

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

בס"ד

13 JANUARY 2024 | 3 SHEVAT 5784

VOLUME 37 | #19

# DAF HASHAVUA

וארא | VA'ERA  
דו"ר

**SHABBAT ENDS:**

- London 5.10pm
- Birmingham 5.14pm
- Cardiff 5.26pm
- Dublin 5.29pm
- Edinburgh 5.08pm
- Glasgow 5.13pm
- Hull 5.08pm
- Leeds 5.08pm
- Liverpool 5.16pm
- Manchester 5.13pm
- Sheffield 5.13pm
- Southend 5.08pm
- Southport 5.19pm
- Jerusalem 5.35pm



## SIDRA BREAKDOWN

### ואֵרָא VA'ERA

#### 2nd Sidra in: שְׁמוֹת SHEMOT

By Numbers:  
**121 VERSES**  
**1,748 WORDS**  
**6,701 LETTERS**

#### Headlines: **SEVEN OF THE TEN PLAGUES**

**VA'ERA:**  
Artscroll p.318  
Hertz p.232  
Soncino p.351

**HAFTARAH:**  
Artscroll p.1149  
Hertz p.244  
Soncino p.372

# Sidra Summary

#### 1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – SHEMOT 6:2-6:13

God reassures Moshe (Moses) that He will keep His promise to the forefathers to bring the nation into the Land of Cana'an (later Israel). God has heard the crying out of the enslaved Israelites; He instructs Moshe to tell them that He will redeem them from slavery. The Israelites, exhausted from their labour, do not accept Moshe's reassurances.

#### 2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 6:14-6:28

The Torah details the genealogy of Moshe and Aharon (Aaron). They are the sons of Amram and Yocheved, who were both descendants of Levi, the third son of Yaakov (Jacob).

***Point to Consider:** Why does the Torah break from the previous narrative to discuss this genealogy? (6:14)*

#### 3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 6:29-7:7

Moshe re-expresses his reluctance to speak to Pharaoh, given his speech impediment. God restates that Aharon will be Moshe's spokesman. God will harden Pharaoh's heart and He will send plagues. This will make Egypt aware of God's omnipotence.

#### 4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 7:8-8:6

Upon God's command, Aharon throws down his stick in front of Pharaoh; it turns into a snake. Pharaoh's magicians duplicate this. However, Aharon's stick swallows up their sticks. The 1st Plague: Moshe and Aharon confront Pharaoh while he is bathing in the Nile and warn him that if he does not let the Israelites leave, the waters of Egypt will turn to blood. Pharaoh ignores the warning; Aharon strikes the water with a stick and it turns into blood. Pharaoh's magicians duplicate this. The plague lasts a week. (This pattern follows

for most of the rest of the plagues – three weeks of warning and a week of plague – see Rashi's commentary.) The 2nd Plague: Aharon strikes the waters of the Nile. A plague of frogs emerges, which covers Egypt. Pharaoh asks Moshe to pray for the frogs to die.

#### 5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 8:7-8:18

The 3rd Plague: Aharon strikes the ground with his stick and lice spread all over Egypt. The Egyptian magicians fail to duplicate this, admitting it is the 'finger of God'.

#### 6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 8:19-9:17

The 4th Plague: A plague of wild beasts spreads over Egypt, apart from Goshen, where the Israelites live. Pharaoh agrees to let the Israelites leave for three days to bring offerings in the desert. Moshe prays for the plague to stop but Pharaoh reneges on his promise. The 5th Plague: The Egyptian livestock is killed, but the Israelites' animals are untouched. The 6th Plague: Moshe throws a fistful of ash in the sky. This turns into dust covering all of Egypt, which then turns into boils on the Egyptians and their animals. God hardens Pharaoh's heart.

#### 7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 9:18-9:35

The 7th Plague: A fiery hail falls on all of Egypt, apart from Goshen. Pharaoh admits that he has sinned and that God is righteous. After Moshe has prayed for the hail to stop, Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go.

#### HAFTARAH

The prophet Yechezkel (Ezekiel) prophesies about the downfall of the future Egyptian empire, after Israel will have mistakenly relied upon them as an ally. Egypt will be invaded by the Babylonian leader Nebuchadnezzar.



