

Shabbat Times

	Ⓜ	Ⓝ	Ⓜ	Ⓝ
London	20:47	22:04	Cambridge	20:45 22:17
Manchester	21:05	22:33	Leeds	19:40 22:27
Birmingham	20:55	22:27	Liverpool	21:04 22:41
Oxford	20:49	22:19	Jerusalem	19:01 20:19

Coming up...

- We invite all Bogrim to join us for Tikkun Leil Shavuot at Rav Ari and Chaya's for more information contact Rav Ari on Rav@bauk.org

- Summer Machane is on 3rd-16th August, email Akiva on camps@bauk.org for more information

Shabbat Debate

Every week we will be writing weekly debates to discuss over Shabbat. The debates will then be continued on facebook, after Shabbat.

Why do we need to count the people?

SHABBAT

פרשת במדבר

PARASHAT BAMIDBAR



תנועת בני אקיו
BNEI AKIVA UK

LASHEM

שבת לה'

The most widely distributed weekly Torah periodical written by our youth in the United Kingdom.

The Number 50

Joey Sanford

At this time of year, 50 seems like a significant number; 50 days of counting *sfirat HaOmer*.

עַד מִמְקַרְת הַשְּׁבִיעִת הַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמֵשִׁים יוֹם... until after the day after the seventh week- fifty days' (Vayikra 23:15-16). However, this year, there is another significant date which relates back to the number 50; Yom Yerushalayim. From where I'm writing this D'var Torah, in the old city of Jerusalem, preparations are well underway to celebrate jubilantly the re-unification of Yerushalayim which will be commemorated with a fifty-year anniversary. However, what strikes me are the obvious similarity between these 2 events. Shavuot is the day we celebrate receiving the Torah, some could argue that although at Pesach was the event which created the Jewish Nation, most will claim that it was at Shavuot when we received the Torah that we really became the Jewish People. The Torah is what we live by; it is our heart and soul. The same too can be said for Yerushalayim to Israel. Although a Jewish state was declared in 1948, it wasn't until 1967 that the Jewish Nation regained the old city and had access to our holiest sites. However, the number 50 in the Jewish religion is no coincidence. One of the reasons we count 50 days of the Omer is because when Yaakov collided with Eisav's army of 400, Eisav originally refused the gifts claiming 'yesh li rav' (I have more) but Yaakov insisted and replied 'yesh li kol' (I have everything). When delving further, the *gematria* of 'kol' is 50. We count the Omer in a hope that by gradually making ourselves better people and more prepared, we too can transcend the word of quantity and reach a unified whole; like the unified Jerusalem we've commemorated for the past 50 years.

May we be *zoche* next year to stand together in the old city of Jerusalem celebrating not only Shavuot and Jerusalem, but the building of the 3rd Beit Hamikdash and the re-unification of the Jewish people in Israel.

SUMMER MACHANE 5777



3 August - 16 August

Year 6, 7, 8 in North Wales

Year 9 in Holland

Year 10 in Spain

NEW LOCATION!



for more info contact akiva@bauk.org



For time immemorial, Jews have felt apart from the rest of the world. Whether living in separate geographical areas – in ghettos and closed-communities – or living by a separate moral code, Jews were barred of equal civil rights, and would remain outcast and isolated. Was this situation ideal; is it the destiny of the Jews to be separated and alone? Or was it just the product of prejudice and anti-Semitism?

It would seem that this isolation is not merely externally imposed; that there has been a conscientious decision to keep ourselves and our faith to ourselves. It is the common understanding that the Torah and its values are meant for the Jews only. The Talmud teaches (Sanhedrin 59a):

“Rebbi Yochanan said: A heathen who studies the Torah deserves death, for it is written, ‘Moses commanded us the Torah for an inheritance’ – it is our inheritance, not theirs.”

What is the place of the Jews amongst the nations; are we to be alone or along? Are we to be by-ourselves and for-ourselves, or is our existence meant to be more far-reaching? Whilst the above opinion is widely quoted and accepted, there is in fact a dissenting position in the Gemara, which is ultimately codified in *halacha*:

“An objection is raised: Rebbi Meir would say: Whence do we know that even a heathen who studies the Torah is as a High Priest? From the verse, ‘Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which, if man do, he shall live in them.’ – Priests, Levites, and Israelites are not mentioned, but men: hence you learn that even a heathen who studies the Torah is as a High Priest!”

The Gemara qualifies this statement, restricting it to matters of Torah that have relevance to non-Jews, and this conclusion is accepted by the Rambam (Rambam Hil. Melachim 10:9). Rebbi Meir doesn’t see the ghettoization of Am Yisrael as ideal; it would seem that he believes that the Torah bears relevance to the wider human-community as well. Indeed, throughout the ages elements of Torah have been taught to non-Jews, and some of the great sages in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries prompted the translation of the Talmud and its introduction to the university academic curriculum.

So which is it – alone or along? Is our message particular or universal?

Our *parasha* – and the forth book of the Torah – opens with the words (Bamidbar 1:1):

“And Hashem spoke to Moshe in the wilderness of Sinai.”

The Midrash points-out that it is counter-intuitive for the Torah to have been given in the desert, and it rather should have been given in the Land of Israel. The answer:

Continued on next page.....

The Week that Was...

- On Tuesday night we had a tefilla chagigit in Borehamwood for Yom Yerushalayim
- On Wednesday morning we had Shacharit with breakfast at the bayit and went into primary schools to celebrate and educate about Yom Yerushalayim
- This week, Mazkir Joe Boxer and Chinuch Worker Dena Schwartz ran programming for the Mizrahi UK Yom Yerushalayim conference.

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“Thus the nations of the world were prevented from claiming that they didn’t accept the Torah on the grounds that it was not given in their lands.”

The Torah was given in the wilderness, a neutral territory, because all nations are meant to have a connection to it, and be influenced by it. The Torah was surely given to Am Yisrael and as-such describes a particular way of life. However it contains lessons for the entire world to learn and messages that are universal. Indeed, it is by being particular that we can be universal; by embracing the unique way-of-life described by the Torah the entire world can benefit from its eternal messages.

The Torah describes a particular way of life with universal implications and messages. This is ultimately the position taught by Rebbi Meir and endorsed by the Rambam.

The Torah introduced the virtues of altruism and charity, equality before the law and the liberty of the individual. It planted the seeds for values such as equal rights for women, abolishment of slavery and animal rights. The Torah taught the central, revolutionary idea that all people are created in the image of God.

The positive contribution that the Torah can make on society is not only in the past. Not only has the Torah made a historical impact on the world; but its value system has much to offer to society today. The Torah is not an archaic and primitive doctrine that has nothing to contribute to modern people. We would be best to learn from the Torah about topics such as personal dignity, self-esteem, restraint and embellishment, compulsive work and rest, and many more. In all of these – and more – we stand to gain so much from the values espoused by the Torah. Indeed, Am Yisrael stands to offer the world so much by learning and embracing these values.

This week on Shavuot, we mark “*zman matan Toratenu*” – the time of the giving of our Torah. We return to Sinai, to the wilderness, where we received our particular lifestyle with its marvellously impactful universal implications. On Shavuot we celebrate the gift given to us by Hashem; it is the gift of Torah, the