

Sponsored by JWA to mark Jewish Women's Aid Shabbat



בס"ד

25 NOVEMBER 2023 | 12 KISLEV 5784

VOLUME 37 | #12

# DAF HASHAVUA

וַיַּעֲזֵב | VAYEITZEI

## SHABBAT ENDS:

London 4.52pm  
Southend 4.48pm  
Leeds 4.50pm  
Edinburgh 4.50pm  
Hull 4.51pm  
Birmingham 4.56pm  
Sheffield 4.56pm  
Manchester 4.56pm  
Glasgow 4.56pm  
Liverpool 4.59pm  
Southport 5.02pm  
Cardiff 5.08pm  
Dublin 5.11pm  
Jerusalem 5.15pm



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



# Sidra Summary

## **1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 28:10-22**

On Yaakov's journey to Charan, he falls asleep and dreams of a ladder resting on the ground and reaching up to heaven, with angels ascending and descending. God is at the top of the ladder, telling Yaakov that he will inherit the Land and that he will have plentiful offspring. Yaakov wakes up, having realised the holiness of the place, which is where the Temple would later be built (Rashi). He builds an altar and takes a vow committing to serve God fully (Ramban).

## **2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 29:1-17**

Yaakov travels eastwards. He sees a well in a field, covered by a large stone. The local shepherds tell Yaakov that the daughter of his uncle Lavan is approaching. Yaakov moves the boulder blocking the well and waters Rachel's flock. He kisses Rachel and weeps.

## **3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 29:18-30:13**

Yaakov wants to marry Rachel, the younger sister of Leah, and offers to work for Lavan for seven years as payment. Although Lavan agrees, when the time comes, he tricks Yaakov, swapping Rachel for Leah. Lavan defends his actions and agrees to let Yaakov marry Rachel a week later, if he works for another seven years. Leah, unlike Rachel, is blessed with children: Reuven, Shimon, Levi and Yehuda. Rachel gives Yaakov her maidservant Bilhah to conceive 'on her behalf'. Bilhah gives birth to Dan and Naftali. Leah then gives Yaakov her maidservant Zilpah, who gives birth to Gad and Asher.

## **4TH ALIYA (REVI'U) – 30:14-27**

Reuven finds some *dudaim* (jasmine – Rashi) in the field and brings them to his mother Leah. Rachel asks for some of the jasmine. Leah agrees, but only in return for the right to sleep that night with Yaakov. Leah conceives and has

a fifth son, Yissachar. This is followed by a sixth, Zevulun. She then has a daughter, Dinah. Rachel finally has a child, Yosef. Yaakov demands that Lavan let him return home after all his years of work.

**Point to Consider:** *What is the connection between the birth of Yosef and Yaakov's demand to leave? (see Rashi to 30:25)*

## **5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 30:28-31:16**

Lavan asks Yaakov to stay on and to specify his payment. Yaakov replies that he will keep the plain-looking animals currently in the flock, and any offspring born to them with unusual-patterned skin. Yaakov becomes very prosperous. Lavan's sons accuse Yaakov of theft. God tells Yaakov to return to Cana'an immediately. Rachel and Leah agree to leave.

## **6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 31:17-42**

Yaakov's entire family leaves. Lavan finds this out three days later and chases after Yaakov, catching up with him at Mount Gilad. God appears to Lavan in a dream, telling him not to harm Yaakov. Lavan criticises Yaakov for fleeing and for stealing his idols. Yaakov denies the latter charge, unaware that Rachel was hiding them. Yaakov also defends his record in Lavan's house, where he worked tirelessly, despite Lavan's trickery.

## **7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'U) – 31:43-32:3**

Lavan proposes a peace treaty, which Yaakov agrees to, symbolised by a stone monument built by Yaakov's sons. Lavan and Yaakov part ways.

## **HAFTARAH**

The haftarah, according to the general United Synagogue custom, is taken from the Book of Hoshea (ch. 12-14). The prophet Hoshea rebukes the tribe of Ephraim for their rebelliousness, warning them of the dire consequences. However, they will ultimately return to God, Who will welcome them back.

