

Sponsored by Chai Cancer Care, the Jewish community's dedicated cancer support service

  
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together we can cope

בס"ד

2 DECEMBER 2023 | 19 KISLEV 5784

VOLUME 37 | #13

# DAF HASHAVUA

וישלח | VAYISHLACH

"Thus Rachel died, and was buried on the road to Efrat" (Bereishit 35:19)

## SHABBAT ENDS:

London 4.48pm  
Southend 4.44pm  
Edinburgh 4.44pm  
Leeds 4.45pm  
Hull 4.46pm  
Birmingham 4.51pm  
Sheffield 4.51pm  
Manchester 4.51pm  
Glasgow 4.51pm  
Liverpool 4.54pm  
Southport 4.57pm  
Cardiff 5.04pm  
Dublin 5.06pm  
Jerusalem 5.15pm

**Chanukah begins next Thursday night**

  
**The United Synagogue**

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

**וַיִּשְׁלַח  
VAYISHLACH**

8th Sidra in:

**בְּרֵאשִׁית  
BEREISHIT**

By Numbers:

**153 VERSES  
1,976 WORDS  
7,458 LETTERS**

Headlines:

**JACOB IN  
THE LAND**

**VAYISHLACH:**

Artscroll p.170

Hertz p.122

Soncino p.195

**HAFTARAH:  
(HOSHEA 11:7-  
12:12, ACCORDING  
TO THE US  
CUSTOM)**

Artscroll p.1139

Hertz p.135

Soncino p.220

# Sidra Summary

## **1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 32:4-13**

Yaakov sends angels to inform his brother Esav that he is returning home, after decades away. Yaakov's message offers Esav the chance to make peace, but also conveys Yaakov's own strength (Rashi). The angels return, warning Yaakov that Esav is approaching with 400 men. Yaakov becomes afraid, divides his camp into two and prays to God for survival.

## **2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 32:14-30**

Yaakov sends copious gifts to Esav, hoping to appease him. That night, Yaakov's family crosses over the Yabok stream. Yaakov is left alone. He is attacked by 'a man', identified by the Midrash as the ministering angel of Esav. They wrestle until dawn. The 'man', unable to defeat Yaakov, nevertheless dislocates Yaakov's hip. The 'man' then tells Yaakov that his name will later change to 'Yisrael' and blesses him.

## **3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 32:31-33:5**

Yaakov's injury is the source of the prohibition of eating the sciatic nerve of an animal. As Esav approaches, Yaakov bows to him seven times. Esav embraces and kisses Yaakov, and they both weep.

## **4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 33:6-33:20**

Each person in Yaakov's family bows to Esav. Yaakov successfully urges Esav to accept the gifts that he had sent. Esav suggests that he and Yaakov travel together, but Yaakov politely declines. Esav departs for Seir and Yaakov departs for a place called Succot. Yaakov then travels to Shechem.

## **5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 34:1-35:11**

Dinah is captured and violated by Shechem the son of Chamor, ruler of the town. Shechem falls

in love with Dinah and asks his father to secure her as his wife, whilst still holding Dinah captive. Yaakov's sons are outraged. Chamor speaks to them, suggesting that their two families unite in marriage, as well as offering them trade and land prospects. Shechem offers a large dowry for Dinah. Yaakov's sons trick Chamor and Shechem – they offer the Israelite girls only if all the town's males are circumcised. Chamor and Shechem agree; all the men of the town circumcise themselves. Three days later, when they are in great pain, Shimon and Levi kill them all, take Dinah back and plunder the town. Yaakov rebukes them.

God appears to Yaakov, telling him to go back to Beit El, where he originally built an altar when escaping from Esav. As the angel had previously foretold, God changes Yaakov's name to Yisrael.

**Point to Consider:** *Why did Yaakov rebuke Shimon and Levi? (see Rashi to 34:30)*

## **6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 35:12-36:19**

Rachel dies whilst giving birth to Binyamin and is buried in Beit Lechem. After Rachel's death, Reuven, Leah's son, moves his father's bed out of Bilhah's tent and into Leah's (Rashi). Yitzchak dies, aged 180. He is buried by Esav and Yaakov. Esav's descendants are listed.

## **7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 36:20-36:43**

The Torah lists eight Edomite kings and their origins.

## **HAFTARAH (HOSHEA 11:7-12:12)**

The Haftarah, according to the general United Synagogue custom, is taken from the Book of Hoshea. The prophet refers to events in Yaakov's life, including his struggle with the angel. Hoshea encourages the people to learn from Yaakov's responses to the spiritual challenges he faced, so that they can become worthy of being his descendants.

