

Shabbat Times

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London	20:04	21:14	Cambridge	20:02	21:21
Manchester	20:18	21:33	Leeds	19:30	21:29
Birmingham	20:10	21:24	Liverpool	20:18	21:40
Oxford	20:06	21:25	Jerusalem	18:40	19:55

SHABBAT

פרשת תזריע-מצרע
PARASHAT TAZRIA-
METZORAH



תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

LASHEM שבת לה'

The most widely distributed weekly Torah periodical written by our youth in the United Kingdom.

Coming up....

- Join us on Monday night at Kinloss for our annual Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations
- Bogrim and Shevet Avichai are invited to the customary Yom Ha'atzmaut BBQ Rav Ari and Chaya's house. Mincha and Ma'ariv included.
- Look out for us in schools on Yom Ha'atzmaut, including Yavneh, JFS and Sinai
- Summer Machane is on 3rd-16th August, email Akiva on camps@bauk.org for more information

Shabbat Debate

Every week we will be writing weekly debates to discuss over Shabbat. The debates will then be continued on facebook, after Shabbat.

Is it appropriate to have punishments that publically humiliate people?

SUMMER MACHANE 5777

3 August - 16 August
Year 6, 7, 8 in North Wales
Year 9 in Holland
Year 10 in Spain

for more info contact akiva@bauk.org

YOM HA'ATZMAUT
69 YEARS
OF ISRAEL'S
INDEPENDENCE
1ST MAY 2017
4TH IYAR 5777

תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Hazikaron Service

Once again, we are delighted to be joined by Chief Rabbi Mirvis and a top Israeli dignitary, who will both address the community during the service. Doors will open at 6:30pm with the service commencing at 7. Dinner and dancing for all Madrichim and Chanichim of Bnei Akiva will follow the Service

Bachad are also hosting a White House Buffet (£20), for all who want to come after the Service. Contact Sarah at events@bauk.org or 020 8209 1319 ext. * to reserve your spot

MIZRACHI UNITED KINGDOM KINLOSS UJIA

The Purity in our Lives

Malka Weissler

Upon first glance, this is perhaps one of the most seemingly irrelevant portions of the Torah. This Torah reading discusses at length topics that are among the most challenging for us to relate to. What relevance do the laws of ritual purity and impurity hold for us?

We can recognise the importance of purity in our everyday lives by focusing on our speech, for example. The Kabbalists explained that the Hebrew name for Passover, *Pesach*, is a combination of the words 'peh-sach' — 'the mouth speaks.' The redemption from Egypt, which paved the way for the Torah's revelation at Sinai, also redeemed the faculty of speech. For this reason, Passover is commemorated with a mitzvah of speech, the mitzvah to retell the story of the Exodus. And we find that Moshe, aware of this aspect of the redemption from Egypt, tried to disqualify himself by protesting, "I am not a man of speech" (Shemot 4:10).

In an essay entitled 'The Redemption of Speech,' Rav Kook wrote:

"Sometimes we can sense the connection between our speech and the universe. This is the initial step to redeem speech from its exile... As the soul is elevated, we become acutely aware of the tremendous power that lies in our faculty of speech. We recognise clearly the tremendous significance of each utterance; the value of our prayers and blessings, the value of our Torah study and of all of our discourse. We learn to perceive the overall impact of speech. We sense the change and great stirring of the world that comes about through speech." (Orot HaKodesh vol. 3, p. 285)

Having returned from their exile and rebuilding the Bet Hamikdash, it was expected that the Jews once again observe the Bet Hamikdash's strict requirements of Taharah. However, during the long exile following the Second Bet Hamikdash period, the Jews' emotive and imaginative abilities weakened. Their intense spirituality became impoverished. Only the Torah and its intellectual influence remained for the Jewish people in exile. It still involved the physical realm through the practical observance of mitzvot, but the intermediate stages of imagination and feeling were bypassed. In exile, we lament, 'Nothing remains but this Torah' (Selichot).

The Chasidic movement of the 1700's aspired to restore the concepts of physical purity to the masses. Chasidism focuses on the imaginative and emotional faculties, particularly through prayer and song rather than the intellectual ones. As a result, it awakened a greater need for personal and physical purity.

Especially now, with the national renaissance of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, these aspirations for physical Taharah should be renewed and expanded. Our national renewal complements the renewed yearning for spirituality; and the healthy desire to restore the nation and heal its national soul.

Malka Weissler is in Shevet Eitan and was a madricha on Bet Chalutz 5776



Dealing with Difficulty

One of the burning questions we are all troubled with is why do bad things happen to good people? In truth (not to belittle that question) we could equally ask why do bad things happen at all – to good or bad people?

It is beyond the scope of the few lines of this article to explore this issue in any way that could do it justice. Suffice to say that this is one of the chief and most profound struggles of faith (see Talmud Berachot 7a), and some answers that have been offered are lacking in any depth, intellectual honesty and are at times outright distasteful – especially regarding Holocaust theodicy. It is sometimes better to live with a good question than a bad answer (see “Binyan Ariel”, parashat Shemini 5775).

Our parasha does offer a powerful lesson in regards to relating to evil. The Torah teaches a starkly counter-intuitive law regarding childbirth: The halacha is that a woman enters into a state of ritual impurity upon giving birth; in biblical times, this period (which was limited in its time, contrary to today) would be followed by a time of being unconditionally pure. At the conclusion of this cycle, the woman would be obligated to bring two offerings (Vayikra 12:6-7):

“And when the days of her purification are fulfilled ... she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle-dove, for a sin-offering, to the door of Ohel Mo'ed, to the priest. And he shall offer it before Hashem, and make atonement for her...”

