בס"ד

27 DECEMBER 2025 | 7 TEVET 5786

VOLUME 39 | #16

DAF HASHAVUA

וַיִּגַּשׁ | VAYIGASH

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 4.52pm
Birmingham: 4.55pm
Bournemouth: 5.06pm
Cardiff: 5.08pm
Dublin: 5.09pm
Edinburgh: 4.47pm
Glasgow: 4.54pm
Hull: 4.50pm
Leeds: 4.49pm
Liverpool: 5.01pm
Manchester: 4.54pm
Nottingham: 4.55pm
Sheffield: 4.55pm
Southend: 4.48pm
Southport: 5.01pm
Jerusalem: 5.23pm

The Fast of Tevet is on Tuesday

London: 6:16am-4:48pm
Jerusalem: 5:20am-5:15pm

(For other cities please contact your local community)

The United Synagogue

"God said, "I am the Almighty, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you there into a great nation."
(Bereishit 46:3)

SIDRA BREAKDOWN

וַיִּגַּשׁ
VAYIGASH

11th Sidra in:
בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

By Numbers:
106 VERSES
1,480 WORDS
5,680 LETTERS

Headlines:
YAAKOV AND HIS FAMILY COMING TO EGYPT

VAYIGASH:
Artscroll p.250
Hertz p.169
Koren Sacks p.301
Soncino p.277

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1144
Hertz p.178
Koren Sacks p.1449
Soncino p.293

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 44:18-30
Twenty-two years after Yosef (Joseph) was sold by his brothers, they now face the prospect of their father Yaakov (Jacob) 'losing' another one of his sons, Binyamin. Yehuda (Judah) does not yet know that the viceroy of Egypt standing in front of him is actually Yosef. He approaches Yosef, recounting Yosef's demand to see Binyamin and Yaakov's reluctance to let Binyamin leave. Having already 'lost' Rachel's other son, Yosef, Yaakov did not want disaster to befall Binyamin.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 44:31-45:7
Yehuda states that if they return without Binyamin, Yaakov will surely die. Yehuda offers to take Binyamin's place and remain as a slave to Yosef. Yosef orders everyone apart from his brothers out of the room. He reveals his identity and asks if his father is still alive. He tells his ashamed brothers not to be sad; God had sent him on this mission in order to sustain them during the famine.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 45:8-18
Yosef tells the brothers to go back to Cana'an to relate to Yaakov that he (Yosef) is alive and is the viceroy of Egypt. Yaakov should come immediately to Egypt; Yosef will ensure their safety and sustenance in the remaining five years of famine. Yosef and Binyamin cry on one another's necks.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 45:19-27
Pharaoh instructs Yosef to give his brothers wagons. Yosef sends them back with money and provisions for the journey. He sends 20 laden donkeys for Yaakov. The brothers return home and tell Yaakov that Yosef is alive and is ruling over the land of Egypt. Initially, Yaakov does not believe them.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 45:28-46:27
Yaakov travels to Egypt, stopping at Beersheva to bring an offering. God appears to Yaakov in a night vision, allaying his fears of leaving Cana'an to go to Egypt, and promising to make his progeny into a great nation. The Torah lists the 70 members of Yaakov's household who came to Egypt.

Point to Consider: *Which person is missing from the list of 70? (see Rashi to 46:26)*

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 46:28-47:10
Yosef and Yaakov meet in the region of Goshen. Yosef falls on Yaakov's neck and cries. Along with five of his brothers, Yosef goes to inform Pharaoh of his family's arrival and tells him that they are sheep and cattle farmers. Pharaoh grants them the right to live in Goshen. Yosef brings Yaakov to meet Pharaoh. Yaakov blesses Pharaoh, who asks him his age.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 47:11-27
Despite the famine in Egypt, Yosef makes sure that his family has food. The starving Egyptians give Yosef their animals in return for bread. The following year, they sell their land to Pharaoh in return for food and seed. They become serfs to Pharaoh, and are to give him one fifth of all produce from that land. Yosef fixes this as a national statute. Yaakov's family increases greatly.

HAFTARAH (YECHEZKEL 37:15-28)
Yechezkel (Ezekiel) prophesies that the tribes of Israel will eventually be reunited and will reject idol worship and sin. They will be ruled over by a king from the House of David.

