

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

בס"ד

27 JANUARY 2024 | 17 SHEVAT 5784

VOLUME 37 | #21

DAF HASHAVUA

בְּשַׁלַּח | BESHALACH

SHABBAT ENDS:

London 5.31pm
Birmingham 5.35pm
Cardiff 5.47pm
Dublin 5.51pm
Edinburgh 5.34pm
Glasgow 5.37pm
Hull 5.30pm
Leeds 5.31pm
Liverpool 5.38pm
Manchester 5.35pm
Sheffield 5.35pm
Southend 5.29pm
Southport 5.41pm
Jerusalem 5.47pm

Shabbat Shira

**בְּשַׁלַּח
BESHALACH**

4th Sidra in:
**שְׁמוֹת
SHEMOT**

By Numbers:
**116 VERSES
1,681 WORDS
6,423 LETTERS**

Headlines:
**CROSSING OF AND
THE SONG AT
THE SEA**

BESHALACH:
Artscroll p.366
Hertz p.265
Soncino p.407

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1152
Hertz p.281
Soncino p.434

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – SHEMOT 13:17-14:8

After Pharaoh sends the Israelites out of Egypt, God does not lead them on a straight path through the land of the Pelishtim (Philistines) towards Cana'an (later Israel), but rather towards the Sea of Reeds. Moshe is raying Yosef's bones, as Yosef had requested before his death (see Bereishit 50:25). A pillar of cloud guides the Israelites by day, and a pillar of fire lights up their journey at night. God tells Moshe to turn back in the direction of Egypt. God hardens the heart of Pharaoh, who pursues the Israelites with his armed chariots.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 14:9-14

The Egyptians catch up with the Israelites, who are encamped by the Sea. Seeing the approaching army, the people cry out in prayer, and also ask Moshe why they left Egypt only to die in the desert. Moshe tells them not to fear; they will experience God's salvation.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 14:15-25

Moshe raises his staff; an easterly wind blows and the Sea splits. The Israelites walk through the dry channel, the water providing a wall on either side of them. The Egyptians enter the Sea but struggle to move forward. Point to Consider: Why did God move the sea with a "strong easterly wind"? (14:21)

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 14:26-15:26

Moshe raises his staff; the Sea closes on the Egyptians, drowning them. The Israelites see the drowned Egyptians on the seashore. Together with Moshe, they sing the Song at the Sea (Shirat HaYam) which celebrates God's miraculous salvation. The nation travels on, experiencing three days in the desert without water. They come to a place called Marah, where the water is too bitter to drink.

They complain to Moshe, who is shown a tree by God. Moshe throws the tree into the water, thus sweetening it.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 15:27-16:10

The Israelites arrive in the Sin Desert and complain to Moshe that they are hungry. God tells Moshe that he will send down a daily portion of 'bread' from the heavens. Moshe tells the people they will also get meat in the evening.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 16:11-36

The heavenly bread – called 'man' (manna) – falls between two layers of dew (Rashi). Each household gets a daily portion sufficient for its members. Moshe tells them not to leave any over until the next day. Some people ignore this warning; their manna becomes infested. A double portion falls on Friday. Moshe tells them to use the excess for Shabbat and not to go out to collect any manna on Shabbat. Again, some ignore this instruction. Moshe tells Aharon to preserve some manna in a container, as a reminder to future generations.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 17:1-16

The Israelites travel to Refidim, but again do not find water. God tells Moshe to strike a rock with his staff; water emerges from the rock. Amalek attacks the Israelites at Refidim. Yehoshua (Joshua) leads the battle against them, whilst Moshe, Aharon and Chur (Moshe's nephew) ascend a nearby hill. Whenever Moshe raises his arms, Israel overcomes Amalek. Aharon and Chur support Moshe's tired arms. Yehoshua is victorious.

HAFTARAH

Devorah was a prophetess and a judge. The haftarah, from the Book of Judges, includes the song that Devorah sang to celebrate the defeat of the evil Ca'ananite general, Sisera. This defeat was facilitated by the bravery of Yael, who attacked and killed Sisera with a tent-peg.



United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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

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The Commitment to Continue



**REBBETZEN
TALI HARRIS**

Community Rebbezen
at Finchley United
Synagogue

Upon crossing the Yam Suf, the Reed Sea, *Bnei Yisrael* break out in song, praising God for the miracles of the exodus from Egypt. We are told that Moshe (Moses) led the men in song and dance and Miriam led the women. The Malbim, a 19th century commentator, states that the reason for the women's dancing was because all of this had occurred in their merit and that they too had a part in all the miracles which took place. While the latter half of this claim feels reasonable, after all, all the Jews had a part in leaving Egypt and were right to be singing to God, the former part of the Malbim's claim feels a bit extreme. How could he argue that it was due to the Jewish women that the exodus was occurring?

The Midrash Raba (early rabbinic teachings) explains the way which the Jewish women would encourage their husbands

to continue having children.

Despite the struggles of slavery, these women were adamant on maintaining Jewish continuity. Miriam seems to have been the ringleader of this cause. Having grown up as a midwife with her mother, Yocheved, she would bear witness to the beauty of the Jewish family daily. When her father ordered all Jewish couples to separate in order to avoid the baby boys being killed as per Pharaoh's decree, Miriam was fuming. Rashi (1040-1105) relates how Miriam accused her father of being worse than Pharaoh; Pharaoh had decreed an end to all Jewish baby boys, but her father was decreeing an end to Jewish babies altogether.

While this may seem extreme, Miriam understood how essential the continuity of Jewish family life was to Jewish continuity. The

The Malbim suggests the exodus occurred in the merit of the women.

Jewish women in Egypt understood the difficult circumstances under which they were bringing new life into the world, yet they had the strength and belief to see the light at the end of tunnel. They believed that their current situation was temporary and that when redemption would come, there would need to be a generation of Jews able and ready to partake in the next phase of Jewish history.

Perhaps it is on this basis that the Malbim suggests the exodus occurred in the merit of the women. The ability to believe in a brighter future despite living in utter darkness requires deep dedication and trust in God. Difficult decisions must be made, and individuals need to have strength to carry the results of such choices. While it may seem hard to relate to how anyone could desire bringing life into a world of utter oppression and depression, we must thank the women in Egypt for their faith in God and persistence in continuing the Jewish nation; ultimately enabling there to be a generation of Jews who merited to see the exodus from Egypt.



In loving memory of Yaacov ben Shmuel z"l

Bringing Light into the Darkness



**REBBETZEN
SHULI LISS**

Highgate
Synagogue

Sometimes the darkness feels so thick that we cannot see anything in front of us. When we bring light into a dark room, we do not actually change anything in the room - we merely allow the items themselves to be seen.

Lighting candles on Friday night makes our home feel different. During the week, we are busy with so many different jobs and tasks that we cannot always see what is clearly there. Our minds are preoccupied as we try to cross things off our to-do list. Paying attention to a child's smile or sad eyes, a beautiful flower that bloomed in the kitchen, or perhaps even a change in our own

reflection in the mirror, can only happen when we stop *doing* and start *being*.

Shabbat allows us that time. It is carved out for us each week and it begins before the darkness arrives. Fifteen minutes before sunset¹, we prepare for the 'Shabbat Queen' by bringing light into our homes.

Some have the custom to wave their hands in circular motion to bring the light into our home. It is at this point that we can access a deep, personal connection with our Creator.

"God, You made this world and I am doing my best 'to guard it and to keep it,' as You instructed. Just as You rested on Shabbat, I, too, am resting. And as I light these candles, I ask You to help me to stop and recognise, with the help of these lights, all the blessings that I have in this home."

The flame is compared to a soul, which burns strongly within us. Sometimes a flame flickers and wanes - we may even think it will fade away - but with a little bit of oxygen, it can shine brightly again. Shabbat is like oxygen for our soul. No matter what happened in the week, we switch off from our daily challenges and enjoy a peace and tranquillity that can refresh and rejuvenate ourselves.

