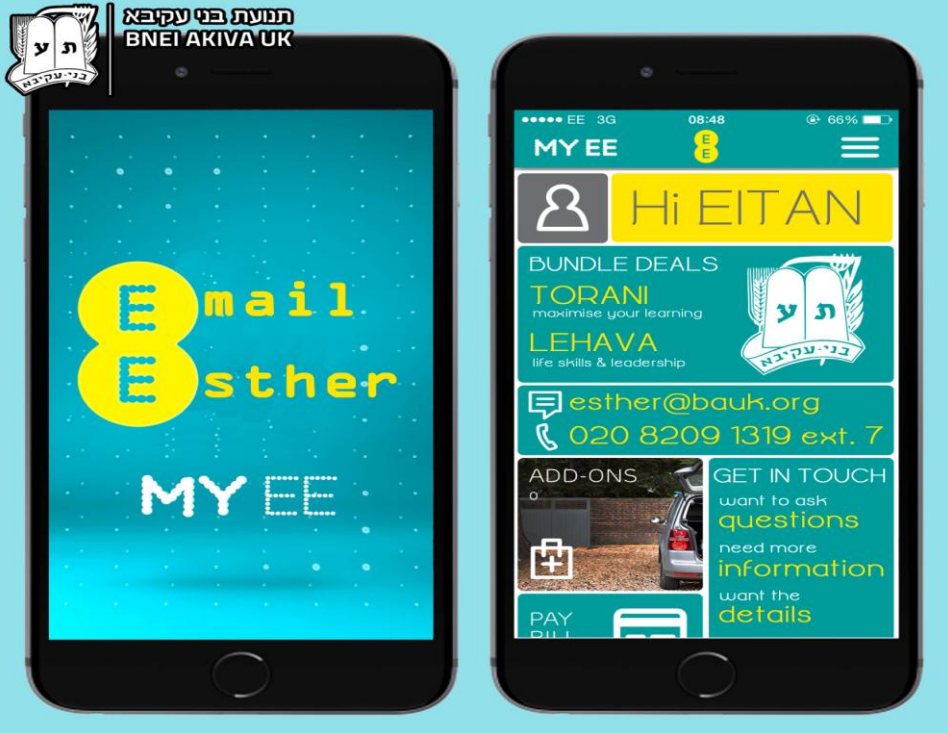


Coming Up...

Full details of all our events are available on our Facebook page, or call the Bayit on 0208 209 1319 to speak to one of the team.

- Shabbatot Halrgun are around the corner, starting with Edgware on 23rd January. To find out when yours is, speak to your local Rosh or contact Adam at svivot@bauk.org
- Israel Machane applications are open to Shevet Avichai. Apply now to avoid disappointment!
- Shevet Eitan... Hachshara applications are now open!
- If you would like any information about Israel Machane (13th July-16th August) or Hachshara, please contact Esther at israel@bauk.org
- We are proud to be holding an Aliyah Pilot Trip on 14th-21st June 2015 for Bogrim. For full information, contact Rav Ari at rav@bauk.org
- Limmud continues on Monday nights in London and Birmingham! Learn Torah, hear great speakers and see friends. For more information, or to arrange a chavruta, email Marina at chinuch@bauk.org



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17th January 2015



Shabbat Lashem 'שבת לה' ו'ארא - Va'era

The Levi Gene

Liora Goldberg

In this week's Parsha, as Hashem commands Moshe and Aharon to speak to Pharaoh, compelling him to release Bnei Yisrael, the narrative is interrupted by a seemingly random family history. Why is the lineage of Moshe and Aharon so vital for us to understand now? Couldn't it be mentioned elsewhere, for example, when Moshe was born?

The Malbim suggests that their ancestry is significant for us to know now because they have just 'officially' been appointed for their mission. One could suggest that for us to see them as worthy of this mission, we must understand who their family was (the tribe of Levi). Perhaps the most famous commentary comes from Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, who proposes that it is precisely at this moment, when the process of redemption is about to occur, that we need to be reminded that Moshe and Aharon were humans. Many have the tendency to neglect the fact that the people in the Torah were not 'superheroes'. Therefore, we should be careful not to deify them.

The section concludes,

"That is Aharon and Moses, to whom the Lord said, 'Take the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt with their legions.'" (Shemot 6:26)

Many have struggled over Rashi's commentary on this verse which states that they were the same Moshe and Aharon "whom Yocheved bore to Amram." The Likutei Sichot suggests that Rashi's explanation clarifies why Moshe and Aharon were chosen for this specific mission; because of their lineage. Their parents defied Pharaoh's orders and reunited to have a child. They did everything in their power to ensure the continuity and endurance of their nation.

Moshe and Aharon did not just appear on the scene; they became who they were because of the merit and upbringing of their courageous parents. This 'Levi gene' they inherited from their parents and ancestors was the source of their strength and the root of their significance as leaders.

Liora Goldberg is in Shevet Lehava and was a Madricha on Haroeh Machane 5775

Celebrating a simcha? A special birthday coming up? Include Bnei Akiva in your celebration by sponsoring Shabbat Lashem! For details email shabbat@bauk.org

Editor's Corner

Shalom!

We are greatly saddened by the events in France last week, and express our solidarity with the Jewish and wider French community.

We were honoured to host the Chief Rabbi at the London Bayit on Monday. His inspirational address was broadcast live to our chaverim in Manchester and Birmingham!

Applications for Israel Machane and Hachshara continue to pour in. We look forward to receiving even more!

