

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

בס"ד

21 DECEMBER 2024 | 20 KISLEV 5785

VOLUME 38 | #13

DAF HASHAVUA

וישב | VAYEISHEV

SHABBAT ENDS:

London 4.48pm
Birmingham 4.51pm
Bournemouth 5.02pm
Cardiff 5.05pm
Dublin 5.05pm
Edinburgh 4.43pm
Glasgow 4.50pm
Hull 4.46pm
Leeds 4.45pm
Liverpool 4.57pm
Manchester 4.51pm
Nottingham 4.52pm
Sheffield 4.51pm
Southend 4.44pm
Southport 4.57pm
Jerusalem 5.19pm

**Chanukah begins on
Wednesday night**

*"Yosef said to the butler... 'In another three days Pharaoh
will lift up your head and restore you to your post, and you
will place Pharaoh's cup in his hand'"*
(Bereishit 40:12-13)



**וישב
VAYEISHEV**

9th Sidra in:

**בראשית
BEREISHIT**

By Numbers:

**112 VERSES
1,558 WORDS
5,972 LETTERS**

Headlines:

**JOSEPH'S
DREAMS AND
BEING SOLD
INTO SLAVERY**

VAYEISHEV:

Artscroll p.198

Hertz p.141

Soncino p.229

HAFTARAH:

Artscroll p.1142

Hertz p.152

Soncino p.248

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 37:1-11

Yaakov (Jacob) settles in the Land of Canaan (later Israel). Yosef (Joseph) brings negative reports to his father about the sons of Leah, his half-brothers (Rashi). Yaakov makes a woollen tunic for Yosef, his favourite son. Yosef's brothers become jealous. Yosef has a dream in which all 12 brothers are binding sheaves in the field. The brothers' sheaves gather around Yosef's sheaf and bow to it. This increases their hatred. Yosef has another dream; the sun and moon and 11 stars bow to him. He relates this to his brothers and to Yaakov, who rebukes him.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 37:12-22

Yosef's brothers shepherd Yaakov's flock. Yaakov sends Yosef to meet them. His brothers plot to kill him. Reuven dissuades them, advising them to throw Yosef in a pit, but not to kill him. Reuven plans to rescue Yosef and return him to his father.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 37:23-36

Yosef's brothers remove his tunic and throw him in the pit. They see a caravan of merchants approaching. Yehuda (Judah) suggests selling Yosef to the merchants. Yosef is sold on repeatedly (Rashi), eventually arriving in Egypt. The brothers dip the tunic in the blood of a slaughtered goat and show it to Yaakov, who concludes that Yosef was killed by an animal.

4TH ALIYA (REVI') – 38:1-30

Yehuda has three sons – Er, Onan and Shela. Er marries Tamar, but is killed by God. Yehuda instructs Onan to marry Tamar. Onan also dies. Sometime later, Yehuda's wife dies. Tamar disguises herself and approaches Yehuda at a crossroads. Unaware of her identity, he consorts with her, for the wage of two kid goats. He leaves her his ring, coat and staff as surety. Yehuda sends a friend to take the payment to the unidentified lady but he does not find her.

Yehuda is later told that Tamar is pregnant and orders her to be burned to death. As she is taken out, she declares that the owner of the surety is the father. Yehuda recognises the objects and admits his role. Tamar is spared and gives birth to twins, Peretz and Zerach.

Point to Consider: *Why did Yehuda not instruct Shela to marry Tamar after the death of Onan? (see Rashi to 38:11)*

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 39:1-6

Yosef is sold to Potiphar, the Chamberlain of the Butchers. Yosef is very successful and Potiphar places him in charge of his household.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 39:7-23

Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Yosef, who rejects her advances. One day they are alone in the house. She tries again and catches his garment; he runs away. With Yosef's garment in her hand, she summons her household, shows them his garment and accuses Yosef of attempting to seduce her. Potiphar imprisons Yosef, who earns the trust of the chief prison officer.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI') – 40:1-23

Pharaoh's baker and butler transgress against Pharaoh and are sent to the same prison as Yosef. Each one has a dream, which Yosef interprets: both will be taken out of prison in three days – the baker to be hanged and the butler to be restored to his post. Yosef asks the butler to mention his plight to Pharaoh, but he forgets to do so.

