

Shabbat Times

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London	15:39	16:50	Stoke	15:37 16:58
Manchester	15:37	16:52	Leeds	15:30 16:48
Birmingham	15:38	16:59	Liverpool	15:37 17:00
Denbigh	15:40	17:02	Jerusalem	16:05 17:21

Rosh Chodesh Tevet is on Friday the 30th December

Shabbat debate

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

One of the biggest things when parenting is not having favourite children, how could it be that Ya'akov one of our forefathers who we learn so much made such a huge parenting error?



Shabbat Shalom to all the Chanichim in Stoke and Wales having an incredible time on winter Machane!!

The Rainsbury and Slonim families are delighted to sponsor Shabbat Lashem to celebrate the forthcoming marriage of Michael and Dana. Mazal Tov!

SHABBAT



LASHEM

שבת לה'

פרשת וישלח

PARASHAT VAYESHEV

תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

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

Yoseph's Self Restraint?

Sara Ellerman

Parshas Vayeshev is about the story of bechiras (free will of) Yoseph. We read of Yoseph's response to Potifar's wife's attempts to lure him into an intimate adulterous relationship. Yoseph explained to her that he could not betray his master, Potifar, in this fashion, and concluded, "How can I commit this great evil, and I will have sinned against God" (39:9). However, every day she tried to seduce him, and despite being Yoseph HaTzadik, it was not without a challenge.

Chazal say in Gemara Yoma that Potifar's wife had a plan. Every day she tried to seduce him. She would change clothing from the morning to the evening to look even better; she threatened to imprison him, to which Yoseph responded 'G-d can free the prisoners'. She said she'll break him; he replied 'zokef kefufim'. She threatened to blind him; he responded 'pokeach ivrim'. She even offered payment, but nothing enticed Yoseph to sin.

However, that is not entirely true.

The passuk (39:11) tells us how one day Yoseph came into the house to do his work, but nobody was there. Rabbi Yochanan explains how that day was a holiday, and everyone went to pray to the gods except for Potifar's wife, who stayed home because she wasn't feeling well. Yoseph knew she would be home alone and he knowingly went to work, ready to give up.

Chazal comment that when she grabbed hold of him and tried to seduce him an image of his father appeared and said "the time will come when all the shevatim are written on the breastplate – do you want your name to be missing?" That image, either literally or figuratively is what saved him. However, how could Yoseph have given in, having withstood so much?

The answer is that even if you are Yoseph HaTzadik and have tremendous fortitude and emunah in Hashem, when placed in a situation of enticement even Yoseph can falter. No one can be so sure they can withstand everything.

What does that have to do with us? We often find ourselves in environments which are not always the best situations, but we convince ourselves we can withstand it. We don't worry enough and we need to remember we aren't better than Yoseph, who had true Fear of Heaven and Fear of Sin. If Yosef could almost break, who's to say we can't? Obviously, there are situations we can't always avoid but there are situations we shouldn't run towards. We need to remember to constantly re-evaluate and check ourselves, which will ultimately strengthen our emunah and help us make the right choices.

Sara Ellerman is in Shevet Eitan and was a Madricha on AC Summer Machane 5776



I would like to focus this week's column – which is being read nationwide – on two brief messages for the hundreds of chaverim currently on Winter Machane.

Changing Perspectives

This week's *parasha* features the well-known story about Yoseph and his brothers. The brothers, out of suspicion, jealousy and hatred plotted to murder Yoseph only to reconsider at the last moment and then sell him down to Egypt as a slave – hopefully, never to see him again.

I'm sure we have all gotten upset at other people – our siblings, peers or parents. I'm also sure we would never be guilty of plotting such a diabolical scheme as the murder planned by Yoseph's brothers. As such, it would be easy to judge the brothers and to think they were terrible people.

