

In memory of all those brutally murdered in the war on Israel,
including the recently fallen soldiers of the IDF

18 NOVEMBER 2023 | 5 KISLEV 5784

VOLUME 37 | #11

DAF HASHAVUA

תולדות | TOLEDOT

SHABBAT ENDS:

London 4.58pm
Southend 4.55pm
Hull 4.58pm
Leeds 4.58pm
Edinburgh 4.59pm
Birmingham 5.03pm
Sheffield 5.03pm
Manchester 5.03pm
Glasgow 5.04pm
Liverpool 5.06pm
Southport 5.09pm
Cardiff 5.15pm
Dublin 5.18pm
Jerusalem 5.17pm



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SIDRA BREAKDOWN

תולדות TOLEDOT

6th Sidra in:
בראשית
BEREISHIT

By Numbers:
106 VERSES
1,432 WORDS
5,426 LETTERS

Headlines:
JACOB
AND ESAU

TOLEDOT:
Artscroll p.124
Hertz p.93
Soncino p.140

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1137
Hertz p.102
Soncino p.159

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 25:19-26:5

Yitzchak, aged 60, prays for his wife Rivka to have a child. Rivka conceives twins and is told prophetically that the two children will father two separate nations. Esav is born first, red and hairy. Yaakov then emerges, holding on to Esav's heel. As they grow up, Esav becomes a hunter, whereas Yaakov dwells in tents of Torah study (Rashi). Yitzchak loves Esav, whereas Rivka prefers Yaakov. One day Yaakov prepares a red lentil stew. Esav returns exhausted from the fields, demanding that Yaakov give him some of the stew. Yaakov agrees, but in return for Esav selling the first-born rights to him. Esav agrees, taking an oath in return for the food.

Famine hits the Land of Cana'an (later Israel). God tells Yitzchak not to go down to Egypt for food and assures him that he will be a forefather of a great nation.

Point to Consider: Why did God insist on Yitzchak not leaving the Land? (see Rashi to 26:2)

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 26:6-12

Yitzchak lives amongst the Plishtim (Philistines) in Gerar. Afraid to reveal that Rivka is his wife, lest harm befall them from jealous men, Yitzchak tells the locals that she is his sister. However, the ruler Avimelech discovers that they are actually married. He accuses Yitzchak of deceiving him, but warns the people not to harm Yitzchak and Rivka. Yitzchak sows the land and becomes very prosperous.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 26:13-22

The Plishtim, jealous of Yitzchak's prosperity, stop up his wells. Yitzchak carries on digging wells; the arguments eventually end.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 26:23-29

Yitzchak moves to Beersheva. God appears to

him in the night, telling him that He will bless him. Yitzchak builds an altar. Avimelech brings an entourage from Gerar, offering Yitzchak a new peace treaty.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 26:30-27:27

Yitzchak agrees to the peace proposal. Esav marries two Hittite women. This pains his parents, as both women worship idols (Rashi). The ageing Yitzchak, almost blind, asks Esav to go and hunt some game for him to eat, after which he will bless Esav. Rivka overhears and instructs the reluctant Yaakov to go to Yitzchak disguised as Esav, with two cooked goats, so as to receive the blessings instead of Esav.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 27:28-28:4

Rivka's plan is successful; Yaakov receives the blessings. Esav returns from the field, realises what has happened and lets out a loud and bitter cry. Yitzchak also gives Esav a blessing, but it includes his future subservience to Yaakov. Esav plans to kill Yaakov. Rivka realises this, and tells Yaakov to escape to her brother Lavan in Charan. Yitzchak instructs Yaakov to marry one of Lavan's daughters. Before Yitzchak sends Yaakov away, he blesses him with the blessing first bestowed upon Avraham, including, specifically, the blessing of the Land of Israel. From this we can see that Yitzchak had always intended that the real legacy was to go to Yaakov, not Esav.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 28:5-9

Yaakov sets off to Charan. Esav marries a third wife, Machalat, the daughter of his uncle Yishmael.

HAFTARAH

The prophet Malachi speaks of God's love for Yaakov and His rejection of Esav. However, Yaakov's nation has to justify God's favour; the prophet rebukes them for being lax and insincere in their Temple service.



United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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How Much Do (Should) You Care?



BATSHEVA WOLF

Tribe Head of Education

Shocking statistic: over 70% of young people between the ages of 16-24 worry about climate change, and of those asked, 20% indicated that they *regularly* experience stress, feelings of hopelessness and anxiety when thinking about the climate crisis (study by Friends of the Earth, Netherlands). These are big numbers. This is a generation that genuinely cares about the climate. What is going on underneath this and how do we view these feelings of anxiety when looking at them through a Jewish lens?

