

SHABBAT LASHEM

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PERIODICAL IN THE UK



תנועת בני אקביב
BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT BO | ISSUE 12

JORDAN BERNSTEIN | BOGER DVAR TORAH

In this week's parsha, as the Jews make preparations to leave Egypt, there is a curious exchange between HaShem and Moshe. Moshe is told: 'Please speak in the ears of the people: Let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her fellow silver vessels and gold vessels' (Shemos 11:2). We all remember the story from school that during the plague of darkness, Jews went into the houses of the Egyptians who had enslaved them in order to identify where the valuables were. This way, the Egyptians could not later argue that they had nothing to give when payment for centuries of service was demanded. 'Ahah,' the simple Jew would reply 'but what about that gold vessel you keep under the sink?'

But the exchange still appears odd. HaShem orders, HaShem commands, but He rarely politely requests, even pleads. Rashi comments that in other instances where HaShem addresses Moshe and commands him to pass on a message, the message will be one of national importance. Here, HaShem is very much asking Moshe for a personal favour, so that the promise made to Avraham in Bereishis 15:15 that the Jews would leave Egypt 'with great possessions' would not have been in vain. But, asks Rav Kook, does this explanation really make sense? We can understand why HaShem would not want the Jews to leave Egypt empty-handed, but why did it have to be done in this way, with the Jews having to ask, in what was probably quite an awkward encounter, for handouts? The story cited in answer is that of Bontsha the Silent, a

man who endured more than his fair share of life's tragedies. But never once did he complain, forever staying silent. When he passed away, very few took notice, but when Bontsha arrived in Paradise, a huge fuss was made over him. Here too he stayed silent, embarrassed and sure that there had been some sort of mistake. It was not until Bontsha's trial, as the angels read out all of the grief he had endured, that he realised it really was him for whom all of this privilege was intended. Asked by the judge what he wished for in Paradise, since he had merited through his positive attitude not just a share but a right to all of the World to Come, Bontsha simply replied that he would like a fresh roll and butter each morning. The heavenly prosecutor laughed and the angels bowed their heads in shame.

Simply being handed all of the gold, silver and general luxuries that their new life had to offer would be all very well and good for Bnei Yisrael, but it would do very little to change their attitude. It was time, after 210 years of slavery, for the Jews to begin taking control of their own destiny, demanding the payment they were due for their hard labours and marching proudly out of Egypt. The easy bit, as we all know, was taking the Jews out of Egypt. The hard bit was taking the Egypt mentality out of the Jews. By learning that they were entitled to the riches of Egypt, the Jews began their journey towards powerful and self-determined nationhood.

London In: 16:12 Out: 17:20 | Manchester In: 16:09 Out: 17:19 | Leeds In: 16:05 Out: 17:15
Oxford In: 16:13 Out: 17:22 | Cambridge In: 16:06 Out: 17:16 | Bristol In: 16:19 Out: 17:29
Birmingham In: 16:12 Out: 17:22 | Jerusalem In: 16:21 Out: 17:52

What's in a Calendar?

Rav Aharon Herskovitz | Rav Shaliach

The very first Rashi on the Torah (quoting a midrash) references a passuk from this week's parsha:

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק לֹא הָיָה צָרִיךְ לְהַתְחִיל אֶת הַתּוֹרָה אֶלָּא מִהַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה לְכַסֵּם, שֶׁהִיא מִצְוָה רִאשׁוֹנָה שֶׁנִּצְטַוּ בָּהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמֵה טַעַם פְּתַח בְּבְרָאשִׁית?

Rabbi Yitzchak said: The Torah should have commenced with the verse (Exodus 12:2) "This month shall be for you the first of months" which is the first commandment given to Israel. What is the reason, then, that it commences with the account of the Creation?

At this point, we will leave the answers that are

provided by the midrash and other commentators, and instead focus on the basis of Rabbi Yitzchak's question. Though the Torah is a book of law, Rabbi Yitzchak does not suggest that the Torah begins with the very first mitzvah. If so, the suggested beginning of the Torah would not be "this month shall be for you the first of months", but earlier!

Indeed, in Sefer Bereishit we are already presented with three mitzvot (according to the Sefer HaChinuch): procreating, circumcision and refraining from eating the sciatic nerve. Why does Rabbi Yitzchak choose to focus on the mitzvah in this week's parsha?

A careful reading of Rabbi Yitzchak's question shows that this question is already answered: Rabbi Yitzchak is not attempting to examine the first very command, but the very first that is given to Israel. Though we, as the descendants of our ancestors, are obligated in the mitzvot mentioned in the book of Bereishit, the mitzvah of "this month shall be for you the first of months" is the first one

given to Israel as a nation. The culmination of the plagues is at hand, and with it Bnei Yisrael are about to leave Egypt with an end goal of Har Sinai and Eretz Yisrael. The transition from individuals to a family to a nation is almost complete, and now this nation must be taken away from within another nation (Devarim 4:34). Why mention now "this month shall be for you the first of months?"

