

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.

- Next Shabbat we will be holding Shabbat Bogrim II in Birmingham Central shul, bringing our unique ruach to the Birmingham community! If you would like to be part of it, email rav@bauk.org
- Shabbat Halrgun season is here. Next week Cheadle and Pinner will be having theirs! To find out when yours is, speak to your local Rosh or contact Adam at svivot@bauk.org
- Shevet Avichai... Apply now for Israel Machane (13th July – 6th August). Don't miss out!
- Hachshara applications for Shevet Eitan are flooding in. Get yours in soon!
- If you would like any information about Israel Machane or Hachshara, please contact Esther at israel@bauk.org
- Do you want to be really informed about the facts of Israel's history without any politics or propaganda? If you are in years 10-12, come to iHistory – an interactive and exciting new programme to expand your knowledge – launching on 5th February. Contact one of the team on 0208 209 1319 for more information.

Just when you thought Birmingham couldn't get any more exciting ...



SHABBAT BOGRIM 5775
Part Two: The Sequel

Join us in bringing pumping *ruach* to Birmingham Central Shul like only Bnei Akiva Bogrim can! With Central Shul's scholar-in-residence, our own Rav Shaliach, Rav Ari Faust.

Parashat Yitro
February 6-7

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ושבתה הארץ Shabbat Lashem 'שבת לה בשלח - Beshalach

Everyday Miracles

Aron White

Chelsea 2 - Bradford 4. A totally ridiculous scoreline that no-one could have predicted. That match was nothing short of miraculous. However, I personally believe that the current success of Southampton is actually more of a miracle. Any team can play a good game, or half a game, and beat a team better than them. However, Southampton are playing well week in, week out, beating Manchester United, Arsenal and putting 8 past Sunderland. It is harder to play well consistently than to have one week of brilliance.

If we were to think about the miracles that God did for the Jews, there are a few that definitely stand out. The water turning into blood, the splitting of the sea and the opening up the ground under Korach all stand out as memorable miracles. But Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra, one of the most important commentators on Chumash, who lived in Spain about nine hundred years ago, says that it is a different miracle that is the greatest. He comments on the following passuk:

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אָכְלוּ אֶת-הַמָּן אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה--עַד-בֹּאֵם, אֶל-אֶרֶץ נוֹשָׁבִת: אֶת-הַמָּן, אָכְלוּ--עַד-בֹּאֵם, אֶל-קְצֵה אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן.

"The Children of Israel ate the manna for forty years, until their arrival in an inhabited land; they ate the manna until their arrival at the border of the land of Canaan." (Shemot 16:35)

He says that the provision of the Manna, the miraculous food that God provided in the desert, is in fact the greatest miracle God did for the Jews. Other miracles were passing, one-off events, but the Manna was a consistent miracle that lasted for forty years.

We have a tendency to notice the irregular, the rare, the one-off and ignore those things, even miracles, that happen the whole time. The Parsha of the Manna is a reminder that sometimes things we get used to are more miraculous than the things that surprise us. Even though they are less glamorous, the story of 2014-15 is Southampton, not Bradford.

Shabbat Lashem is sponsored this week by Michelle and Stephen Lubinsky on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary. Mazal tov!

Editor's Corner

Shalom!

300 of our chaverim are enjoying Shabbatot Halrgun in Borehamwood & Elstree and Finchley shuls this week. Shabbat shalom and kol hakavod to these tzvatim for making this event!

We are very excited to be launching our Shevet X Hadracha training programme, Kivun, on 7th and 8th February, This is open to all in Shevet Tzion and will be held in Borehamwood, Edgware and Hendon. Contact adam@bauk.org or marina@bauk.org for more details.

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

	🕒	🌙
London	16:31	17:38
Manchester	16:32	17:41
Birmingham	16:31	17:46
Cambridge	16:25	17:39
Leeds	16:24	17:38
Liverpool	16:32	17:49
Jerusalem	16:31	17:50

To receive Shabbat Lashem by email every Friday, or for sponsorship details, send an email to shabbat@bauk.org



Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

Venturing Into the Wilderness

It is always frightening to venture off into the unknown. Life is far easier when lived within pre-existing molds. It takes tremendous courage to live the life of a trailblazer, to swim against the current and follow your beliefs and dreams.

