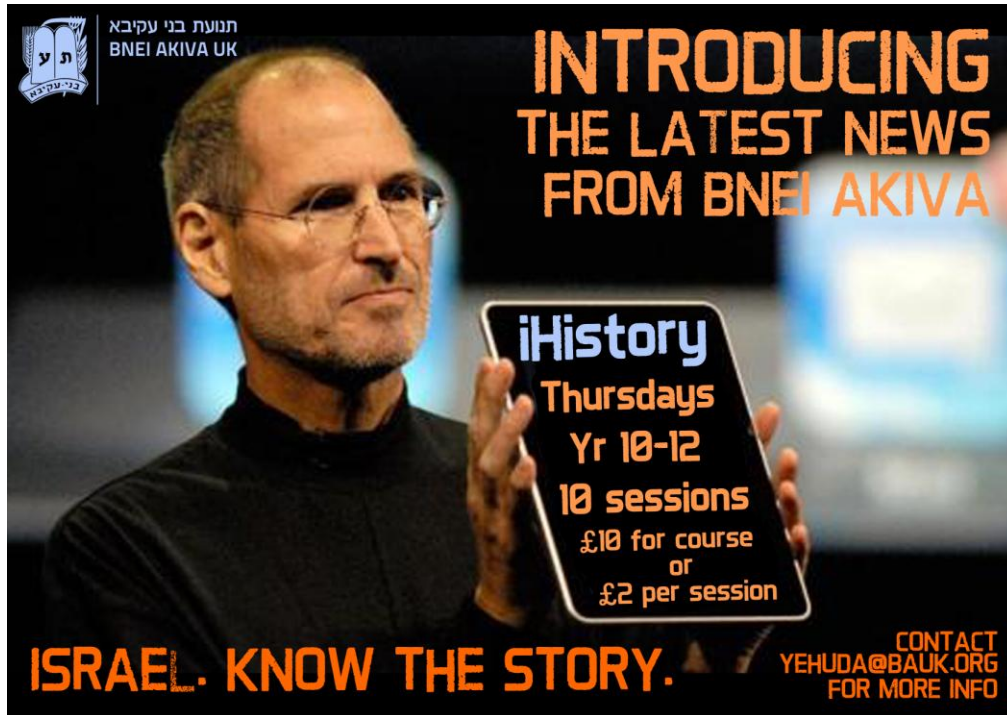


Coming Up...

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.

- 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 – every Thursday at 18:30 at the London Bayit. Contact one of the team on 0208 209 1319 for more information.
- Kivun – our great Hadracha training programme for Shevet Tzion, is occurring on Motzei Shabbat in Borehamwood and Hendon, and on Sunday Edgware. For full information, email adam@bauk.org or marina@bauk.org
- Shabbat Halrgun season is here. Next week Barnet, Golders Green, Leeds and Woodside Park will be having theirs! To find out when yours is, speak to your local Rosh or contact Adam at svivot@bauk.org
- If you would like any information our Israel programmes: Israel Machane or Hachshara, please contact Esther at israel@bauk.org



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ושבתה הארץ Shabbat Lashem 'שבת לה' משפטים שבת שקלים – Mishpatim, Shabbat Shekalim

Absolute Morality?

Aaron Wunsch

When I was 5, a friend and I began an expedition in my back garden to dig to China. We had finished watching an episode of Pokémon and got confused. My mother was less than pleased with our antics and told me that 'you can't just go digging up the garden!' I then began to wonder if there would be any situation which would permit me to do so.

It is interesting to note the differences between Jewish thought and philosophers of the past few centuries. Immanuel Kant, for example, discusses absolute duties – the idea that some actions remain constantly prohibited regardless of the situation. The concept of absolute duties also appears in Judaism. Kant would argue that lying would be wrong, not just some of the time, but all of the time. Judaism, however, contains cases where we are lenient and 'break' absolute laws. For example, one can break Shabbat in order to save a life.

In this week's parasha, it says that **'You shall not take a bribe'** (Shemot23:8), and Rashi comments, 'do not take a bribe – even to judge truthfully'. He assumes that this must be what the Torah is referring to because it will say later in Shoftim (16:19) **'Do not pervert justice'** through bribery. The question arises – why can't one take a bribe to judge truthfully? Surely we should be doing all we can to improve our legal system, and therefore if bribes are used positively, then what is the problem?

The answer comes from the continuation of the passuk, and Rashi explains that 'it will blind those who can see – even a Torah scholar...his vision will become dim'. We often believe that making one or two small exceptions to a rule is not such an issue – we justify our actions by saying that even though it wasn't necessarily the right thing to do, in this case it was different. In drawing a parallel to Kant's categorical imperative, we see that an action is not just defined by the means, but also by the ends.

Aaron Wunsch is in Shevet Shvut and was Head Cook on H Course 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!

Shabbat Shalom to our chaverim in Chigwell and Stanmore who are having their Shabbatot Halrgun!