## **United Synagogue Daf Hashavua**

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# Shechem: The Crossroads of the Jews



**RABBI  
NICK KETT**

Radlett United  
Synagogue

Parashat Vayishlach is famous for the overnight battle between Yaakov (Jacob) and the Angel, which resulted in Yaakov receiving a new name: Yisrael. Following this incident, the Torah tells us that “Yaakov arrived intact at the city of Shechem” (33:18), which he goes to great efforts to purchase. The Talmud teaches that Shechem is one of three cities that our biblical ancestors purchased. Chevron was purchased by Avraham, as we see in parashat Chayei Sarah, and Jerusalem was purchased by King David, as we see in the book of Shmuel Bet. Accordingly, these three locations have great importance to us as Jews. Curiously, by studying these three locations on a map of Israel, one cannot help but notice that they create a central line through Eretz Yisrael, almost like they form the spine, or the core, of our Holy Land.

In our parasha, Yaakov’s daughter Dinah is abducted and violated by Shechem the man, son of the ruler of Shechem the city. The rabbis in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 134) teach us that this results in Dinah giving birth

to a daughter. Later, in parashat Vayeishev, Yosef (Joseph) is sent to check up on his brothers in Shechem, which leads to his sale and being taken to Egypt, where, after many years and tragedies, he is eventually reunited with Dinah’s daughter, Osnat, whom he marries.

Moving forward in time, Shechem appears again when the kingdoms are divided (see the Book of Kings). King Solomon’s son, Rechavam (Rehoboam), becomes king in Shechem, while Yarovam (Jeroboam) builds an alternative temple in Shechem, resulting in the split monarchies of the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. It is noteworthy that the Talmud teaches: “Shechem is a place which is prone to disaster and trouble” (Sanhedrin 102a).

The mountains of Eval and Gerizim, described in Devarim 11:29, lie either side of Shechem, and this is where the Jewish people are cautioned to choose appropriately between a life of blessings or curses. Shechem is also the stage on which Yehoshua (Joshua) delivers his final speech before he dies, in which he makes a covenant with the Jewish people to serve God wholeheartedly and to get rid of *avodah zara*, idol worship.

Avraham entered the Land of Israel via Shechem, and the Jewish people do the same through the process of standing between

blessing and curse and making a choice to commit to God. The Jewish people commit to getting rid of idol worship in Shechem while, conversely, Yarovam chose to build his rebel monarchy in Shechem. Shechem, therefore, seems to be closely and deeply connected to the idea of choice. It serves as a fork in the road between two completely opposite choices. It is no coincidence that the word is etymologically linked to the Hebrew word for shoulder (Bereishit 9:23). The shoulders are the first point in the body where the body moves from being one unified place and divides into two distinct sides. The shoulders are the crossroads for the body. Shechem is the crossroads for spiritual progress or decline. Time and again it has served as a place of choice, and commitment to that choice.

# Chai Cancer Care



**REBBETZEN  
LAUREN LEVIN**

South Hampstead  
Synagogue

Parashat Vayishlach opens replete with tension and anxiety. Yaakov (Jacob) is returning with his family to Canaan and preparing to meet his brother Esav once again. In the black of the night Yaakov finds himself isolated from his family, all alone. It is there that he has an encounter which will change him forever:

*"And Yaakov was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip, and the socket of Yaakov's hip became dislocated as he wrestled with him. And he (the angel) said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking," but he (Yaakov) said, "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me." So, he said to him, "What*

*is your name?" and he said, "Yaakov." And he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Yaakov, but Yisrael (Israel), because you have commanding power with [an angel of] God and with men, and you have prevailed" (Bereishit 32:24-29).*

Life's scrambles throw up much dust, and some will leave their mark on us, just like the displaced hip of our ancestor Yaakov. Our resilience as a nation is a reflection of how integral this story is to us as Jews, bearing the name given to Yaakov – **Bnei Yisrael**. The incredible bravery we have seen in Israel over recent weeks is also part of this legacy, also bearing the same name – **Yisrael**.

The hallmark features of this story are familiar to the amazing team at Chai Cancer Care, because they are often the features of the people they support. Yaakov is surrounded by a loving and supportive family, but the actual fight is his own. It is an encounter he did not ask for or expect, yet he rose to the challenge with grit, determination and faith. In addition, the experience is transformative – he will develop resilience that will remain with him long after this particular struggle is over. Chai Cancer Care supports cancer patients and their families to develop the physical, emotional and spiritual tools to tackle the journey ahead. As in Yaakov's case, it is not a challenge they asked for

or expected, but similarly, the tools and support they gain from Chai will remain with them forever.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi (Talmud Chullin 91a) explains that the fight brought up so much dust it reached God's throne of glory. My great-grandfather, Rabbi Yisrael Yosef Lew (in his work *Yalkut Yosef*) interpreted this to be a statement regarding the holiness of the fight. Despite appearing as a purely physical struggle, which threatened to distract Yaakov from his life's mission, it was in fact an important, if not holy, stage of his life's journey. The passion, dedication and love that emanates from the Chai team is testament to their deep acknowledgment of the significance and holiness of each person's journey. Anglo-Jewry is so blessed to have such a crucial and meaningful organisation in its midst.