Throughout the story of the Exodus from Egypt, Moshe seeks to empower the nation of Israelite slaves to break out from their slavery. It was more important to Moshe – and indeed to Hashem – that Am Yisrael free themselves from the tyranny of the Egyptian bondage, than for Paroh to simply let them go. Finally, after a long and drawn-out process, Am Yisrael march out of Egypt on their way to the Land of Israel. But were they yet a free people? Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, zt”l, is known to have said, “Harder than to extract the Jews from exile is to extract the exile from the Jews”. No phrase could be truer regarding the nation that left Egypt. In as much as they no longer needed to fear the agony of the slave drivers’ whips, the Jews remained psychological slaves to Paroh and the Egyptians. Despite having left Egypt in body, in spirit the Jews still very much remained there; their mindset remained entrenched in the Egyptian worldview.

Just a few days after watching the Egyptian empire crumble before their eyes, and departing into a new future which surely was to be full of hope and optimism, the Jews suffer a deep relapse. They challenge Moshe, saying (Shemot 14:11-12):

“And they said to Moshe: ‘Are there no graves in Egypt, that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying: Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?’”

The people continue in similar vein, going so far as to state (v. 12):

“For it was better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.”

Approximately three weeks later when their food supplies had run out, after having witnessed Paroh and the Egyptians drown in the sea, the people again complained (16:3):

“If only we had died by the hand of Hashem in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots, when we did eat bread to the full; for you have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Surely the catering in Egypt was not five star! How can it be that Am Yisrael keeps remembering their Egyptian slavery in such a positive light? How could they have so quickly forgotten the countless years of the cruel rule of the whip they faced?

Ibn Ezra comments (Shemot 14:13):

“The Egyptians were masters over Israel, and this, the generation which departed from Egypt, was trained from youth to suffer under the yoke of the Egyptians and thus had a lowly spirit.”

The situation for the Jews in Egypt was dreadful; Egypt was an entire socio-economic system based upon getting raised up by crushing those below – and the Jews were the absolute lowest. However, no matter how dreadful the system was, it was still a system. Egyptian society may have stripped the people of their essential self-worth, reducing them to a class within a hierarchy, but at the end of the day the master fed his slave in order to keep him and his enterprise alive. Freedom from Egypt meant a departure into the unknown, and regarding the question of whether it is better to die a free man, or live as a slave, the people ruled unequivocally that they preferred the latter.

The people may have left Egypt, but it remains an ongoing process to get Egypt out of ourselves. The most fundamental theme of Jewish living is the ongoing Exodus from Egypt. The Torah was given in the wilderness in order to teach us that the basis of all the mitzvot is to break free of the clutches of Paroh-esque societal structure and the Egyptian psychological slavery.

We mustn’t fear the freedom of the wilderness. We must be bold and empowered to imprint our essential self-worth onto reality, by living by our beliefs and following our dreams.

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

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All the Land that You See

Looking at and learning about every corner of our Land

Har Tavor
Sam Gross

The haftarah of this week’s parashah is drawn from the book of שופטים and tells the story of a battle in which the tribes of Naftali and Zevulun, led by the famous figures of the prophetess Devorah and the military commander Barak, descend from a mountain, Har Tavor, and crush an invading army that had been attacking all the Israelites in the land. When the Romans ruled Israel, Jewish rebels once again fought from the mountain, and like Masada, the Romans could not take the mountain – the Jews only surrendered when they ran out of water (it happens).

In the War of Independence, some members of the Bedouin tribe who had settled on the mountain fought in the Arab armies, but one clan of the tribe remained in Israel through and after the war and gained Israeli citizenship – their children serve in the IDF. It’s worth noting that in the Haftarah, the final part of the war is decided not in the battle between the armies but by the intervention of a non-Israelite, a Kenite called Yael. The invading Canaanite general assumed that the loyalty of the Kenites was to him, but when push came to shove, the resident minority in the land proved to be loyal friends to the Israelites. Har Tavor is also a top spot in Israel for hang-gliding.

Sam Gross is in Shevet Hagevurah and was a Madrich on H Course Machane 5775