We read in the Torah reading of this week about a rather peculiar episode in the life of our forefather Yitzchak (Isaac). The verse reads: "Yitzchak dug anew the wells which had been dug in the days of his father Avraham and which the Philistines had stopped up after Avraham's death; and he gave them

the same names that his father had given them" (*Bereishit 26:18*). Peculiar, because we can ask: why bother? Why bother re-digging wells which got covered over, and why does the Torah find it necessary to report this to us?

I believe the answer that bridges the above two paragraphs lies in the following idea. In a world where mindfulness is at the front and centre of many a conversation, article and vlog, Judaism offers us an ancient approach to mindfulness. *Pirkei Avot*, our guide on ethical living, asks us the question: "which is the right path for a person to follow?" (2:13). And it offers a few answers: having a positive mindset, having a good companion, surrounding ourselves with good people, having a good heart and lastly: foresight (literally translated, "being able to see what will be born"). Foresight is seen as a key ingredient to living a meaningful, ethical and righteous life. It seems that this idea has really been taken on by our current 16-24 year-olds. A lot of time is spent looking into the future, using research to predict and perhaps change the future. And for

the most part, this is very positive.

What Yitzchak understood and implemented was the other side of the coin. The reason he re-dug the wells was out of a deep understanding and respect for the past. In digging up the past (pun intended), he provided us with a lesson for the future. He appreciated that his father's achievements should not go to waste and were worth re-investing in. In Judaism, this is called "*Ma'aseh Avot Siman LaBanim*"; our forefathers' actions are a sign for us. They do not dictate the course of our life, but they help guide it and can serve as a beacon of light for us.

Reading about the very real worries that today's young people have about the future of our planet and asking myself what Judaism would say about this, I propose as follows: we care about the past; it was there for a reason, and it requires careful maintenance. And at the same time, we care about the future. Judaism has its eye on both. We are required to have foresight, as it is up to us to build the best futures for ourselves and future generations.

The War with Hamas: Day 18 Snapshot



**RABBI BARUCH
& REBBETZEN
NECHAMA DAVIS**

Daf Hashavua
Editorial Team

There is anxiety and tension in the air. And outrage – at Hamas and at its many defenders in worldwide media and at the UN, amongst others. And yet, to paraphrase Churchill, in certain aspects, this is Israel's and the Jewish People's finest hour. Everyone is rallying round in many different ways - spiritually, militarily, practically and emotionally. We have the soldiers of the IDF, an "army" of volunteers (in Israel and around the world), combined with mass prayer gatherings, and Tehillim around the clock. What does it feel like to be living in Israel during this "Simchat Torah War", which began with the most barbaric of pogroms, painfully reminiscent of some of the darkest days in Jewish history?

Everyone is living with a constant dichotomy of emotions. On the one hand, there is deep pain and grief at the enormous loss of lives on one day, and the fact that, nearly 3 weeks later, more than 200 of the murdered have yet to be identified, such was the disfigurement of their bodies. There

is a sense of worry and tension and fear over what lies in store for us all, but especially the fate of the kidnapped and our precious soldiers.

On the other hand, we all feel incredible pride and of being supported as we witness how the country has come together, a sense that every single one of us has a role to play, each one using their particular skills to the utmost. We ourselves launched one of many fundraising drives, both here and in the UK, raising significant amounts of money to supply soldiers in the North (where our son is based) with their needs. We are also endeavouring to help various people with their anxiety and practical issues, with their loved ones on the front line.

But this is nothing compared to large-scale operations taking place in all the major towns, assisting soldiers, helping the hundreds of thousands of bereaved or evacuated civilians, and counselling those suffering with anxiety. In Jerusalem, for example, there are around 600 volunteers at any one time, working around the clock on a rotational basis in one multi-story building, fulfilling these needs, in at least five languages!

A couple we know was told yesterday that they would have

a brief opportunity to visit their son early this morning, and they wanted to take a hot meal for his unit – 100 young men. They knew that they needed help and put out a Google spreadsheet, listing all their requirements. Within ten minutes (!) everything they needed was provided. We know that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of similar stories.

This circle of love is, of course, worldwide. We have been moved to tears seeing recordings of huge prayer-gatherings and solidarity demonstrations for Israel everywhere, and from so many private messages. Communities all over the world, significantly including those of the United Synagogue, are collecting supplies and sending them to Israel. And the "Bring them Home" campaign in Israel and around the world is very moving, powerful and important.

Rabbi Sacks zt'l in a speech to AIPAC in March 2013 entitled *The Struggle against Israel* said: "This will be the defining battle of the 21st century: which will prevail, the will to power with its violence, terror, missiles, and bombs, or the will to life with its hospitals, schools, freedoms and rights? We have to stand up and fight and we have to stand up and win".

