

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

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT BAMIDBAR

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בס"ד



INDIVIDUALITY SAM NIMAN SHEVET OROT

This week, we begin the new book of Bamidbar which contains countings of the fledgling Jewish nation, hence the name, "Numbers." In this week's specific parasha we get introduced to the counting and exact encampment of the twelve tribes. The parasha kicks off with,

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד בַּאֲדָם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי
בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיָּה לְצֵאתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם לְאֵמֶן

On the first day of the second month, in the second year following the exodus from the land of Egypt, Hashem spoke to Moshe in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting (Bamidbar 1:1).

Ramban points out that the Torah notes the location of where Hashem spoke to Moshe, namely the Tent of Meeting, and says that the same location was used for all the commandments that Moshe received, from the beginning of the Book of Vayikra, and continued to be the case until the end of the Torah.

The parasha then goes on to tell us how they counted the people. Hashem told Moshe and Aharon to get all the men and arrange them in their tribes, including only those from age twenty to sixty, adding the words כל יצא צבא. Rashi explains this tells us that back then, no one younger than twenty years of age went out to the army. The twelve tribes who were counted were: Reuven, Shimon, Yehudah, Yisachar, Zevulun, Ephraim, Manasheh, Binyamin, Dan, Asher, Gad and Naphtali. Moshe counts a grand total of 603,550 Jewish men. Each of the twelve tribes had a "Nassi," a leader who helped with the counting. The numbers were as follows: Reuven - 46,500, Shimon - 59,300, Yehudah -

74,600, Zevulun - 57,400, Manasheh - 32,200, Binyamin - 35,400, Dan - 62,700, Asher - 41,500, Gad - 45,650, Naphtali - 53,400 and Ephraim - 40,500.

The tribe of Levi was then counted separately. In this tribe they counted all males from the age of one month and older- the Levites were the unique legion of Hashem so they were treated differently. They totalled 22,300.

The parasha then tells us how the people of Israel camped and travelled in the desert. When the Jews had to leave their temporary accommodation to begin travelling, the Leviim would dismantle the Mishkan, carry it to the next encampment and erect it again. The camp was arranged with the Mishkan in the centre of the camp. Around the Mishkan was the camp of Leviim divided into three groups on 3 of its sides. The family of Kehat (who carried the Mishkan's vessels) camped to the south, the family of Gershon (who carried the curtains and roof coverings) were to the west. The family of Merari (who carried the walls and pillars) camped to the north. In front of the entrance of the Mishkan to the east were the tents of Moshe, Aharon and Aharon's sons.

How on earth is this all relevant to us? One beautiful theme that we see running throughout the parasha is that despite being part of an entire nation, Hashem wants us to never forget our individuality. Every Jew had their own unique place to camp and each of those counted had their own number. Without each individual, the overall number would be different. Although we merge together in the mass called the Jewish nation, each individual must recognise their own talents, personalities and strengths, and without them, the entire nation would be affected. Our individuality cannot be overlooked - Hashem created me because He decided the day I was born that the world could not continue without me.

**SAM WILL BE A MADRICH ON MACHANE THIS
SUMMER**

SHABBAT TIMES

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|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| London | In 20:55 Out 22:24 | Oxford | In 20:58 Out 22:30 | Leeds | In 21:10 Out 22:53 |
| Manchester | In 21:14 Out 22:52 | Bristol | In 21:01 Out 22:33 | Liverpool | In 21:14 Out 22:54 |
| Cambridge | In 20:54 Out 22:29 | Birmingham | In 21:04 Out 22:40 | Jerusalem | In 19:05 Out 20:24 |

SHAVUOT 5782: MOTIVATION FOR MITZVOT

DANIA MANN-WINEBERG

SHEVET AVICHAI



It has been nearly a year since I completed the NHS 'Couch to 5K' challenge. For nine long weeks, I schlepped myself on three runs each week, battling a range of challenging climates, oscillating between gratitude and pure hatred

towards 'Laura,' the voice in the podcast who would urge me to keep running even when my legs felt like tagliatelle. After each run, I would return home to my bemused family, red in the face, unable to use my limbs, yet bragging to anyone who would listen about how fabulous I felt. There is no doubt that whilst painful at times, this undertaking led to an improvement in my overall health.

I am not only sharing this anecdote to flex my mediocre running achievements, but also to reflect on a question that is foundational to Torah observance. Rabbi Norman Lamm pointed out in his *Shavuot Derasha* in 1966 that there are two different narratives of the process that led to Bnei Yisrael accepting the Torah at Har Sinai.

On the one hand, there is the well known Midrash (Sifrei Devarim 343) that describes how Hashem offered the Torah to the other nations and only the Jewish people were willing to accept the Torah in its entirety, implying an element of original choice to Torah observance.

On the other hand, the Talmud says,

אמר רב אבדימי בר חמא בר חסא: מלמד שקפה הקדוש ברוך הוא עליהם את ההר כגיגית, ואמר להם: אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב, ואם לאו — שם תהא קבורתכם

Rabbi Avdimi bar Chama bar Chasa said: the verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, overturned the mountain above the Jews like a tub, and said to them: If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there will be your burial (Shabbat 88a).

This narrative paints an entirely different (and terrifying) picture of overt coercion regarding Mitzvah observance.

So which is it? Did Hashem save the Jewish People from a tyrannical dictator in Egypt, only to impose a set of laws upon them against their will, or did accepting the Mitzvot involve an element of choice? Can both of these accounts be true? Do we do

Mitzvot because we want to or because we have to?