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COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

REFRAMING

This essay is an abridged version of Rabbi Sacks' 2010 Covenant & Conversation essay, marking the recent 5th yahrzeit of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at www.rabbisacks.org

Viktor Frankl was a prisoner in Auschwitz when he made the fundamental discovery for which he later became famous as part of his work as a psychotherapist. What gave people the will to live was the belief that there was a task for them to perform, a mission for them to accomplish that they had not yet completed and that awaited them in the future. Frankl discovered that *"it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us."*

The mental shift this involved became known, especially in cognitive behavioural therapy, as reframing. Just as a painting can look different when placed in a different frame, so can a life. The facts don't change, but the way we perceive them does. Frankl writes that he was able to survive Auschwitz by seeing himself daily as if he were in a university, giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp. Everything that was happening to him was transformed by this one act of the mind into a series of illustrations of the points he was making in the lecture. He later wrote:

"By this method, I succeeded somehow in rising above the situation, above the sufferings of the moment, and I observed them as if they were already of the past."

Reframing tells us that though we cannot always change the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we can change the way we see them, and this itself changes the way we feel.

Yet this modern discovery is really a re-discovery, because the first great re-framer in history was Yosef (Joseph), as we will see in this week's *parasha* and the next.

Let's recap: He was sold into slavery by his brothers. He lost his freedom for thirteen years, and was separated from his father and his family for twenty-two years. It would be understandable if he felt resentment toward his brothers, and a desire for revenge. Yet he rose above such feelings, and did so precisely by shifting his experiences into a different frame.

Yosef reframed his entire past. He no longer saw himself as a man wronged by his brothers. He had come to see himself as a man charged with a life-saving mission by God. Everything that had happened to him was necessary so that he could achieve his purpose in life: to save an entire population from starvation during a famine, and to provide a safe haven for his family.

This act of reframing allowed Joseph to live without a burning sense of anger and injustice. It enabled him to forgive his brothers and be reconciled with them. It transformed the negative energies of feelings about the past into focused attention to the future. Yosef, without knowing it, had become the forerunner of one of the great movements in psychotherapy in the modern world. He showed the power of reframing. We cannot change the past. But by changing the way we think about the past, we can change the future.

Whatever situation we are in, by reframing it we can change our entire response, giving us the strength to survive, the courage to persist, and the resilience to emerge, on the far side of darkness, into the light of a new and better day.

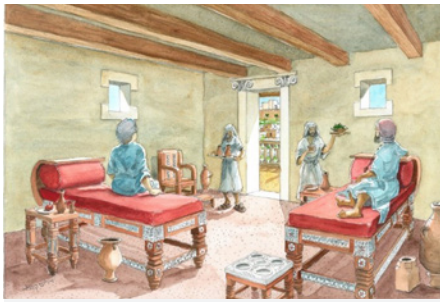
UNCOVERING THE FAST OF TEVET

BY: **SHLOMO GREENBERG**
Projects Executive, Tribe

The Fast of *Asara B'Tevet* (the Tenth of Tevet), observed this week, commemorates the beginning of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar II in 588 BCE. After laying a siege for two and a half years, the Neo-Babylonian king and his general, Nebuzaradan, breached the city walls and destroyed the First Temple and the city.

The prophet Isaiah, who lived during the First Temple period, rebuked the people of Israel over their misplaced joy over the events of their time. He asked what they could have to rejoice about, "That you have gone, all of you, up on the roofs" (Isaiah 22:1). This verse is part of a longer admonition of the prophet to the people of Israel. According to the *Da'at Mikra* (20th century biblical commentary), rooftops in ancient Jerusalem were flat and used for gatherings and celebrations, and Isaiah's words expressed sorrow that the people rejoiced when repentance and reflection were needed.

Fascinating archaeological discoveries were made about ten years ago, in an area known as the Givati Parking Lot, south of the Old City walls in Jerusalem. These came to light after excavating and discovering remains dating to the Early Islamic, Byzantine, Roman and Hellenistic periods. They were above a grand house of a very wealthy family, perhaps advisors to the king, that was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE. The finds that were unearthed inside the rooms of the house provide us with a window into the affluent lives of those who lived at the end of the First Temple period in Jerusalem.



