

זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה ה' נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמַחָה בּוֹ

**BNEI  
AKIVA**  
UNITED KINGDOM



**ZEH HAYOM**

**YOM HA'ATZMAUT**

5<sup>TH</sup> IYAR 5782

4<sup>TH</sup> & 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022

OMER DAY 19



80 years ago, the idea that we would actually have a Jewish State was incomprehensible. Yet here we are, celebrating 74 years of the State of Israel; 74 years of the Jewish People living and governing our homeland – the Land of Israel. It is nothing short of miraculous, and today is the day to celebrate and thank Hashem for it.

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*This is the day that the LORD has made – let us exult and rejoice on it.*

**Sam Prais, Mazkir**



## FROM THE ISRAEL WORKER'S DESK

SHIRA COLLINS  
SHEVET NE'EMAN

What is the difference between the education you get sitting in a classroom and education through actually doing something? The answer is experience. In Bnei Akiva, we pride ourselves on putting the educational framework of experiential learning at the forefront of all we do.

As Israel Worker I am able to help plan three amazing experiential learning programs, Israel Machane and Hachsharot - Torani and Kivun.

Here at Bnei Akiva UK, we continue the education and love of Israel through everything we do. Despite all the challenges of being physically away from Israel for so long we continue to provide event after event, project after project, that all help to enhance and educate our Tnuva's love for Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, and Torat Yisrael. All you need to do is look around you right now here in Kinloss, despite being unable to experience Israel for so long, we are all here to commemorate Yom Hazikaron and celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Both Israel Machane and Hachshara fall at such key parts of our chaverim's journeys within Bnei Akiva. Year 11, the highest point of one's journey as a chanich/a, and the year after finishing high school, the early stages of becoming a boger/et. Both are key stages for development within our movement.

The past two years I have learnt through this job that here in England we have been held back due to the lack of experiential learning opened to us by actually visiting Israel. I was lucky enough that before Pesach I got to spend time with our chaverim on Hachshara, I joined Kivun on their Israeli Society Seminar and Torani on their Pre-Pesach Seminar on Kibbutz Ein Hanatziv. Being a part of their programmes for less than three days I was able to personally learn so much. It reminded me of the importance of experiences, seeing the land, the people, and the culture not through a screen, but through your eyes.

Being able to see the places you learn about, ask questions to people of different cultures, political opinions and religions. Seeing the love of the land through so many different eyes and minds. Learning how to ask questions, developing your own thoughts and opinions and most importantly gaining skills of understanding and leadership. That is the importance of experiential learning and Israel education. That is what we do at Bnei Akiva UK. That is what I am privileged to be a part of.

That's why here at Bnei Akiva UK, it's not just a tour, it's Israel Machane. It's not just a gap year, it's Hachshara - preparation. Preparing the next generation, the youth, to be able to learn, ask questions and be the leaders of the future.

*Shira is making Aliyah this September after two years on the Bnei Akiva UK mazkirut and can't wait to continue learning from Israel experientially, for the rest of her life.*



## Ish Echad B'Lev Echad

YONA DAVIS  
SHEVET AVICHAI

I can remember the moment I decided I wanted to make Aliyah. It was the shabbat before

Yom Ha'atzmaut 5778, I was spending my gap year in Midreshet Amit with Torani and we were spending our Shabbat on Kibbutz Ein Tzurim in Southern Israel. It was on that Shabbaton that I realised Israel was where I was meant to be, it was where I was meant to fulfil my tafkid for life, and most importantly, it was where I could be truly happiest.

My parents raised my siblings and me with a love for Israel and always encouraged us to make Aliyah, so naturally I anticipated support for my decision to move at age 18 without any semblance of a life plan. Unsurprisingly, this was not quite the case – they told me, “come back to the UK, get your undergraduate degree and the minute you finish that last exam, we would be over the moon if you get on a plane and fulfil your dreams.”



So I did. I made up my mind that day that no matter what stood in my way, I would be back in Israel by the summer of 2021, 3 years after I left. Despite the bureaucracy and the slight hurdle of moving in a global pandemic, I made Aliyah and returned home on 5th July 2021. Having lived here for nearly 9 months now, I've been asked the question – “what's the best part of living in Israel” many times. And I never really know what to say.

Overall, being a new Olah isn't always the easiest process. There is the bureaucracy,

a language barrier and a cultural difference to name a few. At times it can be isolating. But **ספר עזרה** shows us an answer. **פרק ג** starts off with the **פסוק**:

**וַיָּגַע הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי וּבִגְיֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעָרֵים {ס} וַיֵּאסְפוּ הָעָם כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד אֶל־ירוּשָׁלַם**

*When the seventh month arrived—the Israelites being settled in their towns—the entire people assembled as one person in Jerusalem.*

This **פסוק** I think outlines what makes all the challenges so worth it. In so many ways, the whole of Israel is assembled - **כאיש אחד** as one person, whether you're out in the Shuk on Chol Hamoed Succot and you end up eating your food in a random Succah, or if you're davening on Yom Kippur with people from six different continents. There's also something truly incredible about the mundane – about that random person asking you, “where are you from? When did you move?” and after you answer they'll say, “amazing – well **ברוכים הבאים** and welcome home, we're happy to have you.”