Why was this Shabbat different from all other Shabbatot?

RABBI UZIEL HILL

Son of Rabbi Adam and Shoshana Hill, Potters Bar & Brookmans Park Synagogue

A Jerusalem resident originally from the UK, Uziel Hill, like thousands of other Israelis, was called up for reserve duty in the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) during the frantic days after the horrific attacks launched on 7th October.

On Shabbat Bereishit, 14th October, a week after the original attacks, Uziel's unit was stationed at a small town tasked with providing security for the residents.

- Even before Shabbat, we realised how much the residents and others cared about us. The seemingly never-ending boxes of food delivered on Friday, put the phrase "enough to feed an army" to shame.

- Davening felt even more important than usual. And this was not just for the religious soldiers. It was not easy to hold a service on Friday night given our responsibilities, the window of time was tight. Who helped us out? A non-religious resident gathered enough people to make sure we had a minyan for Kabbalat Shabbat and Maavir.

- A local family, unknown to any in my unit, invited around 60 soldiers for Friday night dinner over the course of the night. The many questions asked around the table showed the depth of interest in learning about Judaism and our shared heritage.

- The same was true the next day, when people from a wide variety



of religious backgrounds and none engaged in discussions about the parasha – particularly well-known as it was Bereishit! The laws of *pikuach nefesh* (the requirement to save life which overrides the prohibitions of Shabbat, such as writing or driving) needed to be applied, with care and professionalism. The rabbi of our battalion typified this, explaining on this basis how some of our military activities to protect the town, never normally done on Shabbat, were actually a fulfilment of Shabbat as they helped us to save lives.

Suddenly, many different kinds of Israelis were together for Shabbat in a small, crowded town from which many residents had also been called up by the IDF

Just over a week earlier, the soldiers protecting this town and the residents might have been divided, even passionately, over internal tensions in Israeli society. Now, they were thrown together suddenly as Israel, reeling, had to deal with an existential threat. What would happen?

After that Shabbat, Uziel recorded in point form why that Shabbat was different for him from every other Shabbat. We thank him for permission to reproduce his thoughts here.

- Many soldiers previously with very little connection to Judaism decided they wanted to wear tzitzit. Throughout the country, thousands of people not currently serving volunteered to make and donate tzitzit for soldiers, to ensure a plentiful supply.

- Hadvalla at the end of Shabbat was attended by over 600 people.

I'm not sure I'll ever experience another Shabbat like that one and certainly pray that the catalyst, the horrific attacks, will never occur again. I felt on that Shabbat, as we restarted the Torah reading cycle with Bereishit, that there was a unique opportunity to renew our appreciation for the small things we might just take for granted and to strengthen our ties to Judaism and each other. Let's in particular strengthen our connection to Shabbat, *kashrut* and *chesed* (kindness), as I saw in this town. And, together, let's all keep davening for a swift, safe, successful end to this war, the return of the hostages, no more bloodshed and peace everywhere.

60th Anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's Assassination



RABBI MEIR SALASNIK

Former rabbi of Bushey United Synagogue

On Friday 22nd or Saturday 23rd November 1963, our neighbour died. He was a good person, and the whole family were good neighbours. He had been ill for some years, and even though he was not so old, his passing was not surprising, certainly not for me at the age of 12. I recall his surname but not his first name. If now, 60 years later, I saw a photograph of him, I might not recognise him. So, how do I recall the date of his passing?

There is a view that everybody recalls where they were when they heard of President John F. Kennedy's assassination. As the assassination happened on Friday afternoon in Texas, when it was already Shabbat in London, I did not learn about it until I walked into my father's synagogue on Shabbat morning.

It is not only that we remember where we were when we learned of the assassination, but many of us remember what else happened that tragic day. Thus, my memory of our neighbour's passing.

Assassinations of public figures possibly happen about once a month around the globe. Some of these assassinations do not even get mentioned in the international news. So, why does this one assassination stand out even after

60 years?

Previously, three other Presidents of the USA had been assassinated, the last over 60 years before John Kennedy's assassination. Every one of these assassinations had happened openly, the victim or observers present seeing the assassin. President Kennedy was assassinated from a distance. It took a little while to find the assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald.

President Kennedy was exceptionally popular and young, very young for a President. He had a young wife and family. They represented a golden future for America and beyond. Comparisons have since been made with the mythical King Arthur's court at Camelot.

He appeared pro-Jewish and pro-Israel, a notable difference to his anti-Semitic father, who, as United States ambassador to Britain before and during the early years of the Second World War, had opposed America entering the war against Nazism.

Perhaps, above all, President Kennedy had saved or was assumed to have saved the world in October 1962 during what is known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. My generation, born post-World War 2, feared, for the first time in our lives, that the world was coming to an end. John Kennedy's combination of standing firm, yet withdrawing, and being open to better communication with the USSR in the future helped diffuse that possibility of nuclear war. Whether or not John Kennedy



saved us, we felt safer with him in the Oval Office.