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

	🕒	🌙
London	16:07	17:16
Manchester	16:06	17:19
Birmingham	16:06	17:24
Cambridge	16:01	17:17
Leeds	15:57	17:14
Liverpool	16:07	17:26
Jerusalem	16:18	17:38

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All the Land that You See

Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

Finding Light in the Darkness

Those last moments before Shabbat were so different last week than any other. They were moments of anxiety, sadness, and fear that seemed to last forever. There was such powerful unity, such togetherness, as all of Am Yisrael was glued to the news following the developments in the “Hyper Cachere” supermarket – no one wanting to disconnect. What words of comfort and inspiration can we find to console the great despondency we feel?

There are two distinct *mitzvot* pertaining to the story of the Exodus, which we read about this Shabbat: The first is to remember the Exodus every single day in the morning and at night, this is fulfilled by reading the Shema. The second is to tell the story in great detail at the Pesach Seder, which is fulfilled by reading the Hagaddah.

At the Seder, we read of the five Rabbis who met in Bnei Berak to observe the Pesach Seder; we tell how they remained awake all night immersed in discussion of the story of the Exodus until their students arrived to tell them “the time has arrived for the morning Shema”. Why is it necessary to tell this story at the Seder? Also, these five were the leaders of the Jewish People, including the *Nassi* – president – in the generation after the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. It is curious that the rabbis gathered in Bnei Berak, which was the hometown of Rabbi Akiva; surely it would be more appropriate to go to the home of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariya, the *Nassi* of the nation?

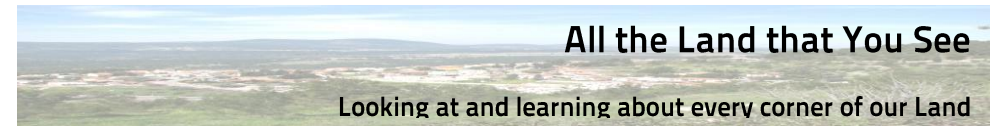
After this we relate a teaching of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariya, stating the novel idea that the Exodus from Egypt should not only be remembered each day, but every night time as well. This passage is certainly intriguing: First, what is its correlation to the previous story? Second, and most importantly, why is this teaching mentioned on Seder night; it is pertaining to the *mitzvah* of remembering the Exodus every day, and this has no special connection to the Seder?!

In the early versions of the Hagaddah (see Rambam, Mishneh Torah), the two stories are linked: When the students came to announce the time of the morning Shema, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariya went outside and proclaimed to them the novel idea that Shema is also meant to be recited at night. How does this explain the two enigmatic passages? What does it teach us about the story of the Exodus, and what relevance does this have to us today?

Let us pay close attention to the picture being drawn before us: The rabbis lived in the generation immediately subsequent to the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash; it was one of the first times in our history that the Pesach Seder was not taking place in Jerusalem with the *korban*. The nation as a whole was in a state of devastation, dejection; they knew that the exile which had just began was going to last a painfully long time. After spending a heartless Seder at home, the students gathered around their rabbi’s home, hoping to hear words of inspiration. Metaphorically, the morning Shema refers to the time of redemption, and the students hoped to hear that the dark reality of the exile was to be short-lived. The leader of the nation replied that it would be of no real comfort just to know that the dark times will end, we must learn how to find the light within the darkness. The story of the Exodus is not just a historic account of a nation freed from bondage over three thousand years ago, rather it is a relevant story that has in it the potential to inspire us in times of depression, and can empower us to find the inner strength to overcome whatever darkness we face. We must also remember the story of the Exodus in the night time Shema!

With this in mind, we can understand why the rabbis went to Rabbi Akiva’s home. The same Rabbi Akiva who saw that a fox wandering over the ruins of the Holy of Holies was part of the process of redemption (Makkot 24b), also inspires us all to see the potential of the story of the Exodus in our times of darkness. When reading the story of the Exodus, we should be empowered to find our inner strength, and renew our endeavors to light the darkness.

Rav Ari Faust is in Shevet Yechiam, and is Shaliach for Bnei Akiva and the Jewish Agency for Israel



Dan
Darryl Bernstein

One of the first times we hear about the town of Dan is in Bereshit chapter 14, when Avraham travels to Dan in order to rescue Lot, when he is taken captive by the kings of Sedom and Amorrhah. Later on in Shoftim chapter 18 we are told that the town originally went by the name of ‘Laish’ before Jewish occupation, though Yehoshua chapter 19 refers to the land as ‘Leshem’. In both stories, however, we are told that the tribe of Dan had not been given a territory of their own within Israel, so they claimed the land as their own by destroying all that was previously there, in order to construct a new city, Dan. The town of Dan was the northernmost city in the kingdom of Israel.

Today, the town of Dan is associated with the archaeological feature Tel Dan, or the mound of Dan, due to the human occupation and subsequent abandonment of the land during exile. There is a Kibbutz, Kibbutz Dan, which is located within the previous territory of the tribe, as has been calculated by the proximity of the Kibbutz to Tel Dan. The Kibbutz was founded in 1939 by Jewish farmers from Transylvania and, significantly, it marks the start of the National Trail, a hiking path spanning the entire country, further signifying how even today it is one of the most northern territories in Israel. Kibbutz Dan is internationally famous for the caviar it produces.

Darryl Bernstein is in Shevet Hagevurah, is a Nivchar Hanhalla and was a Madrich on H Course Machane 5775