

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.

- In conjunction with Borehamwood & Elstree shul and the United Synagogue, our chanichim and madrichim are encouraged to attend a festive Yom Yerushalayim service at 8:15am at Borehamwood & Elstree shul, followed by breakfast and an appearance from a high level Israeli diplomat!
- Bogrim are encouraged to attend a Tefilla Chagigit at 8:15 on Sunday morning, followed by breakfast with guest speaker Rabbi Michael Laitner at Alei Tzion
- Bnei Akiva is holding a Tefilla Chagigit and breakfast with a guest speaker, with KD Yavneh Boy's School on Sunday morning!
- We are proud to be partners with Mizrahi UK for a special Yom Yerushalayim concert with Israeli music star Yonatan Razel at the VIP Lounge in Edgware! Israeli style food at 18:00, concert begins at 19:15. Visit www.yonatanrazel.eventbrite.co.uk to book your ticket
- We are holding a Tikun Leil Shavuot for bogrim at Rav Ari and Chaya's house in Edgware, and for all at the Manchester Bayit! Contact rav@bauk.org or north@bauk.org for more information
- We are holding inspiring learning and Seuda Shlishit for the whole community on 6th June in Kinloss shul, 13th June in Borehamwood and Elstree shul and 27th June in Mill Hill shul. Contact rav@bauk.org for more details

Reflections from our gap year programme participants in Israel...

Hello Hachshara!

Shalom from Israel!

This year I have been on Torani studying in Yeshivat Hakotel in the heart of the Old City of Yerushalayim. Through living in such a popular and special place, I have had many thoughts some of which I'd like to share.

One of the things I have noticed is how open Yerushalayim and especially the Jewish Quarter of the Old City are. All types of Jews are accepted here and when at the Kotel, you see a man in a black hat next to a man with a paper kippah, you realise just how unified our nation is.

I also feel a sense of holiness here, as everywhere you go, there is something to remind you of your Jewish identity. All buildings are made of holy Jerusalem stone, there are many memorials for significant Jewish figures and some buses even have 'Chag Sameach' written on them.

Finally, the Old City is a city of Simcha, as throughout the year there is lots of Jewish music played and on the festivals the whole place comes alive to celebrate our heritage.

From Aaron Rudolph

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Zeh Hayom Asah Hashem
זה היום עשה ה'
נגילה ונשמחה בו

Parashat Behar
Bechukotai
27th Iyar 5775
16th May 2015
Omer Day 42

Yom Yerushalayim
28th Iyar 5775
17th May 2015
Omer Day 43

תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

Hashem's Hand in History

Adam Finn

I was once told a joke about the 'G-d powered car' sold by Jewish dealers. To accelerate, the driver proclaims 'Baruch Hashem' and to break, he says 'Shcoyach'. One such driver was motoring around the countryside until his hand slipped, veering the car off the road, hurtling down a steep cliff towards a lake. Desperate not to fall into the lake the driver screams 'shcoyach', but the car is moving too fast to stop. In one last attempt to prevent himself plummeting into the lake, the driver shouts 'shcoyach, shcoyach, SHCOYACH!!' and finally, the car halts inches away from the edge. Relieved, the driver instinctively sighs the thanksgiving phrase 'Baruch Hashem' - prompting the car to lurch forwards into the lake after all!

This old joke highlights the trait of instinctively involving G-d in daily life. The Gemara (Arachin 16b) describes how minor negative incidents in our lives should be seen as an 'affliction' from God, indicating his involvement with us. This can be compared to our parasha that discusses reward and punishment. Bechukotai starts by promising a peaceful existence for Am Yisrael if we keep the Mitzvot and then presents the *Tochecha*, "Rebuke" of horrific collective punishments if we don't. A simple look at the sources shows that God is heavily involved with the Jewish people both personally and collectively. Within both the individualistic and nationalistic fields, we should aim to recognise Gods *hashgacha* - intervention.

In his book, "Halachik Man", Rav Joseph Ber Solevetchik describes his idea of the ideal Jew; someone who looks at their daily life through the prism of Halacha. In every situation he encounters, the thought process used should instantly be one of Halachik and Torah analysis. Just as we look for G-d's involvement in our lives, we make the active effort to involve Him, by living according to His will.

