

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.


- Summer Machane is coming! 29th July – 12th August. It is now possible to reserve a place by contacting yehuda@bauk.org.
- Tafkid applications for Summer Machane are out now! Visit our website, bauk.org to apply!
- Kivun – our Hadracha training programme for Shevet Tzion, is occurring on Motzei Shabbat in Hendon, and on Sunday Edgware. For full information, email adam@bauk.org or marina@bauk.org
- If you are in years 10-12, come to iHistory – an interactive and exciting new programme to expand your knowledge of Israel's history – every Thursday at 18:30 at the London Bayit. Contact yehuda@bauk.org for more information
- On Sunday at 7:30, Mizrachi UK along with Bnei Akiva are having a Post Israel Election Analysis event, featuring Miriam Shaviv, Dr Martin Sherman and Michael Dickson as panellists. For more information. Visit www.israelection.eventbrite.co.uk to book tickets.



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Shabbat Lashem 'שבת לה'

ויקרא שבת החודש Vayikra, Shabbat HaChodesh

Are You an "I" Specialist?

Channah Cohen

In the beginning of this week's sedra the verse states,

'ויקרא אל- משה וידבר ה' אליו מאהל מועד לאמר'

'He called to Moses, and Hashem spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying.'

The Alef found in the word ויקרא is smaller than the other letters. Why is there a small alef? And what can we learn from it?

Alef is the first of the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. It is also the first letter in the Ten Commandments, which start starting with the word אנכי "I". The shape of the letter alef is made up of two yuds and a vav, corresponding to the gematria of 26, which is the gematria of Hashem's name. These yuds resemble the higher and lower worlds connected through the vav.

When writing the Torah, Moshe didn't want the alef to be there at all. In his mind he was a nobody, a nothing, why would Hashem call out to him?

The word אני represents ones ego. Moshe was the most humble man in the world. He lowered his ego to a point where it was non-existent. The small alef symbolizes Moshe's humility. We have to lower our ego but remember that we are still needed in this world. To Hashem we are important and necessary for the world's plan. However we shouldn't put ourselves on a pedestal and become big-headed.

As we approach Pesach, the festival of freedom, we clean our house of chametz. Chametz is leaven - products which have risen, representing our inflated ego. During this time we have to get rid of arrogance, or at least decrease it. Our ego can enslave us to do things we shouldn't be doing. We have to think like Moshe; who are we in the bigger picture? After decreasing our ego we will become free; free from those desires which puff us up but have no real meaning.

Channah Cohen is in Shevet Dvir and was Rakaz on Haroeh 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!

We are very proud of the participants of our Hachshara programmes who ran the Jerusalem marathon and half-marathon last Friday, raising over £2000 for Emunah and other charities. Kol hakavod to you all!

Shevet Avichai took their first Step on the journey of Israel Machane on Sunday, with a fun and engaging orientation day. The countdown to the summer has begun!

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

		
London	17:59	19:02
Manchester	18:06	19:13
Birmingham	18:02	19:13
Cambridge	17:55	19:05
Leeds	17:59	19:10
Liverpool	18:07	19:18
Jerusalem	17:10	18:27

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

Close Encounters

How do we encounter G-d? I sometimes feel that in the society we live in, we do not fully understand what this means.

Avraham Ibn Ezra, in his commentary to the Ten Commandments, asks why Hashem introduces Himself by saying “I am Hashem, your God, who has taken you out of Egypt” (Shemot 20:2); surely the greater appraisal of G-d is that He created the world, and that is how He should have accredited Himself? Ibn Ezra answers that belief in the creation of the world is a complex philosophical notion that not everyone can grasp or relate to. While this approach suggests that belief in G-d should be easily accessible, it also seems fundamentally flawed. Surely the connection we are meant to establish with G-d is based on contemplation of ideals and integrating this belief into a general worldview. Why exempt us from the charge to believe in this manner, just because it is difficult? The Torah commands many things that require us to push our limits, why in the case of belief does it compromise if the ideal indeed is to attain belief in G-d of creation?

This Shabbat we include the special reading of Parashat Hachodesh (Shemot ch. 12):

“This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.”

This is the first *mitzvah* given to Am Yisrael, the imperative to sanctify the new month, leading into the order of preparations for the Exodus from Egypt. It is interesting to note that in his commentary to the very first words of the Torah, Rashi suggests that this *mitzvah* would have been the appropriate beginning to the Torah; far more so than the story of creation and the lives of our forefathers. Here we ask again: How can this be? How could one possibly suggest omitting the account of creation from the Torah, the great book of belief?

