

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. Brochures and applications are now out. For more information, contact yehuda@bauk.org.
- We are excited to be bringing the unique Bnei Akiva atmosphere to communities in the coming Shabbatot, holding an uplifting seuda shlishit and learning with our bogrim. We will be in Kinloss shul on 6th June, Borehamwood & Elstree shul on 13th June and Mill Hill shul on 27th June. To find out more, contact rav@bauk.org
- Applications for key roles in svivot for 5776 are open! To be part of the lifeblood of Bnei Akiva across the country, contact adam@bauk.org
- We are looking forward to being joined by a group of Bnei Akiva chaverim from The Netherlands over Shabbat 6th June. Watch this space for more details!



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תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

ושבתה הארץ Shabbat Lashem 'שבת לה

במדבר שבועות - Bamidbar, Shavuot

Knowing Our Priorities

Adam Shasha

Parashat Bamidbar tells us of the roles assigned to the Leviim regarding the transportation of the Mishkan. We are told that the Kohanim assigned each Levi to their individual role, including which item he was to carry. The Midrash tells us that this was necessary because the Leviim would fight over the privilege of carrying more holy items, especially the Aron Hakodesh, often resulting in violent and sometimes fatal clashes among the Leviim. Therefore the Kohanim were instructed to appoint each Levi to a particular role.

In Mesilat Yesharim, the Ramchal cites this Midrash when discussing “Mishkal Ha’hasidut” – the “scale of piety”. He explains that there is certainly great value in going beyond the strict requirements of Halacha and taking upon oneself additional measures of piety. A child who truly loves his parents will not just obey his parents’ wishes, but also do what he feels will make them happy. Likewise, if we are truly devoted to Hashem, we will do more than what is requested of us. However, the Ramchal warns us that we must be very careful when accepting additional measures of piety to ensure we are still achieving our desired goal.

The desire of the Leviim to do the Mitzvah of transporting the Aron Hakodesh was genuine, but their will for this honour led them fight and be violent. If this is the result of attempts to carry the Aron, then this “pious” act contradicts the “Mishkal Ha’hasidut” therefore it isn’t what we should strive towards. If voluntary measures of piety cause fighting, then we should avoid such stringencies.

There are many situations when we need to keep this perspective in mind, and ensure to maintain our priorities when measures that are not strictly required can harm other people. One example is a story of the Chafetz Chaim, who once hosted a group of travellers on Friday night, and began making Kiddush as soon as he returned from Shul without singing “Shalom Aleichem”. When asked the reason for this, the Chafetz Chaim responded “I know that you have not eaten all day. The angels don’t need to eat, so they can wait for ‘Shalom Alechem.’ But I should not make you wait when you are hungry so that I can sing.”

Adam Shasha is in Shevet Shvut and is Svivot Fieldworker for Bnei Akiva

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 looking forward to our Tikun Leil Shavuot for Bogrim at Rav Ari and Chaya’s house in London, and at the Manchester Bayit for the whole community! Rav Ari is also delivering shiurim to youth at Edgware Adas and Yeshurun shuls.

We enjoyed being part of Yom Yerushalayim events in Borehamwood & Elstree and Alei Tzion shuls, and the wonderful Mizrahi Yonatan Razel concert.

On Wednesday night, we joined with Ner Yisrael shul for a great comedy night with Avi Liberman.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

	🕒	🕒
London	20:42	22:01
Manchester	20:58	22:26
Birmingham	20:49	20:23
Cambridge	20:39	20:12
Leeds	19:35	22:23
Liverpool	20:58	22:35
Jerusalem	20:15	20:15

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

Shavuot and Asking for Directions!

A number of years ago, my wife and I travelled from Israel to visit family in Canada with a long stop-over for a flight connection in Greece. We decided to use the time to see the beautiful Greek countryside. We rented a car and set-off towards Delphi, the site of the Delphi Oracle through whom according to Ancient Greek beliefs, the god Apollo spoke (I wanted to ask the Oracle if I should become a Rabbi!) (the answer was no!).

After a day of breath-taking scenic views, we began our return to Athens for our connecting flight, guided by our sat-nav. As we neared the city, signs began pointing us towards Athens. At one junction, the road sign contradicted our sat-nav directing us left. We chose to follow the sat-nav assuming it was taking us on an alternate, quicker route. We couldn't have made a worse decision. We soon found ourselves driving along a dirt road through a field of tall stalks of grain, the sat-nav still directing us – presumably – to Athens: "In 50 yards turn right, then turn left". As we turned the bend on this narrow dirt road, we needed to slam the brakes and quickly reverse as a huge tractor rapidly approached. We returned to the main road and followed the road-signs the rest of the way ...

