

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו.  
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך,  
יום השביעי שבת לה'

# SHABBAT LASHEM

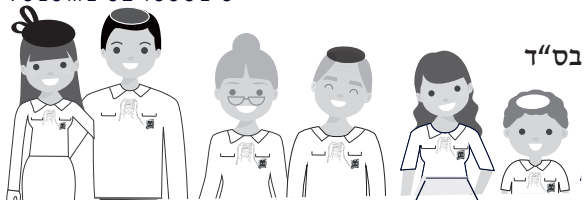
THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT VAYEISHEV

23<sup>RD</sup> KISLEV 5782

26<sup>TH</sup> & 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

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## NOT CONFORMING SHOSHANA ROTHSTEIN SHEVET AVICHAI

Leiluy Nishmat: Menachem No-  
chum ben Meir HaCohen

Over next week, as part of our celebration of Chanukah, we will say Hallel every morning after Shacharit. One of the chapters of Tehillim which is recited as part of Hallel is chapter 114, which discusses the Jewish people leaving Egypt and the subsequent splitting of the sea. The pasuk reads:

הַיָּם, רָאָה וַיָּנֹס הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיָּסֹב לְאַחֲרָיו:

*The sea saw and fled, the Jordan ran backwards*

(Tehillim 114:1-3)

The question which arises from these verses is: what exactly did the sea see?

The Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah, 87:8) records a machloket about in whose merit the sea split. One of those opinions is that the sea split in the zechut of Yosef. According to this opinion, the sea 'saw' the bones of Yosef, which Moshe had dutifully ensured were carried out of Egypt with the Jewish people as the brothers had promised Yosef before he died, and split.

But why? What is the connection between Yosef and the splitting of the sea? What prompts this opinion in the Midrash to make this connection?

The Midrash quotes a pasuk from this week's parasha, Parashat Vayeishev. Once Yosef is sold and taken down to Egypt, he rises to a position of prominence in Potiphar's household. One day, taking advantage of the fact the house was empty, Potiphar's wife tries to seduce him. When Potiphar's wife physically grabs him, the pasuk describes how Yosef reacts:

וַיִּנָּס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה

*"he fled and he went outside"*

(Bereishit, 39:12).

Yosef was in Egypt, the land which the Torah says as

the definition of a society completely defiled by giluy arayot (Vayikra, 18:3). He was alone, in an empty house, with a woman trying to seduce him. It would have been so easy for him to have given in, to have succumbed and behaved in the same way as the society around him. Rashi, quoting the Gemara in Sotah, even tells us that Yosef initially intended to submit to Potiphar's wife's advances (Rashi, Bereishit, 39:11).

Yet he didn't. The pasuk uses a double language – "he fled and he went outside." This suggests that he didn't just leave the house, he also fled from the low morals and acceptable behaviour of the society around him. He didn't give in – even though that would have been easier. He chose to stand against everyone around him and act in accordance with his morals, even though he was thrown into prison for his actions.

Yosef refused to simply 'go with the flow' and act like all of the people around him. Generations later, it was in the merit of this that the sea split for Yosef's descendants, allowing them to pass through on dry land; the sea went against its 'natural behaviour' and parted. It was in the merit of this one single action of Yosef that all of the Jewish people were saved at the Yam Suf.

The message of this incident in this week's parasha teaches us a very pertinent message. It is often so much easier, so much more convenient, so much more comfortable to go with the flow and to conform to the behaviours of the society around us. However, Yosef's actions teach us the incredible power of refusing to be influenced by those around us whose values and morals contradict with our own. Yosef teaches us the importance of acting in accordance with the mitzvot, as strong and proud Jews, even when it contradicts the society in which we live.