In Judaism we don't pretend our forefathers were perfect; we believe they were great men and women, but they were human just like us and were able to mess-up sometimes. (The Gemara, Midrashim and commentaries are full of criticism about when our forefathers did, indeed, make wrong decisions.) But this imperfection doesn't take away from their greatness. In fact, that they could mess-up, but usually didn't, actually shows how great they were. Indeed, the Gemara teaches that the sale of Yoseph was the brothers' only sin. For their entire lives they had a perfect streak of making the right decisions; what does that tell us about this event? What does it tell us about the brothers' character?

Sometimes we jump to conclusions. We judge a situation and react too quickly without understanding the whole picture. We judge people without giving them a fair chance. This is true about our relationships with family and friends – especially while on *machane*. We should never jump to conclusions nor pass judgment.

Changing our perspective can allow us to see things in a new light. And when we do we can resolve differences and find solutions to challenges.

Into the Burning Furnace

In our *parasha* we read of Yehudah's misbehaviour with his daughter-in-law, Tamar. For her actions, Tamar was to be punished by death. Although she had the means to shift the responsibility to Yehudah, thereby saving her own life, she never mentioned his involvement and merely hinted in such a way that only he could understand and confess.

Based on this our rabbis teach that "it is preferable for one to be thrown into a burning furnace rather than embarrass another person publicly".

How often do we advance our own cause at the expense of someone else? How often do we put other people down and embarrass them? This is a serious matter. How would we feel in a similar situation?

Throwing oneself into a burning furnace may be quite extreme, but the message is potent and clear: We must dedicate ourselves to thinking about the people around us. We must strive to create a society that cares.

During the week of *machane* we spend all our time learning and having fun with other people. We must be careful how we speak to, and about, other people. We must be sensitive to others, not only to ensure we are not hurting them, but also to actively try and enhance their experience. This is also true about our behaviour towards our *madrichim* – who especially deserve our respect.

Tamar – who was willing to give her life out of care and sensitivity to Yehudah – merited that the Mashiach comes from who lineage. We too can make the world so much better by showing this extra care and empathy for others.

The Week that Was...

Winter Machane has begun, with hundreds of chanichim and madrichim coming together from around the country for an week of fun.

Hello Hachshara

Catching up with our hachshara programme in Israel

Shalom,

The main thing that comes to mind when I think of the last three months is how quickly they've gone by. Both Midreshet Amit and Torani have allowed me to explore Israel and deepen my Jewish Identity.

Bnei Akiva took us to Eilat hoping to take us on numerous hikes and give us a break from the cold Jerusalem weather. But, upon arrival, it became evident that Eilat was going to flood for the duration of our stay and that our hikes would have to be cancelled. Fortunately, this didn't stop us from having a great time getting to know each other and the South Africans and Australians. We also went ice skating and had a big Mifkad with everyone where we learnt about how Eilat was captured.

On Shabbat we went to Arad and joined up with other BA Sniffing from around the world to celebrate World BA Weekend. This was very exciting and interesting because we got to swap stories and teach songs to people who live as far as Australia and as close as France. We also heard stories from ex-soldiers and Bnot Sherut and asked them questions about their service.

Two weeks later, Bnei Akiva took us to Hadera to have Shabbat with the Beit Hayered kids in Kfar Yeladim. On Friday night, we got to play games and have an amazing tish with all the kids which was so much fun for everyone.

On Shabbat day we were divided and put into different Mishpachot for lunch. We got to practice our Hebrew and connect with the kids and families one on one.

We ended Shabbat with a beautiful Havdala where we all promised to return and have another amazing Shabbat together.

This week we went to Chashmoniam Yishuv where we experienced a genuine Israeli Shabbat Ha'Irgun. We were split into various families who lived in Chashmoniam and we ate and learnt about their Aliyot and life in the Yishuv. Later, our Madrichim during our Peulah told us about the social action and programmes BA have created over the years for all kinds of people. The stories from the families of Chashmoniam and BA's programmes were incredibly inspiring.

We were also lucky enough to be a part of some of the night's events leading up to the revealing of the new Shevet's name. The whole community were a part of the evening and the kids performed incredibly cool and cute dances.

It is incredible how much we do with Bnei Akiva especially in such a short period of time...and it's only been half the year.

Shuli Ferber is on Torani and is at Midreshet Amit