In loving memory of Shmuel Nissim ben Yaacov z"l

# THE CHAI SHABBAT

1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>  
December

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY'S DEDICATED CANCER SUPPORT SERVICE

Chai is currently supporting over **4,000** people aged **3-98** from **11** centres across the UK

Chai is currently working in **29** schools across the UK

This year Chai has provided over **20,900** appointments

Chai **does not charge** for services and **does not receive any statutory funding**

chai cancer care  
together we can cope

**60%** of Chai's clients are patients and **40%** are their loved ones

This year Chai has provided support to **1,035** new clients

**One in three** of Chai's clients are under **50** years old



**RABBI DR  
MICHAEL  
HARRIS**

Hampstead  
Synagogue

In 1987, my late father, Rabbi Cyril Harris zt'l, became Chief Rabbi of South Africa. But together with other family members and friends, I had major misgivings. My parents were leaving behind a great deal that was comfortable and secure in London, including my father's pulpit at St John's Wood Shul. My mother, z'l, who never liked the title 'Rebbetzen' but who was closely involved in both the Shul and the wider United Synagogue, was giving up her longstanding partnership in a leading law firm in London.

The contrast between the amenability of London life and what seemed to await my parents in the South Africa of the time was striking. Not only was South Africa unfamiliar territory; it was inescapably identified in the Western mind with the single overriding issue of Apartheid. It was common knowledge at the time that religious leaders who spoke their minds from within the borders of South Africa often placed themselves in danger, and the risks seemed intensified in light of the then-recent declaration of a State of Emergency by the South African government. It seemed to me that my father was going to be placed in an impossible dilemma: either speaking out against injustice and risking harassment from the Apartheid regime, or remaining silent and thus becoming complicit in the status quo – in halachic terminology, *shetikh kehoda'ah dami*, silence is equivalent to consent.

I well remember the disturbing attitudes I encountered on visits to

# TEN YEARS SINCE THE PASSING OF NELSON MANDELA



Rabbi Cyril Harris zt'l with Nelson Mandela

South Africa among some (by no means all) in the Jewish community early in my father's tenure. These ranged from overt racism to unwillingness to challenge the discriminatory status quo in any way and total marginalization of the Apartheid issue. Thank God, my parents succeeded in expressing opposition to Apartheid from the outset without incurring the wrath of the authorities. And salvation was not long in coming. The release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 heralded a new era for the country in which the key challenge facing my father would be guiding the Jewish community into the new democratic South Africa.

My father's conviction that uncompromising fidelity to

Halacha need not be accompanied by ethical myopia but could go hand-in-hand with a broad and universalistic outlook meant that there was a natural affinity between him and Nelson Mandela. They became good friends, and as well as my father taking an active part in Mandela's Inauguration as President of South Africa in May 1994, the new President attended major Jewish events and developed a positive relationship with the community. Mandela's deep gratitude to Jewish people who had helped him earlier in his life, his magnanimous attitude to those who had not, and his determination to build a better South Africa for all earned him great respect in the Jewish community as well as beyond.

In loving memory of David Yochanan ben Moshe z"l

# THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYISHLACH

1-2 DECEMBER | 19 KISLEV

## What's in a Name?



**SHIRA JACKSON**

US Educator

"What's your name?" That's normally the first question we ask when we meet somebody new. It's a great conversation opener because everybody knows the right answer! This week though, that becomes a challenging question for our forefather Yaakov (Jacob).

There's a moment in which he finds himself alone, on the opposite side of the river to the rest of his family, and he's accosted by a man. They fight each other until dawn, when eventually the man tells Yaakov to let him go. Yaakov will not let him

leave until the man gives him a blessing.

The man, who it turns out is an angel, says, "Your name shall no longer [only] be Yaakov, but Yisrael, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed."

From this point onwards, Yaakov himself maintains a dual identity, sometimes referred to as Yaakov and sometimes as Yisrael, but the nation that emerges from him, the Jewish people, becomes known as Bnei Yisrael, the Children of Israel. Our central prayer becomes Shema Yisrael (Listen, Israel), a reminder of the power and oneness of God, spoken specifically to the children of Israel.

