

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

בס"ד

20 JANUARY 2024 | 10 SHEVAT 5784

VOLUME 37 | #20

DAF HASHAVUA

בא | BO

SHABBAT ENDS:

- London 5.20pm
- Birmingham 5.24pm
- Cardiff 5.36pm
- Dublin 5.39pm
- Edinburgh 5.20pm
- Glasgow 5.25pm
- Hull 5.19pm
- Leeds 5.19pm
- Liverpool 5.27pm
- Manchester 5.24pm
- Sheffield 5.24pm
- Southend 5.16pm
- Southport 5.30pm
- Jerusalem 5.41pm

Tu Bishvat is on Thursday



SIDRA BREAKDOWN

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3rd Sidra in:

שמות
SHEMOT

By Numbers:

106 VERSES
1,655 WORDS
6,149 LETTERS

Headlines:

**PESACH AND THE
EXODUS**

BO:

Artscroll p.340
Hertz p.248
Soncino p.377

HAFTARAH:

Artscroll p.1151
Hertz p.263
Soncino p.404

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – SHEMOT 10:1-10:11

After the first seven plagues, Moshe (Moses) and Aharon (Aaron) again warn Pharaoh to let the nation go, lest Egypt suffer an eighth plague. Pharaoh's advisors encourage him to agree. However, he only agrees to let the men leave temporarily, but not the women or children.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 10:12-23

The 8th plague: Moshe stretches his staff "over Egypt". An easterly wind brings a swarm of locusts over the whole of Egypt, eating any grass and foliage still left over from the plague of hail. Pharaoh admits his sin of not letting the people go and asks Moshe and Aharon to pray for an end to the plague. God sends a westerly wind (see Rashi's commentary) which carries away the locusts. God hardens Pharaoh's heart and he refuses to let the people go. The 9th plague: Moshe raises his hand towards the heavens. For three days, a thick darkness descends over all of Egypt, except for where the Israelites live.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 10:24-11:3

Moshe once again asks Pharaoh to allow the entire nation to leave so that they can bring offerings in the desert. He adds that they should be allowed to take livestock with them. God hardens Pharaoh's heart and he refuses. God requests that Moshe ask the Israelites to ask for gold and silver vessels from the Egyptians.

***Point to Consider:** Why did God insist on the Israelites taking these vessels? (see Rashi to 11:2)*

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 11:4-12:20

Moshe warns Pharaoh about the plague of the first born (Rashi), which will only affect the Egyptians. God tells Moshe and Aharon

the laws of Rosh Chodesh and that Nissan is to be the first month of the 'year of months'. They are also told to instruct the nation about the Pesach offering: the lamb must be designated on 10 Nissan and slaughtered on the afternoon of 14 Nissan. Its blood is to be placed on the door frame and the meat eaten, together with matza and maror, on the night of 15 Nissan. This will be commemorated every year with the seven day Pesach festival.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 12:21-28

Moshe relates the laws of the Pesach offering to the elders. The blood on the door frame will 'indicate' to God to 'pass over' the Israelite houses and only smite the Egyptians.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 12:29-51

The 10th plague: The plague strikes Egypt at midnight, leaving no house without a death. Pharaoh searches frantically for Moshe and Aharon (Rashi) and tells them to leave. The Egyptian people also urge the Israelites to leave. They take their dough with them before it has time to rise. The Egyptians agree to let them take gold and silver items. The nation travels from Ra'amses to Succot. They bake the unleavened dough, making matzot. Additional laws of the Pesach offering are given.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 13:1-16

God relates to Moshe the mitzvah of redeeming firstborn male children (*pidyon ha'ben*). Firstborn animals also have a special sanctity. The mitzvah of tefilin is stated twice.

HAFTARAH

Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) is told by God that Egypt will be destroyed by the Babylonian invader Nebuchadnezzar. The nation of Israel, referred to as "His servant Yaakov", should not be afraid. Even if they are punished for wrongdoings, they will eventually be redeemed from their lands of captivity.



United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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Don't Lose Hope

Longing for the Redemption when all hope seems lost



**RABBI
JOSH
HARRIS**

Community Rabbi,
Finchley United
Synagogue

The writer Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as saying, “*A great part of courage is the courage of having done the thing before.*” For the Jewish people, I do not believe that this accurately describes the greatest source of our courage.

It is impossible to live the life of a religious Jew without constantly encountering the theme of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* (the Exodus of Egypt). We recall the Exodus every time we recite the third paragraph of the Shema, and we perform many mitzvot which are *Zecher l'Yetziat Mitzrayim* (a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt). Kiddush, Tefillin and Mezuzah are all examples of mitzvot which relate to this theme. Many commentators have discussed why the Exodus is a central theme in our religious behaviour and discourse. Aside from the element of our gratitude for God's love and concern for His people, the whole process of the Exodus provides us with a course in the philosophy of God's involvement in our world.¹

Rav Saadia Gaon (882-942), a prominent rabbi and philosopher,

suggests an additional aspect of our constant awareness of the Exodus. *The Tanach* (Hebrew Bible) is filled with countless prophecies promising the end of our long exile. We keep those promises in mind as we long for an end to the suffering and hardship of the Jewish people. Nevertheless, there are times when it appears those promises will be impossible to fulfil. A glimpse at current affairs around the world could easily lead a person to conclude that things are not necessarily working out the way we would have expected. The world outside our window might not be how we envisioned the pathway to redemption. The world can often appear so lost that one could even give up hope on a redemptive future.

The world outside our window might not be how we envisioned the pathway to redemption. The world can often appear so lost that one could even give up hope on a redemptive future.

The best remedy to these feelings is to keep *Yetziat Mitzrayim* at the forefront of our minds. During the dark period of the exile in Egypt, the Jewish people had good reason to assume that, just as they were born slaves, their fate would be to die as slaves as well. The spiritual and physical state of the nation was so dire that any talk of redemption would have been laughable. Nonetheless, God had made a promise to our forefathers that He would redeem us and bring us to the Land of Israel, and that is exactly how things played out.

Recalling the events of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* reassure us that our current situation is never beyond repair. Just as God fulfilled his promises during the darkness of the Egyptian bondage, we can be confident that we are not waiting in vain for our own redemption. As we navigate the challenges of the world outside and all hope may seem lost, we recall the Exodus numerous times a day to recommit ourselves to believing that the much longed-for redemption will come.

Returning to Emerson: “*A great part of courage is the courage of having done the thing before.*” As Jews, what gives us courage (and encouragement) is having seen God do it for us before.

¹ See Ramban, Shemot 13:16

Alone in the Dark

Jami Mental Health Shabbat



**RABBI
MEIR SHINDLER**

Cockfosters &
N Southgate
Synagogue

After the massacres in Israel perpetrated by Hamas on the 7th of October, the entire Jewish community felt shock, grief, helplessness and anger. We had never experienced such outright savagery, barbarism, hate and destruction against our people in our lifetime. We have frantically searched for friends in the global community to support us, but we have been largely disappointed. Our regular media sources have been plagued with anti-Israel bias and we have been left palpably feeling the prophecy of Bilaam: "Behold! It is a nation that will dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations" (Bemidbar 23:9).

The anxiety and fear that results from a feeling of loneliness is expressed in this week's sidra.

After the previous two plagues threatened to destroy the entire wealth of the Egyptian nation, we are then told: "and there will be darkness upon the land of Egypt, and the darkness will be tangible" (Shemot 10:21). The Torah continues to describe that after this, for three days, there was a "thick darkness" over the land. During this period, "no man could see his brother, nor could anyone rise from his place" (ibid. v.23).

I can understand the anxiety the Egyptians must have felt by

not being able to see, by having to grope in the darkness, but was this so much more terrible than the plagues that had come before? What was unique about the plague of darkness that struck terror into the hearts of the Egyptians?