There are two ways of navigating: The first is to methodically follow the directions given. The second is to look at the map and holistically understand the route to take within the general terrain. The two work hand in hand: While the first manner is straightforward and pragmatic, the second provides the context to the route and meaning to the path taken. The particular route is a part of the greater terrain; the directions are a means of arriving at a particular destination.

What is the goal of Torah? The word Torah comes from the Hebrew word *hora'a* – meaning "guiding" or "direction"; a teacher is called *moreh*, guide. Understood as such, the Torah is the guide to navigating life. Life is full of crossroads. The central element of life is free choice and the factor that most expresses our humanness is to make decisions as we try and navigate the uncertainties and challenges we face on the way towards attaining our life-goal. The Torah is our guide to making the right decisions, leading us towards self-fulfilment and the attainment of that goal.

The Torah guides us in two ways: The first is by pragmatically describing to us what the right decisions to take are. Just as a sat-nav directs us to "turn right", "turn left", or "at the roundabout take the third exit" in order to reach our destination, the Torah gives us specific directions towards reaching our destiny. We all have free choice and can thus decide to take these directions on-board, or not; but the underlying assumption remains that the Torah is guiding us towards realizing a greater reality.

But the Torah isn't only a set of do's and do not's. It provides us with a holistic description of reality, one which is inspirational and empowering. The Torah answers some of the most difficult existential questions we face, in some of the most profound and meaningful ways. The do's and do not's are all particular expressions of the greater worldview the Torah describes; they are directions of a route within the greater, more holistic view of reality.

Each of these work in tandem with one another. Over-emphasis of the specifics of the journey can be tedious; without the context they can be experienced as dry and meaningless. On the other hand, the focus only on the macro without attention to the details of the journey will leave us lost.

This was the greatness of the Sinai experience, when we received the Torah. Am Yisrael stood at the foot of Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments. The Torah describes this awesome scene (Shemot 20:14):

"And all the people perceived the sounds, and the lightning, and the voice of the horn, and the mountain smoking..."

Now, how could the people have "perceived" the "sounds"; surely it should have said they "heard" the sounds? Sound is a very particular property; the closer and more focused a person is to the source of the sound, the clearer it will be. Sight is a collective property; one must stay further back to see the bigger picture. Sound relates to the details and sight to the principals. Sound is the particular and sight the collective.

The greatness of the Sinai experience is that the sounds were seen; the particular details were fully appreciated within their holistic context. The people saw the particular route as an expression of the greater terrain. At once they valued the specific directions of the journey, by appreciating its greater context and theme. At Sinai we received both our destination and the directions. Together they forge our destiny, of realizing the inspiring nature of reality.

Torah both draws a beautiful image of reality, while at once describing to us the route towards navigating it. Shavuot is זמן מן תורתנו – the time we received the Torah. It is a celebration of receiving both these properties of guidance, and empowers us to embark on the journey towards this destination.

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

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תנועת בני אקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

Engaging group learning with Bogrim

Inspiring Seudah Shlishit

Communal event for all ages

June 6 - **Kimloss**

June 13- **Borehamwood + Elstree**

June 27 - **Mill Hill**

contact rav@bauk.org for more details



Shavuot Inspiration: Striving for Greater Heights

Ariella Prais

We read in Sefer Shemot (20:23),

"And you shall not ascend with steps upon My altar, so that your nakedness shall not be exposed upon it."

From this, we learn that one could not go up to the mizbeach on steps, rather a ramp was used to reach the top. So too on Shavuot, we are on a "high", and want to go up more steps, higher and higher.

If you are walking up stairs and you get tired, you can have a rest, or even come to a complete stop. Then, you can get up and continue where you left off. However, if you're on a ramp and you stop, you'll fall down to the bottom. In order to stay in the same place on the ramp you have to exert yourself. You have to keep working hard and push yourself to get up to the top.

Rashi asks; why a ramp is needed to ascend the mizbeach, not stairs? He writes that when you walk up stairs you lift your legs up and the stones are exposed to you. These stones don't have the perception to show emotion that they're embarrassed. We're benefitting from the stones and need them to walk up, so we should treat them nicely. This teaches that very person is created in the image of Hashem - we care about being humiliated or embarrassed, so we should certainly be careful about how we relate to others.

On Shavuot many of us are on a high, we're loving life, seeing the beauty and wonders of the Torah and our learning is at its peak. However, what happens tomorrow? The key is to not only maintain this state of mind but to grow and continue to strive for greatness in Torah and all that we do. May we combine the beauty of Torah learning and beauty of loving every Jew to enhance the world with our light.

Ariella Prais is in Shevet Lehava