

Shabbat Times

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London	15:39	16:47	Cambridge	15:31	16:48
Manchester	15:37	16:50	Leeds	15:30	16:45
Birmingham	15:39	16:51	Liverpool	15:38	16:56
Oxford	15:39	16:55	Jerusalem	15:59	17:14

Coming up....

- Winter Machane is coming up 22-29th December
- Hadracha training day for all Madrichim in sviva is on 11th December contact Zechariah on Zechariah@bauk.org for more info
- Limud continues at the London Bayit Monday night at 7:30
- Israel Machane forms are now out, for more information contact Ollie on ollie@bauk.org

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 is Esav portrayed as such a bad person in the Tenach?

SHABBAT



LASHEM

שבת לה'

פרשת תולדות

PARASHAT TOLDOT

תנועת בני אקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

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

Nature vs Nurture

Elise Abrahams

Taken from Rays of The Sun by Shprintza Herskovits:

In this week's parasha when Yitzchak is introduced in the Torah it is written

ואלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק

And these are the offspring of Yitzchak son of Avraham, Avraham begot Yitzchak

Why does this pasuk says both; 'Yitzchak son of Abraham' and 'Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak' surely the two statements mean the same thing. As we know the Torah never wastes words, therefore the two statements must have different meanings.

Rashi explains that 'Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak' is worded in this way to ensure people did not spread a rumour that Sarah became pregnant from Avimelech, rather than Avraham as it was known that they were unable to have children together.

Therefore, G-d made Yitzchak look identical to Avraham so no one would doubt that Yitzchak was Avraham's son. However, this explanation does not clarify why the statement is repeated twice.

The Kli Yakar states that it says both expressions to teach us two different things. There is a difference between saying 'ben' (son of) and 'holeed' (gave birth to). One can be called the son of someone else even if they are not biologically their son, such as a teacher and their student, they could be described as the son of their teacher. The Kli Yakar teaches that when you teach or nurture someone, their behaviour becomes similar to your own, however their nature and essence does not change. This differs from when you give birth to someone, the child's nature is actually similar to their parents. Therefore, the Torah uses both expressions to describe Yitzchak as he was similar to Avraham both in behaviour (nurture) and his essence (nature).

Elise Abrahams is in Shevet Eitan and was a madricha on Bet Chalutzki 5776



HADRACHA DAY

Join us for a morning dedicated to improving your hadracha skills. We will be looking at advanced informal education skills as well as the necessary legal safeguarding

DATE: 11th December 2016

TIME: 10-1



תנועת בני אקיבא
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The Dependency of Israel

These lines are written bearing in mind the terrible flash-fires that swept across Israel last week. In the merit of our Torah, those who have been affected by this tragedy should have a speedy recovery, and be blessed to successfully piece back-together their lives that so suddenly crumbled apart.

The Land of Israel is one that has forever been super-charged with tension. Political tension, religious tension, economic tension and more. Another tension that is often overlooked is regarding water. Water is life. Beyond irrigation, agriculture and sanitation, without drinkable water people will dehydrate and die. Civilizations, both ancient and modern alike, need adequate water resources to survive and certainly to flourish.

There are countries that can boast an abundant source of drinkable water. Biblically, the classic example of this is the River Nile in Egypt. In contrast to Egypt, Israel is highly dependent on rain. As such, there has always been an emphasis on prayer for rain, as well as instituted public fast days when the rain doesn't fall on time. Thus we begin to request rain at the earliest possible time in the rainy season: In Israel, fifteen days after Shemini Atzeret (7 Cheshvan) and in the diaspora we will be beginning next week on the fifth of December (and in years when there are 29 days in February, December 6th).

The consequences of being a rain-dependant eco-climate is the risk of famine. Indeed, each of the three sets of our patriarchs struggled with famine. In our *parasha*, Yitzchak must contend with famine (Bereishit 26:1):

“And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Avraham.”

Both Avraham and Yitzchak migrate to Nile-saturated Egypt in order to survive the famine, as does Ya'acov when there is a famine in his days (Bereishit 42). Yitzchak, contrary to Avraham however, is told not to complete his descent to Egypt:

“And Hashem appeared unto him, and said: ‘Go not down to Egypt ... Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for to you, and to your offspring, I will give all these lands ... and I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and will give to your seed all these lands ...”

In contrast to Yitzchak becoming blessed for staying in Israel despite the famine, Avraham in fact is chastised and punished for his decision. Ramban comments (12:10):

“Avraham’s very departure from Israel due to the famine – the land that he was [divinely] commanded to sojourn in – was in sin, for God redeems from the death of famine. And the Egyptian exile and slavery to Paroh was decreed upon Avraham’s offspring due to his behaviour...”