## **United Synagogue Daf Hashavua**

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# Sleeping on Sacred Ground?



**RABBI SAM  
MILLUNCHICK**

Belmont United  
Synagogue

The curtain rises in this week's parasha with Yaakov (Jacob) fleeing from his brother Esav after having stolen his blessings. As the sun sets on Yaakov's first day, he settles down for the night on a random hilltop. He has a beautiful dream, filled with ladders and angels, where God speaks to him and assures him that all will be well in his travels to his uncle Lavan's house. After his vision, Yaakov wakes up and says, "Indeed, this place contains Godliness and I didn't know!" The verse continues, "And he became afraid and said, 'how awe-inspiring is this place, this is none other than the House of God, the gateway to Heaven'" (Bereishit 28:16).

His encounter with God thoroughly shakes Yaakov. He almost viscerally understands that this is *the* place on Earth where God's presence is most readily felt. What could we expect someone

to do in such a situation? Perhaps offer a sacrifice? Perhaps build a monument? At the very least, he could have moved off such holy ground. All good ideas, and yet, Yaakov seems to have missed the memo.

Instead, he goes back to sleep! "And Yaakov arose early the next morning..." *Only after going to sleep in the very same place he just told us was the seat of God on Earth*, does he build a monument to his encounter with God! (See Radak to Bereishit 20:8 that the Hebrew word *Vayashkem* means "to arise early from sleep")

We learn from Yaakov's actions that holiness is not merely an external attribute—it is not something that can be foisted upon someone. Instead, holiness is a function of a person's relationship to a particular person, place or thing. When Nevuzaradan, the Babylonian conqueror, came to destroy the Holy of Holies, God told him he was too late, "You've killed a dead nation, burned a burnt building, ground flour that was already ground" (Talmud Sanhedrin 96b). In other words, once the Jewish people ceased to see that

place as holy, it became a dead limb, and it was only a matter of time before it fell off.

Yaakov would never have initially slept on the Temple Mount had he known that the place was holy; he would have treated the place with the reverence it deserved (Rashi, Bereishit 28:16). At that point, though, Yaakov was still finding his footing in his relationship with God—he hadn't yet forged the deep bond that he would establish later. When he recognized that his presence at that location was divinely orchestrated and that God specifically intended for him to sleep there (Talmud Chullin 91b), he felt compelled to stay. What previously would have been seen as a place demanding respect and distance now required his presence and connection.

Yaakov's stay at the future Temple Mount imparts a crucial life lesson. Holiness is generated through relationships. When I value something, it becomes meaningful and holy to me. Couple that with the external potential for holiness—the Temple, or a spouse—and true holiness is created.

# Inspirational Responses to the Gaza War



**RABBI  
GIDEON  
SYLVESTER**

US Israel Rabbi

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, my sons were called up to the army, refugees fled from the north and the south of Israel, and we have all been running to the shelters when the sirens sound.

Yet, amidst the horror of barbaric terrorism and the deep darkness of war, there has been at least one glimmer of light. Just weeks ago, Israel was tearing itself apart over the role of the judiciary and the place of religion in Israel's public places. A divided nation. I saw this illustrated when I happened upon two long columns of Jews marching through Jerusalem with flags flying and banners unfurled. Tragically, the two lines were striding in opposite directions, each column proclaiming that the other had abandoned its Jewish values and would destroy the nation.

Jews are good at arguing, but we are also deeply connected. Early rabbinic teachings in the Midrash tell us that when one part

of the nation is in pain, all of us suffer. This has never been more apparent than in the current crisis. As war broke out, the leaders of the protest movement flipped their campaign to bring the country to a standstill and joined the nationwide effort to mobilise volunteers. They brought out tech experts who used artificial intelligence to help verify the identities of the people who have been abducted to Gaza and other citizens to sort through tonnes of donations for the families displaced by the war, the soldiers protecting us and the wounded in our hospitals<sup>1</sup>.

Everyone is finding ways to help. When I went to donate blood at Jerusalem's Teddy Sports Stadium, there were so many donors that the Muslim Israeli manning the door turned us away, inviting us to return the next day.

