

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. Spaces are filling up fast, so make sure to send your forms in! For more information, contact yehuda@bauk.org.
- Applications for key roles in svivot for 5776 are open online! To be part of the lifeblood of Bnei Akiva across the country, visit www.bauk.org
- The Bnei Akiva 5-A-Side Football Tournament is nearly here! 12th July at Powerleague, Mill Hill. To enter a team, or for more information, contact adam@bauk.org
- Every year, Bnei Akiva collectively learns the whole of Tanach in Memory of Marc Weinberg, Mazkir of 5759 and shining example of our ideology. All are welcome to participate. To sign up to learn a section, see the Bnei Akiva Facebook page or for more information, contact marina@bauk.org

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Shabbat Lashem 'ושבתה הארץ שבת לה חקת - Chukat

A Little Faith for Life

Hannah Goldstein

This week's parasha begins with the laws of the Parah Adumah – the red heifer – introducing the concept of “chukkim” – the statutes of Jewish law. By definition, chukkim make no rational sense. So why do we have them in Judaism? Why in a religion where we are encouraged to question do we have a set of laws which are unexplainable?

Perhaps the very nature of chukkim is that despite being irrational, they hold intrinsic value. The Hebrew word chuk, or chok, comes from the word “to engrave”. Many of our social instincts and behavioural patterns are deeply ingrained in us, yet chukkim teach us that it is possible to defy these natural instincts. Sometimes things just don't make sense; but that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's a part of life that we have to accept in order to grasp the true meaning of Judaism.

One of the most destructive pre-rational instincts, found in the writings of Sigmund Freud, is the “death drive”, an impulse to “lead organic life back into the inanimate state”. The ritual of the red heifer, which ritually purifies a person who comes in contact with a corpse, is directed especially at the “death drive” by mandating a process of rehabilitation after coming in contact with death. This ritual enabled Judaism to become remarkably distinct from its contemporary religions; Judaism does not allow for worshipping dead bodies, and does not believe in talking to spirits. In Judaism we know that G-d is found in life, not death. Chukkim teach us that there are some things which may not appear to make sense. We must understand however, that in life there are natural boundaries, these boundaries are often set to control our natural instincts. Chukkim set these boundaries and are an integral part of our faith. Sometimes life doesn't make sense, sometimes we can't understand why things happen, but it is at these most challenging times that a little bit of faith can go a long way

Hannah Goldstein is in Shevet Hagevurah and was a Madricha on Gimmel Summer Machane 5774

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

Editor's Corner

Shalom!

Our 25 bogrim who went on the Aliyah Pilot Trip are still on a high from their amazing experiences, having explored the living, working and educational options in Israel, and drawing inspiration from our former bogrim who have made Aliyah. They are fired with enthusiasm for Aliyah and contributing to the State!

Our Israel Machane madrichim have spent the in Israel with the UJIA, getting ready to create an unforgettable summer for 170 chanchim.

We are very excited to be holding an uplifting seuda shlishit with the community Mill Hill shul this week. All are welcome!

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

	🕒	🕒
London	21:08	22:28
Manchester	21:27	23:00
Birmingham	21:16	22:54
Cambridge	21:06	22:43
Leeds	20:00	22:54
Liverpool	21:26	23:09
Jerusalem	19:13	20:31

Machane Cadur Regel

A WEEK OF FUN FOR FOOTY FANS
YEARS 3-5

We are delighted to be teaming up with the amazing Super SoccerStars for Machane Cadur Regel!

Super Soccerstars is a fantastic organisation which aims to teach football skills through building teamwork and self-confidence in young children.

You'll spend an amazing week with an organisation which is widely respected and even has celebrities sending their children to their clubs! You'll be taught a wide range of football and team skills from professional coaches, as well as being taken care of by Bnei Akiva Madrichim! You have the chance to win medals, and maybe even be chosen as Bnei Akiva's Junior Footballer of the Year!

If you love football, and want to be a part of Bnei Akiva Machane, then this is the place for you! Have the chance to be the next star in Jewish football with fantastic coaches!

Date: 3rd-7th August 2015

Venue: Mill Hill Powerleague

Price: £125



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Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

Belief and Leadership

Rabbi Lord Sacks coined the phrase, “good leaders create followers, great leaders create leaders”. What is the key ingredient to leadership? What is the most important trait that every leader must possess to succeed?

In our *parasha*, we read of Moshe and Aharon’s infamous sin involving them hitting the rock to produce water for the people (Bamidbar 20). As punishment for their misdemeanour, they were denied access into Israel (v. 12). What exactly was their sin? Moreover, what was so severe about it that warranted their exclusion from continuing on the journey of building the Jewish people’s homeland in Israel?

The Ibn Ezra suggests five interpretations to the sin. Or HaChayim quotes ten different interpretations from various commentators and rejects them all! It is certainly difficult to pinpoint the aspect of the episode that was the cause for this punishment. It is interesting to note that in Moshe’s own personal commentary to the people’s journey through the wilderness, he suggests a completely different reason for his punishment (Devarim 1:37):

“Hashem was also angry with me for your sakes, saying: ‘You also shall not go in there.’”

Here Moshe describes when he was told by Hashem that he would not be entering the Land. He does not indicate that it is due to the sin in our *parasha*, but rather for the Sin of the Spies! Why is there a discrepancy between the two accounts? Why does Moshe introduce the Sin of the Spies as the reason for his punishment, a notion that was not hinted to at all previously?

Abarbanel suggests that Moshe’s entry to Israel was made conditional after the Sin of the Spies, but his judgment was ultimately sealed after he hit the rock. While this resolves the discrepancy between the two accounts, it doesn’t explain why the Torah never indicated after the Sin of the Spies that Moshe stood to be punished for his involvement. It must be that the two sins are somehow intrinsically connected.

The failure of the *meraglim’s* – spies’ – mission was not in the report they delivered – which was objective and answered every point that Moshe had instructed them – rather it was in their attitude. They said (Bamidbar 13:31):

“We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.”

The *meraglim’s* failure was not in their perception of the Land of Israel, but rather in their perception of the People of Israel. Against the words of encouragement offered by Yehoshua and Calev, urging the people to fulfil their potential and conquer what seemed to be impossible, the *meraglim* rejected the people’s ability. The root of the Sin of the Spies lay in the fact that the *meraglim* didn’t believe in Am Yisrael’s potential to achieve greatness – no matter how improbable it seemed.

There is a well-known expression that says, “Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me”. I often feel that nothing could be further from the truth. Broken bones can heal, but a broken heart is much harder to overcome. While the words we say don’t necessarily change the objective reality, but they absolutely have the potency to transform how we experience that reality, which is what matters most of all. A positive experience can at once be dampened by someone’s negative attitude; an impossible challenge can be overcome with words of encouragement. The leader’s role is first and foremost to believe in his people. The words of a leader must be full of encouragement, in order to empower the people to believe in themselves.

The sin of the rock follows this same theme. Moshe was meant to use his speech to produce water in an unimaginable way. One must ask: What is the goal of this miracle? The people were about to enter into the Land of Israel after decades of wandering the desert. Moshe was called upon by Hashem to reverse the effects of the Sin of the Spies by indicating that even the impossible was possible if they believed in themselves. Instead of inspiring them with his speech, he disparaged them, calling them a “bitter people” (Bamidbar 20:10).

A person does not need to be a prodigious orator, or have abundant charisma in order to be a great leader. The key trait in leadership is belief in yourself and belief in others. With such an outlook the impossible can be achieved; water can be produced from a rock and the Jewish People can build the most exemplary State in the Land of Israel.

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



Aliyah Pilot Trip – A Reflection

Hadassa Krotosky

Over the past week, I have been fortunate to participate in Bnei Akiva’s Aliyah Pilot Trip for bogrim. Aliyah is a key part of the movement’s ideology, and both chanichim and madrichim are continuously discussing “living the dream”; this trip has enabled us to turn that dream into a reality.

Throughout the week we visited a number of different communities and spoke to their residents; from Migdal Ha-Emek, a small and developing community, to two religious neighbourhoods of Haifa. We heard an inspirational talk from Rabbi Ariel Konstantyn, who has created a warm and inclusive community amidst the hustle and bustle of secular Tel Aviv.

A particular highlight of the trip was one day in which all participants had individual meetings with people in the career fields that we wish to pursue. Additionally, visiting universities and ulpan (Hebrew language classes) meant we could understand the range of options that are available to us. Additionally, we were privileged to meet with leaders who got us thinking about how we can make a meaningful and unique contribution to Israeli society.

One thing that particularly helpful was being able to speak to bogrim from Bnei Akiva UK who have already made Aliyah. We met with bogrim living in Givat Shmuel and Modi'im, as well as having others join us for an inspiring Shabbat in Jerusalem. It was great to see friendly and familiar faces. Meeting with individuals who had made Aliyah at different stages of life, and hearing about their experiences so far, left us with food for thought. Additionally, seeing those who had been on the journey that we wish to take helped us to envisage ourselves in their shoes.

This week’s parasha speaks of the death of Aharon HaKohen, who was “a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace” (Mishna, Avot 1:12). Throughout the trip I was overwhelmed by the genuine offers of support and help we received from absolutely everyone we met, reminding me of the unique warmth of the country. Additionally, the people we met who strive to increase harmony throughout the country truly embodied this trait. Let’s aspire to follow in Aharon’s footsteps, and be leaders of the Jewish people in Israel who seek unity and kindness.

Thank you to the UJIA, Habayta, JNF, Mizrachi, Tlalim and Bachad for supporting this programme, and a massive thank you to our Shlichim - Rav Ari and Mickey, and our Israel worker - Esther for creating such an unforgettable trip.

Hadassa Krotosky is in Shevet Dvir and was Sganit of Aleph Winter Machane 5775