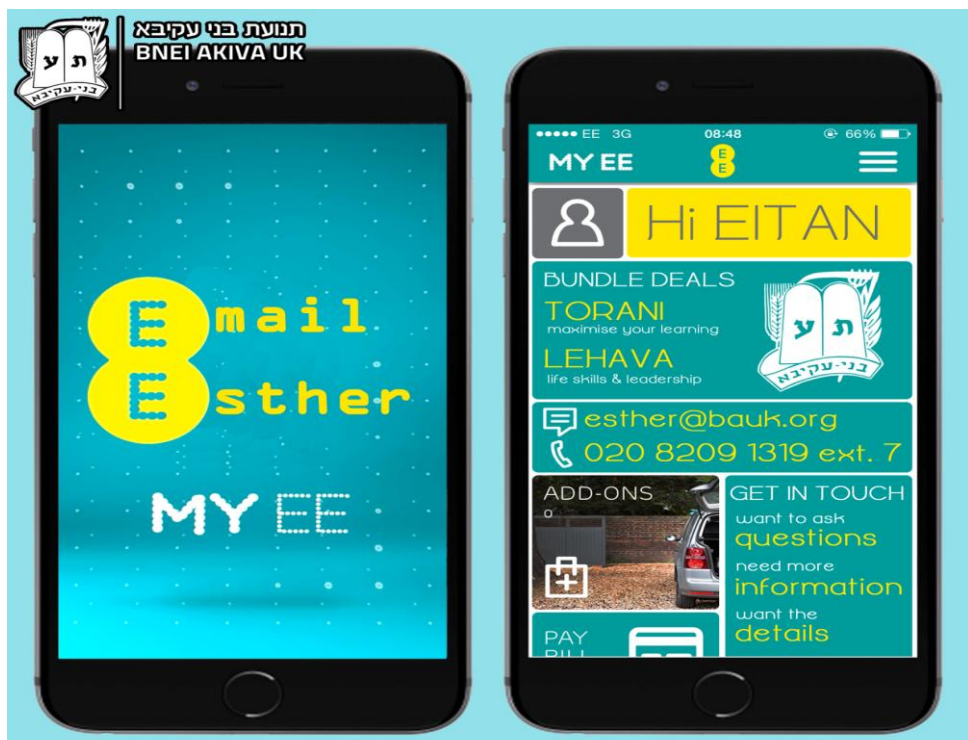


Coming Up...

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.

- Apply for Winter Machane now, to avoid disappointment! For full information, contact Yehuda at camps@bauk.org
- Family Friday Nights are coming up in Svivot across the country! To find out about one in your area, contact your local Rosh, or Adam at svivot@bauk.org
- Shevet Eitan... Hachshara applications are now open! Contact Esther for any information at israel@bauk.org
- Applications and Brochures are out for Israel Machane (13th July-6th August 2015). For full information, contact Esther at israel@bauk.org
- Come along to the Bogrim's shiur with Rav Ari on Thursday evenings! Email rav@bauk.org for more information.
- Come along to Limmud on Monday nights in London, Manchester and Birmingham. Learn Torah, and meet friends!



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29th November 2014

תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

Shabbat Lashem 'ושבתה הארץ שבת לה'

Vayetze - ויצא

Our "Extra" Mother

Daniel Glass

"And Hashem saw that Leah was hated, so He opened her womb; but Rachel remained barren." (Bereshit 29:31)

Due to the fact that Leah was "hated" by Yaakov, He gave her a child. Therefore, Leah names the baby Reuven, "**because Hashem has seen my affliction**" (29:32).

These aren't words we expect to hear when the Torah tells us about Yaakov and his family. Yaakov was a man of truth, literally "Yisrael" - the patriarch to produce the nation that Hashem had promised to Avraham many years before.

Yaakov knew from the moment he laid eyes on Rachel that he was destined to marry her. The Torah tells us that "**he raised his voice and wept**" (29:11). We would assume that Yaakov's tears were an expression of happiness at having met his soul mate, and that he could start his task of building Bnei Yisrael. However, Rashi explains that these were no tears of joy; Yaakov foresaw that Rachel would not be buried with him and our other forebears in the Cave of Machpela, and was deeply saddened by this.

Yaakov initially worked for 7 years to marry Rachel, but was tricked by Lavan into marrying the wrong sister - Leah. Yaakov loved Rachel and knew together their destiny was to raise the twelve tribes of Yisrael. Therefore, he worked for another 7 years for her hand in marriage. Yaakov treated Leah and his other two wives well, but this did not compare to his love for Rachel. The love was so great that it was as if Leah was hated. So to "make up for it" Hashem made Leah the mother of the majority of the tribes.

Wait a minute.... one thing still doesn't make sense. Yaakov never loved Leah the same way as he loved Rachel, and he was tricked into marrying her. It seems that the whole marriage was a mistake, and that Leah was never supposed to be Yaakov's wife!

The answer is, she wasn't. The Torah teaches that Leah was destined to marry Esav and Rachel was destined for Yaakov. Knowing this, Leah cried out to Hashem, so much that "**Leah's eyes were tender**" (29:17). And so Hashem had mercy on her and allowed her to marry Yisrael. Yaakov took upon the spiritual goals of Esav and became Yisrael, the person Leah was destined to marry. And so we gained our "extra" mother.

Daniel Glass is in Shevet Hagevurah and was a Madrich on Haroeh Winter Machane 5774

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!

'Bleed BA Dry' was a roaring success last week, in which over 30 bogrim donated blood across the country. Thank you to all who participated in this important mitzvah.

Last Shabbat we held very successful reunion Shabbatonim for our Israel Machane groups. Thank you to Belmont, Bushey, and Northwood United Synagogues and Maida Vale S&P for hosting us.

We are excited that over 200 of our chaverim are attending Family Friday Nights in Finchley and Borehamwood this week.

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

London	15:42	16:49
Manchester	15:41	16:52
Birmingham	15:42	16:57
Cambridge	15:36	16:51
Leeds	15:32	16:47
Liverpool	15:42	16:59
Jerusalem	15:55	17:14

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



Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

Place and Purpose

How are we to react to challenge and persecution? Where are we to find comfort in the face of tragedy and personal loss? While we mustn't be naïve in relation to the difficult situations we must sometimes face, our attitude could transform the way in which we experience them. The Torah offers a deep and inspirational lesson in relating to tragedy and suffering:

Our *parasha* opens with Ya'acov escaping the Land of Israel as a fugitive, because his brother Esav intended to murder him after he stole Esav's blessing (Bereishit 28:10-17):

“And Ya'acov went out from Be'ersheva, and went toward Haran. And he came upon the place, and rested there because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of the place, and put it by his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, Hashem stood above him ... And Ya'acov awoke out of his sleep, and he said: 'Surely Hashem is in this place; and I knew it not.' And he was afraid, and said: 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'”

Ya'acov went to sleep as the sun set, and it became dark. Simply understood, it would be dangerous for someone to continue to journey the wilderness at night, so he set-up camp to sleep until daybreak. However, this simple interpretation doesn't fully explain the text: why is it necessary to indicate that Ya'acov went to sleep at night? Had the text not indicated this, we could have surely assumed it ourselves. Also, why does it specify that Ya'acov slept in “the place”? What is this place, why is its identity not revealed, and why is it significant that he rested there specifically?

Interestingly, the word *ha'makom* – the place – indicating a very specific place, is repeated several times throughout the passage. Each time it is used totally redundantly, as the geographical location is not only unspecified, but is actually irrelevant to understanding the story!

The Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 68:9) suggests a novel interpretation to the meaning of “the place” referred to in our passage:

“Rebbi Huna said in the name of Rebbi Ami: ‘We know that an epithet for the Holy One, Blessed be He, is *ha'makom*. This teaches that He is the place of the world and the world is not His place.’”

Ha'makom – the place – refers to Hashem: Our space provides the backdrop and context for all experiences we undergo in life. Not only is Hashem not limited to physical space – “the world is not His place” – but He is the context to our world, everything exists within Him and because He wills for it to exist. Hashem is the place of the world and thus everything in the world has a specific “place” and a specific purpose to fulfill. As Abraham Heschel writes:

“To think of Him is to open our minds to His all-pervading presence, to our being replete with His presence ... He remains beyond our reach as long as we do not know that our reach is within Him ... Thinking of God is made possible by His being the subject and by our being His object ... Thus, we must think of Him as the subject of all, as the life of our life, as the mind of our mind.”

The way we can connect to Hashem is to recognize that all exists within Him, and thus we are inseparable from Him. We connect to Hashem by living life with the cognizance that since Hashem is the place of the world, everything has a place and thus everything happens for a purpose. To connect to Hashem is to connect to the purpose behind all that happens.

Ya'acov – a dejected fugitive – is forced to run from the world of innocence and purity he was accustomed to. His world that was so holy at once was filled with darkness. This desperation is overcome by hope when Ya'acov realizes that Hashem is “the place” within which the darkness exists, and thus there is divine purpose to this as well.

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



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All the Land that You See

Looking at and learning about every corner of our Land

Kfar Etzion

Joe Benedyk

“I can think of no battle in the annals of the Israel Defence Forces which was more magnificent, more tragic or more heroic than the struggle for Gush Etzion...If there exists a Jewish Jerusalem, our foremost thanks go to the defenders of Gush Etzion” (David Ben Gurion).

Kfar Etzion is an Israeli settlement and religious kibbutz, located between Jerusalem and Hebron in the biblically and historically significant Judean Hills, the southern part of the West Bank. It is often described as the ‘Southern gateway to Jerusalem’ due to its close proximity to the Holy City, about a ten minute drive.

In the twentieth century, there have been four great attempts to settle the region. 1927 was the first attempt, although harsh physical conditions for the settlers forced them to abandon the settlement. In 1935, Shmuel Holtzman (after whom the name of the region was created, “holtz” meaning “tree” in Yiddish and “etz” likewise in Hebrew) established the village of Kfar Etzion. However, repeated Arab attacks drove them away. In 1943, different affiliated groups established four settlements, one of which was the reinvigorated Kfar Etzion. However, only a couple of days before the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the village and area was fiercely attacked. 240 people were killed alongside a further 260 taken into captivity. The ‘Lamed Hei’ refers to the 35 Haganah soldiers who were ambushed and killed trying to re-supply the kibbutzim before its downfall. For nineteen years, from 1948 to 1967, the orphans of those killed in 1948 would look longingly at the ‘Alon Boded’, the Lonely Oak Tree, which symbolised the lost community. Today, it remains a popular attraction site in Gush Etzion.

Finally, in the Six Day War, Kfar Etzion was re-established and today has a population of around 872 (as of 2011). Hanan Porat was a key figure in its re-founding, himself evacuating to Jerusalem from Kfar Etzion where he lived in 1948 before the Arab riots.

The village was the birth place of Yeshivat Har Etzion, the Hesder Yeshiva founded by Rav Yehudah Amital zt”l, which has since moved to Alon Shvut.

Joe Benedyk is in Shevet Hagevurah and was a Madrich on Gimmel Summer Machane 5774