A calendar is not just an arbitrary division of a year into 12 units. Rather, it gives a sense of meaning to the entire year: what does the calendar center around, from when does it begin and what are its high points? In addition to the feeling of agency that Hashem is giving to Bnei Yisrael (see, for example Shemot Rabbah 15:2), a calendar is a hallmark of a nation. The Ramban (Shemot 12:2) describes how the months center around the first month, so that we will always be focused on the miracle of the Exodus, just as the days of the week are referred to as "first to Shabbat, second to Shabbat etc.".

Through our understanding of having a separate calendar from the other nations, we are meant to understand that part of our mission is to create a unique Jewish experience, giving national and religious significance to our very understanding of time itself.

Shabbat Shalom.

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Dvar Halacha: Weekly Question

Have a question? Please email rav@bauk.org or call Rav Aharon at 07976642135.

QUESTION: MY FAMILY JUST PURCHASED A NEW COFFEE MACHINE. DO I NEED TO TOVEL IT?

ANSWER: From the aftermath of the war Bnei Yisrael fought against Midyan, we learn (Bamidbar 31:21-24) that utensils involved in food preparation/eating require ritual immersion in a mikva (i.e. "tovelling") before being used. This requirement exists when the utensils are transferred from non-Jewish to Jewish ownership, and is relevant specifically for metal and glass utensils (though the obligation for glass may be rabbinic " "). Electric appliances present a difficulty, as immersing them can destroy the circuit boards and render them non-functional (though this may not be the case for "simpler" appliances). Some poskim hold that one should immerse

electric utensils (toaster, water heater etc.) and state that if they are left to dry (and dried with a blowdryer and the like), they will not be damaged. Other poskim suggest other ways to deal with the obligation to tovel the utensil and the prohibition on using it until tevillah has been accomplished, such as taking it apart and having a Jew reconstruct/fix it, so that the utensil has been "crafted" by a Jew (thus negating the need for tevillah). A fuller discussion of the issue is necessary, as there are other opinions relevant as well.

A coffee machine would most likely be destroyed, or impacted severely by being completely immersed in water. For this reason, it is possible to rely on the poskim who believe that in such a situation a person is anus (i.e. on a practical level unable to fulfill this command), and for this reason as well would be allowed to use it without tevillah.

Extract from BAUK's Yediot Magazine ::

YEDIOT is Bnei Akiva UK's independent online magazine. Every few weeks we're going to feature some extracts from the articles written by bogrim of the Tnua. We're very proud of Yediot and the bogrim that contribute to it. We hope it continues to grow - we know that the quality of conversation within a movement is key indicator of the health of that movement. Aloh Na'aleh Yediot!

Extract from DRAW YOUR MOVEMENT, written by ROSH NIVCHAR, HARRY SALTER.

After coming from the highly successful Winter Machane, I saw how powerful our movement can be. Over 200 chanichim were on machane, creating one massive Modern Orthodox community. Even though this specific kind of community lasted for less than two weeks, this sense of togetherness should be

illustrated throughout the year, not just on Machane.

We should come together in the Tnua to create this togetherness all year round, supporting our local Svivot, attending the Bnei Akiva Beit Midrash and the Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations, getting involved as much as we can because we get back as much as we put in. Bnei Akiva should be a part of our lives, not just to give back to the movement, but because of the ideology we all believe in. Over 200 chanichim were a part of our community but not nearly enough madrichim decided to volunteer, and this is a recurring theme throughout recent Bnei Akiva events. Bogrim must step forward for what they believe in, because we have a great opportunity to teach our Torah, our ideology and be a part of our community.

Read more: baukyediot.wordpress.com

Snapshot from the Choveret

This week's Choveret (the weekly educational handbook madrichim use to create their Svivot activities) discusses the Mitzvah of Tochacha. It asks a series of key questions: Do we have a responsibility to protest (rebuke) against bad things we see in the world around us? If we see our friend doing something they shouldn't - do we challenge their behaviour? Does it make a difference if you know the person? Does it make a difference if the protest will be effective? What does an effective protest/rebuke even look like?

The Choveret centres around different interpretations of the passuk in Vayikra: "You shall not hate your people (kinsfolk/brother) in your heart...surely you should give Tochecha to your friend...and bear no guilt/sin because of them." (19:17). Each clause of the passuk can either be seen as connected or disconnected to each other. Rashbam, Ibn Ezra and Ramban all see the last two thirds as continuation of the first third. Therefore if you friend does something wrong to you, don't keep it inside and end up hating them, rather air the problem

out (hochiach) and hopefully once that person is aware of the problem they will stop. The Ramban believed that "open communication" helps us better ourselves in order to prevent secret hatred. The mitzvah is based around your relationship with the person.

On the opposing side there is a Gemara in Erechin 16b that says that the first third and the other two thirds are separate. This means that regardless of your relationship with that person, if you see them doing something wrong you have to rebuke them. The reason being that the mitzvah is trying to create a situation where we are not apathetic to sin/wrong things/injustice, that we can't just shrug it off and think that it is not my problem.

This week Madrichim and Chanichim across the country will be wrestling with these duelling ideas and considering the place of protest and rebuke in our society today. What do you think our responsibility to protest/rebuke should be?

SUMMER MACHANE

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More information to follow

1st - 14th August
2018 | 5778



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