

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.

- Summer Machane is coming! 29th July – 12th August. Brochures and applications are now out. For more information, contact yehuda@bauk.org.
- On Yom Yerushalayim, Sunday 17th May, Bnei Akiva is a partner in events at Alei Tzion shul for bogrim, and Borehamwood & Elstree United shul and Mizrachi UK for chanichim and madrichim. We look forward to seeing you there!
- We are part of Mizrachi UK's special Yom Yerushalayim concert with Jewish music star Yonatan Razel on Sunday 17th May! Contact one of the team on 02082091319 for more information
- On Shavout night, 23rd May, we are holding a stimulating Tikkun Leil Shavuot for bogrim at Rav Ari's house in Edgware, complete with a cheesecake and whiskey Kiddush! Contact rav@bauk.org for details



תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

SMILING FOR SUMMER MACHANE!

29TH JULY - 12TH AUGUST

BROCHURES OUT NOW!!

CONTACT YEHUDA@BAUK.ORG FOR MORE INFO

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

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9th May 2015
Omer Day 35



תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

ושבתה הארץ Shabbat Lashem 'שבת לה Emor אמור

Sefirat Ha'Omer - Taking It Personally

Leah Shaya

In this week's parasha, we read about the mitzvah of Sefirat Ha'Omer – counting the forty-nine days between the second day of Pesach and Shavuot:

“You shall count for yourselves, from the day after Shabbat, from the day when you bring the Omer of the waving – seven complete weeks”
(Vayikra 23:15)

In Menachot 65b, it is explained that the seemingly superfluous word “לָכֶם”, “for yourselves”, teaches us that the mitzvah of Sefirat Ha'Omer means that the counting is an obligation for each and every individual. Furthermore, we learn that each separate individual must perform the mitzvah of counting the Omer; unlike other mitzvot, one cannot fulfil the mitzvah by hearing another person's blessing and saying 'amen' like Kiddush on Shabbat or Yom Tov. Why is Sefirat Ha'Omer different?

Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman explains that normally, by answering 'amen' to a blessing, one expresses one's agreement to the concept of the mitzvah, and is therefore exempt from performing the obligation individually because it is as if they have said the blessing themselves. This applies, for example, to the blessing on the shofar on Rosh Hashanah.

However, when it comes to the Omer, the entire concept of the mitzvah is that of preparation. Every time we recite the blessing, we come one step closer to Shavuot; therefore, each individual is personally obligated to recite the blessing as part of their own self-improvement. Although the words are the same for everyone, we all have different talents and personality traits that can be worked on, and therefore the counting of the Omer is a truly individual act.

The combination of all these individuals culminates on Shavuot with the giving of the Torah. It says in parashat Yitro (Shemot 19:2):

“... Israel camped opposite the mountain”

This statement is in the singular. Rashi teaches us that this means “as one man with one heart”. However, this unity can only exist when each individual contributes their personal preparation.

Leah Shaya is in Shevet Eitan

Shabbat Lashem is sponsored this week l'iluy nishmat Mrs Miriam Weller – Miriam Bayla bat Avraham David HaLevi on the occasion of her 2nd yahrzeit

Editor's Corner

Shalom!

On Thursday, we joined with Edgware United shul for a Lag Ba'Omer celebration – a fun BBQ and concert! Lag Ba'Omer also marked Bnei Akiva's 84th birthday!

We are very excited to be visiting Borehamwood and Elstree, Mill Hill and other shuls in the coming Shabbatot – holding an uplifting seuda shlishit and learning with our bogrim. Contact us for further details!

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

| | 🕒 | 🌅 |
|------------|-------|-------|
| London | 20:21 | 21:33 |
| Manchester | 20:35 | 21:54 |
| Birmingham | 20:27 | 21:50 |
| Cambridge | 20:19 | 20:41 |
| Leeds | 19:30 | 21:51 |
| Liverpool | 20:35 | 22:01 |
| Jerusalem | 18:44 | 20:04 |

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



Searching for Hashem

Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

Rabbi Menachem Mendl of Kotzk was once asked where Hashem can be found. His response: “Wherever we let Him in.” Sometimes I feel that this is easier said than done. What is the mechanism of “letting Him in”? I believe that a profound lesson can be learned regarding this by understanding the essence of the Jewish holidays, or as they are called in Hebrew – *moadim*.

The *moadim* are introduced in our *parasha* (Vayikra 23:4):

“These are the *moadim* of Hashem, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their appointed time.”

Why is it necessary to “proclaim” the holidays at their appointed times? All the holidays have their specific date; surely once the time arrives, the holiday commences; what is the function of the proclamation?

Our sages deduce from here that, in fact, the holiday’s sanctity is preceded by Am Yisrael sanctifying the day (Rosh Hashana 24a). Without Am Yisrael’s intervention, there is no sanctity to the holy days. This is emphasized by the Midrash:

“The ministering angels gathered before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and asked when the holidays will be – ‘When is Rosh Hashana? When is Yom Kippur,’ they asked. The Holy One, Blessed be He, replied, ‘Why are you asking Me! Let us all go to inquire of the rabbinic courts!’”

The sanctity of the holidays is initiated by us. It is only by Bet Din sanctifying the month that the days are imbued with holiness. The Jewish holidays represent our ability to inject sanctity into the world through our own intervention. Holiness is not achieved through meditation, but through action.

