

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

בס"ד

23 DECEMBER 2023 | 11 TEVET 5784

VOLUME 37 | #16

DAF HASHAVUA

ויגַשׁ | VAYIGASH

SHABBAT ENDS:

London 4.49pm
Edinburgh 4.44pm
Southend 4.45pm
Leeds 4.46pm
Hull 4.47pm
Glasgow 4.50pm
Manchester 4.51pm
Birmingham 4.52pm
Sheffield 4.52pm
Liverpool 4.54pm
Southport 4.58pm
Cardiff 5.05pm
Dublin 5.07pm
Jerusalem 5.21pm

Sidra Summary

**וַיִּגַשׁ
VAYIGASH**

11th Sidra in:
**בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT**

By Numbers:
**106 VERSES
1,480 WORDS
5,680 LETTERS**

Headlines:
**YAAKOV (JACOB)
AND HIS FAMILY
COMING TO
EGYPT**

VAYIGASH:
Artscroll p.250
Hertz p.169
Soncino p.277

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1144
Hertz p.178
Soncino p.293

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 44:18-30

22 years after Yosef was sold by his brothers, they now face the prospect of their father Yaakov 'losing' another one of his sons, Binyamin. Yehuda does not yet know that the viceroy of Egypt standing in front of him is actually Yosef. He approaches Yosef, recounting Yosef's demand to see Binyamin and Yaakov's reluctance to let Binyamin leave. Having already 'lost' Rachel's other son (Yosef), Yaakov did not want disaster to befall Binyamin.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 44:31-45:7

Yehuda states that if they return without Binyamin, Yaakov will surely die. Yehuda offers to take Binyamin's place and remain as a slave to Yosef. Yosef orders everyone apart from his brothers out of the room. He reveals his identity and asks if his father is still alive. He tells his ashamed brothers not to be sad; God had sent him on this mission in order to sustain them during the famine.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 45:8-18

Yosef tells the brothers to go back to Cana'an to relate to Yaakov that he (Yosef) is alive and is the viceroy of Egypt. Yaakov should come immediately to Egypt; Yosef will ensure their safety and sustenance in the remaining five years of famine. Yosef and Binyamin cry on one another's necks.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 45:19-27

Pharaoh instructs Yosef to give his brothers wagons. Yosef sends them back with money and provisions for the journey. He sends 20 laden donkeys for Yaakov. The brothers return home and tell Yaakov that Yosef is alive and is ruling over the land of Egypt. Initially, Yaakov does not believe them.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 45:28-46:27

Yaakov travels to Egypt, stopping at Beersheva to bring an offering. God appears to Yaakov in a night vision, allaying his fears of leaving Cana'an to go to Egypt, and promising to make his progeny into a great nation. The Torah lists the 70 members of Yaakov's household who came to Egypt.

***Point to Consider:** Which person is missing from the list of 70? (see Rashi to 46:26)*

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 46:28-47:10

Yosef and Yaakov meet in the region of Goshen. Yosef falls on Yaakov's neck and cries. Along with five of his brothers, Yosef goes to inform Pharaoh of his family's arrival and tells him that they are sheep and cattle farmers. Pharaoh grants them the right to live in Goshen. Yosef brings Yaakov to meet Pharaoh. Yaakov blesses Pharaoh, who asks him his age.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 47:11-27

Despite the famine in Egypt, Yosef makes sure that his family has food. The starving Egyptians give Yosef their animals in return for bread. The following year, they sell their land to Pharaoh in return for food and seed. They become serfs to Pharaoh, and are to give him one fifth of all produce from that land. Yosef fixes this as a national statute. Yaakov's family increases greatly.

HAFTARAH

Yechezkel prophesies that the tribes of Israel will eventually be reunited and will reject idol worship and sin. They will be ruled over by a king from the House of David.

United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

Produced by US Education & Events together with the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue

Editor-in-Chief: Rabbi Baruch Davis
Editorial and Production Team:

Rabbi Daniel Sturgess
Rabbi Michael Laitner
Rebbetzen Nechama Davis
Joanna Rose
Laurie Maurer
Richard Herman
Tatiana Krupinina

www.theus.org.uk
©United Synagogue 2023

To sponsor Daf Hashavua,
or if you have any comments or questions,
please contact
education@theus.org.uk



Yosef's True Strength



**RABBI MARC
LEVENE**

Hampstead
Garden Suburb
Synagogue

Last week, we saw Yosef's (Joseph's) decision to test his brothers and leave his father unaware of his continued existence. We learnt that Yosef was acting for the good of his brothers, allowing them to restore their self-esteem and move on from their troubled past.

This week, we read how, when faced with Yehuda's (Judah's) heartfelt plea to save the life of their youngest brother Binyamin, Yosef can no longer hold himself back and reveals his identity to his brothers. The Torah explicitly states that Yosef was moved to act because he was so overcome by emotion at the change in his brothers' characters that was now evident.

Even though he was overwhelmed and suffering from emotional torment, Yosef protects his brothers from the embarrassment of recounting their previous wrongdoings in front of the Egyptians. Before revealing his identity, he asks all the Egyptians present to leave. This act teaches us two things about the character of Yosef.

Firstly, he had to muster the courage to subdue all his emotions a while longer. If the Torah tells

us that he could not wait and was bursting to tell them, that would imply he had to do it NOW. Yet we see he holds on for a suitable time. He had the strength to quell his own emotional pain, in order not to cause any pain to others.

Secondly, he did so at the risk of his own life. The Egyptians were in the room for his protection as a political figure. At the point when the Egyptians left the room, the brothers did not know he was Yosef and could have attacked him once left unprotected, but he took that risk in order to protect their dignity.

Yosef is known by our sages as *Yosef HaTzaddik*, literally, Yosef the Righteous. He got this name because of his emotional self-restraint and his sensitivity to others. Throughout his story, whether it be his refraining from the immoral advances of Potiphar's wife, helping the servants of Pharaoh in prison, hiding his existence from his family to save them from shame and to build their confidence, or putting himself in harm's way, he demonstrates what made him so righteous.

Throughout the Torah we can see that, whilst the traits of our forefathers are not so easy to

emulate, they are there to show us what we, as human beings, are capable of and what we should aspire to.

The Rav of Fürth: Rabbi David Kahana Spiro (1901-1970)

Rabbi David Kahana Spiro had two particularly distinguished rabbinates: Warsaw prior to World War II and Fürth, Bavaria, from the later part of 1945, following his liberation from Dachau concentration camp after enormous privations during the war years. In 1943, as the Warsaw Ghetto was being liquidated, Rabbi Spiro and his two remaining rabbinic colleagues in the Ghetto refused an offer communicated to them by the then Cardinal of Poland to hide them and their families; they were not prepared, as leaders, to go into hiding and to abandon their responsibilities to other Jews at that awful time.

In 2021, Dr Moshe Rosenfeld, Senior Certification Consultant & Chief Chemist at KLBD, who grew up in Fürth, published "The Rav of Fürth, the Legacy & Legend of Rav David Kahana Spiro zt"l, the Fürther Rebbe". The Rosenfeld family were relatives, next-door neighbours and devoted congregants of Rabbi Spiro in Fürth. Survivors who had been shattered by the Holocaust found themselves in Bavaria post-war, initially in Displaced Persons camps, where they strove to rebuild their lives. Rabbi Spiro remained in Fürth to assist them whilst simultaneously encouraging the community to move to Israel and making practical plans for this to occur.

Dr Rosenfeld paints a fascinating picture of Rabbi Spiro and assesses his impact within both the broader historical context of Rabbi Spiro's family and of those tumultuous years. This extract describes the Fürth to which Rabbi Spiro arrived shortly after liberation.



**DR MOSHE
ROSENFELD**

Senior Certification
Consultant & Chief
Chemist at KLBD

The Rav arrived in Fürth early July 1945 and was given a room in the apartment of family Lichter in Königswarterstrasse. There were some Jewish survivors from the pre-war community, Messrs. Stern, Fruh and Rosental, who formed the committee of the newly-formed *Gemeinde* (community). The bulk of the refugees of Hungarian origin lived outside town, in the area called Finkenschlag. The survivors of Polish origin lived mostly in town.