I think that this is the most accurate answer for the question, “what's the best part of living in Israel?” There are most certainly over a hundred other things. Yes, there's so much Kosher food, and yes there are incredible communities that exist all over the country here, and yes, the Kotel is always super nearby. But for me, personally, the best part about living here is very much the fact that when it truly matters, you feel as if you've come home to a people who are going about their separate lives but are also living a life here that is as **כאיש אחד** – as one person.

*Yona made Aliyah in Tamuz 5781*

# AM YISRAEL, B'ERETZ YISRAEL, AL PI TORAT YISRAEL

EYTAN KLEINBERG  
SHEVET TZION



This time last year, a year into my army service, I was on the Lebanese border, on a small outpost overlooking the villages of Southern Lebanon. We spent the entirety of Yom Ha'Atz-

maut in huge army jeeps driving along the border fence and patrolling the local towns. It was a day of mixed emotions. I was sad that I couldn't be dancing in the streets of Yerushalayim, waving Israeli flags and singing songs of redemption, but at the same time I was doing something our people had longed for for 2,000 years - protecting the Jewish state as part of a Jewish army.

We entered one of the local yishuvim, Avivim, to continue on our patrol, and heard the sweet sound of people singing. We got out of our jeeps and began to dance and sing with some of the locals, celebrating the 73rd year of our small country's existence. At the same time though, tensions were rising in the South, with increased threats from various factions in Gaza. We'd been warned of the possibility of escalation, and been told we'd be heavily involved if it came to it. On top of that, I was supposed to be visiting my family and friends in England in May. Because of the coronavirus, I hadn't seen my family in two years. My plans, and Israel, seemed like they were a mess. How could people still sing and dance so joyously when the world was falling apart around us?

I became very overwhelmed and emotional at the whole situation, and took a step aside to gather my thoughts. One of my commanders came over and sat by me to make sure I was okay. He grew up irreligious, and had never really met a religious person at all until he was given command of our unit, which consisted

entirely of yeshiva students. When he asked me what was wrong, I explained how I was feeling. He listened carefully, and then replied with one of the most life changing statements I've ever heard.

"You believe in G-d, right? Then have faith in Him that we will always win. And if doubt ever creeps into your mind about what could go wrong, just always remember that He is there for you - He's always been there for all of us."

This is the resilience of the Jewish people. It is the glue that has held our people together throughout our existence. Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Al Pi Torat Yisrael. There I was, sitting in a yishuv I never knew existed, with a person I would never have connected with before,

watching these three core values I'd been reciting my whole life come together before my very eyes.

In Mishna Pirkei Avot (4:1), Ben Zoma teaches, "Who is wise? He who learns from everyone." But this message extends past simply learning from other people. We must strive to learn from every place we visit, person we meet, and experience that we have - to draw a better understanding and develop our knowledge of the world..

This is one of the things I love most about Israel. Wherever you turn, whoever you speak to - there is a lesson to be learned, and an opportunity to grow. We must take hold of these opportunities, and use them to build the complete ideals of Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Al Pi Torat Yisrael.

May we merit to see the coming of the Moshiah, and the return of the whole of Am Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael, guided by Torat Yisrael, Bi'Mehra B'Yameinu.

*Eytan made Aliyah in Av 5779*

**WHEREVER YOU TURN, WHOEVER YOU SPEAK TO - THERE IS A LESSON TO BE LEARNED AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW**

# BAUK IN ISRAEL

**Israel Machane** is a unique machane for year 11s where you'll see new sights and places, make lots of new friends, see Israel like never before and have the time of your life!



**Hachshara**, our Gap Year Opportunity is a vital component in one's Bnei Akiva Journey. This is a time one can devote to learning Jewish texts, developing independence, and exploring your identity. Bnei Akiva inspires and empowers young Jews with a sense of commitment to the Jewish people, the land of Israel and the Torah.

**Torani** is a programme that supplements our Bogrim's experience in Midrasha/Yeshiva. The aim of the year is to build a love and commitment to Torah and Yirat Hashem, whilst at the same time providing hadracha training and a knowledge of Israel

**280** Bogrim have made Aliyah in the past 8 years!



This year, Bnei Akiva UK and Mizrachi UK are excited to give Year 12s the opportunity to tour Israel with **Machane Yehudi!**



**Kivun** is a life-changing, integrated gap year experience with Bnei Akiva. The programme has been designed to facilitate the personal and religious growth of participants through diverse and challenging experiences, giving an authentic encounter with Israel.



## UNITY AND RESILIENCE

ABIGAIL GILBERT  
SHEVET MORASHA



Since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1948, we, the Jewish people, have been fortunate enough to call Israel our home, my home. The word 'atzmaut' can loosely translate as 'bones.' The first time the word 'Eztem' is mentioned in the Torah is in Bereishit – 'Eztem Mei'Atzamai' (Bereishit 2:23).

