

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

בס"ד

27 SEPTEMBER 2025 | 5 TISHREI 5786

VOLUME 39 | #2

DAF HASHAVUA

ויילך | VAYEILECH

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 7.35pm
Birmingham: 7.42pm
Bournemouth: 7.44pm
Cardiff: 7.48pm
Dublin: 8.00pm
Edinburgh: 7.50pm
Glasgow: 7.54pm
Hull: 7.40pm
Leeds: 7.41pm
Liverpool: 7.49pm
Manchester: 7.44pm
Nottingham: 7.42pm
Sheffield: 7.43pm
Southend: 7.30pm
Southport: 7.50pm
Jerusalem: 7.06pm

Shabbat Shuva

**Yom Kippur begins
on Wednesday night**



Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – DEVARIM 31:1-3
Moshe tells the people that he is no longer able to lead them, as he is not going into the Land with them (see Rashi). Rather, Yehoshua (Joshua) will lead them across the Jordan, as God had decreed.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 31:4-6
Moshe continues by assuring the nation that they will conquer their enemies in Cana'an, in the same way that God allowed them to defeat the mighty kings Sichon and Og. However, they must make sure to destroy the idols that they will find there (see commentary of Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra).

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 31:7-9
In the presence of the nation, Moshe summons Yehoshua and tells him to be "strong and courageous". God will go "in front of" Yehoshua and will not forsake him. Moshe writes the entire Torah and gives the scroll to the Kohanim and the elders.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 31:10-13
Moshe instructs the people in the mitzvah of hakhel. Just after the end of every seventh year of the agricultural cycle (*Shemittah*), on Succot, all the people are to gather in Jerusalem, young and old, to hear the king read parts of the Torah. Hearing these words will encourage learning Torah and fear of God.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 31:14-19
God calls Moshe and Yehoshua to stand by the entrance to the Tent of Meeting (*Ohel Moed*), where He tells them that the nation will turn against Him and follow other gods. God's anger will flare against Israel, and he will "hide His face" from them, as if He is unaware of their sufferings (Rashi). God commands Moshe to write the Song of Ha'azinu, (next week's sidra), and teach it to the people (Rashi).

Point to Consider: According to the Talmud, which famous Jewish heroine is hinted to in verse 31:18?

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 31:20-24
God continues with His message. After He brings the nation to the Land "which flows with milk and honey", excessive enjoyment of that abundance will lead them to idol worship. Reading the Song of Ha'azinu (the following sidra) will remind them that they were warned of the consequences of rebellion.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 31:25-30
Moshe finishes writing the Sefer Torah and tells the Levi'im to place it next to the *Aron* (Ark). Moshe notes that in his lifetime, the people have been "rebellious and stiff-necked" and that this will carry on after his death.

HAFTARAH
This is a special haftarah, read on Shabbat Shuva, between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. It is made up of three parts, from the Biblical prophets Hoshea, Yoel and Micha. The first part calls on Israel to return to God; even after sinning, their return will be lovingly accepted. The second part emphasises that our Teshuva (return/repentance) has to be sincere and heartfelt, not superficial. The last section states that God is unique in His readiness to pardon.



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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NOISE-CANCELLING SWITCHED OFF

BY: **RABBI YISROEL BINSTOCK**

Hale Synagogue

Noise-cancelling headphones promise serenity, but sometimes too much silence disconnects us from the messy beauty of a community. We might crave peace and focus, especially during the days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, when the stakes feel high and the prayers more intense. But what if the noise is not the problem? What if it is part of the solution? Perhaps shul was never meant to be perfectly quiet.

Vayeilech contains the mitzvah of *Hakhel*, a once-in-seven-years gathering in the *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple), when the entire Jewish people – men, women and children – came together to hear the king read from the Torah. The Talmud (*Chagigah* 3a) asks an obvious question: if young children would not understand what was being read, why bring them? The answer: “*To give reward to those who bring them.*”

At first glance, it sounds like parents are simply rewarded for the effort. Schlep your kids, earn spiritual points. But *Tosafot* (rabbinic commentaries, c. 11th–13th centuries) takes this a step further and suggests that the reason we bring our children to shul is because of this mitzvah. If *Hakhel*, the grand national gathering, included noisy toddlers and distracted five-year-olds, then maybe we should be rethinking our expectations of shul atmosphere.

Why might it be spiritually

beneficial to have the distraction of children in shul?