The advantage for the religious

population was the survival of a respectable synagogue, which was housed in the former Jewish Orphanage. It was spared during Kristallnacht, being part of a residential building and also being terraced with other buildings in a narrow street. Even though it had suffered through the war years, restoration work was soon underway at its location in Julienstrasse 2 (renamed Hallemannstrasse in 1982). The Kehillah (community) also took possession of the buildings Blumenstrasse 31, the former Jewish school, and Theaterstrasse 36, the former Jewish Hospital.

The city of Fürth has a long Jewish history, dating back to the 16th century and beyond. It was

the home of famous Rabbanim, many of whom had been brought there from Poland. During the 19th century, the community of Fürth split apart under the pressures of the Emancipation. The religious community stayed faithful to Orthodox traditions and secured the use of the New Synagogue (built in 1696) for services. The Old Synagogue (built in 1616) was revamped in 1831 and again in 1865. Both synagogues were burnt down during Kristallnacht in November 1938 by local residents in the presence of Mayor Franz Jakob. He managed to escape prosecution for his crimes and was even financially supported by the town's post-war mayor, Bornkessel.

In 1945, the Orphanage Shul,



Jean Mandel (left with top hat), chairman of the Israelite Community of Fürth, and Rabbi David Spiro (centre) at a service in the new synagogue

known as Waisenschul, the only shul to survive Kristallnacht, was an integral part of the main building, housing the unfortunate children. It also had a built-in succah and mikvah. Founded in 1763, the shul was relocated in 1804 to Geleitsgasse 1, and finally moved to Julienstrasse 2 in 1868. This Jewish Orphanage was the first of its kind in Germany. Rav Spiro mentioned his belief on a number of occasions that this shul survived the Nazis due to the pure prayers of the orphans. This building and shul are still in use today. Their history was documented in great detail by my late father z"l (*NJBF 1963, p.16-17 and Memorbuch of the Neuschul, NJBF 1974, p. 14*), and was also described by Meir Königsghofer (*NJBF 1961, p.9-10*).

Immediately after the war, prayer services took place in the

town's theatre, which had been confiscated by the American Army. The Waisenschul had been used as a storehouse and was not fit for use as a shul. After some restoration work, it then became the focal point of Jewish religious life in Fürth. It was finally restored to its former glory in 1963.

The Jewish Hospital stood next to the old cemetery from 1653. In 1846, the hospital moved to Theaterstrasse 36, where there was also a small prayer room.

The old cemetery dates from c. 1607 and although it suffered substantial damage during World War II, there are still a large number of gravestones extant. The stones for most of the famous Rabbanim had been destroyed and were never replaced, though photographs have survived. These helped to locate the exact position of the graves, but,

as of today, no memorial for these prominent people has been put up.

Around the year 1906, a new cemetery was consecrated at Erlanger Strasse.

Fürth also had a substantial number of mikvaot. The mikvah housed adjacent to the Orphanage Shul remains available for use, despite the dwindling of the community after Rav Spiro passed away. The shul building also incorporated a historic succah, which was put to good use for many years.

Due to its distinguished history and many religious facilities, Fürth was well known in Jewish circles even beyond Europe. Against this backdrop, Rav Spiro arrived there as soon as his health allowed. In mid-1945, Rav Spiro was formally appointed to look after religious affairs in the town.

The Great Mitzvah of Visiting the Sick



RABBI STANLEY COTEN

Ruhslip Synagogue
and Senior Jewish
Hospital Chaplain

If anyone is unfortunate enough to find themselves in hospital, it is very possible there is a Jewish chaplain or volunteer available to see them. Even the chaplain may be a volunteer. The fact that so many Jewish volunteers perform the mitzvah of visiting the sick demonstrates the extent of the *chesed* (kindness) within our community. Jewish Visiting, under the aegis of the United Synagogue, is the organisation which co-ordinates hospital visitation.

We have a great team ready to assist those who may need a little support whilst they are in hospital. They may simply come to have a chat, give practical support, say prayers with or for the patient or help them put on their Tefillin.

