

Keeping up with our gap year programmes in Israel...

Shalom from Israel!

I've been having a wonderful time here in Midreshet Harova with Torani! We had a Shabbaton last week in the Golan, and visited the Talmudic village of Katzrin, to daven Mussaf on Shabbat morning. It was a great chance to get to know everyone, and I'm looking forward to our next event, when we will be heading down to Eilat.

I love the feeling of living in the Old City, meeting new people, and learning in the Midrasha. These past two weeks have been incredible, and I can't wait to experience more over the next year! Shabbat shalom!

From Tami Marchant

Tami Marchant is in Shevet Na'aleh, and is on Hachsharat Torani in Midreshet Harova,

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.

Tefillot will be taking place in the Northern Bayit on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. For more information, contact Mickey and Ortal at north@bauk.org. Yom Kippur services will be held in the London Bayit. Contact Marina at chinuch@bauk.org for details.

Limmud returns to Birmingham and Manchester in the coming weeks, and to London on Monday 22nd September.

Svivot will be kicking off with Sukkah crawls around the country! For details, contact your local Rosh, or Adam at svivot@bauk.org



תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

ושבתה הארץ

שַׁבַּת לַשֵּׁמ
SHABBAT LASHEM

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Parshat Nitzavim-Vayelech

Step By Step

Rivka Palmer

This week is a double sedra of Nitzavim & Vayelech. The Shulchan Aruch states the rule that the sedra of Nitzavim must always be read on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah. There are also years, as is the case this year, when we have a double sedra, with Vayelech. But why is it so important to leyn Nitzavim this week ?

Ramban comments on the following passuk:

'For this mitzvah that I command you today is not beyond your understanding or beyond your reach' (Devarim 30:11)

Ramban's opinion is that the Torah's words 'this mitzvah' refers to the mitzvah of teshuva (repentance) and that whilst we might find the idea of repentance difficult, the Torah assures us that nothing is beyond our reach or understanding. The proximity of this mitzvah is underlined a few verses later in the sedra when the Torah states

'it is very near to you, in your mouth and your heart' (30:14).

But can real teshuva be that easy? Ellul is a special month. As we approach the high holy days, the Yamim Noraim, we are told that Hashem is especially close to his people, making it easier for us to repent. We should view this month, and the proximity to Hashem, as a great opportunity to repent. We might view repentance as a daunting task, but we are told that even if we take small steps, Hashem will look on us favourably. It is better to make a small effort than simply give up completely. The Gemara states that **'if a person sanctifies themselves a little, he is greatly sanctified in Heaven'** (Yoma 39a).

The Netziv tells us to 'follow the path of our heart', that is to say there are many ways that we can serve Hashem. Whilst we must keep all the commandments, if we have a greater affinity to a particular mitzvah, for example Gemilut Chasadim, Talmud Torah, Tefillah, etc., then a person should pursue the path that is closest to their heart.

This can be extended to Teshuva, we can start by concentrating on areas where we have a natural affinity, even if these are only small steps, each small step will lead to another and another.

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, let us pray that Hashem will answer our prayers, accept our Teshuva and that we will all be blessed with a year of good health, happiness and peace for the Jewish People and the State of Israel.

Rivka Palmer is in Shevet Hagevurah and was Head Cook on Gimmel 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!

Our chaverim enjoyed seuda shlishit at Rav Ari's house with guest speaker Rav Laurence Doron Perez - senior Rabbi of Mizrahi in Johannesburg - last Shabbat.

Tonight, Bnei Akiva are joining with Alei Tzion shul for the first night of selichot at 10:30pm. Come along for meaningful learning and tefillah. Thereafter, Selichot will be held at the London Bayit on Sunday-Thursday evenings.

We are selling Arba Minim with proceeds going to aid communities in southern Israel! See the advert inside this daf for details.

Shabbat Shalom!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

	🕒	🕒
London	18:52	19:51
Manchester	19:00	20:02
Birmingham	19:12	20:19
Leeds	18:53	19:59
Liverpool	19:00	20:08
Jerusalem	18:00	19:15

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

The Children's Corner

Mystery Melacha

Katie Shemtob
Katie Shemtob is in Shevet Hagevurah and is a Niivheret Hanhalla

There are 39 activities that Jews are not allowed to do on Shabbat. These are called "Melachot" or "Acts of work". Can you guess which Melacha this riddle is about? Log onto the Bnei Akiva Youtube channel after Shabbat to see if you're right!

A long long time ago before Topshop and Newlook

Clothes were made by citizens to make the leather look

This process isn't easy: in fact it's very hard

It involves the skinning of animals, which can leave you behind bars

You may think this is out-dated, and gross on every part

But I can assure you there are people today who still fit the part.

This melachot is not referring to the skinning, not at all

But what happens after, like turning fish into fish balls.

We are talking about the product that changes the skins' form.

