

Coming Up...

Full details of all our events are available on our Facebook page, or call the Bayit on 0208 209 1319 to speak to one of the team.

- Watch out for the Israel Machane brochures which have been posted to Shevet Avichai!
- Shevet Eitan... Hachshara applications are now open!
- If you would like any information about Israel Machane (13th July-16th August) or Hachshara, please contact Esther at israel@bauk.org
- Join Bnei Akiva on March of the Living in Poland, 12th-17th April 2015. Highly subsidised places are available to Bogrim. For more information, email Ben Dov at mazkir@bauk.org
- We are proud to be holding an Aliyah Pilot Trip on 14th-21st June 2015 for Bogrim. For full information, contact Rav Ari at rav@bauk.org

Catching up with our gap year programmes in Israel...

Hello
Hachshara!

Shalom from Israel!

Recently we had Shabbat Hachshara, when all gap year students on Bnei Akiva programmes get together and have a really meaningful Shabbat. We began the weekend with a trip to a chocolate factory where everyone got to make their own chocolate bar and truffles. We then arrived at the hostel where we would be spending Shabbat, with a beautiful view overlooking the Kinneret. Over the course of Shabbat we had the opportunity to speak to and get to know people our age from all over the world, varying from French to Australian to South African to South American. After an incredible Havdalah, we headed to Tiveria before each going our separate ways.

I'm really looking forward to spending Chanukah in Israel because it will be amazing to walk in the streets and see decorations knowing they are for Chanukah, not Christmas, as well as seeing Chanukiot in all the windows. Of course though, I am most excited for the Torani Chanukah party (and for doughnuts).

From Gemma Kay

Gemma Kay is in Shevet Na'aleh, and is on Hachsharat Torani at Midreshet Yeud,

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28th Kislev 5775
20th December 2014



תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

ושבתה הארץ Shabbat Lashem 'שבת לה' - מקץ שבת חנוכה - Miketz, Shabbat Chanukah

What's in a Name?

Talia Album

In this week's parasha, we see the naming of Yosef's two sons, Menashe and Ephraim. Throughout Tenach and Jewish History, much significance is placed on the meaning of Jewish names, and thus the question of why Yosef chose these two names in particular arises.

Let's first address the name of Yosef's eldest son, Menashe. Rav Hirsch explains that 'nashani' is routinely translated as 'forget', and Yosef uses it for the name of his eldest son as Yosef wanted to distance himself from his father's family and move on after his brothers sold him. This provides a satisfactory explanation as to why Yosef did not try to reach out to his father for a long period of time, as he simply did not want to. However, this interpretation does not appear to tally with the description of Yosef to which we are all accustomed.

The Malbim also defines 'nashani' as 'forget', but provides a different analysis of its significance. He says that the implication of the word 'nashini' lies in the fact that Yosef wanted to ensure that he would never forget the troublesome times that he endured with his family. This is the same reason that we eat matza and maror on Seder night, to guarantee that the plight of the Bnei Yisrael is never forgotten.

A similar line of thinking can be found with regards to the naming of Ephraim, an adaptation of the word 'hiphrani', meaning to be fruitful. The Abarbanel notes that despite the greatness and riches bestowed on Yosef as second-in-command of Mitzrayim, he still regarded it as the land of his suffering, and was only blessed with a son in the land of his sufferance. Rav Hirsch explains that Yosef's choice of names for his sons is the greatest proof of his loyalty to his origins in Eretz Canaan, and his determination not to be sucked into Egyptian culture.

It is for this reason that Chazal refer to Yosef as HaTzaddik – the righteous one. Even in a position of such power, he never failed to remember who he was and where his allegiances should lie. So too should we, even in the 21st century with all its distractions, ensure that we never forget who we really are. We must not become complacent, as now, more than ever, the State of Israel needs us to remember who we really are and stand up for what we believe in.

Talia Album is in Shevet Lehava and is currently a Madricha on Haroeh Machane

Celebrating a simcha? A special birthday coming up? Include Bnei Akiva in your celebrations by sponsoring Shabbat Lashem! For details, email shabbat@bauk.org

Editor's Corner

Shalom!

Shabbat shalom to our 100 Madrichim, Technikum and Senior Tzevet members who are currently at pre-camp, preparing to provide an incredible Bnei Akiva experience to our chanichim, who arrive on Monday!

Last week 40 Bogrim enjoyed a massive Friday Night meal at Rav Ari and Chaya's house.

Rosh Chodesh will be from Sunday night until Tuesday night of the coming week.

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

		☾
London	15:36	16:47
Manchester	15:34	16:48
Birmingham	15:35	16:53
Cambridge	15:30	16:47
Leeds	15:25	16:43
Liverpool	15:35	16:55
Denbigh	15:38	17:00
Stoke on Trent	15:34	16:55
Utttoxeter	15:34	16:54
Jerusalem	15:56	17:16

To receive Shabbat Lashem by email every Friday, or for sponsorship details, send an email to shabbat@bauk.org

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Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

Awakening the Darkness

We are all familiar with the two main miracles of Chanukah: The victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks, and the oil which burnt for eight days. The Talmud suggests an even earlier source for celebration at this time (Avodah Zarah 8a):

“When Adam saw the day getting gradually shorter, he said, ‘Woe is me, perhaps because I have sinned, the world around me is being darkened and returning to its state of chaos and confusion; this then is the kind of death to which I have been sentenced from Heaven!’ So he began keeping an eight-day fast. But as he observed the winter equinox and noted the day getting increasingly longer, he said, ‘This is the world’s course’, and he set forth to keep an eight-day festival.”