## SHOSHANA WAS SGANIT OF GIMMEL AND SEENAI WINTERNET MACHANE 5781

### SHABBAT TIMES

London In 15:43 Out 16:55

Manchester In 15:43 Out 16:57

Cambridge In 15:36 Out 16:52

Oxford

Bristol

Birmingham

In 15:44 Out 16:58

In 15:50 Out 17:05

In 15:43 Out 16:59

Leeds

Glasgow

Jerusalem

In 15:35 Out 16:54

In 15:35 Out 16:58

In 16:00 Out 17:15

# Q&A WITH RAV JOEL

**Q:** I HEARD THAT IT IS HALACHICALLY FORBIDDEN TO WATCH MAGIC SHOWS. IS THIS TRUE?



**A:** In Parashat Shoftim the Torah lists a series of prohibitions relating to idolatry including sorcery, witchcraft and other forms of fortune-telling. Amongst this list we find the commandment against,

**קָסָם קְסָמִים קְעוּגָו וְקוֹנֵהֵשׁ וְקוֹכֵשׁ**

*an augur, a soothsayer, a diviner, a sorcerer*

*(Devarim 18:10)*

There is much discussion amongst the Rishonim as to the veracity of these phenomenon. According to the Ramban and others, the Torah is describing forms of magic which are real but strictly prohibited. According to the Rambam, any form of sorcery is by definition comprised of falsehood and deception. In any event all agree that one claiming to perform magic would be transgressing a prohibition.

Rashi quotes two opinions from the Gemara as to the meaning of the word **קְעוּגָו**. Rabbi Akiva holds that it is related to the word **עוֹנֵה** meaning a fixed time, and thus refers to those who make predictions regarding the propitiousness of various times and hours (for example “today is a good day for going on a journey” etc.). However, Chachamim understand the word **עוֹנֵה** to be related to the word **עֵין** – and therefore the prohibition is against **“הַאֲדוּחָז אֶת הָעֵינַיִם”** – one who deceives the eyes (through trickery). It is this definition which would most closely resemble a modern-day magic show.

The Rambam and the Shulchan Aruch both rule that “deception of the eyes” is forbidden. What is not explicit in their rulings is what kind of deception this refers to. Is it only one who creates illusions through the actual use of magic that would be forbidden? Or would it include modern-day magic, illusions, and sleight of hand as well?

In Sefer HaMitzvot the Rambam writes that actions related to the swiftness of movement of one’s hands such as pulling a snake out of a seemingly empty garment or throwing a ring into the air and apparently pulling it

from someone’s mouth would fall under the category of “deception of the eyes.” Based on this the Chochmat Adam rules that performing or watching magic shows is categorically forbidden and that one should protest against those who do so.

Amongst contemporary Poskim, Rav Shmuel Wozner (Shevet HaLevi 5:129) and Rav Ovadya Yosef (Yechave Daat 3:68) follow this stringent approach and forbid all types of magic as entertainment, even when done for mitzvah purposes such as to enhance the joy at a wedding celebration.

Yet there are other great Halachic authorities who take a more lenient approach. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe YD 4:13) questions why sleight of hand should be considered different to any other natural talent a person may possess. He compares this to the case of one blessed with extraordinary speed or strength which may too seem inexplicable to an onlooker yet is certainly not forbidden. Nonetheless he was reluctant to issue a practical permissible ruling out of deference to the authorities who hold stringently.

The Poskim who do allow magic shows include Rav Chaim David HaLevi (former Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv), the Klausenberger Rebbe, Rav Betzalel Stern and Rav Asher Weiss. This is based on the common understanding nowadays that the magician is simply performing tricks and illusions rather than claiming to do real magic. While some go as far as requiring the magician to reveal how his tricks are done, most of these Poskim don’t require it – and allow for the magic and the mystery to be enjoyed as well.

