour rude; surely the guests could have waited a moment while he finished his audience with God?

From here we learn that (Talmud Shabbat 127a):

“Welcoming guests is greater than greeting the holy presence.”

Judaism doesn’t believe in abstract, theological ideas. Our God isn’t theoretical. Belief in God, according to Judaism, is belief in the godliness in every single person and all creation. Meditation, moments of spiritual highs and aloofness are all important *in order* to accentuate the appreciation of God within all reality. A true divine encounter is when you encounter the divine in each and every person.

A divine act is when we leave our comfort zone and consider those around us. Hashem teaches us to visit the sick, and impels us to welcome guests, give charity and become concerned with the wellbeing of others. Avraham doesn’t interrupt his divine encounter by greeting the guests, rather he extends and enhances it by doing so.

The secret of the great revelation experienced by Avraham is inasmuch as he was looking to embody godliness through his righteous behaviour. There is no need for the transmission of a particular message when you are completely united with God. This great revelation is achieved when you reveal God in man.

The Week that Was...

Last Shabbat Bnei Akiva Madrichim were in

This week the mazkirut began their campus visits, visiting Birmingham on Monday night and Oxford Thursday lunch. Rav Ari gave a shiur at both campuses.



Sviva Spotlight

Dvar Torah and Update from one of our Svivot

Salford BA is one of the biggest svivot in the country with around 100 chanichim a week. We have our weekly *peulot* in the Manchester bayit for 8 different groups from ages 6-15. On top of this we have weekly *Tefila* in the bayit and run a range of extra activities during the year for chanichim as well as the wider community.



All in good humour?

Humour is a wonderful tool; it can be used to help people who otherwise may feel rather blue. When you make someone laugh you take them away from their sadness and even if this only lasts a second, it’s pretty cool that humour has this power. Anyone who has been following the news over the past few

weeks however is a witness of how humour is a proverbial two edged sword, especially in the case of Trump using belittling, undermining and offensive “jokes,” this sort of behaviour is often a deal breaker when putting people in places of power... Humour has the power to slice through the toughest of situations or alternatively cut sharply against you when used in bad taste. Good humour can bring people closer, but poor humour can be one of the strongest repellents known to man. We can see examples of this very clearly in the parsha this week which alludes to both kinds of laughter, we learn about the birth of Yitzchak, whose Hebrew name, means laughter. His name refers to the laughter and joy people had when his they found that his super old mum, Sara, gave birth to him. On the other hand, we learn about Ishmael who was so involved in mocking, hurtful and distasteful jokes that he had to leave his father’s home. Winston Churchill said: “Humour is a very serious thing.” Just because you find something funny, it doesn’t make it so, humour can hurt. Using humour to mock, belittle, undermine, or attack isn’t good or funny no matter how many people may laugh. I think that this is something we should all think about especially in our “banterous” and perhaps sometimes even frivolous social media usage.

Anoushka Goldman is in Shevet Avichai and is a madricha at Salford Bnei Akiva