Ramban (Nachmanides, 1194-1270) writes that even if children cannot understand the words, the experience itself can be transformative, even if it has a delayed effect. A moment may feel chaotic in real time, but years later a child might remember standing beside a parent, hearing the words, or feeling a sense of awe. Not all impact is immediate; some memories are planted quietly but their impact can grow throughout our lives.

The Kli Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz, 1550-1619) sees *Hakhel* as part of a communal *teshuvah* (repentance) process. After the intensity of Yom Kippur and the spiritual high of the lead-up to Succot, we may begin to slip. *Teshuvah* must shift from the personal to the collective. That is why we bring the children: to remind us that our repentance is not just for ourselves; we are davening for future generations. We say on the High Holidays, “*Do it for the nursing infants who have never sinned.*” Sometimes, the crying child in the corner is the holiest voice in the room and can bring out more depth of feeling in our own prayers.

There does need to be a balance. A shul must remain a place where

“A moment may feel chaotic in real time, but years later a child might remember standing beside a parent, hearing the words, or feeling a sense of awe.”

people can concentrate, connect and *daven*. But Shabbat Shuva is the time to step back and see the bigger picture. *Teshuvah* demands that we move beyond our own spiritual preferences and consider others – especially those too young to speak for themselves.

So, this week in shul, if the noise levels rise and your concentration dips, take a breath and remember *Hakhel*. Remember that the Torah values all those who are present even if it comes at the cost of perfection. And remember that our Father in Heaven does not always ask for silence. Sometimes He wants to hear the sound of us trying, together, as a people, one generation beside the next.



SHABBAT SHUVA:

TRUST IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

BY: **DAYAN IVAN BINSTOCK**

St John's Wood Synagogue

The first section of the haftarah for *Shabbat Shuva* is taken from the concluding passage in the prophet Hoshea – *Shuva Yisrael*, “Return, O Israel.” Although the Shabbat was originally called *Shabbat Teshuva* (Maharil), it became known as *Shabbat Shuva* when the custom of reading this haftarah became firmly established.

Hoshea was a prophet who lived in the northern kingdom of Israel. After the death of Solomon, the country was divided between the kingdom of Judah in the south and the kingdom of Israel in the north. Israel had a series of unstable monarchs and frequently lapsed into idolatry. The superpower in the region was the kingdom of Ashur, Assyria (present day Iraq). Its policy of expansion and subjugation terrorised the area.

“ Hoshea’s call is a voice that echoes through the ages. “Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God.” Not with grand gestures, not with displays of might or strategic treaties, but with “words.” Sincere, vulnerable speech.”

To the south was Egypt, famed for its horses, constantly looking for opportunities to displace Assyria. The corrupt rulers of Israel sought to gain power and protection by forging political alliances with these powers. Ultimately, it would end in tragedy with Sennacherib conquering and exiling the northern kingdom in 722 BCE.

Despite the people’s lapses, Hoshea, perhaps more than any other prophet, repeatedly emphasises God’s unfailing love for Israel. (“I will betroth you to Me forever, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice...” Hoshea 2:21)

In his final message, Hoshea implores Israel to repent. Sincere words are all you need. Forget about sacrifices. Forget about political alliances. God is ready to accept your repentance and will enable you to flourish again.

“Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled in your sin. Take words of remorse with you and turn back to the Lord... instead of calves, we offer You words of prayer. Assyria will not rescue us; we will ride no more on (Egyptian) horses; never again will we call our own handiwork ‘our god’; for only in You will the orphan find mercy” (Hoshea 14:2-4).

The setting in which Hoshea prophesied – an unstable region, shifting alliances, corrupt leadership, and looming

superpowers – feels remarkably familiar. We, too, live in a time marked by profound uncertainty. Powerful nations assert their dominance in ways that unsettle the global order. Trust in institutions is waning, and many search desperately for security – in wealth, in technology, in ideology.

It is in this context that the message of *Shabbat Shuva* becomes startlingly relevant. Hoshea’s call is a voice that echoes through the ages. “Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God.” Not with grand gestures, not with displays of might or strategic treaties, but with “words.” Sincere, vulnerable speech. Personal and collective honesty.

The prophet offers a striking alternative to fear-driven politics: a return to spiritual clarity. He warns against relying on foreign powers and against the idolatry of self-sufficiency. In our own time, these words challenge our dependence on the modern equivalents of Assyria and Egypt – military strength, market stability, technological advancement – as ultimate sources of salvation. They are tools, not gods.