The Torah tells us that God visited Avraham when he was recovering from his *Brit Milah*. "God appeared to him in the plains of Mamre, as he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day" (Bereishit 18:1). And so should we emulate God's actions by visiting the sick.

Visiting the sick is an example of *Gemilut Chasadim*, the performance of kindness, but is singled out by the Rabbis in Mishnah Peah as something special. It is one of the mitzvot for which we are rewarded

in this world but its principal reward is in the World to Come.

Some authorities, such as the Halachot Gedolot (attributed to Shimon Kiara, circa 8th century) and Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, 1194-1280), maintain that *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the sick) is one of the 613 commandments of the Torah, while others, like Rambam (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, 1138-1204) view it as a rabbinic command, derived from the verse "You should love your neighbour as yourself" (Vayikra 19:18).

The Shela HaKadosh (Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz, 1558-1628) divides the mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim* into three categories:

1. *B'gufo*, with one's body — by taking care of the patient's needs.

This includes actually visiting the sick and raising their spirits. Often, the visit itself, particularly when the visitor is a respected person, does wonders for the patient's medical condition. Rambam writes that one who visits the sick should be prepared to tell cheerful stories or make simple conversation so that the patient's mind will be temporarily distracted from his illness. Rambam adds that anyone who walks into a patient's room should do so happily, since a patient is sensitive to the mood of people who visit them.

The visitor must respond to the patient's needs. That could be, for



example, helping them with their physical needs, such as fetching something for them. (It is suggested that the Hebrew word *bikur* means 'to seek out', in other words, to seek out what the patient needs).

2. *B'mamono*, with one's money — by covering the sick person's expenses so that they have peace of mind.

3. *B'nishmato*, with one's soul — by davening for the sick person.

One who visits a sick person and does not daven for them is not considered to have performed the mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim*. One who is able to daven for a sick person and does not do so, is even called a sinner!

Bikur Cholim has no boundaries or limits. One may visit as frequently as they like, provided that it is not too much for the sick person. There are no age restrictions on visiting: the young may visit the elderly and the elderly may visit the young.

In the merit of this mitzvah, may we all be rewarded with good health.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYIGASH

22-23 DECEMBER | 11 TEVET

Surprise!



JOEL AZULAY

University & Sixth Form Programme Executive

Having followed Yosef's (Joseph's) story for a few weeks, we now reach the pinnacle of the story where Yosef reveals his identity to his brothers. Hence the... **SURPRISE!**

The theme of unity is resonant throughout this week's parasha. After all Yosef had endured, stemming from his sale by his brothers, it leads us to wonder how he could forgive them? The power of forgiveness is something we are taught from a young age and the idea of 'not holding a grudge' is a major principle within Judaism. However, after all that had been

done to Yosef, how could he just forgive his brothers? Perhaps the answer is as follows. The collective power we hold together is far more powerful than the malice of one person towards another. Together we are stronger and together we can defeat evil – both internal and external. Unity is what holds us together and makes us strong!

During these turbulent times, the message of Yosef and his brothers is more relevant than ever. The importance of standing up for what's right is one of our most important values. When Yosef, in his position as the viceroy of Egypt, was going to imprison his youngest brother Binyamin (Benjamin) for the theft of a goblet, it was another of his brothers, Yehuda (Judah), who stood up and said, "No, take me!" This then led to Yosef revealing his identity as the lost brother and

the familial reunion that eventually brought their father Yaakov (Jacob) to Egypt.