Because Lee Harvey Oswald was himself shot dead by Jack Ruby a couple of days later, we have never had clarity. Was Oswald a lone actor? Or were others involved? Was he definitely the murderer? Was the USSR or Cuba behind the murder? Maybe opponents at home were involved. The fact that even 60 years later many documents remain secret continues to feed conspiracy theories.

There has not been closure.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT TOLEDOT

17 - 18 NOVEMBER | 5 KISLEV

The Power of Community



HARRISON COHEN

Gap Year Student
and Tribe Madrich

There aren't any words to describe the events that took place on Simchat Torah in Israel. The worst tragedy to affect the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Evil beyond comprehension committed against us. But what I can describe is what I experienced afterwards, and what it felt like to be part of a united Israel.

Before October 7th, a political divide over the role of the Supreme Court was splitting the nation. As soon as the war began, this division was gone an instant. I haven't even heard anybody say the words 'judicial

reform' since. The people of Israel came together with a common cause to protect. Whether it's soldiers or civilians, the mission to defend and strengthen *Medinat Yisrael* (the State of Israel) binds people together despite their differences.

On a personal note, my Yeshiva in Jerusalem (*Eretz Hatzvi*) has committed itself to countless volunteering opportunities. We tied hundreds of tzitzit for soldiers, cleared out multiple bomb shelters and collectively gave hundreds of hours of work in food production factories and hospitals. During and after experiencing the above, I have never felt more connected to *Am Yisrael*. We are a people like no other, with an unwavering commitment to be there for each

other; it is truly beautiful.

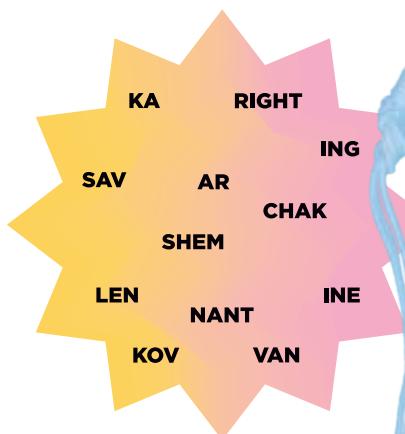
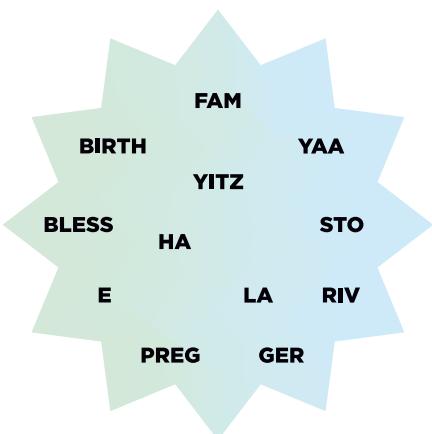
Even after returning to the UK, it was inspiring to see the efforts here from countless organisations and synagogues. Packing boxes of food and first aid equipment for soldiers, events to discuss the situation, programmes for Yeshiva/Seminary students to continue learning. This happened everywhere. Jews became united.

My message is that this is something we can rejoice in knowing. That they can't break us. We will only grow stronger from this, be prouder to be Jewish, move closer to God and each other. We are united forever.

Am Yisrael Chai.

Parasha Word Pair-Up

Pair up the syllables from the two stars, to form 12 words connected to the parasha.





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

TOLEDOT: MAKES SENSE!

IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHA, ISAAC, WHO IS BLIND, USES HIS OTHER SENSES TO GIVE BERACHOT (BLESSINGS) TO HIS SONS JACOB AND ESAU.

WE CAN USE OUR EARS FOR LISTENING TO THE SHOFAR!

OR FOR LISTENING TO OUR MUM AND DAD.



DID YOU KNOW THAT WE CAN DO MITZVOT WITH ALL OUR FIVE SENSES? HERE ARE SOME OF OUR FAVOURITES...



WE CAN USE OUR EYES TO SEARCH FOR CHAMETZ BEFORE PESACH.

WE CAN USE OUR HANDS TO LIGHT THE SHABBAT CANDLES.

OR TO SHAKE THE LULAV AND ETROG!



WE CAN USE OUR NOSE TO SMELL THE BESAMIM SPICES WHEN WE MAKE HAYDALLAH AFTER SHABBAT.

SOME OF MY BEST MITZVOT ARE ONES WE DO WITH OUR TONGUE, AS I JUST LOVE TO EAT! WE CAN USE OUR TONGUE FOR EATING CRUNCHY MATZAH!



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Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.