A hint can be found in the seemingly superfluous words in that verse. The most terrifying element of the plague was that "no man could see his brother".

When people go through challenges, somehow the pain is mitigated when it is shared, by a mutual experience. There is a resource of strength when others are together with them. The plague of darkness was especially distressing because the Egyptians experienced it alone. They could not reach out to each other, console or comfort one another. Each person felt that they alone were going through this distress.

As antisemitism rears its ugly head again, many Jews around the world feel very alone. However, this has been countered by an enormous surge in Jewish pride and camaraderie, providing a feeling of safety and security, knowing that we have each other; knowing that as Jews we care and look out for each other.

However, those people who feel disconnected from their Jewish community are particularly vulnerable at this time. They could



be experiencing 'darkness' together with loneliness, which can be a terrifying and distressing state to be in.

This Jami Mental Health Shabbat, make a concerted effort to identify those who may be feeling a heightened sense of isolation at this time, and offer support, friendship, connection to community, and, where relevant, signpost them to Jami or another relevant Jewish mental health charity, so that we can collectively ensure that no Jew feels isolated, helpless or alone.

Jami

Tu Bishvat: Reconnecting to Our Roots



**DANIELLA
NIEFELD**

US Community
Participation Manager

On October 30th 2023, three IDF soldiers planted an orange tree in Kibbutz Kfar Azza in southern Israel.

At first glance, there is nothing particularly special about this headline and yet, many saw this as a strong and defiant statement, given the tragic destruction of life and property in Kfar Azza a few short weeks beforehand.

On October 7th, these three soldiers had entered Kfar Azza in a tank to rid the community of the Hamas terrorists who had overtaken it. During their battle, they ran over an orange tree, destroying it. Three weeks later, they took the time to return to Kfar Azza to plant a new tree in its place.

This story was shared and liked hundreds of times, and spread quickly across the international Jewish community through WhatsApp and social media. Why was this story so inspirational?

From the beginning of time, the Jewish people have given fruit trees high status. One law in the Torah is that we are forbidden to cut down fruit trees, even when going to war. The Torah explains, “*ki ha'adam etz ha'sadeh*, because man is the (fruit) tree in the field” (Devarim 20:19). There are many *midrashic* explanations to this verse which compare human beings to trees, but the simple understanding, most famously explained by the Ibn Ezra (1089-



1167), is that a fruit tree provides sustenance for humanity and we should not destroy something that provides us with life.

This concept is found in the creation of humankind. The *Midrash Kohelet Rabbah* (7:13) describes how God took Adam around the Garden of Eden shortly after his creation to show him the magnificence of the fruit trees, and explicitly says that He created them all for us. While the trees exist to benefit humankind, we are also given the responsibility of caring for them.

In a time when we are faced with an enemy who does not value life in any way, it is empowering for the soldiers to demonstrate their foundational appreciation for a vessel that provides life - both in the sense that it brings life into this world by bearing fruit, and that it provides humanity with sustenance through its fruit.

And perhaps it goes even deeper.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law) describes a dispute between a potential land buyer

and the person who owns the land neighbouring the property on the market. The law dictates that if the potential buyer wants to build homes on the land and the neighbour wants to plant crops on the land, the land would be allocated to the potential buyer, since homes are a greater fulfilment of the mitzvah of *Yishuv Ha'Aretz*, settling the land (Choshen Mishpat 175:26). However, the SM”A commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch* (written by Rabbi Yehoshua Falk HaCohen, 1555-1614) adds that if the neighbour wishes to plant trees, then the land would be allocated to him. The concept is, whichever provides more permanence in the land has priority to the land. Trees can be more permanent than houses as they are rooted deep into the ground, and in the case of fruit trees, create continuity.