This week is 'US Women's Shabbat', where we celebrate women's contributions to our communities. We are blessed to have a diverse and talented group of women within each of our communities, who inspire others through their involvement and example. It can be through teaching Torah, leading women's Kabbalat Shabbat, Hallel and Megilla readings, welcoming people into shul, organising events or volunteering their time to make calls, visit or deliver items for our welfare initiatives.

As we celebrate every woman for her public contribution, can I also take a moment to celebrate our 'private contributors' - those who light up their own homes with candles every Friday night. This seemingly small act brings heavenly blessings to our whole community - even if no one else sees those candles.

May God gather together all our small flames and bring the light of *geulah* - redemption - to our people.

¹ According to London Beth Din guidelines.

Ma'aleh and Me

Early reflections on the US's new Women's Advanced Torah Programme



**ANNABEL
RIES**

Participant on the United Synagogue's Ma'aleh Programme

I am now two months into Ma'aleh, the new programme run by the United Synagogue together with the Chief Rabbi's Office, Mizrachi, Matan and the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS).

Ma'aleh runs for two evenings a week over two years. It aims to "provide broad and in-depth knowledge of Torah to create inspiring female role models and leaders. The scope and skills acquired through the programme will enable participants to teach a variety of core Jewish subjects with passion, proficiency and confidence". So, no pressure then...!

The thirty Ma'aleh participants range from university students to working mothers to retired women, from various walks of life and with different experiences of Jewish education. Everyone has their own reasons for joining the course, but we all share the wish to study Torah seriously, and potentially teach it to our communities in the future.

One evening a week we are taught by Rebbetzen and *Yoetzet*

Halacha (halachic adviser) Lauren Levin from South Hampstead. We meet in Bet Meir, with several women joining on Zoom from around the UK. In *chevrutot* (study partnerships) and *shiurim* (lectures), we are studying broad themes in *Tanach* (Bible), so far covering issues such as moral responsibility, responses to trauma and sibling rivalry.

We all share the wish to study Torah seriously, and potentially teach it to our communities in the future.

**מעלה
MA'ALEH**

**Women's
Advanced
Torah
Programme**

Building female leaders

The second evening is taught on Zoom by two outstanding Israeli educators. Rabbanit Shani Taragin is a senior lecturer at Matan and Educational Director of World Mizrachi. She teaches *Halacha* (Jewish law), and appropriately we have started with the laws regarding women learning Torah. For the second hour, Rabbanit and

Yoetzet Halacha Racheli Weinstein teaches us Gemara (Talmud).

The course will also include two full-day Sunday seminars per term (though sadly these have not yet been possible due to the war), when Rabbanit Taragin will come to London and we will meet in person. These sessions will focus on leadership and pedagogic training as the course progresses. I hope they will enrich our experience and create a strong cohort of students.

I will be honest – I am finding the course really challenging. It is a significant time commitment alongside family/work/everything else, and it can be hard to focus on Gemara at 9.45 pm via Zoom, although I think I would find it a challenge at any time! Thankfully though, the US Education team is helping and Rabbi Michael Laitner, Director of Education, is providing extra classes in Gemara skills for those who need. So, I hope things will become clearer.

My personal aims are to increase my confidence in learning foundational Jewish texts and to try to be a role model to my children and their generation. If I can play just a small part in Ma'aleh's aim of increasing the overall level of UK women's Jewish learning and building the pool of good women educators, that will be even better.

Jewish Prison Chaplaincy



**REV MICHAEL
BINSTOCK MBE**

Director of Jewish
Prison Chaplaincy &
Faith Adviser to HM
Prison and Probation
Service

Jewish Prison Chaplaincy is probably one of the lesser-known departments of the United Synagogue. Fortunately, most of the Jewish community has never needed its services. However, for those serving or facing a custodial sentence and their close family members and friends, Jewish Prison Chaplaincy provides a vital service.

Jewish Prison Chaplaincy has been in existence for many decades. Originally, it was organised by the United Synagogue Visitation Committee. In fact, many people still refer to the 'Visitation Committee'. However, Jewish Prison Chaplaincy is now a department within United Synagogue Chesed, headed by Michelle Minsky. This is most appropriate because the term *chesed* literally means 'kindness'. Its full title is *Gemilut Chasadim* (bestowing acts of lovingkindness).