HAFTARAH (AMOS 2:6-3:8)

The prophet Amos sends a warning message to the people to stop persecuting the poor, a sin that cannot be overlooked. He also accuses them of corrupting the prophets and the Nazarites. The rich and powerful will not be able to escape God's ultimate judgement.



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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Gloves off!



Laurie Maurer

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At the intersection of Parashat Vayeishev and the festival of Chanukah are two women, widows, whose actions alter the course of history and save the Jewish people.

In this week's parasha we read about Tamar, who was married to Yehuda's (Judah) son, Er. Er died childless, so according to the laws of *yibum* (levirate marriage), the brother of the deceased has a responsibility to perpetuate his brother's name by marrying the widow and having children with her (if they do not want to, they can perform another ceremony, *chalitzah*). So, Tamar married the second son, Onan, who also died childless. Yehudah, not wanting his third son to die, sent Tamar away, back to her family, to be a widow for life.

Tamar took matters into her own hands, understanding that it was God's will that she bear children through her husband's family. She "took off [*vatasar*] her

widow's garments, covered her face with a veil and wrapped herself up" (Bereishit 38:14), enticed Yehuda to lie with her, and she became pregnant. When it was discovered, Yehuda realised his error, saying, "She is more righteous than I" (ibid. v.26). From this union came twins, Peretz and Zerah. Peretz was the great (x7) grandfather of King David (and therefore an ancestor of the *Mashiach*). This is a clear indication of the righteousness of Tamar.

Moving on to Chanukah, our heroine of the festival is Yehudit (Judith). Talmudic commentators mention her in multiple places, including Tosafot on Megillah 4a and Pesachim 108b. There is an Apocryphal work with her story, the Book of Judith, which is not part of the Jewish biblical canon, but authoritative halachic texts such as the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 670:2) and *Mishneh Torah* (Megillat Esther and Chanukah 3:4) corroborate the story told in this book.

The city of Bethulia was under siege by the Assyrian-Greek army, who wanted to sack the city and outlaw Judaism. The governor, Uzziah, proclaimed to the people that if they were not saved by God in five days, they would have to surrender to the army surrounding them. Yehudit heard this and vehemently opposed this course of

action, saying, "Who are you to have tempted God this day, and to stand among the children of men instead of God?" (Book of Judith 8:12).

Yehudit hatched a plan; she "took off [*vatasar*] her sackcloth and her widow's garments" (ibid. 10:1) and dressed up, walked to the General Holofernes' tent and plied him with cheese and wine until he fell asleep, and then beheaded him. This spooked the Greeks and contributed to the victory of Chanukah; Yehudit's actions inspired the Maccabees to fight back even though they were outnumbered.

The parallels of these two stories are obvious; the two books even use extremely similar wording, as shown above. Tamar knew that she wanted to fulfil her obligation of *yibum* and produce progeny who would illuminate the world. Yehudit saved the Jewish people of the Land of Israel from the life of hedonism and defilement the Assyrian-Greeks tried to impose on us. Whether the threat is physical or spiritual, we must take a gloves- (and widow's garments) off approach, whilst praying to God for a successful outcome.

Jewish artists you want to (re)discover

BY: **TATIANA VON BEELEN**

Senior Graphic Designer and Brand Lead
at the United Synagogue



ZOYA CHERKASSKY-NNADI

Born 1976
Kyiv, Ukraine

Zoya Cherkassky-Nnadi is a modern Israeli artist. Born in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 1976, she immigrated to Israel in 1991. On her canvases, she merges exaggerated, cartoon-like figures with compelling personal narratives and sharp social critique. Her work addresses the nuances of life in Israel with humour and sharp insight. As Israeli writer Shaul Setter puts it: "Cherkassky paints the social truth sharply and clearly; one sees it and is immediately convinced of it. It hits the viewer like a bolt of lightning." This alone makes Zoya's art worth exploring. She began her latest series of works just four days after the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023.