The inlay of the ivories in the couch-thrones painting (Shalom Kweller, City of David)

The reconstructed sixth-century BCE wine jars (Dafna Gazit, Israel Antiquities Authority)

After excavating to a depth of many meters, archaeologists found a thick layer of destruction. Within this layer were some incredible artefacts, such as broken storage jars that were found in the basement of the house. Chemical analysis revealed that they contained wine that was flavoured with vanilla. Vanilla was a luxury item that is not native to Israel or its surrounding regions and arrived from India or East Africa on camels via the Arabian spice trade. On the ground floor, intricate ivory inlays were discovered, that were likely used to adorn furniture. Ivory, too, was a rare, imported material that reflected the family's wealth, status and international connections. These discoveries offer an extraordinary glimpse into the affluent life of Jerusalem's elite at the end of the First Temple period and serve as a poignant reminder of the city's sudden and total destruction soon afterwards.

The contrast between Isaiah's warning and the opulent remains found beneath Jerusalem's soil reminds us of the fragility of power and prosperity and of the enduring call to humility, awareness and renewal that *Asara B'Tevet* embodies.

WOMEN'S POETRY AND PRAYERS WRITTEN IN A POST-OCT 7 WORLD - PART 3

BY: **REBBETZEN NECHAMA DAVIS**
Israel, Daf Hashavua Editorial Team

Az Nashir, We Will Sing Again is a volume of poems and original prayers written by women of faith in Isael in the year following Oct 7, during the ongoing war in Israel, and amidst the spiralling antisemitism all over the Jewish world.

Ann Gordon, one of the editors, writes: "This book is a companion volume of contemporary prayers written by women in response to our shifting reality. It offers a collection of *techinot*—religious poetry—to give voice to the deep, troubling emotions that have filled our days and nights since October 7th. The siddur remains a profound resource, but the horrors of massacre, war, and resurgent antisemitism have created space for personal, contemplative prayer—expressions we never imagined we'd need." (Foreword, *Az Nashir*, paraphrased.)

"As we hid from armed and murderous invaders, buried loved ones, or huddled in shelters during *leilot shimurim*, [nights of God's watchfulness], of rocket attacks, prayer became more than a personal practice. It became a way to grasp for hope. **Prayer implies faith in the possibility of something better. We hope that the prayers [in this volume] offer comfort, in the spirit of Channah, David, Miriam, and all the generations of Jews who allowed themselves to hope for a better world."**

After the miraculous salvation on that night in April 2024 when Iran first attacked Israel with ballistic missiles, people of faith were searching for words to express their gratitude to God. This prayer expresses the profound and the lighter aspects of that experience.

Mizmor Letodah

Raise a shout for God, all the earth
For the salvation of the skies.
Raise a shout for the army of Israel, for the soldiers of the air, and all who aided them.
Serve God with joy -
Come before Him with exclamations of rejoicing.
Know that the Lord is God,
And in one night that was, and in one night that was lost,
He overturned the threat from the nation of Iran and its rulers
From grief and fear
(and a little black humour)
To a deep breath,
To a shrug of the shoulders,
To blessings upon salvation and a song of thanksgiving
(and a quick return to routine).
He made us and we are His-
His people, the flock He tends.
Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His Courtyards with praise.
Give thanks to Him and bless His name,
For God is good and His kindness is eternal.
("A Song of Thanksgiving", by Ann Gordon, *Az Nashir*, p.166. Translated from the Hebrew. Based on *Mizmor Letodah*, A Psalm of Thanksgiving, psalm 100, attributed to King David.)

Heartfelt words of prayer reach up to the very heavens. Rachel Secunda, a recent American immigrant, offers up these words:

A prayer for my children's futures.
A song of rejoicing.

I pray that in the future we teach about these broken years in school so that they will not be forgotten.
Bless me with grandchildren who will ask about this time because all that will be left is the memory of a war that seemed like it would never end.

("May They Live in Peace", *Az Nashir*, p.224.)

May all these precious words be accepted On High!

SEFER YESHAYAHU (ISAIAH) - PART 3

PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**
Ma'ayan and US Educator

Interestingly, there are four national prophets during the time of Yeshayahu (Isaiah). His contemporaries are Amos, Hoshea and Micha. Although they all receive the same message from God, they each have different roles and choose different methods of transmitting the message.

Yeshayahu speaks to the people in the manner that he thinks will yield the best results. A beautiful example of this takes place in Chapter 5. He uses a parable of a vineyard to explain God's displeasure. Yeshayahu describes a man who works hard to plant and nurture a vineyard, detailing all the different actions that he undertakes. However, despite his high hopes, the result is bad grapes (Yeshayahu 5:1-2). The man feels so angry that he destroys the vineyard.

The prophet explains that this is how God feels about His vineyard: the Jewish people. He hoped to produce fine grapes but instead received inferior grapes. After listing the sins of the people, the prophet warns that punishment is coming soon. This parable must have been very powerful for Yeshayahu's contemporaries, considering the centrality of the vineyard to Judean agriculture. They would have been able understand the disappointment and anger of the vineyard owner, allowing them to connect to how God is feeling too.

Following on from this, Yeshayahu describes the approaching enemy army. Although he does not mention a name, there are many hints that show he is referring to the Assyrian army. The anonymity of the army in Yeshayahu's prophecy is to keep the message relevant to future generations, who may face similar dangers from different enemies (Amos Chacham, *Da'at Mikra* commentary). As we know, all parts of *Tanach* (the Hebrew Bible) have a dual message: one to the contemporaries of the prophet and another to future generations. While there is often overlap, it is important for us to try to understand both of these messages. This enables us to fully appreciate the prophetic messages of the *Tanach*.

This prophecy is realised in a startlingly accurate way, with Assyria soon becoming a thorn in the side of the southern kingdom of Yehuda (Judah). Towards the end of Uzziah's reign over Yehuda, in 745 BCE, a rebellion takes place in Assyria. Tiglat-Pileser is now the ruler of the Assyrian Empire and begins to expand, encroaching into the territory of the northern kingdom of Yisrael (Israel). Yeshayahu describes the Assyrian leader's success at conquering other nations as like "one who gathers stray eggs" (Yeshayahu 10:14). Nations crumble in the face of the well-oiled Assyrian army, and the kingdom of Yisrael is soon destroyed. Assyria does not stop, and soon invades the kingdom of Yehuda, as we will see in future articles.

> **"The anonymity of the army in Yeshayahu's prophecy is to keep the message relevant to future generations, who may face similar dangers from different enemies (Amos Chacham, *Da'at Mikra* commentary).**

Yeshayahu takes his leave of King Uzziah in Chapter 6, ending the first section of the book. Chapters 2-6 focused on the arrogance, selfishness and corruption of Uzziah's kingdom, which will become less relevant after the king's death. Chapter 6 itself is full of allusions to God's wrath – e.g. "the house will be filled with smoke" (v. 5) - and future destruction "until the cities will be devastated without inhabitant..." According to most commentaries, this refers to the destruction of the northern kingdom of Yisrael, around 65 years later.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYIGASH 26-27 DECEMBER | 7 TEVET

LISTENING WITH BIOGRAPHY

BY: **THE TRIBE TEAM**

When Judah steps forward to plead for Benjamin, something remarkable happens. Joseph is not only analysing words. He is listening with biography. Years earlier, the brothers sold him. Now Judah offers himself instead of his younger brother. The family grammar has changed from rivalry to responsibility. Joseph hears that change because his life has tuned his ear to it.

This is why he weeps and reveals himself. He reads the moment against the story God has been writing in him. Power could have led him to settle scores. Instead, he chooses reconciliation and provision. That is the test of a genuine spiritual encouragement. It draws you away from ego and towards responsibility for others.

Vayigash teaches a practice for hard conversations. When you face conflict, listen for more than the surface. Ask: what has changed here, and what is God asking of me now? Sometimes the most important "voice" you will hear comes from another person's courage to speak truth, or from your own memory of how things once were. Joseph models how to discern that voice and act on it.

For teens and adults, this is a skill worth cultivating. In family tensions, online debates, school or workplace friction, try hearing the other with your story in mind, then choose the deed that heals. To explore this approach in depth, see Rabbi David Fohrman's *divrei Torah* on Judah's speech and Joseph's reaction.

Storyline Shuffle!

