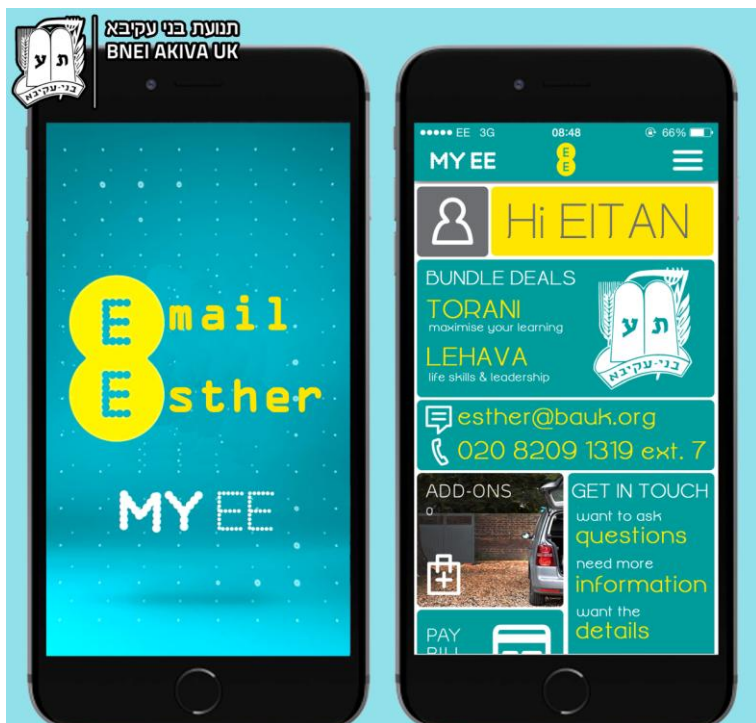


Coming Up...

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.

- Winter Machane is on 22nd – 29th December. Don't miss your last chance to sign up! For full information, contact Yehuda at camps@bauk.org
- 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



Connect with Bnei Akiva, and download our app, at www.bauk.org

Bnei Akiva is proud to be supported by UJIA

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Volume 21 - No 9
21st Kislev 5775
13th December 2014



Shabbat Lashem 'ושבתה הארץ שבת לה' וישב - Vayeshev

Comebacks

Michael Rainsbury

The Jewish people are the ultimate comeback kings. After standing eyeball to eyeball with the angel of death many times, we have survived and are thriving today. Similarly, the Land of Israel, despite being abandoned for centuries, is currently blooming in agriculture, economy and population growth.

The inspiration for our comeback mentality can be traced to this week's parasha. Despite being tipped for future leadership of Yaakov's family following earlier failures of his elder brothers Reuven, Shimon and Levi, Yehuda sank to the lowest levels of society. Not only did he fail to complete his promise of arranging a levirate marriage between Tamar, the wife of both of his first two deceased sons, and his third son Sheyla, but he also slept with a prostitute, who later turns out to be Tamar herself. Not knowing this, Yehuda brought her to be burnt and this led to an EastEnders-style moment when Tamar reveals what had happened and Yehuda admits his wrongdoing.

Yehuda is the prototype for the ability of Am Yisrael to be a people with a 'second chance' mentality. The name 'Yehuda' comes from the word 'I'hadot', which means 'to admit' and 'to thank'. Throughout history we have seen how our nation was given a second chance by Hashem, despite our sins. This is why we are called 'Yehudim' (Jews) – people who admit.

However, Yehuda came to realise this attribute through the actions of Tamar. It was Tamar who deliberately seduced Yehuda, making him recognise his failure in not keeping his promise to her. It was Tamar who made Yehuda realise his hypocrisy in calling for her to be burned as a prostitute when he himself had slept with her.

Tamar's name represents the ability of Eretz Yisrael to be a land with a 'second chance'. The name 'Tamar' means a date – a fruit that is exceedingly sweet yet comes from the date-palm, which grows in the desert. The Tamar demonstrates the survival of a plant, and life itself, where it is least expected – just as in our story, where Tamar allows for the continuation of Yehuda's family.

Together, Yehuda and Tamar represent the ability to bring redemption from the darkest times. Just as Tamar's actions allowed the redemption of Yehuda to take place, it is the blossoming of Eretz Yisrael from a wasteland to a land flowing with milk and honey, which acts as the perfect platform for Am Yisrael to re-establish itself as a 'second-chance' nation.

Michael Rainsbury is in Shevet Kommemiyut and was the Mazkir of Beni Akiva in 5771

Pamela, Julian, Michael and Esther Rainsbury are delighted to sponsor Shabbat Lashem to celebrate the very special occasion of the marriage of Rachel to Stu Bernstein. Mazal tov!

Editor's Corner

Shalom!

Kol Hakavod to Salford Sviva on their Family Friday Night, with 190 people experiencing the unique Bnei Akiva ruach!

We are now gearing up for Winter Machane, with Madrichim heading off to pre-camp on Tuesday. We look forward to welcoming over 200 Chanichim on 22nd December!

This Sunday, Join Bnei Akiva at Super Sunday – fundraising with the UJIA. Slots between 10:00am and 8:00pm are available. Contact Ben Dov at mazkir@bauk.org if you would like to come.

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
Jerusalem	15:56	17:16

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

Achdut - Building on the Cracks

Our *parasha* opens with one of the most incriminating sagas in the Torah – the conflict between Yosef and his brothers. The Torah devotes far more attention to this story than to any other, indicating its central importance. Yosef is hated vehemently by his brothers. Ya'acov sends his son to visit the brothers, who were herding the cattle in Shechem, and the rest is history. The burning question is, why did Ya'acov send Yosef to the brothers? The hatred between the siblings was no secret (Bereishit 37:4); what did the father expect to happen to his beloved son?