Cherkassky-Nnadi writes: "It's important for me to show what happened." She channels her grief and pain into 12 mixed-media drawings telling terrifying stories. Despite the brightness and the simplicity of the figures, the tragic events she depicts are deeply shocking.

On the canvas *Kidnapped Women* she depicts a group of women huddled together, marching towards their fate; one bears a Holocaust-style tattoo, a reminder that an Auschwitz survivor was among the hostages.

Often Zoya references easily recognisable classical works, such as Picasso's iconic *Guernica*, to convey the devastation and anguish felt across Israel after the recent attacks. Picasso's *Guernica*, painted



Zoya Cherkassky-Nnadi. *Kidnapped Women*, 2023. Courtesy of Zoya Cherkassky-Nnadi and Fort Gansevoort.



Zoya Cherkassky-Nnadi. *7 Oct. 2023 ('Israeli Guernica')*, 2023. Courtesy of Zoya Cherkassky-Nnadi and Fort Gansevoort.

in 1937, is one of the most haunting anti-war artworks in history.

Created in response to the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War, the painting captures the horrors of war and the suffering of innocents through a chaotic, monochrome composition of distorted figures. The expressive, fragmented forms convey a visceral, universal cry against the destruction and human cost of conflict. In her work *7 Oct. 2023*, Cherkassky-Nnadi draws on this powerful parallel to evoke a sense of solidarity and understanding, sharing Israel's pain with the world.

The entire 12-work series is widely available for viewing on the internet and was recently exhibited at the Jewish Museum in New York.

Kahal Zur Israel: The First Jewish Community in the Americas



**RABBI
SHAUL
KHALILI**

KLBD

I was born in Brazil. Around this time 290 years ago, freedom of worship was granted to all religious minorities in the country, leading to the establishment of - perhaps - the first Jewish community in the Americas: Kahal Zur Israel, in Recife, Pernambuco.

Brazil was first discovered – and colonised – by the Portuguese in 1500, who brought with them the Catholic Inquisition. However, with a landmass larger than the entire European continent, managing such a huge colony was difficult for this nation. To address this issue, the Portuguese entered trade pacts with other European powers, such as the Dutch, seeking their help in settling and exploiting the land. Unsurprisingly, the local natural riches caused conflicts of interest between the most prominent European countries; coveting part of the land, the Dutch invaded northern Brazil and gained control in 1630.

Around 1634, the Dutch granted freedom of worship to all, hoping that this and the prospect of new business would attract new immigrants. It did, and Moises Cohen Henriques, a Jewish sailor who had helped with the Dutch invasion of Brazil, and his brother established a Jewish community in 1636, calling it Kahal Zur Israel. In 1642, they invited Rabbi Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, one of the leading Spanish & Portuguese *Chachamim* of Amsterdam, to be



Kahal Zur Israel, Recife, rebuilt on the original site. Today it is a museum

the community's Rabbi – a position he held until 1654. Unfortunately, Jewish settlement did not last long in Brazil; in 1654, the Portuguese defeated the Dutch, forcing them out of their colony. Jews were granted safe passage to leave the territory, but Jewish presence in Brazil (as a community) ended until the abolition of the Inquisition in 1821.