*Time Magazine* noted that, whereas in every other conflict people search for routes to flee from the fight, here things are different. Israelis living, honeymooning and holidaying abroad scrambled to find flights home<sup>2</sup>. Seeing how many backpackers wished to return from South America, someone chartered

a plane to bring them home. At other airports, philanthropists stood at the check-in footing the bill for those who could not afford the fares.

The outstanding unity is not limited to Israel. I have watched with wonder and admiration the efforts of our United Synagogue communities who are standing with Israel and contributing to our war effort.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935) famously said that the Jewish people suffer destruction at times of in-fighting and causeless hatred; the path to salvation lies in spreading gratuitous love to one another. The head of my yeshiva, Rabbi Yehuda Amital (1924-2010), argued that Rav Kook's beautiful words no longer apply. For, since the Holocaust, there is no such thing as "gratuitous love"; we all understand that everyone needs and deserves all the love we can shower upon them. All the more so since the appalling terror attacks in Israel and the wave of antisemitism around the world. Our challenge now is to build on the newfound spirit, uniting our families, communities and country more than ever before.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231014-in-war-israel-protest-movement-morphs-into-relief-effort>

<sup>2</sup> Jocelyn Noveck, Menelaos Hadjicostis and Amy Taxin, Reeling From Hamas' Attack, Israelis Around the World Try to Head Home to Join the Fight, *Time Magazine*, 11 October 2023.

**JWA SHABBAT PRESENTS:**

# Exploring Healthy Relationships

**24-25 NOVEMBER 2023**

**This year, Jewish Women's Aid Shabbat is focused on Healthy Relationships.**

We invite you to read our toolkit and to take part in the activity which opens conversations about what makes a relationship healthy – or unhealthy.

[jwa.org.uk/healthyrelationships](https://jwa.org.uk/healthyrelationships)

We are delighted to partner with the Office of the Chief Rabbi and The United Synagogue and other key organisations across the community.

Office of The  
**CHIEF RABBI**



Charity No. 1047045



**JEWISH  
WOMEN'S  
AID**

Jewish Women's Aid supports and empowers Jewish women and girls aged 16+ (14+ in London) who are experiencing domestic abuse. No Jewish woman affected by domestic abuse should have to face this alone. We are here to help.

**IF YOU NEED OUR SUPPORT, PLEASE CONTACT US:**  
0808 801 0500 • [advice@jwa.org.uk](mailto:advice@jwa.org.uk) • [jwa.org.uk/webchat](https://jwa.org.uk/webchat)

# Hearing the Silent Cry



**RABBI NICKY  
LISS**

Highgate United  
Synagogue

The theme of Jewish Women's Aid Shabbat this year is 'Exploring Healthy Relationships', with the goal to engage people across our community in opening up conversations about what makes a relationship healthy or unhealthy. When an unhealthy relationship constitutes abuse, the responsibility lies with the abuser, and the partner being abused should feel empowered to seek support and not suffer in silence.

The United Synagogue Rabbinate, through its Rabbinical Council, Rebbetzins' Group and Centre for Rabbinic Excellence, are proud to stand with Jewish Women's Aid and support the critical work they do.

On the surface, this week's parasha seems to detail a number of unhealthy relationships. Leah felt that she was hated after Yaakov (Jacob) also married her sister (Bereishit 29:33). Rachel felt estranged when Leah was blessed with children (30:1). They both felt alienated by their father, Lavan, who favoured their brothers (31:15). And throughout his time in Lavan's house, Yaakov was treated unfairly and unequally.

In this short piece I am going to focus on Yaakov's perspective, based on extracts from a remarkable essay by Rabbi Sacks zt"l (*Leah's Tears, Covenant and Conversation, Nov 2007*).

The Torah describes Yaakov as an *'ish tam'*, understood according to Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) as "a single-minded man." The prophet Micah associated Yaakov with truth. Yaakov's life embodies the fact that truth must be fought for with single-minded determination. It rarely comes without a struggle and the pain of experience. What is the truth at stake in Yaakov's life?

listen, in Yaakov's case, to the unspoken tears of Leah and her feeling of rejection.