This commentary by Ramban is piercing. Was Avraham’s decent so terrible that we deserved the bondage in Egypt on its account? What reaction was expected of Avraham under these circumstances; was he meant to die of starvation?

The fragile eco-climate of the Land of Israel could easily be seen as a curse. It is far easier to live in tranquillity in a land like Egypt with the Nile flowing through and irrigating it. But the Torah sees this arrangement as a blessing (Devarim 11:12):

“A land which Hashem, your God cares for; the eyes of Hashem, your God are always upon it...”

Rashi comments that Hashem’s eyes are upon the Land of Israel in regard to the rain. Israel is a place that needs specific ecological conditions to be fulfilled in order to have the necessary precipitation, thus needs Hashem to oversee these natural conditions. Israel, by definition, faces an irrigation challenge; it is unclear whether the year will be one of abundance or scarcity. Even today we are constantly pre-occupied with the level of the Kinneret, and the amount of rainfall at the right time. How is this situation a blessing and not a curse?

I once heard an answer to this from my *rebbe*, Rav Yitzchak Neriya, who explains based on a teaching of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk: After the sin of the forbidden fruit, the snake is punished that he will eat of the dust of the earth (Bereishit 3:14). How is this a curse, surely eating the most abundant substance in the world is a blessing? The Kotzker explains that this abundance is a curse, inasmuch as it expresses that God wishes nothing to do with the snake; it is an expression that He doesn't want the snake to speak with Him. God doesn't want a relationship with the snake, this is the greatest curse there can be.

The dependency on Hashem coordinating the appropriate forces of nature to provide may be a source of tension. But this tension means that we cannot take what we have for granted. Hashem wants us to call-out to Him, and wants our material abundance to be a source for cultivating a relationship with Him.

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Avraham reacted inappropriately by descending to Egypt when faced with the famine; instead he should have called-out to Hashem. Avraham was meant to internalize that the eco-climate, and indeed our very existence in Israel, is in order to cultivate our relationship with Hashem.

As we begin to request rain, we realize that all comes from Hashem, and our material abundance is a blessing; it is a source of cultivating our relationship with Him. May this year be one of health and abundance, and appropriate, well-needed rainfall in Israel.

The Week that Was...

Over Shabbat we had our bogrim’s Shabbat Ha’irgun, with a Friday night dinner at Rav Ari and Chaya’s followed by a motzei Shabbat tochnit in Birmingham.

The Mazkirut roadshow continued this week in Bristol on Wednesday.



Sviva Spotlight

Dvar Torah and Update from one of our Svirot

Whitefield BA

Whitefield BA is one of the UK’s smallest svirot with Rosh Josh Caplan, and Sgan Josh Fine. Whitefield BA takes place at Whitefield shul for school years 3-8 on a weekly basis, approximately four miles away from the northern Bayit. In its heyday Whitefield BA had tvatim containing high calibre with people such as David Reuben and Simon Levy who both became members of the Mazkirut.

Deceit

Josh Caplan – Rosh of Whitefield BA

In this week’s parsha Ya’akov Avinu bought the brachot from Eisav and yet he still went and deceived his father by dressing up as Esav. Why did Ya’akov do this? Why not just tell his father that he had been sold the birth right?

According to one opinion Ya’akov did tell his father that he was sold the birth right – they say that instead of Ya’akov saying “I am Esav the first-born”, he actually said “I am in place of Esav the firstborn”. We can however argue that Yitzchak would not have approved of the sale because Esav was not of sound mind. We could say that his mind was clouded by hunger which impaired his judgement and the sale was therefore not valid. In answer to that we could also say that Esav did not fully appreciate the birthright and only when he realised what he had to lose did he actually come to his father for the blessings.

Esav also had immense respect for his father and he therefore honoured him as much as he could. Because of this we could say that Yitzchak was deceived twice – by Yitzchak when he got the brachot and by Esav because his father didn’t realise how bad Esav was because he was very good to him. Because of the way Esav respected and honoured his father, Yitzchak may have wanted to give the blessings of the birth right to Esav anyway regardless of if the sale was legitimate. Both this and the fact that he didn’t want to risk it not being a legitimate sale could have led to Ya’akov deceiving his father in order to get the brachot.

It is interesting to see how Ya’akov never lied about being Esav – he said “I am Ya’akov and Esav is the first-born” and it can also be believed that he did say “I am in place of Esav the first-born”. From this we can learn that we have to be very careful about what we say and how we portray ourselves.