Nowadays, Brazil is home to the 8th largest Jewish community in the world, after the UK and Argentina, and before Australia. The biggest communities are in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but sizable *Kehilot* (communities) exist also in the north and south of the country. Among the Sephardi communities living in Brazil, Moroccan Jews re-established the first community in northern Brazil in 1824, calling their synagogue Eshel Avraham. Years later, they were followed by Lebanese Jews who started emigrating to Brazil in waves from 1908, to escape the country's instability or to avoid being drafted into the local army. They founded their *Kehilah* in Rio de Janeiro, calling it Benei Sidon (sons of Sidon) and, initially, all their meetings were in



Templo Benei Sidon, Rio de Janeiro

Arabic. I grew up in this *Kehilah*, and still remember their tunes.

Ashkenazi Jews from Imperial Russia came to Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century. Escaping poverty and antisemitism, they were aided by the London-based Jewish Colonisation Association to emigrate to southern Brazil, where they formed the first Jewish agricultural colony, which they named Phillipson. Other waves of Jews came later from other locations such as Poland and Germany, and they started moving towards bigger cities such as Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Today Brazil has a vibrant and diverse Jewish community, with *Yeshivot* and *Kollelim*, Zionist movements such as Bnei Akiva, and even a local Rebbe from the Ratzfert-Sanz dynasty. The local *Kehilah* proudly supports Israel and is an important voice in all international Jewish-related matters.

CURIOUS CUSTOMS

CHANUKAH

A *minhag* (custom) is a religious practice that is not a mandatory part of Jewish observance. Customs are instead practical expressions of values and ideas in Jewish law, which have developed in different Jewish communities around the world.

1

It is customary to use olive oil when lighting Chanukah candles, although in India their tradition is to use coconut oil.

2

Continuing the theme of oil, it is customary to eat oily foods to remember of the miracle of a tiny jug of oil lasting 8 days after the Temple was reclaimed by the Maccabees. For some, that's latkes and doughnuts. For Moroccan Jews, it's *sfenj*, fried dough with orange juice and zest. Columbian and Cuban Jews eat fried plantains (*petacones*).

3

There is a tradition of eating dairy foods as well, as one of the heroines of the Chanukah story, Yehudit, fed cheese and wine to the Syrian-Greek General Holofores, before killing him, which contributed to the salvation of the Jews in Israel.

4

Many will play a game of dreidel, which reflects the 'gambling' game the Jews played whenever the Greeks came past, as learning Torah was outlawed. When playing this game, the currency customarily used is chocolate coins!

5

Speaking of coins, historically, there was no custom to give presents on Chanukah, but to give Chanukah gelt (money) to children, as a reward for studying Torah. The Syrian-Greeks tried to outlaw Torah; today we encourage it even more!



THE TRIBE WEEKLY

VAYEISHEV

20-21 DECEMBER | 20 KISLEV

You're a Star!



**MENUCHA
SAMPSON**

Tribe Madrich

After learning about Yosef's (Joseph) dreams in Parashat Vayeishev, where his brothers were described as being "stars in the sky that bowed down to him," I began to think about one of the most common symbols in Judaism, the 'Star of David' or '*Magen David*'. Where did this six-pointed star originate? How and why has it become the nationally recognised symbol for the Jewish people?

The star was first found in an old Jewish legend about the story of King David and this symbol being emblazoned upon his shield,

which was said to hold miraculous protective power from God. This is where the star gets its name as the 'Shield of David' (*Magen* means shield). It is nice to think of the star as a symbol of God's protective intervention in this world. Furthermore, there are many more references to it in different stories in the *Talmud* (Oral Torah) and *Tanach* (Written Torah).