Yaakov wrestles with this throughout his life. It is not that he has a moral failing. To the contrary, he is the most tenacious of all the patriarchs – and the only one all of whose children become part of the covenant. It is rather that every virtue has a corresponding danger. Those who are courageous are often unaware of the fears of ordinary people. Those who, like Yaakov, have an unusual capacity to love must fight against the danger of failing to honour the feelings of those they do not love with equal passion. The antidote is the ability to listen. That is what Yaakov learns in the course of his life – and why he, above all, is the role model for the Jewish people – the nation commanded to listen.

As Rabbi Sacks concludes: How beautiful it is that this message – one of the deepest and most subtle in the Torah – is conveyed in a series of passages whose meaning does not lie on the surface of the text, but discloses itself only to those who listen to what is going on beneath the words: the unspoken cry, the implicit appeal, the unheard tears, the unarticulated pain. Those who wish to learn to listen to God must learn to listen to other people – to the *kol demamah dakah*, "the still, small voice" of those who need our love.



**JEWISH  
WOMEN'S  
AID**

One of the most striking facts about Yaakov is the frequency with which the word "love" appears. Yaakov loves more than any other figure in Bereishit.

But through painful experience, Yaakov must learn a truth about love. There are times when love not only unites but also divides. What Yaakov learned – and what we learn, reading his story – is that love is not enough. We must also heed those who feel unloved. Without that, there will be conflict and tragedy. That requires a specific capacity – the ability to

# THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYEITZEI

24-25 NOVEMBER | 12 KISLEV

## The Epic Journey



**Tamar  
Cohen**

Tribe Education  
Manager

In this thrilling biblical odyssey, we follow Yaakov (Jacob), the grandson of Avraham, on a captivating adventure of love, betrayal and self-discovery. Fleeing his brother's anger, Yaakov embarks on a life-changing journey, encountering a mysterious ladder to heaven and building his family. Amidst family rivalries and deceit, he works tirelessly for his cunning uncle, Lavan. As the saga unfolds, Parashat Vayeitzei unveils a gripping narrative of faith, endurance and the enduring legacy of a patriarch.

But the Torah is more than a blockbuster film or gripping storybook; it's a timeless life guide, imparting

values, ethics and history to help us navigate our own journeys. Here are four key lessons we can learn from Yaakov's journey:

### 1. Hard work and patience

Yaakov works tirelessly for his uncle Lavan for many years in order to be able to marry his beloved wife Rachel and to earn a living. He tends to Lavan's sheep and faces many challenges along the way. This teaches us the importance of hard work and perseverance. It's essential to understand that success often comes from putting in the effort and being patient with our goals and dreams.

### 2. Honesty and integrity

Yaakov maintains honesty and integrity despite Lavan's attempts to deceive him. This teaches us the value of staying true to our principles and not compromising integrity, even in challenging or unethical situations.

### 3. Family relationships

The parasha of Vayeitzei highlights the complex dynamics within Yaakov's family, particularly with his wives, Leah and Rachel, and their handmaids. It shows the importance of communication and empathy within family relationships, essential for fostering understanding and harmony.

### 4. Dreams and aspirations

Yaakov's visionary dream of a ladder to heaven reminds us of the significance of having dreams, aiming high and believing in our potential for greatness. In life, we should dare to dream and work towards our goals. The true magic of the Torah is that there are personal lessons for each and every one of us hidden in the text of these historic stories. In every parasha, find the message which is there just for you, and learn from the guidance of our illustrious ancestors.