But if this is the case, the continuation of the verse seems out of place: How can something depending on human action have an appointed time? This seems to imply a rigid, pre-determined moment of holiness independent of any human intervention? So what triggers the sanctity of the days – is it the proclamation, or is it the appointed time? What imbues holiness into our lives, is it God or is it man?

The term *moadim* comes from the Hebrew *mo’ed*, meaning “meeting”. An example of this is the *Ohel Mo’ed* – the Tent of Meeting, or Mishkan, constructed in the desert as a precursor to the Temple. There are two components to every meeting: time and place. If I arrange a meeting with a colleague or friend, and come to the designated location at the wrong time, they won’t be there. Also, if I am waiting for them at the right time but in the wrong place, again we will not meet. The Mishkan was the meeting place between man and Hashem in physical space, the holidays are the meeting in time.

But the term *moadim* also comes from the word *yeud*, meaning “purpose” or “destiny”. With this understanding we can come to derive the essence of the Jewish holidays. Abraham Heschel writes (The Sabbath):

“We are all infatuated with the splendour of space, with the grandeur of things of space. ‘Thing’ is a category that lies heavy on our minds ... reality to us is a ‘thinghood’, consisting of substances that occupy space; even God is conceived by most of us as a thing. The result of our ‘thinginess’ is our blindness to all reality that fails to identify itself as a thing.”

Our lives are saturated by acquiring “things” and conquering space. It is as such that we struggle to perceive that which does not fit into the realm of things; hence it is so hard to find God. Where do we find God? The answer is that God is not found in space. God is found in moments, in awareness. He is found in the values we live by and the significance we attribute to the things we have, the appreciation we have for them. “The whole world is filled with His presence” (Yeshayahu 6:3) – but we must tune in to be able to appreciate this existential truth. God is found when we realize that it is He looking for us, more so than we are looking for Him.

This is the secret of the *moadim*: on one hand there is an appointed time, on the other, we must proclaim its sanctity. The *moadim* are a microcosm of life, and illustrate our destiny to us: Hashem desires a relationship with us. He has arranged a meeting; the time a place have been set – but we must show up. We will encounter God when we acknowledge that He wants to encounter us.

Hashem is not found in great temples or shrines, but in the value we attribute to moments and things. The *moadim* teach us to tune in and become receptive to the notion that Hashem is the all-pervading reality that loves us and desires a relationship with us. When we acknowledge this, we will indeed encounter Hashem.

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

Mizrachi UK invite you on **Sunday May 17** to celebrate **Yom Yerushalayim** with music from **Yonatan Razel** and **The Shabbaton Choir** as well as **Israeli style food!**

In 2008, Yonatan Razel released a remake of the song “Vehi she’amda”, he composed, arranged & performed a duet with Yaakov Shwekey, the collaboration was a success and it became an anthem in the Jewish music world.

In 2011, he won an award for composition and musical arrangement. During Hanukkah 2012, Yonatan’s second album, “Bein HaZlilim” was released and became a gold record and a huge worldwide success in only a few short months.

For more information contact: uk@mizrachi.org



MIZRACHI UNITED KINGDOM



LSJS London School of Jewish Studies

Shabbaton Choir

Ticket Prices:

Adult - £20

Children - £12.50 up to 16

Family - £55
2 adults 2 children

Details:

VIP Lounge, Edgware, HA8 7DP

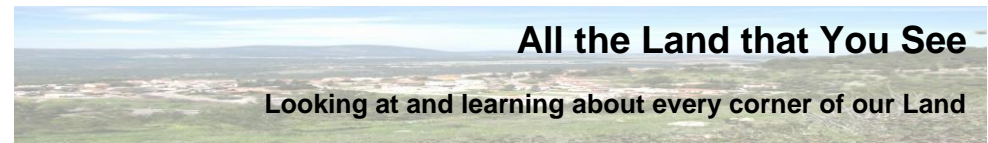
Doors Open @ 18:00

Information:

18:00 - Israeli style food and snacks for purchase

19:15 - Ceremony and Concert

To book go to: www.yonatanrazel.eventbrite.co.uk



Chevron Luis Herszaft

Chevron (Hebron) was the first city in Israel where land was purchased by a Jew. The passuk tells us ‘And Sarah died in Kiriyat Arba, which is Hebron...’ (Bereshit 23:2). After Sarah died, Avraham wanted to bury his wife in the cave of Machpelah, and even though he was offered it free of charge, he insisted to pay for it and ended up paying far more than what it was really worth!

Rashi explains that the city is called Kiriyat Arba because of the four giants who were there: Ahiman, Sheshai, Talmai, and their father. Another explanation for the name is the four couples that were buried there, man and wife: Adam and Chavah, Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaacov and Leah.

Chevron was also David Hamelech’s first capital city for seven years, until he conquered Yerushalayim. The large building which stands today above the cave of Machpelah was built by Herod in the first century BCE.

Jews were living in Chevron for centuries until the massacre of 1929 in which 67 Jews were murdered, after which many people left. After 1967, many Jews returned to Chevron and there are approximately five hundred Jews living in Chevron today. The city is also home to the Shavei Chevron yeshiva, where 250 students learn.

Wishing you a good Shabbos, from Chevron!

Luis Herszaft is in Shevet Lehava and was a Madrich on Aleph Summer Machane 5774