Moving this idea from the personal to the national, we should remember that the progression of Am Yisrael as a nation has G-d at its centre. The days at this time of the year - Yom Ha'atzmaut, Yom Yerushalayim and Shavuot - show that Hashem moulds our people's history, and how we in turn take decisive action to realise His will.

Adam Finn is in Shevet Hagevurah and is co-Rosh of Salford Sviva

Zeh Hayom Asah Hashem is sponsored anonymously

Editor's Corner

Shalom!

Welcome to the second edition of 'Zeh Hayom Asah Hashem' this year, in honour of Yom Yerushalayim. This follows the successful Yom Ha'atzmaut edition.

Due to the profound religious significance of our people's return to Jerusalem, 'Zeh Hayom Asah Hashem' contains Torah articles about Jerusalem, as well as details of the initiatives that we are holding in conjunction with shul communities to mark this day.

Shabbat Shalom to all our chaverim who are joining Rav Ari and Chaya for a community Seuda Shlishit at their home in Edgware this Shabbat!

Shabbat Shalom and Moadim I'Simcha!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

| | | ☪ |
|------------|-------|-------|
| London | 20:32 | 21:46 |
| Manchester | 20:47 | 22:09 |
| Birmingham | 20:38 | 22:05 |
| Cambridge | 20:30 | 21:56 |
| Leeds | 19:30 | 20:06 |
| Liverpool | 20:47 | 22:16 |
| Jerusalem | 18:49 | 20:10 |



Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

Yerushalayim Really is in Our Hands!

On 5 June, 1967, the Jordanians opened a six-thousand shell barrage against Israeli west Jerusalem. Israel sought to avoid opening a front against the Jordanians at all cost, but were told by King Hussein that the “die was cast” and the Jordanians were joining Egypt and Syria in a joint war to drive Israel into the sea. Israel conquered Jordanian strongholds at Ammunition Hill and the Rockefeller Museum – putting them in position to reclaim the Old City – the Kotel and the Temple Mount. The Israeli cabinet was deeply divided over the move. Finally at 3 o’clock in the morning of June 6, it was decided to proceed towards the Old City. On the cool, sunny morning of June 7, personnel carriers entered through Lion’s Gate, and the paratrooper’s 55th Division continued towards the Temple Mount amidst white flags draped from the Jordanian windows. At 10 o’clock, Commander Motta Gur made the historic transmission, announcing that “הר הבית בידינו” – “the Temple Mount is in our hands”.

According to *halacha*, the first action taken every morning is to wash our hands. *Netillat yadayim* is not only performed before we eat bread, but also before we begin to go about our lives each day. What is the deeper significance of this tradition? Why has it been mandated as the precursor to all other actions we undertake?

The term *netillat yadayim* is simply understood to mean “washing the hands”. But the word *netilla* could have a very different interpretation, meaning “to take position” or “uplift” (this is the intention of the *bracha* recited over shaking the four species on Succot, “... *al netillat lulav*” – the taking-up of the *lulav*). When understood as such, the intention of the *bracha* of *al netillat yadayim* actually means that Hashem has “sanctified us ... and commanded us to take possession of, and uplift [the doings of] our hands”.

This is a profound shift in understanding *netillat yadayim*. Our hands are the principal vehicle through which we interact with the material world. With our hands we create – and with our hands we destroy. With our hands we embrace – and with our hands we fight. The very first action of the day, which precedes all others, is *netillat yadayim*, by which we remind ourselves of the importance of taking possession of the labour of our hands, and uplifting all our doings. Before we engage with the material world, we train ourselves to focus on the ultimate and refined end goal we are capable of bringing it to. By taking possession of our actions and “uplifting our hands” we can uplift the whole world.