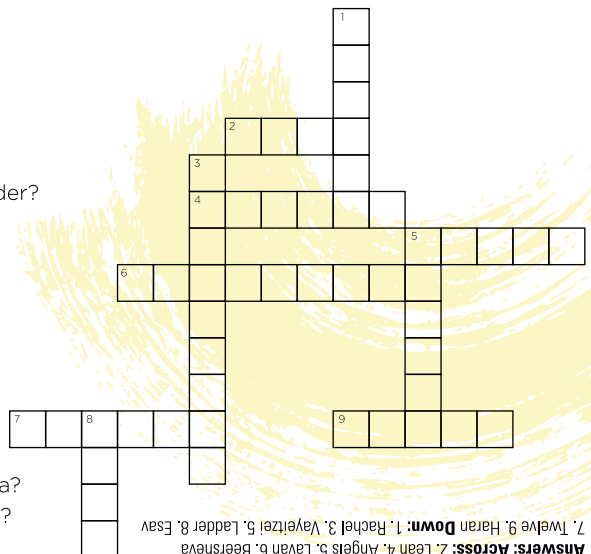
## Parasha Crossword

### Across

- Who was Lavan's eldest daughter?
- What were going up and down the ladder?
- Who tricked Yaakov?
- Where did Yaakov's journey begin?
- How many tribes were there?
- When Yaakov fled from his brother, which place did he head towards?

### Down

- Who was Yaakov's first love?
- What is the name of this week's parasha?
- What was the object in Yaakov's dream?
- Who was Yaakov's brother?



Answers: Across: 1. Rachel 3. Vayeitzei 5. Ladder 8. Esau  
Down: 2. Leah 4. Angels 5. Lavan 6. Beersheva 7. Twelve 9. Haran



# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYEITZEI: TIME FLIES!

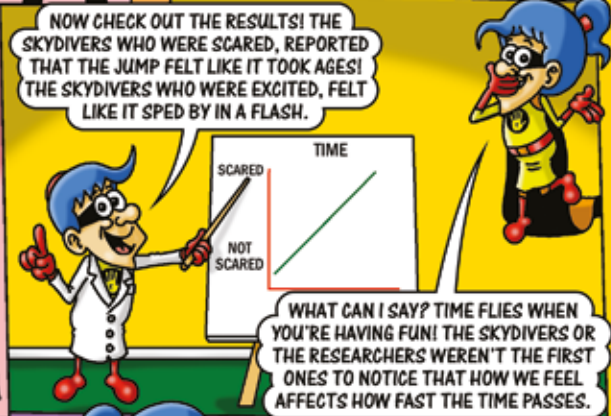
In 2007, Leah Campbell and Richard Bryant did an experiment to study how long skydivers thought they had been in the air. They interviewed 76 people before their first ever skydive.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT THE JUMP? PLEASE FILL IN THIS SCALE, ON HOW EXCITED AND SCARED YOU ARE.



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR FIRST SKYDIVE! NOW PLEASE CAN YOU TELL US HOW LONG THE JUMP TOOK.

NOW CHECK OUT THE RESULTS! THE SKYDIVERS WHO WERE SCARED, REPORTED THAT THE JUMP FELT LIKE IT TOOK AGES! THE SKYDIVERS WHO WERE EXCITED, FELT LIKE IT SPED BY IN A FLASH.



WHAT CAN I SAY? TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN! THE SKYDIVERS OR THE RESEARCHERS WEREN'T THE FIRST ONES TO NOTICE THAT HOW WE FEEL AFFECTS HOW FAST THE TIME PASSES.

IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHA, YAAKOV (JACOB) HAS TO WORK FOR SEVEN YEARS BEFORE HE COULD MARRY HIS BRIDE, RACHEL. INTERESTINGLY, THE TORAH TELLS US THAT THE SEVEN YEARS FELT TO HIM LIKE THEY WERE JUST 'A FEW DAYS' BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE FOR HER.



YAAKOV KNEW THAT HE WAS WORKING TOWARDS SOMETHING HE WAS REALLY EXCITED ABOUT. SO EACH DAY BROUGHT HIM CLOSER TO THAT REALITY AND INSTEAD OF DRAGGING ON AND FEELING LIKE FOREVER, THE YEARS FLEW BY FOR HIM, FEELING LIKE JUST A FEW DAYS. HOW COOL IS THAT? IF WE CAN REFRAME WHAT IS IN OUR MINDS, WE CAN CHANGE OUR WHOLE EXPERIENCE.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY... TIME'S FUN WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FLIES!



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www.tribeuk.com

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.