“And Israel said to Yosef: ‘Do not your brothers feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you (ve’eshlachacha) to them.’ And he said to him: ‘ Here I am (hineini),’

The Torah specifies that Yosef was not sent on a mere visit; the term “ve’eshlachacha” – “I will send you” – as well as “hineini” – “here I am” – imply that Yosef was being sent on a mission. The term *hineini* denotes an acceptance of a divine mission and an understanding that this mission expresses one's essential self. What was this mission? Why was it necessary for Yosef to undertake it?

As Yosef journeys from the valley of Chevron to Shechem, he encounters a stranger who asks what Yosef is looking for? The man says “*mah tevakesh*” implying “what is the thing you want most out of all other things?”, or “what motivates you?”. Yosef explains (37:16):

“I seek my brothers.”

To which the man replies:

“They have travelled from this.”

This is a strange reply, the text should have read “they have travelled from here”; what is the “this” that they have travelled from? Rashi comments:

“They have departed from the brotherhood in order to seek-out those who will murder you.”

Yosef was seeking that which is most dear, and the singular most important Jewish value – brotherhood and unity. The brothers abandoned this most essential value; “they have travelled from this” implies that they have moved on from the very thing Yosef was seeking – “my brothers”. Yosef is sent from Chevron, meaning “place of friendship”, to Shechem, meaning “place of divisiveness”, in order to reconcile with his brothers, and restore the love that was once prevalent amongst them.

Too often we return to the position of the brothers and pursue disunity and strife instead of acknowledging our unity. Now, unity does not need to equal agreement; no one suggests that we must all believe the same thing or behave the same way. Unity implies that we are part of a greater whole, a unified organism which is complete despite our differences – or because of them. Unity implies that we cannot fulfill our own mission without our “brother” fulfilling theirs.

Throughout our history, we have been plagued by the effects of our disunity – our baseless hatred. The Talmud (Yoma 9) describes the sins which were the main catalysts in each of our exiles. It enumerates the three cardinal sins as the reason for the first, and *sinat chinam* - baseless hatred – as the reason for the second.

Opinions differ which of the two was worse. Surely, we would assume that three sins – all of which require one to give-up their life instead of violating – would be more severe than the one. But this is not what the Gemara says:

“The Temple will prove: For the first was returned, but the second has been destroyed indefinitely.”

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Berlin (introduction to Emek Davar commentary to Bereishit) comments that baseless hatred includes hatred based on deep ideological disagreement, even with those believed to be heretics.

There are no grounds for hatred – even ideological differences, even in the name of God. In the place of disagreement there must always be love. Rabbi Kook writes (Orot HaKodesh vol. 3 page 324):

“If we have been destroyed, and the entire world was destroyed with us, due to baseless hatred, we will rebuild – and the world will be rebuilt through us – with baseless love.”

We must continue to pursue “our brothers” – to seek our brotherhood – despite our differences. Only when we do this can we expect to succeed in building our state and meriting the ultimate redemption.

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



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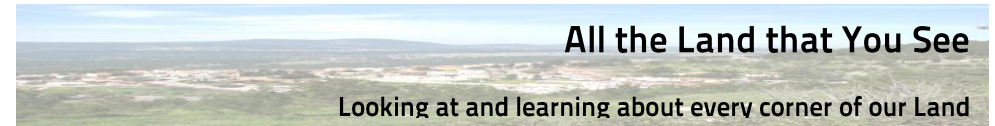
December 22-29

Brochure and Forms are online at:

www.bauk.org

For more info email Yehuda at:

yehuda@bauk.org



Be'ersheva

Talya Mullish

Be'er Sheva is located in the Negev, in southern Israel. It is the seventh largest city in Israel with a population of nearly 200,000, and is often referred to as the ‘capital of the Negev’. The name Be'er Sheva, was given following Avraham's oath that he made with Avimelech by the well. The word “be'er” means “well” and “sheva” is translated as “oath”. Avraham, after travelling from Ur Kasdim, arrived at Be'er Sheva and built himself a well. After this was seized by Avimelech's servants, Avraham and Avimelech then made an agreement that the well belonged to Avraham. Avraham then built an Eshel (monument) and named the place Be'er Sheva. This dispute continues when Avraham dies and Yitzchak rediscovers the water and builds another well there. Be'er Sheva is thought to be the most southern city in which the Bnei Yisrael settled, which is why the expression ‘From Dan to Be'er Sheva’ is used nine times in the Tenach in order to describe the entire Kingdom.

At Tel Be'er Sheva, an archaeological site that lies just east of the current city Be'er Sheva, contains the remains of the ancient town which is believed to be the Biblical Be'er Sheva. In 2005, UNESCO declared Tel B'er Sheva a World Heritage Site. The Modern city of Be'er Sheva was founded at the beginning of the 20th Century by the Ottomans where they built a small town with a police station. Both Jews and Arabs settled here. However in 1928, Arab riots left 133 Jews dead and most of the Jews abandoned Be'er Sheva. The 1947 UN Partition Plan therefore included Be'er Sheva as part of Arab territory since the population was primarily Arab. In the following War of Independence, Be'er Sheva was returned to the Jews and many immigrants settled there.

It is now one of the fastest-growing cities in Israel and has doubled in size with an influx of immigrants from Ethiopia and Russia. Be'er Sheva is Israel's national chess centre with more chess grandmasters per capita than any other city in the world. It is also host to museums, a zoo, and historical sites and one of the largest universities in Israel.

Talya Mullish is in Shevet Hagevurah and is a Nivcheret Hanhalla