That a woman brings an Olah (burnt) offering is understood: There could be no greater experience of elation and oneness with Hashem than literally partnering with Him in creation. But why the Korban Chatat (sin-offering)? In what way could the woman possibly have sinned when bringing new life into the world?!

The Gemara (Niddah 31b) addresses this anomaly, suggesting a powerful lesson:

“Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai was asked by his disciples: ‘Why did the Torah ordain that a woman after childbirth should bring a sacrifice?’ He replied: ‘When she kneels in giving birth she swears impetuously that she will no longer be with her husband. The Torah, therefore, ordained that she should bring a sacrifice.’”

Life can be seen as a process of childbirth. Just as the woman on the birthstool brings-about new life, we are all in an eternal-evolutionary process of encountering ultimate goodness. But this process is at times accompanied by terrible birth pangs. There are times in life of extreme distress and difficulty, when we don't see the Ultimate Goodness shining through. During these times of torment and anguish we can be caused to lose the plot and become disenfranchised from this great process. Even worse, the pain can be so great that we wish to not be part of the process at all.

The Hebrew word chet – sin – literally means to miss, in the sense of missing a target. A sin is an act that expresses a temporary lapse in focus on the ultimate end-goal. The Korban Chatat is brought to achieve atonement for those moments when we lose our sight of the target, when we become disenfranchised from the process of increment. Thus, the woman must bring a sin-offering for any possible moments of chet she experienced during the agonizing pain of her contractions, which removed her from the process.

We all experience these birth pangs in our own lives. They need not be as physically or emotionally exhausting as the contractions of childbirth, but every person experiences moments of hardships: Economic hardships, arguments with friends or siblings, challenges at school, spousal strife, or other personal tragedy. The challenge is to remain committed to the process and focused on the Ultimate Goodness in these moments. The challenge is to say that if Hashem wills it, I do too – no matter how bad it is.

There is perhaps no time more apt for contemplating this message. In the days between Yom Hashoah, Yom Ha'Zikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut.

We do not know why bad things happen, and we certainly would prefer that – in the ideal world – they wouldn't occur at all. But when hardships do befall us, there is a manifestation that it is Hashem's will that they do occur and this presents us with the challenge and opportunity to remain steadfast to the process, and encounter the Ultimate Goodness even in the bad.

May it be Hashem's will that we know no more hardships, and that we experience the Ultimate Goodness manifest in our lives.

The Week that Was...

On Sunday in Manchester Ma'ayan and Benaya hosted an event with Suzy Salomon, hearing her survivors testimony. Sivot restarted around the country after a Pesach break.

Hello Hachshara

Catching up with our hachshara programme in Israel

It's been wild! (ly educational). The last two weeks have undoubtedly been the highlight of my year thus far. All of us have embarked on a Torani seminar that we will never forget. We spent the first 5 days exploring Israel's domestic politics and learning about Her people. We visited various stake (or state) holders, in their homes and communities, and in doing so attempted to further understand the intricacies of the modern country . Having met Arabs, Chareidim, Chilonim and Religious Zionists (no bias) we all came to the conclusion that Israel truly is a miracle, seeing as the only common ground they hold is their passion for humus.

We were also able to explore possibilities for our own Chalutzit,9 which I learnt means pioneering - after hearing it said 30,000 timeso. We met BAUK bogrim who had made the big move (cue arms out plane actions for 'aliyaaaa'), it was wonderful being able to discuss their routes with them and understanding the economic and everyday realities of living in Israel.

The last 8 days of the Seminar were dramatically different but equally (if not slightly more) fun. We spent our time on Kibbutz Ein Ha Natziv, and like many middle class Jewish teens before us, 'lived the real kibbutz life' (for a week). We worked in the mornings on various tasks around the kibbutz including landscaping, where we were given ice creams, and factory, where I hold the record for fastest time placing 10 plastic screws in their foam nuts, 15 seconds.

We spent the remainder of our days playing intense games of machanayim (a game similar to dodgeball but with logic to its rules) and lazing by the ma'ayan (natural spring), and socialising with the locals from Bet Shean. I am now lifelong friends with Yosi and a boy who's name I cannot pronounce, but is a gutarul sound along the lines of Chchm. My fluent grasp of the words פ and אָל enabled me to develop life -long friendships with both of them.

The culmination of this two week rollercoaster ride came in the form of the Torani Seder night. Without even trying to avoid sounding cliché, this was undoubtedly one of the best nights of my life. We sung, laughed, discussed and ate our way through till 5.30 am, meaning that we spent a total of 9 hrs and 35 mins at the Seder table. Every person brought their own unique customs to the Seder with some of the highlights of the night being singing songs from Shrek and ballroom dancing in pairs whilst singing Mordechai Ben David's Ve'ata Banim.

The last two weeks have been immensely fulfilling. I will never forget the time I have done both learning and contributing to the land with my fellow BA-nics. I feel truly honoured to have been a part of the Pesach seminar and am eternally grateful to all the wonderful people at BA that facilitated it all. Could not recommend it more!

Love Bert see you on machane! Xxx

Bertie Green is in Shevet Ne'eman and is on Hachsharat Torani at Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi