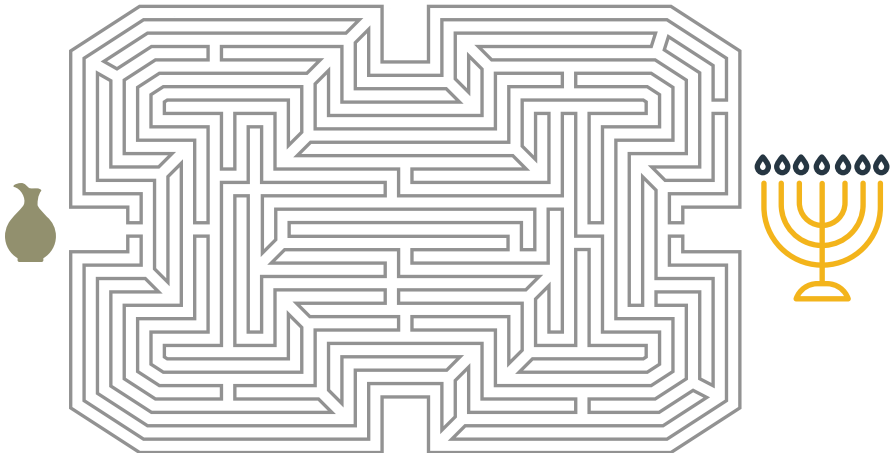
The first archaeological evidence for this star was found in the ancient synagogue of Capernaum, near the sea of Galilee, and then on the cover of the oldest known manuscript of the Hebrew Bible, The Leningrad Codex, from 1008 CE.

However, the explanation that personally intrigued me the most was the kabbalistic (Jewish mysticism) commentary, which took a more spiritual approach to this

symbol. The star is made of two triangles, one pointing up and the other pointing down. The triangle pointing upwards symbolises the spiritual side of life, the way in which we become closer to God and connect with Him; this manifests in Jewish peoples' lives through learning Torah and prayer. In contrast, the downward-pointing triangle represents the physicality of this world, the exploration of the beauty and wonder embedded in the world through food, nature, etc. A life with only one or the other would be a catastrophic disaster. The Kabbalists explain that the hexagon in the middle of our star symbolises where our consciousness lies, where we have the free will to choose how to spend our time and where we find our own personal balance within our lives.

Maccabees' Menorah Maze

The Maccabees have found a single jug of pure oil, and they are desperate to use it to light the Menorah in the *Beit Hamikdash* (Temple). Help them get the oil to the Menorah to light its lamps.





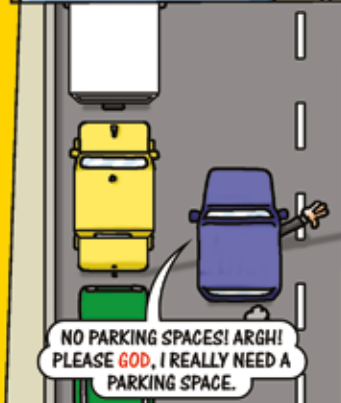
THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYEISHEV: PARKING PROBLEMS!

Sol was stressed! The minutes were ticking closer to his super important business meeting and the traffic was hardly moving.

GRR! COME ON CARS, KEEP MOVING! THAT'S RIGHT, WE CAN MAKE IT THROUGH THE TRAFFIC LIGHT. I'M NEARLY AT MY TURNING.

PHWEH, NOW I JUST NEED TO FIND A PARKING SPACE PRONTO AND I'LL STILL MAKE IT TO MY MEETING ON TIME.



NO PARKING SPACES! ARGH! PLEASE GOD, I REALLY NEED A PARKING SPACE.

PLEASE GOD, IF YOU COULD JUST GIVE ME A PARKING SPACE SO I CAN MAKE IT TO MY MEETING, I'LL COME TO SHUL EVERY WEEK AND I'LL MAKE KIDDUSH EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT!

IT'S OK GOD - I FOUND ONE!

SILLY SOL. HE DIDN'T REALISE IT WAS GOD GIVING HIM THE PARKING SPACE.

IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHA WE FIND YOSEF (JOSEPH), SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS AND WORKING AS A SERVANT IN EGYPT. THE TORAH TELLS US THAT GOD WAS WITH YOSEF, AND HE RECOGNISED GOD IN HIS LIFE AT EVERY TURN. THIS WAS THE KEY TO HIS SUCCESS!



ERM, SOL, I THINK YOU COULD DO WITH READING THE PARASHA THIS WEEK.



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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.