We read in the opening chapter of *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers, 1:2) that the world stands on three things: on the Torah, on Divine worship and on acts of lovingkindness. Undoubtedly, visiting those who have reached a low point in their lives with a message of hope

and encouragement, is an act of *chesed*.

The number of Jews in prison is extremely low, which is of course good news. However, this can result in a feeling of isolation. Therefore, the regular visits made by the Jewish chaplain is a source of great comfort.

The team of Jewish chaplains authorised to visit prison establishments throughout England and Wales comprises men and women, including pulpit rabbis and lay chaplains. This cohesive team is cross-communal, and the mutual harmony and respect that exists is a cause for celebration.

The role of the Jewish chaplain is to provide for the religious, spiritual and pastoral needs of their flock. These needs will vary

considerably, depending on many factors.

For some, the mere visit and a brief chat is all that is required, because the message that this conveys is that whatever reason a fellow Jew finds him/herself in custody, the community has not rejected them.

Clearly, the most important feature of prison chaplains of all faiths is to be non-judgemental, but also to do all that is possible to provide hope and encouragement, so that they turn their lives around and become valued members of the community.

Jewish chaplains ensure that Jewish prisoners who so wish are provided with Kosher meals. Other items that are often requested include a Siddur, Chumash and kippah.

Jewish prisoners are provided with weekly educational material such as the United Synagogue's Daf Hashavua. Some are keen to learn to read Hebrew and improve their Jewish knowledge. In some prison establishments, Jewish chaplains hold a regular service.

Prisoners of all faiths and none have rights which are contained in a document entitled 'Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners'.

Jewish chaplains are instrumental in ensuring that the rights of Jewish prisoners are protected.

For further information, please email info@jvisit.org.uk, or call 020 8343 6238.

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THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT BESHALACH

26-27 JANUARY | 17 SHEVAT

My Israel Story



**ANNA
COLEMAN**

Head of Operations,
Tribe

At the age of 16, as many British teenagers do, I went on Israel summer tour. Tour was when I fell in love with the madness, courage, bravery, *'shtuyot'* (nonsense), rudeness and brilliance of this tiny Jewish homeland that I now call home. Having made aliyah over ten years ago, life here is not always easy but I cannot imagine living in any other place in the world.

On October 7th, I woke up to the sound of sirens in Tel Aviv. I ran to the stairwell and sat with my neighbours, all of us trying to understand what had awoken us so early on this Shabbat and Chag morning. Throughout the next days we moved back and forth from our protected

stairwell to take shelter, closely monitoring the news with shock at the unimageable horrors taking place in our country.

With the situation as it was, I debated if leaving Israel to lead our scheduled Tribe Poland trip was the right decision. Each year, Tribe takes sixth formers who primarily attend non-Jewish schools on a heritage tour of Poland to experience not only the death camps and what Jewish life was like before the Holocaust but also for participants to connect with, and be proud of, their Jewish heritage. Having visited Poland many times before, this particular trip had a completely different feel to it. The comparisons to the events of October 7th were striking and heartbreaking, but the difference today is that we have the Jewish state, a home to all Jews.

On the recent United Synagogue Israel solidarity trip, we met with displaced families, soldiers, injured

Israeli citizens, first responders and families whose loved ones are being held hostage in Gaza. Despite the unimaginable suffering they have experienced, and are still experiencing, what remains with me most is not their pain but rather their continued courage, heroism and strength.

On Shemini Atzeret we read *Kohelet*, where, in Chapter 2, it says, "*Yitron Haor Min Hachoshech*" - light surpasses darkness. There has been an extra dimension of darkness in Israel and around the world over the past months, yet I continue to witness how this is overcome, time and again, by the tremendous light and hope generated by so many different people, from our participants in Poland, to people all over the world standing with Israel and by the tremendous *achdut* (unity) and resilience of the citizens of Israel.

Parasha Scramble!

Unscramble the words in capitals to reveal some facts about the parasha.