*Bereishit Rabbah*, an early rabbinic

commentary, explains the blessing that Yaakov received from the angel to mean that Yaakov had heavenly struggles and earthly struggles; he fought an angel but also faced conflict with his brother Esav here on earth, and he managed to overcome both. One of the root meanings of the word Yisrael is *Yashar-El*, the upright ones of God. We're named the Children of Israel as we too will face both physical and spiritual struggles; throughout life we have ups and downs, and it can feel extremely challenging to know the right thing to do and the correct way to respond. As the Children of Israel, we have the power to overcome anything, in an upstanding way and emerge stronger than ever before.

## Parasha Wordsearch

J	T	S	H	E	C	H	E	M	S	A	M	O
H	Y	X	E	D	L	L	E	G	N	A	Y	I
C	I	C	I	K	I	E	A	B	S	Y	R	U
A	H	H	W	G	N	N	A	T	W	A	N	B
N	K	A	F	S	W	E	A	R	C	R	I	I
A	E	L	M	U	L	O	P	H	S	U	T	N
A	G	E	E	O	H	Y	E	R	P	I	R	Y
N	D	P	K	R	R	L	E	J	M	R	Y	A
M	Y	H	I	Y	J	V	S	G	I	E	E	M
G	S	C	B	S	K	E	A	E	L	O	W	I
K	A	A	N	M	K	A	V	K	Y	A	Q	N
F	Z	M	E	H	C	E	L	T	E	B	T	H

CANAAN  
ESAV  
ANGEL  
YISRAEL  
LIMP  
SHECHEM  
CHAMOR  
DINAH  
BINYAMIN  
RACHEL  
BET LEHEM  
MACHPELAH





# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYISHLACH: GAME ON!

IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHA, YAAKOV (JACOB) STRUGGLED WITH THE ANGEL OF ESAV (ESAU) ALL NIGHT. IN THE MORNING, THE ANGEL ASKED YAAKOV TO LET HIM GO.



BUT YAAKOV SAID NOPE! YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE UNTIL YOU BLESS ME FIRST.



RABBI MENACHEM LEHRFELD POINTS OUT THAT YAAKOV WAS TEACHING US THE JEWISH WAY TO DEAL WITH CHALLENGES. WHEN YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT YOU STRUGGLE WITH, FIND A WAY TO TURN IT INTO A BLESSING. CHECK OUT THIS UNSUNG HERO WHO TRANSFORMED THE CHALLENGING LIVES OF HIS PATIENTS.



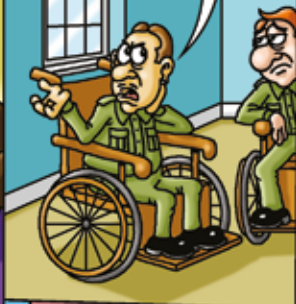
Dr Ludwig Guttmann was a Jewish doctor who had escaped Nazi Germany and settled with his family in Oxford.

IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE MOVING AGAIN. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE ASKED ME TO SET UP A HOSPITAL FOR PARALYSED SOLDIERS IN STOKE MANDEVILLE.



YOU'RE PROGRESSING WONDERFULLY! I THINK IT'S TIME WE ORGANISED SOME COMPETITIONS.

I'M SURE THIS NEW DOCTOR WILL BE JUST LIKE THE REST, DO NOTHING AND WE'LL LIVE A MISERABLE LIFE.



IT'S TIME FOR SPORTS! YES, I CAN SEE YOU'RE IN A WHEELCHAIR. THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF SPORTS THAT YOU CAN DO. WE'RE STARTING WITH ARCHERY.

THROUGH SPORT, DR GUTTMANN CHANGED THE MINDSET OF HIS PATIENTS AND HELPED THEM BUILD BOTH PHYSICAL STRENGTH AND SELF-RESPECT. DR GUTTMANN'S SOLDIERS ALL LIVED FULFILLING LIVES, WHICH WAS A GREAT CHANGE TO THE WAY THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN TREATED.



DR GUTTMANN DIDN'T SEE BADLY WOUNDED SOLDIERS; HE SAW MEN WHO HAD LOST HOPE AND NEEDED ENCOURAGEMENT. HE TURNED THEIR DIFFICULT LIVES INTO A BLESSING FOR THEM AND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. DR GUTTMANN'S NOVEL STOKE MANDEVILLE GAMES FOR DISABLED WAR VETERANS, EVOLVED INTO THE PARALYMPIC GAMES WHICH ARE NOW ENJOYED BY THOUSANDS OF PARTICIPANTS WORLDWIDE AND MILLIONS MORE SPECTATORS!



tribe  
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.