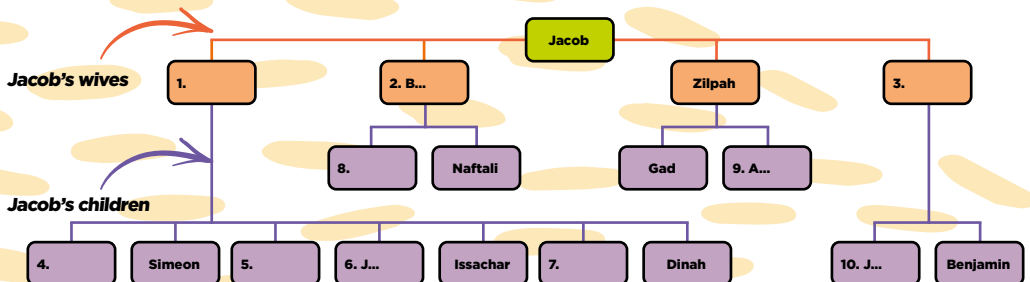
I want to finish this Tribe Weekly article with a quick thought about sand. You may be asking why we are talking about sand, but as God said to Avraham in Bereishit 22:17, "I will bless you greatly and make your descendants as many as the stars of the heavens and the sand on the seashore." What can we learn from this about unity? It's quite simple; when we are like a single grain of sand we can be blown around, but when we pack and stick together, we can break waves. What do people use when there's a flood? Sandbags! Even when times are tough, if we all stick together, we will be OK and we will thrive.

AM YISRAEL CHAI!

Jacob's Family Tree

This week's parasha lists all the members of Jacob's family who went down to Egypt. Can you put the following people in their correct places in the family tree? (Hint: Look in Bereishit (Genesis) 46:8-24).

Rachel • Leah • Bilhah • Joseph • Levi • Asher • Judah • Zebulun • Reuben • Dan



Answers: 1. Leah 2. Bilhah 3. Rachel 4. Reuben 5. Levi 6. Judah 7. Zebulun 8. Dan 9. Asher 10. Joseph



THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYIGASH: KITH AND KIND!

IN THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** WE READ ABOUT THE DRAMATIC REVELATION OF **YOSEF** (JOSEPH) TO HIS BROTHERS. IF WE LOOK CLOSELY AT THE EVENTS THAT HAPPEN, WE CAN DISCOVER MUCH MORE THAN JUST AN EPIC STORYLINE.



BEFORE THE REVELATION, **YEHUDA** (JUDAH) MAKES A PASSIONATE REQUEST TO **YOSEF** TO SPARE HIS BROTHER **BINYAMIN** (BENJAMIN), FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR FATHER'S WELLBEING.



YEHUDA AND HIS BROTHERS REGRET HOW THEY TREATED **YOSEF** AND ARE SUPER CAREFUL NOT TO REPEAT ANYTHING LIKE THAT WITH ANOTHER BROTHER.

NEXT, JUST AS HE IS ABOUT TO SHOW HIS BROTHERS WHO HE REALLY IS, **YOSEF** ASKS ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT TO LEAVE THE ROOM, SO AS NOT TO EMBARRASS HIS BROTHERS - SO NO ONE ELSE WOULD KNOW THAT THEY HAD SOLD HIM INTO SLAVERY.



WHAT'S MORE, INSTEAD OF BLAMING HIS BROTHERS FOR HIS CHALLENGING YEARS, **YOSEF** REASSURED THEM THAT IT WAS ALL PART OF **GOD'S** PLAN, SO THAT THEY SHOULDN'T FEEL SO GUILTY.

ARE YOU SEEING WHAT I'M SEEING? THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** IS A MASTERCLASS IN EMOTIONAL SENSITIVITY!



HAVING MADE MISTAKES IN THE PAST, WE SEE INDIVIDUALS GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO BEHAVE IN A WAY THAT IS CARING AND THOUGHTFUL.



TODAY'S LESSON
BE YOUR BEST SELF.

THE **TORAH** IS MORE THAN JUST AN ACCOUNT OF HISTORIC EVENTS. IT SHOWS US OUR WAY OF LIFE, AND HOW TO BE OUR BEST SELVES. THIS EPISODE HIGHLIGHTS HOW TO INTERACT SENSITIVELY IN CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES. NOW THAT'S A CLASS I DON'T WANT TO MISS!

SOMETIMES WE GET CAUGHT UP IN THE MOMENT. OUR **PARASHA** THIS WEEK SHOWS US THAT EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF VERY DRAMATIC PERSONAL AND IMPORTANT EVENTS, WE CAN STILL BE SENSITIVE TO THE FEELINGS OF THE PEOPLE AROUND US.