### United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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# Without Hesitation



**RABBI  
ALEX  
CHAPPER**

Borehamwood  
& Elstree United  
Synagogue

Abigail Adams, the wife of John Adams, who served as the second President of the United States, once said: "Great necessities call forth great leaders".

This principle is perhaps best illustrated by Moshe (Moses). In last week's sidra, he was sent by God to Pharaoh to demand the release of the Children of Israel. Not only did this mission fail, but it resulted in the slavery actually being intensified. In response, Moshe did something very bold - he questioned God, asking why God would cause greater hardship for His people. Moshe queried God's method as well as his part in the plan. God responded somewhat cryptically, "Now you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh, for through a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them from his land" (Shemot 6:1).

In this week's sidra, Moshe is given a powerful message to be delivered to the Children of Israel. On behalf of God, he is to tell them,

"I am God, and I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt, and I shall rescue you from their service, and I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I shall take you to Me as a people, and I shall be a God to you, and you will know that I am the Lord your God, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt. I shall bring you to the Land about which I raised My hand to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, and I shall give it to you as a heritage; I am God" (ibid. 6:6-8).

Moshe dutifully delivers this inspiring pronouncement. Yet what happened? Seemingly nothing. The people did not listen due to their desperate mental state and their physical exhaustion (see 6:9 with Rashi's commentary). However, the nation's response

**This is a tremendous tutorial in leadership. When needs must, whatever personal doubts that are harboured have to be put aside.**



is perhaps the least significant part in this narrative. What is more remarkable is that Moshe went back to the people to relay the message. As we have seen, he had been unsuccessful in this arena previously. He had already questioned God's strategy and he surely knew that the people were not going to greet his speech with delight and follow him unquestioningly. Yet he went anyway. Without hesitation and without any hint of reticence, he precisely conveyed the Divinely prescribed message.

This is a tremendous tutorial in leadership. When needs must, whatever personal doubts that are harboured have to be put aside. A leader has to step forward and deliver because sometimes the message is greater than the messenger.

In times of national emergency or communal crisis, leadership has to be strong and decisive. Whether or not the message will be listened to, agreed with or acted upon, is sometimes secondary. It is of primary importance that, like Moshe, a leader stands at the front. This strength in and of itself – a clear and present voice – provides hope and reassurance.

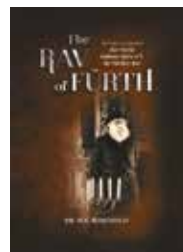
# Return to Dachau

## 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 edited extract from pp.390-393 describes Rabbi Spiro's emotional return to the Dachau concentration camp in 1967.*



**DR MOSHE  
ROSENFELD**

Senior Certification  
Consultant & Chief  
Chemist at KLBD

On 7th May 1967, a memorial was consecrated on the grounds of Dachau concentration camp. One could only guess the emotions of Rav Spiro upon returning to the place of murder and destruction, 22 years after being liberated from there.

A big banner across the entrance reads 'Nie wieder' (never again), as if this would be sufficient to stop mankind from inflicting atrocities upon fellow humans. "When the Rav of Fürth, who resembled a



biblical patriarch, addressed the congregants, many hundreds cried at the sound of his words", reported Stefan Schwarz. "Himself a survivor of the Dachau KZ, he now lives in the four cubits of Torah" (Die Jüdische Gedenkstatte

in Dachau, Munich 1972). When he spoke, his words were flowing from the depths of his soul, which had witnessed the cruelty of this place of horror. The Rav read a chapter of Psalms and addressed the large crowd:

**In loving memory of Harav Yisrael ben Eliyahu z"l**



Rabbi Spiro at a memorial service in a synagogue in Fürth, Germany, 1945

*"Remove your shoes from your feet, as the place where you stand is holy (Shemot 3:5). We should remove our shoes and lower our heads in awe when entering this place, which is drenched with tears and blood through the suffering of the victims, who met all types of deaths only for one reason: they belonged to the ancient nation of Israel.*

The Talmud (Berachot 54a) quotes the obligation of a person who experienced a miracle at a particular place to say a blessing. Maimonides and the *Shulchan Aruch* stipulated the following wording that must be said when encountering such a place: Praised be God, Who has favoured me with a miracle at this location.