Shabbat Shuva is a pause to ask: In what have we placed our trust? What have we feared, and what have we hoped for? And are we ready, as Hoshea urges, to repent, to speak truthfully and return to God’s embrace?



RAISING OUR SPIRITS THROUGH DRAMA

BY: **REBBETZEN NECHAMA DAVIS**

Israel, Daf Hashavua Editorial Team

As of July 2025, the war in Israel is still ongoing and everyone is finding their own ways to cope with the stress. So, when an advert for a pre-Shavuot Bibliodrama and BiblioPlayback session at the Efrat library appeared on my screen, I jumped at the opportunity. The next day (lots of things are last-minute in Israel!) I found myself with an energetic group of women, improvising our way through the heart-wrenching Naomi and Ruth scene from the Book of Ruth, 'artistically' draped in colourful scarves, enjoying all the catharsis and creativity that drama provides.

I recently interviewed Toby Klein Greenwald, veteran American immigrant to Efrat and the founder of the Nana BiblioPlayback company. "I firmly believe that all drama and theatre is deeply therapeutic, not only for the audience but for the people who do it. And especially when you're

talking about drama from our Jewish sources. We are verbalising it with our faces, our bodies, our words... It becomes part of us when we express it with our whole selves, and we imbibe the messages into our souls."

Toby mentioned that, with a session she ran a few days earlier, when she asked the women what the themes of the story were, they came up with all sorts of ideas, but none said "loss". In the Book of Ruth, the husband dies, the two sons die - but it is such a painful and sensitive subject in Israel at the moment that some people cannot even bring themselves to talk about it. So many people have lost husbands and sons...

One highly relevant theme of the Book of Ruth is how a stranger wants to join the Jewish people. Toby continues: "We go through troubled times and yet people want to join *Am Yisrael*, the Jewish

nation. Just like Ruth wanted to be part of *Am Yisrael* in *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel) and follow the God of Israel, so we see a surge in applications for conversion from soldiers in the IDF. That gives us hope and strength."

Bibliodrama, pioneered by the British born Yael Unterman, is studying the text and improvising, to bring the text alive and to learn from our sources in a very personal way, speaking in the characters' voices. BiblioPlayback is the next stage: it is people taking their personal stories that are informed or inspired by stories from *Tanach* and acting them out.

Take the Ruth/Naomi story for instance. One woman connected to the 'stranger' aspect of Ruth's journey through her own experience of returning to the Jewish world as an adult, for many years still feeling like a stranger. Another woman acted out how, when she got engaged, she sent her fiancé a card saying, "Where you go, I will go, your God is my God!" Others related to their own experiences as a mother-in-law or a daughter-in-law.

Toby continues: "It's always extremely moving because, in *Ruth*, you have stories of death, of leaving home, of being the other, being shunned because you're not accepted, and, of course, conversion. Plenty of themes to connect with personally!"

Of course, there is also something very liberating and fun about acting something out. Even when the topics are heavy, there is a pleasure in expressing yourself. This truly does raise spirits. Especially in these very difficult times.



Bibliodrama, Efrat



KOL NIDRE APPEAL 2025: STAND TOGETHER, GIVE TOGETHER

BY: **DAVID GOLDBERG**
US Director of Fundraising

Kol Nidre is the time when Jews across the world come together in *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *zedakah* – repentance, prayer and charity. It is the time to think about how we can improve our own lives and help others.

On Kol Nidre night, through our collective prayers and charitable donations, we have the power to change lives.

For generations, the Kol Nidre Appeal has raised money for charities at home and in Israel. Last year alone, our United Synagogue community raised

an incredible £1.5 million and supported tens of thousands of people.

This year, as we stand together, the weight of the past year is heavy. Our hearts are with Israel, still grieving, still healing, still defending. And across the Jewish world the need is greater than it has been in a generation. Support, resilience and rebuilding are not abstract ideas – they are urgent realities.

Charities need your support more than ever. Here at home, the community faces rising costs,

rising needs and the rising call to ensure that Jewish life not only survives, but thrives.

We have seen a wonderful upsurge in people volunteering their time, but alongside this we also need to see an upsurge in the amount of money raised.