Perhaps the explanation to both these questions is one and the same: The ultimate form of belief is in fact not founded in philosophical concepts and lofty ideas. The ultimate form of belief is founded in action. Hashem is not encountered in lofty concepts outside of our grasp and comprehension, but rather He is encountered in our good deeds. We do not grasp G-d by thinking about Him, rather we grasp Him by realizing G-d is thinking about us. This concept is crystallized so aptly by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (Radical Then, Radical Now pg. 71):

“More than the Bible is interested in the home G-d makes for man, it is concerned with the home man makes for G-d.”

It is interesting that the Hebrew word for month is *chodesh* – meaning “new” or renewal. It is as such that this *mitzvah* is so appropriate to be the first one. Why was the *mitzvah* of the new month chosen as the first one? We look at the moon and appreciate that it changes, it evolves and it indeed becomes renewed. This is symbolic of how our attitude should be towards reality; we mustn't become caught up in the routine of life, rather we must always relate to it with enthusiasm and freshness. The world isn't static, rather it is always changing. It is incumbent upon us to guide that evolution – towards good, and greater G-dliness.

The encounter with Hashem is not in a transcendent, spiritual experience. Rather it is in the belief that there is an intimate interdependency between ourselves and reality – we are brought about by reality, but we also guide reality. We encounter Hashem when we believe in our ability to bring about change and renewal, and act upon that belief until goodness reigns supreme – “And Hashem shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall Hashem be One, and His name one” (Zecharia 14:9).

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



In the past week, three of our Bogrim, Avishav Engle, Uzi Hill and Eitan Phillips have joined the Israeli Defence Force. We are hugely proud of them, and all of our Bogrim who are serving in the IDF, including the many who have recently joined. Below in an excerpt from an article written by Eitan Phillips, in anticipation of his draft.

Shmuel HaKatan says: 'when your enemy falls be not glad, and when he stumbles let your heart not be joyous. Lest Hashem see and it displease Him, and he will turn his wrath from [him to you]' (Avot 4:24)

All leaders face enemies who oppose righteous goals, so why is it wrong to rejoice when those impediments are removed? As a leader, surely one should eagerly anticipate divine retribution against one's enemies? It may be suggested that rejoicing in your enemy's disgrace is wrong on two levels:

Firstly, it represents an inherent flaw within one's own character. Our job as Jews and as humans is to perfect our Midot and to preserve our own human dignity. Rejoicing at someone else's hardship, even our worst enemy, represents divergence from that dignity. We refuse to be happy in the face of others' suffering. To bear such abhorrent hate for anyone, no matter who they are, would be beneath our human dignity. It is within this framework that Rav Kook writes that the trait of love must be held for all of creation, 'every people and every language without exception'. For Rav Kook, the trait of love must be so deep rooted within all of us that even Amalek, our greatest enemy, must be included (Midot haraiyah, ahava, 6).

Secondly, it would represent a misunderstanding of what it means that humans are created 'in the image of G-d' (Bereshit 1:26). It is not just a flaw within us, but a lack of sensitivity towards our fellow human being. The Midrash (Pesikta Drav Kahana) suggests a reason for why Hallel is not recited on the last six days of Pesach. Since the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea on the seventh day, it would be a clear departure from the words of our Mishna. The Gemara in Megillah 10b relates how the angels wished to sing to G-d at the drowning of the Egyptians, but G-d reprimanded them saying, 'my handiwork is drowning in the sea, and you recite a song?' If we truly understood the value of every human being as a divine creation, the option of rejoicing in their plight is unimaginable. They are as human as we are, and with that humanity comes an element of dignity.

This does not mean that we refuse to face opposition head on when confronted with it, On the contrary, as leaders we must defend our ideas and our nation. However, the ability to act does not require the trait of hate. At a time where religious ideas are breeding hate and violence, it is our role as leaders to stand against that hate without returning it.

I write this in anticipation of my imminent draft to Tzahal, immensely proud to serve in the first Jewish army for over 2000 years and ready to do my duty in the defence of this unique nation, yet more aware than ever of the Jewish value in humanity; for every man is created in the image of G-d.

Eitan Phillips is in Shevet Lehava and was on Hachsharat Torani at Yeshivat Hakotel