Hashem took a bone from Adam and with it he formed Chava, who became an independent individual. Hence, the connection between 'Eztem' and 'Atzmaut,' a 'bone' and 'independence.' For us, the connection advances further than that. Israel is central to our existence, symbolising the skeletal form of the body. Although it is not always possible to physically be in Israel, we are reminded each year on Yom Ha'atzmaut of how fortunate we are that the State of Israel exists and that we can be connected to it. Here, I will discuss the two things that have resonated with me the most about Israel: its unity and its resilience.

Israel is widely known for its hospitality and warm nature. Recently we witnessed Israel open its arms to welcome Ukrainian refugees in response to this time of crisis, displaying the essence of loving your neighbour as yourself. In the Torah it is deemed a mitzvah to accept and love strangers for we once were strangers. Thousands of Israeli families open up their homes to students all year round for shabbat meals, which I was lucky enough to have experienced during my year in Midrasha.

Like Avraham, opening his tent up to welcome guests, people go out their way to support others. So many charitable organisations have been set up in Israel, several of which I was fortunate to intern at and witness the tremendous continuous chesed going on there. At the giving of the Torah the singular is used rather than the plural when describing the Jewish people:

וַיִּחַרְשֶׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹגֵד הָהָר׃

*And Israel encamped opposite the mountain* (Shemot 19:2).

Rashi explains that they were like one person with one heart. The literary use of the singular highlights the fact that we are one people who share a sense of mutual responsibility for one another.

Israel for me feels safer than anywhere else in the world. The response of the people of Israel to terror is unity.

*Israel has taken a tattered, shattered nation and made it live again. Israel is the country whose national anthem, Hatikva, means hope. Israel is the home of hope* (Rabbi Sacks zt"l).

**WE ARE REMINDED EACH YEAR ON YOM HA'ATZMAUT OF HOW FORTUNATE WE ARE THAT THE STATE OF ISRAEL EXISTS**

Throughout ancient and modern history we have witnessed this pattern of behaviour. This resilience is also reflected in the non-materialistic nature of many in Israel who are happy living off only what is needed. For me, it demonstrates a different attitude to life, focused on gratitude and being satisfied with what you have (Avot 4:1). It is this resilient attitude and Hashem's help that has enabled us to survive as a nation.

*Israel is the people that has always been sustained by faith, faith in G-d, in the future, in life itself; they choose life in the face of death* (Rabbi Sacks zt"l).

Throughout all the persecutions, exiles, wars, pogroms, and holocausts, the Jewish people remain just that, a unified but resilient people.

*Abigail was a madricha on H-Course Machane 5782*

## A COUNTRY OF ACHDUT

OLIVER RADIVAN  
SHEVET HINEINI

Every year in Israel at around the same time, tensions rise and a string of terrorist attacks occur. This year unfortunately there was a lot and that brought with it a lot of fear for Jews around the world, but especially for us living in Israel at the time.



It's hard to describe the tension in the air but what's even harder to describe is the sense of unity and achdut between everyone. Whether religious or not religious, left wing or right wing. It's not a subtle feeling but it's not spoken either. Nowhere else in the world would you feel a sense of connection with complete strangers but Israel. My favourite thing about Israel is this bond people feel towards each other.

This was particularly evident during the peaks of coronavirus outbreaks within the yeshiva I am in. Guys would organise meals for the people in isolation and get them anything they needed.

This experience opened my eyes to how much greater life can be in an environment where people help each other in all sorts of ways, whether they are friends or not.

I think this is especially important to Hashem as the reason the Second Beit Hamikdash was destroyed was because of Sinat Chinam, baseless hatred, so when we come together in these times of distress I think it's sort of a tikun for how we behaved during the time of the Second Bet HaMikdash.

**...AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE  
PEOPLE HELP EACH OTHER  
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WHETHER THEY ARE FRIENDS  
OR NOT**

So in the days leading up to Yom Ha'atzmaut when arguments and disagreements start to arise I think it's important to remember that we need to stick together because this unity is the most precious thing to

Hashem.

*Oliver is currently a participant on Hachsharat Torani at Yeshivat Hakotel*

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **The Lishmah Women's Bet Midrash Programme** is now open to **all Bogrot and Sixth-Formers** on Tuesdays 8-10pm at the London Bayit!

- **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

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

- **Moreshet Heritage Project** is underway with opportunities to interview older members of the community, share your family's story or join our BAnd!

- Look out for details about our exciting **Tikkun Leil Shavuot** Programme!

- Sign up for our **Bnei Mitzvah Programme**, taking place for Years 7 & 8 at a Sviva near you: bauk.org/bnei-mitzvah

- **Sixth-Formers** and **Bogrim** are invited to a session on **Mental Health and Halacha** with **Rabbi Yoni Rosensweig** on Sunday 19th June at 6:30pm!

**Produced by the Bnei Akiva Chinuch Team**