*Rav Joel is an experienced magician and is available for birthday parties and Bar/Bat Mitzvahs.*

**DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR RAV JOEL? SEND IT IN TO RAV@BAUK.ORG. YOU CAN ALSO FOLLOW RAV JOEL ON FACEBOOK (RAV SHALIACH PAGE) AND ON TWITTER (@JOEL KENIGSBURG).**

# THE WEEK IN PICTURES



Chaverim in both Manchester and London decorate posters and make Chanukah cards to give to Jewish Care and Healthlands, respectively, as part of Mitzvah Day



Parents and Chanichim learn together in the Manchester Bayit, as part of the 'Horim Veyeladim' program organised by BA and Mizrahi

Rav Joel speaks to Bogrim about Torat Eretz Yisrael at Va'ad, after a Siyum on Masechet Rosh Hashana by Gidon Schwartz. Mazal tov!

Bogrot learn in the Lishmah Bet Midrash

## SNAPSHOT FROM THE CHOVERET

**The Choveret is the educational handbook that Bnei Akiva UK madrichim use to create their activities and discussions in Sviva each week. For the Chanukah edition, it explores the concept of luck and chance in relation to the Chanukah story.**

If everything is a miracle, nothing is really down to chance. When we think of Chanukah the most important miracle that comes to mind is the miracle of the oil. This is all well and good but if we look at another familiar source for Chanukah, the Al Hanisim prayer in the Shemonah Esrei and Birkat Hamazon prayers, we have a different story!

*"[We thank You also] for the miracles, the redemption, the mighty deeds, and the victories in battle which You performed for our ancestors in those days at this time..." - Al Hanisim*

Really there were two miracles in the Chanukah story - the oil and the military victory. Which one was more significant? Obviously the crazy military victory! But the military victory of Chanukah (like the Purim victory) is a hidden miracle. Sometimes we need a reminder that these things aren't just down to chance, but rather down to Hashem. There is no Hebrew word for luck. Sometimes it takes a more obvious miracle like a burning candle to shed some light on the real miracle taking place.



# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Calling all Bogrot in London! **Lishmah is back!** Don't miss this amazing **Torah learning opportunity**, now with a brand new **choice of Chaburot!** Sign up: [tinyurl.com/Lishmah-BA](http://tinyurl.com/Lishmah-BA)

- Calling all male Bogrim in London! Join **Rav Joel** for a **weekly Va'ad** on Tuesday evenings at 10:15!

- **London Student Bet Midrash** is taking place weekly on **Thursday evenings** for high school and university students. For more info about London, Birmingham or Leeds SBM email [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org)

- **Friday night learning, tisch and chill** is taking place this week at the **Manchester Bayit** for girls in year 10 and up at 9pm!

- Does your child attend **Sviva**? Please make sure to **fill in a medical form** for them: [www.bauk.org/-svivot-medical-form](http://www.bauk.org/-svivot-medical-form)

- **KADIMA is back** by popular demand in Manchester and London! Open to all in **Years 7-10**, join us for a riveting **5-part course** infused with **fun, friends and inspiration!!** For more information contact Adi at [svivot@bauk.org](mailto:svivot@bauk.org)

- **Mazal tov** to **Isabel Assor** and **Alex Fachler** (both Shevet Morasha) on their recent marriage!

- Keep an eye out for **exciting Bnei Akiva updates** for all ages!

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (bneiakivauk)** to get regular updates with what is going on in the Tnuva.

- Visit **[bauk.org/feedback](http://bauk.org/feedback)** for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!



**LISHMAH IS BACK!!!**  
7:30 PM  
**Open Bet Midrash**  
8:30PM  
**Choice of Chaburot**  
Netivot Shalom  
or  
Masechet Succah Bekiut

Join us on Tuesday evenings at the London Bayit and become part of this dynamic Makom Torah for post-high school women!  
Sign up at [tinyurl.com/Lishmah-BA](http://tinyurl.com/Lishmah-BA)  
Contact [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org) for more info!

**BNEI AKIVA** UNITED KINGDOM



**BNEI AKIVA** UNITED KINGDOM

BOGRIM JOIN US ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF CHANUKAH FOR AN EVENING FULL OF

# A WHOLE LATKE FUN!

at the Kenigsberg's

8:00 PM | SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER  
35 TENTERDEN GARDENS

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