Rav Ari and the Mazkirut have visited Bogrim in Cambridge, Oxford and Leeds in the past two weeks. We are very excited that Limmud has launched in Leeds. This is a fantastic initiative led by Bnei Akiva bogrim in the student community!

Kivun and iHistory both got off to a flying start last week. See inside Shabbat Lashem for more information and how to get involved!

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

	🕒	🕒
London	16:57	18:01
Manchester	16:59	18:07
Birmingham	16:58	18:10
Cambridge	16:52	18:03
Leeds	16:52	18:03
Liverpool	17:00	18:14
Jerusalem	16:44	18:02

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

A popular song that we will begin to sing this week is “Mishenichnas Adar”. The words come from the Talmud (Ta’anit 29a) which states:

“Just as when Av commences we reduce our happiness, so too when Adar commences we increase our happiness.”

It is truly delightful to be joyful when the month of Adar begins and Purim is around the corner. There are, however many questions to be asked about this teaching: Why is the mourning and sadness of the month of Av – when the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed – juxtaposed with the joy of Adar; what is the connection between the two? Also, how are we meant to quantify this happiness? the sadness of the month of Av is clearly defined by *halacha* (Shulchan Aruch OC 551), but there is no set *halachic* definition to how the happiness of Adar is meant to be marked.

The main question to be asked is, why should we be so happy during Adar? The holiday of Succot is characterized as *Zman Simchateinu* – The Time of Our Happiness, shouldn’t the month of Tishrei then be the “happy” month? If it is due to the celebration of the Purim miracle, why highlight that miracle specifically; why is Nissan – when the Exodus from Egypt took place – not the “happy” month? And even if Purim should be held on a higher pedestal than all other miracles, why does the entire month merit being one of happiness; why not just the holiday itself, or the week thereof? In fact, Rabbi Avigdor Nebenzhal, *shlit”a*, notes that the happiness of Adar commences this Shabbat, when we bless the incoming month, even before we actually reach the month of Adar in the calendar. The Chasidic Masters comment that the name “Adar” in Hebrew is comprised of two words – אָדָר – meaning “the One G-d resides”. Understood as such, the happiness of the month of Adar is rooted in the fact that we can tap in to the notion that Hashem dwells in this world during the month of Adar more than any other time.

Generally, we expect that G-d can be connected to through lofty spiritual exultation. The connection we experience in the month of Adar is very different to this. I once heard from Rabbi Yeshayahu Hadari, emeritus Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Hakotel, that in the month of Adar we connect to Hashem specifically through our lower-most points, as expressed in three dimensions:

In terms of time: Adar is the last month on the Hebrew calendar. It is the time when we literally reach the bottom of the year, before recommencing with the first month of Nissan.

In terms of geography: The Talmud (Megilla 11a) teaches that Achashvarosh’s reign reached the entire known-world, literally spanning each extreme from east to west. Thus the planned destruction was meant to be total, and on the other hand the redemption was total.

In terms of spirituality: Not only was Am Yisrael at a terrible low at the time of the Purim story, having all but lost their collective Jewish identity (see Talmud Megilla 12a), but the practices on Purim itself– which are especially physical in their nature, such as lavish feasting and alcohol consumption – do not bring out the most overtly G-dly in us.

The message of the month of Adar is that Hashem doesn’t only “dwell” in the lofty spiritual echelons, but also in the lowliest points which we would otherwise choose to shun in ourselves. During the month of Av we mourn our failures and shortcomings, whereas during the month of Adar we celebrate that Hashem paradoxically “dwells” in them.

There is no specific definition of the happiness of Adar, because it is without any boundary, restriction or limitation. This is because happiness of Adar is rooted in appreciating that we are embraced without limits by Hashem, and our very essence is divine. When we can appreciate that Hashem is totally invested in us – even our traits which are most antithetical to G-dliness – then we can truly experience the redemption.

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

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Modi'in

Zoe Daniels

Modi'in is situated in the centre of Israel just west of Jerusalem. In Jewish History, Modi'in is probably most famous for it being the place where the Maccabees lived and planned the Hasmonean Revolt against the Greeks in Second Century BCE. Today, we memorialize this by celebrating Chanukah.

Ancient Modi'in was situated in the southern side of the Judean Mountains, with Jerusalem to its East. When people would go on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Shalosh Regalim (Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot), the Talmud talks about Modi'in being the place where they would stop off to re-energise themselves, buy all the vessels necessary for the Korban, and enter the Mikvah that they could be spiritually pure. The reasons vessels were often bought here is due to the towns close proximity to Jerusalem. It was assumed that the town’s potter was careful to maintain ritual purity as such the vessels were suitable for Temple use.

It is also believed that Modi'in is where the Bar Kochba revolt began in 132AD. Today Modi'in is home to around 75,000 people and has thriving Jewish life.

Zoe Daniels is in Shevet Eitan and is the Rosh of Pinner Bnei Akiva