Rabbi Lamm explains that it must be both; the Jewish People are not only the people who were chosen by G-d, but also the people who choose G-d. When we say *Asher Bachar Banu* in Kiddush on Shavuot we are noting the fact that giving the Torah to the Jewish People was Hashem's non-negotiable decision. However, when we learn Torah and choose to keep the Mitzvot, we demonstrate the fact that the Jewish People have the option and the opportunity to elect to perform these mitzvot.

Rav Yehuda Amital stresses the need for a combination of obligation and choice when he combines the two, using the word 'Neumanut,' meaning commitment. A person who only does mitzvot because they enjoy it will struggle to maintain observance once they hit a part of Judaism they don't like. On the other hand, navigating mitzvot like an automated robot without gaining any level of happiness or emotional fulfillment will ultimately lead to burnout and won't be productive in the long run.

Speaking of running, let's go back to Couch to 5K. I could've stopped at any point and absolutely nothing immediately terrible would've happened. Sometimes it was thoroughly unenjoyable. However, I truly believed that sticking with it was of intrinsic value. This is how we must approach Torah observance (and life) if we wish to be successful with it. Whether it's fasting, missing an important university lecture on a Friday afternoon, or awkwardly davening mincha on the tube, if we believe that keeping the Torah insincerely valuable, we'll not only stick with it but work on finding the meaning and even enjoyment from these Mitzvot.

This Shavuot, as we once again make a conscious choice (hopefully) to accept the Torah and Mitzvot, let's think about ways that we can take on more mitzvot that we don't like, and enjoy doing those Mitzvot that we take on.

Chag Sameach!

DANIA IS ONE OF THIS YEAR'S CHINUCH WORKERS

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. This week, it looks at the different traits of Rabbi Akiva.

We've seen that Rabbi Akiva was a Torah giant who lived an incredible life. But why are we named 'the children of Akiva'? What characteristics did he embody that we are supposed to try and emulate?

Learning and teaching: not only was Rabbi Akiva a Talmid Chacham, he had thousands of students that he shared his Torah knowledge with. This is an important lesson for us as madrichim – we have a responsibility to share our knowledge and love for Torah with our chanichim. Likewise in the reverse, we can only be good teachers if we are learning ourselves!

Ability to grow and change: Rabbi Akiva shows that it's never too late to start learning or growing and that anyone can change at any age. As a youth movement and as individuals, we should always be prepared to change for the better, improve and start learning Torah whenever and wherever. Anything is possible if you work hard at it!

Connected to tradition: Rabbi Akiva's Torah was full of chiddushim, but everything was derived from the Torah! It is crucial to remain connected to the chain of Torah that links generations.

Devoted to his ideals: The ultimate Kiddush Hashem is to die with the Shema on one's lips – and that was what Rabbi Akiva did. He was a martyr who lived and died by his ideals, that of perfect devotion to Hashem and sanctifying His name.



Active rebel: Rabbi Akiva was the ultimate Religious Zionist! After the destruction of the Temple, it would have been easy to give up on Judaism. No Bet Hamikdash, no state, no nation – what was left? A mere 60 years later and Rabbi Akiva was actively supporting a revolution by Bar Kochba to regain control of Israel. We know that he ensured his students took part (therefore meaning they led lives as part-yeshiva student and part-soldier) and gave him support. Rabbi Akiva believed in the idea of actively bringing the geula, as opposed to passively waiting for it to happen. When Bnei Akiva was set up in 1929, its members were at the forefront of the fight for the development of the state of Israel. Today, with a Jewish state, Rabbi Akiva's vision is becoming a reality.

Ahavat Yisrael: As we mentioned last week and in the introduction, Rabbi Akiva valued love for each and every Jew above all other principles in the Torah. The Torah learning and ideals we may have are all worthless if we do not respect one another.

BNEI AKIVA TERMINOLOGY

You may have noticed that there are quite a few words in Hebrew that pop up in Shabbat Lashem from time to time! Here are a few commonly used 'BA words.' Why not test everyone at your Shabbat table on them?

Madrich/a - Leader

Machane - Camp

Mazkirut - Movement Workers

Chanich/a - Participant

Boger/et - Post School Member

Shevet - Year Group

Did you know that every year group internationally has its own Shevet name?



I'm in Shevet
Avichai!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Lishmah** is now open to **all Bogrot and Sixth-Formers!** Don't miss this amazing **Torah learning opportunity!** Sign up: tinyurl.com/Lishmah-BA

- Calling all male Bogrim! Join **Rav Joel** for a **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 or Birmingham SBM email chinuch@bauk.org

- Don't miss our **Tikkun Leil Shavuot** Programmes taking place in both **London** and **Manchester!**

- **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 for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!**




ת"ש


BNEI AKIVA UK INVITES ALL CHAVERIM TO...

TIKKUN LEIL 5782


8:30PM – 3:00AM @ THE LONDON BAYIT



Joanne Greenaway - "From Sinai to Today - the ongoing halachic conversation"



Rabbi Raphael Zarum - "The Re-education of Rabbi Yannai: What really matters on Shavuot"



Rabbi Daniel Rowe - "The love that healed a nation - how Ruth changes everything"

- + Plenty of chaburot, divrei Torah, walking tours and more!
- + Spaces for independent learning and chavrutot open all night!
- + Food for Seuda and refreshments provided throughout the night!

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