So that the skin can be used in the Bet Hamikdash, but that's not all

This melacha is very general and can be used in reference to food

Like the transition of a cucumber to pickle, hmmm we love our Kiddush

This process is a melachot, one of the 39,

So my question is, which one is it? Please take your time



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Binyan Ariel

Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Rabbinical Shaliach

Returning to Ourselves

At times in life, we are called-upon to make very difficult and sometimes painful decisions; sometimes the most difficult ones entail admitting we were wrong. At these times we often seek the easy route out, seeking excuses to relieve ourselves of responsibility. While at the time we feel we have done ourselves a favor, in the long-run it could be we are in fact harming ourselves.

What is the value in making the difficult decisions and not diverging onto an external factor? In the long-run, there is something incredibly refreshing and fulfilling about facing those difficult decisions, and making them.

Our *parasha* says:

“For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say: 'Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say: 'Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?' But the word is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.”

The commentators are divided if this passage is discussing the entirety of the Torah (Rashi), or the *mitzvah* of Teshuva specifically (Ramban). What is the message being taught here?

At first reading, this passage seems to be offering words of encouragement; living a life of Torah and Teshuva does not require a person to make unreasonable sacrifices – we need not go to exaggerated lengths in order to fulfill our obligation. This is the message expressed in the Talmud (Eruvin 55a):

“For if it were in the heavens, you would be required to ascend and go after it.”

And so luckily, it's not – and we don't have to. The Torah is not meant to impede upon our life, rather it is meant to enhance it. However this is not always true: There are times when living a Torah lifestyle demands of us to make incredible personal sacrifices, and everyone experiences this at different times in their lives. At these moments, the Torah seems completely out of reach – completely foreign – how then can we be told it is “not in heaven” or “beyond the sea”?

A second reading, would actually suggest the exact opposite of the first: If only living a lifestyle of Torah and Teshuva was in the heavens – all we would have to do is ascend to the heavens to go after it. That would have been easy. However it is not, and so the task is far more challenging. If the Torah lifestyle would have been in the heavens we would have a-million excuses why not to get it – if only for the fact that it costs over 150-thousand pounds to take the Virgin Galactic flight to go there! But it's not in the heavens, nor across the sea, and thus there are no external factors preventing us from fulfilling it. Thus, the message which the Torah is teaching is that the Torah is essential to us, and fundamentally connected to our true selves – there are no external factors or pre-conditions involved.

Sometimes the hardest decision to make is the one which is right, and the hardest person to be is ourselves. While in the short-term, these decisions are unpleasant, in the long-run they promise to be most fulfilling, as there is nothing more refreshing than being ourselves – as difficult as it may be at times.

Living a Torah lifestyle is inherent for us, although sometimes it doesn't feel this way. Rabbi Kook teaches (Orot HaTeshuva 15:10):

“When we forget the essence of our soul itself, when we are distracted from introspection, from the content of inner life, everything becomes confused and doubtful.”

And thus – **“The peak of Teshuva which immediately illuminates the darkness is that man return to himself, the root of his soul, and he will at once return to G-d, to the soul of all souls.”**

A life of Torah and Teshuva is not foreign to us. It is not dependant on far-off circumstances and pre-conditions to be fulfilled. There are no external factors to point at when faced with the decision to make – only at our essential self.

Living a life of Torah and Teshuva may not be easy – at times it can provide us with incredible challenges – but as we live a lifestyle which is most essentially us, we will experience it as being incredibly fulfilling.

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

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All orders must be placed by Tuesday 30th Sept.**

All the Land that You See
Looking at and learning about every corner of our Land

Katzrin

Sammy Rose

Katzrin is an ancient village in the Golan, north-west of the Kinneret. Archaeological evidence has found that the site had been inhabited on and off from the Middle Bronze Age (about 4,000 years ago) until the Romans destroyed it during their rule over Eretz Yisrael. There is subsequent evidence of a Jewish village from the Talmudic period which included the Katzrin Synagogue. It was built in the 6th century CE on the foundations of a more modest 4th-5th century synagogue. The Jewish settlement served as an important trading location in the region, but started to decline with the change of trading routes after the Islamic conquest. The synagogue, along with the village was destroyed in the Golan earthquake of 749 CE. As a result, the location was abandoned by the declining Jewish community until 1967, when Israel captured the Golan.

Modern Katzrin was established in 1977 after the Israeli government decided settling and populating the Golan Heights was of prime importance for Israeli security. It has a population of around 7000, houses many nurseries, schools and a teacher training college, and is considered to be the capital of the Golan, housing the Golan Regional council.

Katzrin is a major centre of tourism in the region, most notably for the 'Katzrin ancient village and synagogue' open air museum, where many tour groups (including BA Israel machane) go to see the partially reconstructed site and learn about what life in Taludic times was like. Katzrin is also home to the Golan Heights Winery, the Mey Eden mineral water bottling plant and the Golan Olive Oil Mill. The large Chinese solar company Suntech Power and Israeli company Solarit Doral built Israel's largest solar power station, a 50 kW rooftop project near the town, and connected it to the electric grid in December 2008.

Sammy Rose is in Shevet Dvir and was Rakaz for Gimmel Machane 5774.