And so, as a former prisoner in Dachau and the sole survivor of the Warsaw Rabbinate, one of the largest religious authorities

of European Jewry, I feel it my duty also, in the name of all other survivors, to say: Praised be the Master, our God, the King of the universe, who made a miracle for me and others, here at this place and in the various concentration and death camps.

Gratitude is one of the greatest virtues and has its foundation in the Torah. Therefore, it is only right to express at this moving moment my thanks to the Allied Forces. They were the heavenly messengers and mediators of rescue. *May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel (Ruth 2:12).*

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: *One does not make a memorial for the righteous; their words are their memorials (Jerusalem Talmud, Shekalim 2:5).* Righteous or religious people, wise or holy men, do not need

memorial stones. Their moral teachings, their holy way of life are their monuments. Neither places of remembrance nor statues will safeguard the memory of the satanic cruelty the Jewish nation has experienced. It is the bone-shattering cry of the victims at the moment they were pushed into the gas chambers to await a painful death; this cry will hover over this place as an eternal witness and accuse and warn at the same time. The pious, the martyrs, the infants, the pure, they were all expelled from this world which is full of lies. They left this world filled with revulsion for the animalistic murderers.

They experienced the hollowness of modern civilisation, which watched with indifference, passivity and without compassion the spectacle of the vilest crime of all times. Does not King Solomon say: *the lazy man is a brother of the destroyer? (Mishlei 18:9).* We believers, children of believers, trust that the holy souls of the martyrs are hovering above us at this moment of remembrance. To quote from Psalm 137: *If I forget you Jerusalem, may my right hand lose its skill; may my tongue stick to my palate if I do not remember you.* I promise to these holy souls, we shall not forget you; you are part of our broken bodies. An eternal light will exist for you in our hearts, which will be passed on from generation to generation until the end of time. Until the hour arrives, which has been promised by Yeshaya (Isaiah), the Prophet: *On that day, when the Eternal will repair the damage of His nation and heal the open wounds (Yeshaya 30:26).*"

The short speech of the Rav, delivered in his rich Yiddish, left its mark on everybody present. There was stunned silence and the congregants had to wipe tears from their eyes.

# J'Accuse!



**BARNABY  
NEMKO**

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US Director of  
Community Life

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Emile Zola (1840-1902), a late-19th century French novelist, makes for an unlikely profile piece for the Daf Hashavua. On his return from a vacation in mid-November 1897, Zola was shocked to see Paris still consumed by public debate regarding personal liberties being subordinate to national security. He wrote in his diary in 1897, "a single matter troubles and fascinates everyone, the question of Dreyfus... Is there something rotten in France?" On closer inspection, it is clear that Zola believed that the ongoing dispute between the 'Dreyfusards', those seeking the exoneration of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, and the anti-Dreyfusards, those against reopening of the legal case, in fact reflected a broader challenge for the soul of French society. The first modern nation-state had been built on the values of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' for all its citizens, but it seemed now to be blinded by the forces of conservatism and clericalism in the treatment of its Jewish minority. How could the French state be true to its founding values when it was prepared to punish an innocent man? The conclusion for Zola was that the French Third Republic was rotten to its core.

Zola's famous open letter to the President of the French Third



Emile Zola

Republic, printed in *L'Aurore*, a liberal newspaper, and entitled simply '*J'Accuse...!*', published on 13th January 1898, named those in the higher echelons of the army responsible for the 1894 cover-up. This saw Captain Alfred Dreyfus, an assimilated Jew and a French career officer, held responsible for the passing of military secrets to the German government, when clearly the evidence showed that blame lay elsewhere. By naming the actual conspirators and those in

the French military responsible for the subsequent cover-up, Zola was aware that he would face a libel action. The publishing of the article also led to a wave of antisemitic riots across France as Dreyfus, now serving time on Devil's Island, once more became the focus of anguish across French society. However, Zola believed that the publication of '*J'Accuse*' would ultimately provide the opportunity to clear Dreyfus' name and remove this stain of injustice from the French state. Although the subsequent libel judgement would ultimately go in the Dreyfusards favour, it would be a posthumous judgement for Zola, who had died in 1902, but it would lead to fundamental changes to the French Third Republic.

Zola's conclusions were clear: a modern state must make room for all minorities to play a role in building liberal democracy underpinned by the rule of law. Thus, the Dreyfus Affair was a contributing factor to the 1905 French secularism laws that included the principle of the neutrality of the State. However, for Theodore Herzl, an Austrian journalist reporting on the original Dreyfus trial in 1894, a different conclusion was reached: if even the most assimilated Jew who had committed himself to a career serving in the French army was not able to escape antisemitism, what chance was there for any assimilated Jew in the West or religious Jew in the East? His conclusion was clear: Jews needed to create their own nation-state in their own national land.

12-13 JANUARY | 3 SHEVAT



Tribe Fieldworker

Over the course of the Torah's narrative at the start of the Book of Shemot (Exodus), it becomes clear Moshe (Moses) was an exceptionally talented leader. Rambam (Maimonides, 1135-1204) includes the belief in Moshe's status as the greatest of the prophets as

Moshe's strongest attribute, and

Clearly, great leadership is not about who is most charismatic, forceful or loud. Rather, the way to enact change in the world comes from having the humility to listen to others and translate that into thoughtfulness and common understanding.

#### 4 CIEL

A 4x7 grid of squares. The squares at positions (1,3), (2,2), (3,1), and (4,4) are highlighted in orange. All other squares are white.



# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VA'ERA: TACT FACT!

Jonny's reputation at school was well known. Jonny was always at the centre of any mischief and any trouble. With the new school year starting, Jonny braced himself for his new teacher.

HMMM, I WONDER IF MRS TEACHYOU THIS WILL BE AS BAD AS MR SHOUTALOT LAST YEAR? LAST YEAR WAS FULL OF TELLINGS-OFF AND PUNISHMENT. I'M SURE THE CLASS IS BORED OF LISTENING TO THAT BY NOW.

LET'S TRY HER OUT. I'LL DO MY USUAL DOODLES ON MY TEST, INSTEAD OF PUTTING THE ANSWERS IN. WE'LL SOON SEE IF SHE'S A SHOUTER.



JONNY, I KNOW YOU CAN PRODUCE FINE WORK IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO IT. A MATHS TEST IS NOT THE PLACE TO TRY OUT YOUR NEW ILLUSTRATION SKILLS. WHEN I SEE YOU WORKING HARD AND DOING THE PROBLEMS I HAVE SET, I'M GOING TO BUY YOU A SKETCH BOOK FOR YOUR DRAWINGS.



JONNY, PLEASE CAN YOU COME AND SEE ME AFTER CLASS?

WOW! SHE'S NOT SO BAD ACTUALLY! HMMM, MAYBE I WILL DO THOSE MATHS PROBLEMS. I COULD REALLY DO WITH A NEW SKETCH BOOK.

IN THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA**, GOD TELLS **MOSHE** (MOSES) AND **AHARON** (AARON) TO SPEAK TO **PHARAOH** ABOUT LETTING THE **JEWISH PEOPLE** LEAVE **EGYPT**. IT'S A LITTLE SURPRISING AS IT SEEMS TO BE A REPETITION OF A COUPLE OF VERSES EARLIER.

**MOSHE** AND **AHARON** WERE TASKED WITH TELLING **PHARAOH** STUFF HE DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR. HE DIDN'T WANT TO LET THE **JEWISH PEOPLE** GO! HE DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO HEAR ABOUT TERRIBLE **PLAGUES** OCCURRING IN HIS COUNTRY.



THE MEDIEVAL **RABBI, RASHI** (1040-1105), EXPLAINS THAT THE SECOND VERSE IS THERE TO TELL THEM TO SPEAK RESPECTFULLY TO **PHARAOH**.

THE **TORAH** IS TEACHING US THAT EVEN WHEN WE ARE SHARING SOMETHING HARD TO HEAR, EVEN WHEN WE ARE REPRIMANDING OR DISCIPLINING, WE SHOULD DO SO SENSITIVELY AND RESPECTFULLY. AND AS JONNY WILL TELL YOU, IT'S MUCH EASIER TO HEAR IT THAT WAY!



**tribe**  
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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.