

דבר אל בני ישראל, ואמרת אליהם,
כי תבאו אל-הארץ, אשר אני נתן לכם
ושבתה הארץ, שבת לה'

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT BO
6TH SHEVAT 5779
11TH/12TH JANUARY 2019



Please continue to daven for the refuah and strength of Yeshaya Noson ben Shira Gittel



INSPIRING TIMES GIDON SCHWARTZ SHEVET NE'EMAN

It's time. The Jewish people are almost ready and are at the cusp of leaving Egypt and being free to serve Hashem properly. This is where the journey of the Bnei Yisrael really begins, so much so that the first Rashi in the Torah suggests that we should be starting the Torah in this week's parasha. For the Jews to be able to be saved, they need to prepare and sacrifice a lamb as a last big show of faith and to show the Egyptians who the true God is. In this week's parasha as well as the commandment and details given to the people in Egypt for what to do with the lamb, all the details for the Korban Pesach and many other aspects of the chag are given whilst still in Egypt. (16 of the 20 mitzvot listed by the Sefer Hachinuch from Bo are connected to Pesach.)

However, some of the details in both the פסח נסח and the מצרים פסח לדרות are very surprising. Firstly, at Seder night every year, we say how we are eating the Maror as a remembrance for the fact that the Egyptians embittered the Jews lives. If this is the case surely the Jews in Egypt would not need any reminder of how bad their lives had just been. They had their sons thrown into the river and had to do backbreaking labour. Why is Hashem forcing them to eat vegetables as a remembrance? Were their lives not bad enough? Surely this detail should only be relevant for future years and only included in פסח לדרות?

Rav Avigdor Nevenzahl answers this by quoting the Gemara that says that the Jews stopped working on Rosh Hashanah which was half a year before they took the lambs and killed them. In these months the Jews were living a nice life to the extent that many times in the Torah, even at one of the first obstacles after the splitting of the ים סוף, the Jews in the desert are already complaining and saying, "if only we were still in Egypt". The

reason they were commanded to eat the Maror whilst still in Egypt at the end was a way of saying this is the experience of Egypt. Egypt is the root of bitterness and it is not a place you should be wanting to go back to.

Life is full of both good and bad experiences and it is very important that we never forget either of them, we are still commanded to have Maror every year as we can learn as much from the bad as we can from the good but it is important to see them for what they are and not fixate on the small good aspects of them and pretend it was all ok.

At the end of the parasha, the Torah also shows us how to relate to the massive moments in our life. Hashem takes the Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt and says the defining words of why we do Pesach at all:

וְהָיָה כִּי-יִשְׁאַלְךָ בִּנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מַה-זֶּאת אָלֶיךָ בַּחֹק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְהוָה מֵמִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:
"And it shall be when your son will ask you at some future time, 'What is this?' you shall say to him, 'With a strong hand Hashem removed us from Egypt from the house of bondage.'" (Shemot 13:14)

In life we have these big inspirational moments, be it a tisch on Machane or Seder night itself but we need to ask ourselves מה-זאת. Why has this happened and what can I do now to ensure this inspiration is not just a flash in the pan. This is how the parasha ends. It, seemingly out of nowhere, talks about Tefillin as a sign that Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand. It provides us with action as a reminder to take forward with us.

Someone once said to me after any big thing you should ask three questions: What happened? So what? What now? This is how to respond to highs and lows in life. To see things for what they are, take something from it, and do something to maintain it.

GIDON IS A NIVCHAR HANHALLAH AND WAS A MADRICH ON H-COURSE MACHANE 5779

London	In: 15:56 Out: 17:06	Oxford	In: 16:00 Out: 17:09	Leeds	In: 15:51 Out: 17:01
Manchester	In: 15:55 Out: 17:05	Bristol	In: 16:07 Out: 17:16	Liverpool	In: 15:59 Out: 17:08
Cambridge	In: 15:53 Out: 17:03	Birmingham	In: 15:59 Out: 17:08	Jerusalem	In: 16:14 Out: 17:45

WHEN A CALENDAR IS NOT JUST A CALENDAR

RAV AHARON HERSKOVITZ | RAV SHALIACH



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

אמר רבי יצחק לא היה צריך להתחיל את התורה אלא מהחדש הזה לכם, שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו בה ישראל, ומה טעם פתח בבראשית?

"Rabbi Yitzchak said: The Torah should have commenced with the verse (Shemot 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 the 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 Bereshit, according to the Sefer HaChinuch, we are already presented with three mitzvot: procreating, circumcision and refraining from eating the sciatic nerve. Why does Rabbi Yitzchak choose to focus on the mitzvah in this week's parasha?

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 commandment, 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 Bereshit, 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). So, why mention now, at this crucial transition period, "this month shall be for you the first of months"?

**PART OF OUR MISSION
IS TO CREATE A UNIQUELY
JEWISH EXPERIENCE,
GIVING NATIONAL AND
RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE
TO OUR UNDERSTANDING
OF TIME ITSELF**

What does our calendar centre around, from when does it begin and what are its high points?

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. A calendar is a hallmark of a nation.

The Ramban (Shemot 12:2) describes how the months of our calendar centre 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 why we have a separate calendar from the other nations, we are meant to understand that part of our mission is to create a uniquely Jewish experience, giving national and religious significance to our very understanding of time itself.

TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EMAIL RAV AHARON AT RAV@BAUK.ORG

THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS

*This Shabbat is the third **Head On: The Mental Health Awareness Shabbat** and in support of this important weekend Rav Aharon has written a Dvar Torah about the link of this Shabbat to parashat Bo.*

During the recounting of the plague of darkness, we are told that the darkness was so thick and heavy, so all-encompassing, that "A man did not see his fellow...for three days." (Shemot 10:23). The expression of the extent of darkness was its effect on human interaction.

In halacha, light and dark also sometimes have social expression. For example, from among a number of Tannaitic positions as to the earliest time one may say Shema in the morning (Berachot 9b), the halacha is in accordance with the opinion that one may read from the point at which they would recognise a semi-frequent acquaintance at a distance of four amot (Shulchan Aruch OC 58:1). In other words, night has ended, and the darkness has withdrawn when there is enough light that one can recognise another person.

I believe there is an important lesson for us to draw from this to dealing with mental health. Often, when we are dealing with diffi-

culties, we may feel as if we are all alone as if the darkness has fully enveloped us and we have nowhere to turn. We must remember that there are others who care for us, people to whom we can turn and thus bring a little light into our lives.

We must equally remember the obligation incumbent upon us all to help those of our friends, family and community members struggling with mental health issues. "For a bit of light is able to push away great darkness" (Chovot HaLevavot): the light that we bring into our interactions with others, into our attempts at support and expressions of care and love, are capable of having profound positive influences on their well-being.

May we all merit to have the end of the verse above be fulfilled: "And for the **entirety** of Bnei Yisrael there was light in their dwellings."

***Head On** aims to raise the profile of mental health in the Jewish Community. It is an opportunity to encourage people of all ages to be more in touch with their own mental health and wellbeing, and to raise awareness in the local and wider community. For more information about the work that JAMI does then please visit their website jamiuk.org*

A TASTE FROM ISRAEL



ELIANA OZIN
SHEVET TZION

Hi all! This year I am in Israel attending Midreshet Harova in the Old City. Living in Israel for the last five months has been incredible! It's truly impossible to describe all that has happened since August, but I will give you a brief overview.

The day I arrived at Harova was, to be honest, terrifying! I hadn't come to seminary with any of my closest friends, I knew close to no one and I was surrounded by Americans. There was a large part of me that wanted to run back home.

However, within a day I quickly changed my mind. By the second day, I had met so many amazing people, madrichim and teachers. I had made friends which have stuck by me till this day and started to make connections with my rabbis.

From then on, I can honestly say, my time in Harova has been incredible. I've been to Shiloh, Tel Aviv, Eilat, Tiberius, the West Bank, Netanya, Modi'in and lots more. I've been on hikes, visited museums, volunteered for charities, toured Jerusalem and had the most incredible lessons that have changed my outlooks on Judaism and life altogether. My Jewish knowledge has grown tremendously and my connection to Hashem has only strengthened!

Just to prove it :) here's a beautiful idea on this week's parasha, Bo.

Hashem sent ten plagues to compel Pharaoh to let the Jewish people go. But why didn't God just send one massive plague to free the Jews?

Here is an idea: when I go shopping, I know what I want to buy: a dress, a car, some chocolate, but does my local store know that too? How can Steve, the shopkeeper, possibly know exactly what every one of his customers wants before the day even begins?

God makes ten plagues to show He is not just a creator who stands back and doesn't get to know us, but a creator, who unlike Steve, knows what each of us wants and needs. He knows exactly what affects us and what doesn't, what connects us and what doesn't, what scares us and what doesn't. By having 10 plagues, all completely different, Hashem connects all his children in Egypt to Him and to his power and love he has for us in a way that works for everyone. Hashem loves us, protects us and connects to us, all in a different and personal way.

I am having one of the best years of my life and I hope that all of you who want to follow on to Israel for your gap year get the chance.

Shabbat Shalom :)

ELIANA WAS A MADRICHAN ON ALEPH WINTER MACHANE 5778 AND ALEPH CHALUTZI MACHANE 5777

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- We're back from an amazing week of Winter Machane in Colomendy. Chanichim from year 6 to 12 all had so much fun taking part in fantastic Kvutzot and Tochniot run by our fabulous madrichim. Which leads us into our next point...

- Summer Machane applications are NOW OPEN for Ari, Aleph, Aleph Chalutz, and Gimmel. Bet Base applications are now open as well! For more information please email Rafi H at campus@bauk.org

- Student Bet Midrash has started again every Thursday night at Kinloss! Come along for a great opportunity to hear amazing speakers, have some great food and learn with friends or madrichim! Please feel free to email Eli at chinuch@bauk.org for more details or if you have any questions

- Israel Machane applications are NOW OPEN. For more information or a brochure please contact Chana at israel@bauk.org

- Svivot have re-started all over the

country and it's Shabbat Ha'Irgun season!!! To get involved (or to even start a sviva) please email Rafi C at svivot@bauk.org

- 2019 marks the 80th birthday of BAUK!! Keep an eye out for events in your local community. Kicking off the celebrations is a premiere of the BA80 film on the 3rd February! To reserve a seat visit bauk.org/film



Shabbat Shalom!!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Why did Moshe leave the palace so abruptly after warning Pharaoh about the locusts? **(See Ramban on 10:6)**
2. When Moshe stretched out his hand to bring the Plague of Darkness why was he not holding his staff? **(See Shemot Rabbah 14 and Or HaChaim on 10:22)**
3. Why did Hashem personally carry out the Plague of the Firstborn and not delegate it to an angel or emissary? **(See Maharal on 12:12)**



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