Below are 16 mixed-up words and phrases. Sort them into 4 groups of 4, based on these storylines from the *parasha*:

Group 1: Joseph tells his secret

Group 2: Going down to Egypt

Group 3: Judah speaks up

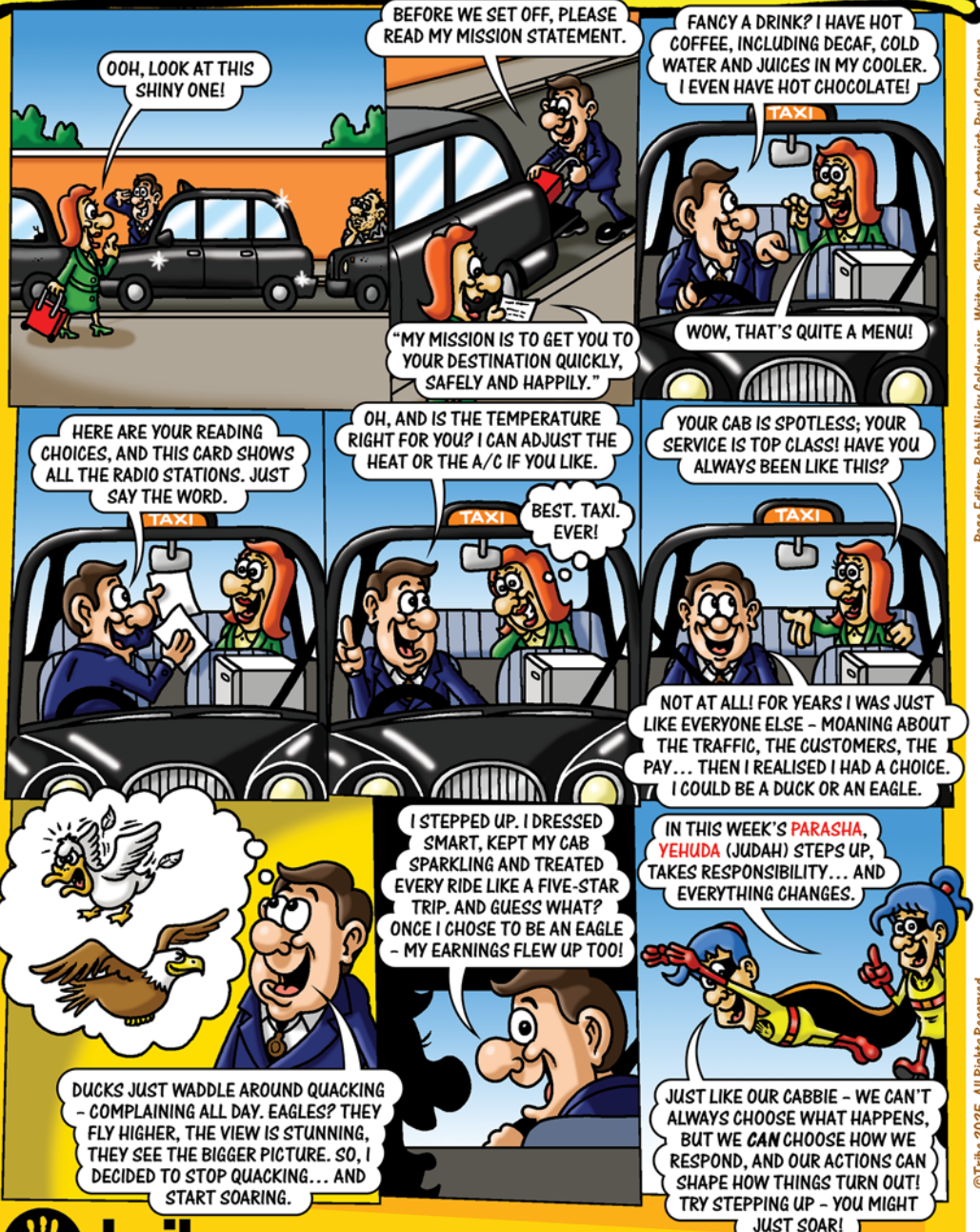
Group 4: Settling in Goshen

1. HUGGING
2. LONG SPEECH
3. BE'ER SHEVA STOP
4. PHARAOH SAYS YES
5. SEVENTY FAMILY MEMBERS
6. PROTECTS BENJAMIN
7. WAGONS
8. BROTHERS SURPRISED
9. BEGS JOSEPH
10. BEST OF THE LAND
11. "I AM JOSEPH!"
12. GOD SAYS "DON'T BE AFRAID"
13. SHEPHERDS
14. OFFERS HIMSELF INSTEAD
15. FAMILY MOVES IN
16. BIG CRYING

Answers: Group A: 1, 8, 11, 16 Group B: 3, 5, 7, 12 Group C: 2, 6, 9, 14 Group D: 4, 10, 13, 15

THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYIGASH: DRIVING CHANGE!



Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Writer: Shira Chalk Cartoonist: Paul Solomons

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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.