In 1967, Israel achieved one of most improbable victories in the history of modern warfare. Out of an attempt to defend western Jerusalem from Jordanian shell bombardments, we fell into position to return to the Old City, the Kotel and the Temple Mount – this despite the strong opposition of much of the Israeli leadership. It was as if the masses of territory and landmarks were forced upon us – almost against our own will – by Hashem. With all the emotional yearning our nation sensed toward the Temple Mount, we did not expect and were unprepared to return there. The backlash of this is felt until today. Yossi Klein Halevi summarizes the moment of liberating the Temple Mount as that which “reunited Jerusalem and divided a nation” (Like Dreamers).

What is most remarkable about the conquest of the Old City is how Kotel-centric everyone reacted. As swiftly as we had ascended our most significant and holy place – the Temple Mount – we ran down to marvel over the Kotel, which is an outer wall of the Temple Mount, whereas the Temple Mount was the epicentre of the Beit Hamikdash. While the Kotel’s significance cannot be over-emphasized, we must wonder how the Temple Mount became so glossed over at that moment; a moment that transcended political dispositions and religious affiliations?

Perhaps it is the manner in which we arrived at the Temple Mount that is the very reason we immediately left it: the Temple Mount – and the Beit HaMikdash which it represents – is not something we chance upon. We cannot come to the Beit Hamikdash haphazardly. It takes arduous preparation and self-reflection to merit this lofty level. The Beit Hamikdash is the product of us “uplifting our hands” and all their doings.

Perhaps we can ascribe this message to the hallowed words of Motta Gur, *the Temple Mount is in our hands*: Hashem may have brought us to the holy sites, He may have brought us to the Kotel, but the Temple Mount is an achievement we must conquer with our own hands! It is by performing *netillat yadayim* – metaphorically – that we can achieve the Temple Mount. The Beit Hamikdash is built by our own self-reflection, by our refinement of character and uplifting of actions.

The Beit Hamikdash will not descend upon us miraculously from the Heavens – as the Kotel did. The Beit Hamikdash will not be built by a messiah who comes to make us better, rather it will be the revelation of our success in making ourselves and the whole world better. It is the culmination of a universal edifice built brick-by-brick by our positive actions in uplifting the world. May we merit to forge on from the place we have been brought to by grace of God. May we be empowered to internalize the message of *netillat yadayim*, to uplift ourselves and our actions, and the entire world, so that indeed we can merit the Beit Hamikdash – may it be speedily and in our days.

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



All the Land that You See

Looking at and learning about every corner of our Land

Jerusalem

Gabi Sacofsky

Jerusalem has always been at the heart of the Jewish people’s prayers. Not only is it the direction in which we pray but the yearning for its rebuilding is mentioned in many of our prayers - our תפילות. For so many years Jerusalem was an abstract idea, a symbol of holiness and of years gone by. The Jewish people’s interaction with the city never went beyond a longing to re-establish the wonders that had stood there years ago.

When the Old City was re-conquered in June 1967 the Jewish people’s relationship changed from the conceptual to the concrete, from years of hope to an actualisation of a dream. We were finally able to live as a people in the Old City of Jerusalem once again. Written on a wall within the Jewish Quarter are the famous pessukim found in Sefer Zecharia (8:4-5)

כֹּה אָמַר, ה' צְבֹתֵינוּ, עַד יָשְׁבוּ זְקֵנִים וְזָקֵנוֹת, בְּרַחְבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם; וְאִישׁ מִשְׁעֲנֵתוֹ בְּיָדוֹ, מֵרֵב זָמִים וְרַחְבוֹת הָעִיר יִמְלֵאוּ, יְלָדִים וְיִלְדוֹת, מִשְׁחֻקִים, בְּרַחְבֵּיהָ.

So said the Lord of Hosts: Old men and women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of old age. And the streets of the city shall be filled, with boys and girls playing in its streets.

A prophecy made centuries ago is slowly being fulfilled. Old people are able to sit on the streets of Jerusalem and enjoy watching young children play around them. Our relationship with Jerusalem has blossomed. Gone are the days where inhabiting Jerusalem was just a distant dream. Jerusalem is now so much more to us than just a passing mention in prayer. The realisation of these pessukim highlight the miraculous shift that has taken place in our time. Jerusalem is now living, breathing city bursting with Jewish life.

Gabi Sacofsky is in Shevet Netzach and made Aliyah in 5774. She now lives in Jerusalem