- 1 One man was brave enough to step into the sea first, his name was **CHAN NOSH** [1 word]
- 2 A major event in this week's parasha is the **FITTINGS TELOPHASE** [4 words]
- 3 When the Jewish people complain about the bitter water, God performs a miracle: He **NEWEST SWEETHEART** [3 words]
- 4 Did you know that the Manna tasted of **AVENA TRYOUT WHEW?** [3 words]
- 5 In order to honour Shabbat, the Jews had to collect a **TROOP UNBOILED** [2 words] of Manna on Friday.





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

BESHALACH: THE SOUND OF MUSIC!

THIS WEEK'S PARASHA DESCRIBES ONE OF THE EPIC MOMENTS IN JEWISH HISTORY - THE SPLITTING OF THE SEA. AFTER YEARS OF SLAVERY, THE JEWISH PEOPLE WERE FINALLY FREE. AND ONCE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE REED SEA, THEY FELT SAFE ENOUGH TO CELEBRATE.

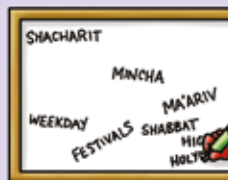


DID YOU KNOW THAT MUSIC HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CENTRAL PART OF JEWISH LIFE? WHEN WE PRAY, WE DON'T JUST READ. THAT'S RIGHT - WE SING. WHEN WE LEARN TORAH, THERE IS A SPECIAL CHANT. EVERY TEXT AND EVERY OCCASION HAS ITS OWN SPECIAL MELODY.

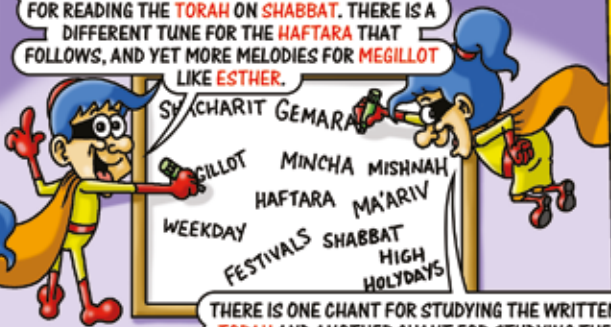
WHAT DID THEY DO? THEY BURST INTO SONG! EVERYONE JOINED IN. MOSHE (MOSES) LED THE MEN AND MIRIAM LED THE WOMEN. WHERE WORDS WERE NOT ENOUGH, THEY SANG AND DANCED AND CELEBRATED THEIR NEW FREEDOM.



THERE ARE DIFFERENT TUNES FOR SHACHARIT (MORNING), MINCHA (AFTERNOON) AND MA'ARIV (EVENING) SERVICES. THERE ARE TUNES FOR A WEEKDAY, FOR SHABBAT, SPECIAL TUNES FOR FESTIVALS AND YET MORE TUNES FOR THE HIGH HOLYDAYS.



DID YOU THINK THAT WAS ALL? THERE IS ONE TUNE FOR READING THE TORAH ON SHABBAT. THERE IS A DIFFERENT TUNE FOR THE HAFTARAH THAT FOLLOWS, AND YET MORE MELODIES FOR MEGILLOT LIKE ESTHER.



THERE IS ONE CHANT FOR STUDYING THE WRITTEN TORAH AND ANOTHER CHANT FOR STUDYING THE ORAL TORAH - MISHNAH AND GEMARA (TALMUD).

MUSIC HELPS CREATE THE FEELING - THINK OF THE SPECIAL TUNE WE USE FOR KOL NIDRE ON YOM KIPPUR OR THE SAD MEGILLAT EICHAH ON TISHA B'AV. JUST HEARING THE MELODY CAN GET YOU IN THE MOOD.



Rabbi Lord Sacks zt"l



BY MUSIC ALONE WE CAN TELL WHAT KIND OF DAY IT IS AND WHAT KIND OF TEXT IS BEING USED. THERE IS A MAP OF HOLY WORDS AND IT IS WRITTEN IN MELODIES AND SONGS.

ONE DAY SOON, PLEASE GOD, WE WILL SING AND DANCE AS WE WELCOME MASHIACH (MESSIAH) - I'VE GOT MY TAMBOURINE READY!



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.