Why did Adam associate darkness with his sin; why did he think that this would be an appropriate punishment for his wrongdoings? What, actually, are “light” and “darkness”?

What is the difference between a dark room, and one which is lit up? While it seems like the two are total opposites, in truth there is actually no difference between them; nothing actually changes when we flick the switch. The only difference is in our perception. We cannot be aware of the room or its contents when it is dark, but we can when there is light. It is quite fascinating how light can create such a significant “change” to an object or a scene when in fact nothing at all is changed. How interesting is it that psychological studies that have shown that the appearance of food influences the eater’s taste, and lighting can affect one’s culinary experience.

What is the secret of light that – despite having no mass or physical form – it makes such a tangible difference in how we experience life?

Life could technically be lived without light. Light, however, is what allows us to grasp the greater context within which we are living. Light is the only “thing” in life that has no definition of its own, but rather is defined based on our perception of other things through it. (Even when we “see” a ray of light, it is not the light itself we are seeing, but a reflection of dust shimmering in the light.) Thus, technically, light is not a “thing” at all. Rather it is what gives all things their context and specific, unique purpose in the world.

The Shulchan Aruch opens with the following teaching (OC 1):

“One must awaken like a lion to perform the service of the creator; that he shall awaken the darkness.”

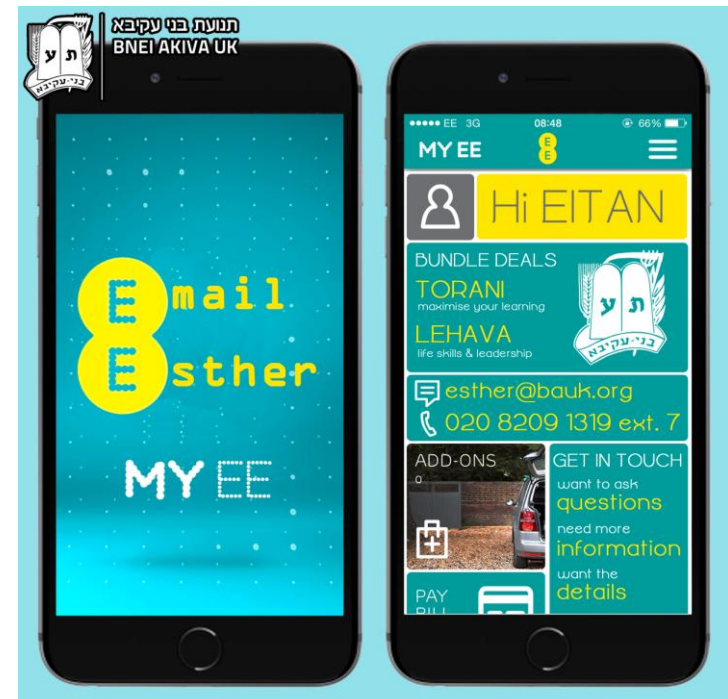
The simple understanding of this is that one should awaken in the morning for *tefilla*. But a careful analysis suggests that another lesson in these opening words of the codified law: What is the “service of the creator”, and what is the meaning of “awakening the darkness”?

The first act Hashem performs in creating the world is (Bereishit 1:3): “And Hashem said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light.” In making this declaration, Hashem set out the essence of our existence: All things in the world are purposeful and important; all things deserve to be seen. The goal of our life is that against the context of darkness we should shed light; upon the backdrop of depression we should give hope.

The essence of our being is to imitate the “work of the creator”, to recognize the purpose of everything and to illuminate the darkness of our world. The Shulchan Aruch opens with this message; this is the underlying message of all Torah and all *halacha*. The epitome of sin is darkness; the greatest of all sins is to not recognize the unique place that someone or something plays in life.

On Chanukah we are called-upon to contemplate the difference between darkness and light, and to reinforce our commitment to enlightening the world by appreciating our own essential value, and that of all people and things.

Rav Ari Faust is in Shevet Yechiam, and is Shaliach for Bnei Akiva and the Jewish Agency for Israel



Chanukah Inspiration: Dreidel Dreidel Dreidel...

Carly Abrahams

A traditional pastime on Chanukah is playing dreidel, a four sided spinning top with Hebrew letters on each side. The Hebrew letters ג, ה, ש and נ begin the words in the Hebrew sentence “ניס גדול היה שם”, “a great miracle happened there.” (In Israel, the letter פ is inscribed instead of ש to correspond to “פה”. meaning “here” instead of “there”). Children enjoy playing this game by winning chocolate coins depending upon which letter is up after the dreidel has stopped spinning and falls.

A commonly known explanation behind the dreidel is that the Greeks had forbidden the Jewish people to learn Torah. During this time, Jews would gather together to play this seemingly simple game and use it as a disguise to discuss Pasukim from Torah, thus continuing to defy the Greeks from under their noses.

Another profound lesson about Jewish history could be seen from the dreidel. The four sides symbolise the four major exiles that the Jews have experienced: Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Just like spinning a dreidel, each of these empires experienced periods of glory, but eventually fell. In history, as with the dreidel, only two things remain constant: the point on which it revolves and the handle above. The point around which the dreidel revolves symbolises the eternal Jewish people, while the ‘hand’ from above which spins the dreidel of history is the Divine Providence of Hashem.

Carly Abrahams is in Shevet Hagevurah and was on Hachsharat Torani at Midreshet Harova