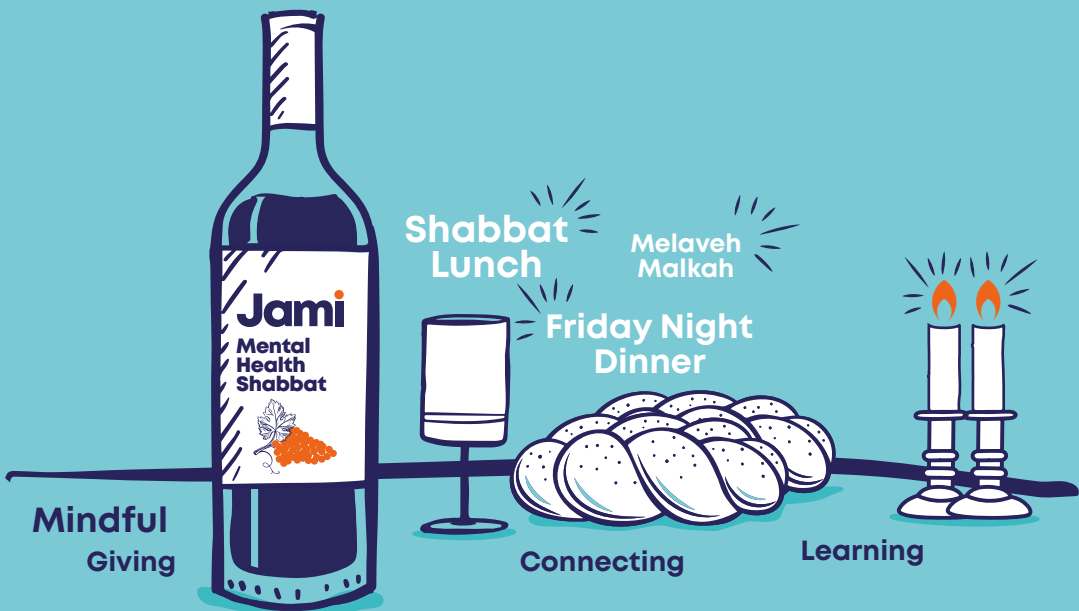
The soldiers' planting of the orange tree was a declaration of *Am Yisrael Chai* – an eternal people in an eternal land with eternal values.

Jami Mental Health Shabbat



19 - 20 January 2024

This special Shabbat is an opportunity for us to encourage conversations on mental health, raise awareness of mental illness and distress and share ideas on how to support ourselves and others within our community.



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5

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YEAR

6

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YEAR

7

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29th – 7th August

YEAR

8

and

9

CAMP SUFA & KERACH EUROPE

29th – 7th August



YEAR

10

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YEAR

11

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YEAR

12

and

13

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THE TRIBE SCRIBE

BO: EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION!

A PHILOSOPHER ONCE SAID, 'IF YOU PLAN FOR A YEAR, PLANT RICE.'

IF YOU PLAN FOR A DECADE, PLANT A TREE.

IF YOU PLAN FOR A HUNDRED YEARS, EDUCATE CHILDREN.

EDUCATE CHILDREN!

THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** IS FULL OF DRAMATIC EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE **JEWISH PEOPLE** FINALLY LEAVING **SLAVERY** IN **EGYPT**.

THE **JEWISH PEOPLE** LOOK TO THEIR NEW LEADER, **MOSHE** (MOSES), FOR INSPIRATION AT THIS TIME. INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT TODAY AND TOMORROW, AND THE REMARKABLE EVENTS THEY ARE LIVING THROUGH, **MOSHE** KEEPS REFERRING TO TEACHING CHILDREN.

THOUSANDS OF YEARS LATER, **MOSHE'S** PHILOSOPHY IS STILL JUST AS RELEVANT.

MOSHE WAS THE GREATEST LEADER BECAUSE HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE KEY TO THE FUTURE IS EDUCATING CHILDREN. IF YOU WANT TO MAKE LASTING CHANGE AND BE IMPACTFUL, YOU NEED TO INVEST IN THE FUTURE.



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.