So please, let's stand together, give what we can and help those in our community and beyond. Our future depends on it.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY'S MOST POWERFUL TOOL

To find out more about the charities your community is supporting and to donate online, please visit

KOLNIDRE.ORG.UK



THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYEILECH

26-27 SEPTEMBER | 5 TISHREI

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY



BY: **SHLOMO GREENBERG**

Tribe Projects
Executive

At the beginning of Moshe's (Moses) life, when reading about his parents, we find the word *vayeilech* (and he went): "And a man from the house of Levi went, and he married a daughter of Levi" (*Shemot* 2:1), and on the last day of Moshe's life, we find the same word: "And Moshe went (*vayeilech*) and spoke these words to all Israel" (*Devarim* 31:1).

The Rabbinic commentators

discuss the word *vayeilech* - where did Moshe go?

Rabbi Ovadia Seforno (1475-1549) writes that the word *vayeilech* is about initiating and taking action. It began with the responsibility of Amram, Moshe's father, who decides with his family to continue having children, to continue sustaining the nation, despite the terrible decrees of the Egyptians, the enslavement and the throwing of Hebrew children into the river. Moshe continues this responsibility throughout his own life, taking care of the Jewish people, delivering the Torah to the nation – and it continues until

his last day when Moshe goes and strengthens the people of Israel, to inherit the Land and to stay true to God and His Torah. This is part of Moshe's great legacy.

From this we learn about our duty to initiate, to take positive actions and to take responsibility – responsibility for our own lives, for our families and for our people. Responsibility for Judaism in the world. This is especially relevant during these Ten Days of Repentance (*Aseret Yemei Teshuva*) between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – days dedicated to personal reflection and taking responsibility.

Parasha Trivia!

(Hint: There can be more than one answer!)

1. Which of these Canaanite kings are mentioned in the parasha?
 - a. Sichon
 - b. Og
 - c. The king of Arad
2. Which special mitzvah is mentioned in this parasha that happened once every seven years?
 - a. Hakhel
 - b. Yovel
 - c. Pesach Sheni
3. Moshe died at the age of 120 - which other Jewish figures also died at that age?
 - a. Methuselah
 - b. Hillel the Elder
 - c. Raban Yochanan Ben Zakai
4. Whose death is described in Tanach (the Hebrew Bible) as ascending to heaven in a storm?
 - a. Abraham
 - b. King David
 - c. The prophet Elijah
5. Which song is Moshe commanded to write and teach to the people?
 - a. The Song at the Sea
 - b. Haazinu
 - c. Hatikvah



THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYEILECH - SHABBAT SHUVA: AMAZON ANGEL!

June 2016. Asher Lax from New Jersey is a new Amazon seller.

OK, MY AMAZON SELLER STATUS IS UP AND RUNNING. THE IPADS ARE LIVE AND LISTED ON AMAZON FOR SALE. LET'S HOPE MY **LY BERDITCHEV*** USERNAME BRINGS ME GOOD **MAZAL** AND BIG SALES!

* Chassidic Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740–1809)

The next day...

WOAH! ALL 28 IPADS SOLD OVERNIGHT. NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL **MAZAL** - THIS WILL BE MY BIG PAYDAY.

WAIT! **OY VEY!** THIS ISN'T A PROFIT - THIS IS A DISASTER! I LISTED THE IPADS FOR \$40 INSTEAD OF \$400! NO WONDER THEY WERE SNAPPED UP SO QUICKLY!

HELLO! FINALLY! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH YOU FOR THE LAST HOUR! I ALSO SELL IPADS ON AMAZON, AND I ALWAYS CHECK OUT OTHER SELLERS TO BE IN THE KNOW. I SAW YOUR IPADS LISTED FOR \$40 - THAT MUST'VE BEEN A MISTAKE AND WHEN I SAW YOUR USERNAME, I FELT CONNECTED TO YOU.

I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO LOSE THE MONEY OR MESS UP YOUR SELLER RATING BY CANCELLING THE ORDER, SO I QUICKLY BOUGHT ALL THE IPADS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE COULD. PLEASE LET ME KNOW HOW I CAN SEND THEM BACK.

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ME AND YOU HELPED ME OUT SO MASSIVELY! YOU COULD HAVE SOLD THE IPADS ON AND MADE A HUGE PROFIT! WHO ARE YOU?

IT'S NOT IMPORTANT WHO I AM. JUST CALL ME **YEHUDA** FROM **LAKEWOOD** AND TELL ME WHERE I CAN RETURN YOUR IPADS.

SHABBAT SHUVA IS ABOUT RETURNING. NOT ONLY TO **GOD**, BUT TO RETURN TO BEING THE BEST VERSION OF OURSELVES.

THANKS, **YEHUDA**, FOR SHOWING US HOW IT'S DONE!



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.