

6 DECEMBER 2025 | 16 KISLEV 5786

VOLUME 39 | #13

DAF HASHAVUA

וישלח | VAYISHLACH

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 4.46pm
 Birmingham: 4.50pm
 Bournemouth: 5.00pm
 Cardiff: 5.02pm
 Dublin: 5.04pm
 Edinburgh: 4.42pm
 Glasgow: 4.48pm
 Hull: 4.45pm
 Leeds: 4.44pm
 Liverpool: 4.55pm
 Manchester: 4.49pm
 Nottingham: 4.50pm
 Sheffield: 4.49pm
 Southend: 4.43pm
 Southport: 4.55pm
 Jerusalem: 5.15pm

*"The sun rose for [Yaakov] as he
 moved on from Peniel, limping
 on his thigh"*
(Bereishit 32:32)



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 cancer support service



**וַיִּשְׁלַח
VAYISHLACH**

8th Sidra in:

**בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT**

By Numbers:

**153 VERSES
1,976 WORDS
7,458 LETTERS**

Headlines:

**JACOB IN
THE LAND**

VAYISHLACH:

Artscroll p.170

Hertz p.122

Koren Sacks p.217

Soncino p.195

HAFTARAH:

**(HOSHEA 11:7-12:12,
ACCORDING TO THE
US CUSTOM)**

Artscroll p.1139

Hertz p.135

Koren Sacks p.1441

Soncino p.220

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 32:4-13

Yaakov (Jacob) sends angels to inform his brother Esav (Esau) that he is returning home, after decades away. Yaakov's message offers Esav the chance to make peace, but also conveys Yaakov's own strength (Rashi). The angels return, warning Yaakov that Esav is approaching with 400 men. Yaakov becomes afraid, divides his camp into two and prays to God for survival.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 32:14-30

Yaakov sends copious gifts to Esav, hoping to appease him. That night, Yaakov's family crosses over the Yabok stream. Yaakov is left alone. He is attacked by 'a man', identified by the Midrash as the ministering angel of Esav. They wrestle until dawn. The 'man', unable to defeat Yaakov, nevertheless dislocates Yaakov's hip. The 'man' then tells Yaakov that his name will later change to 'Yisrael' and blesses him.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 32:31-33:5

Yaakov's injury is the source of the prohibition of eating the sciatic nerve of an animal. As Esav approaches, Yaakov bows to him seven times. Esav embraces and kisses Yaakov, and they both weep.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 33:6-33:20

Each person in Yaakov's family bows to Esav. Yaakov successfully urges Esav to accept the gifts that he had sent. Esav suggests that he and Yaakov travel together, but Yaakov politely declines. Esav departs for Seir and Yaakov departs for a place called Succot. Yaakov then travels to Shechem.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 34:1-35:11

Dinah is captured and violated by Shechem the son of Chamor, ruler of the town. Shechem falls

in love with Dinah and asks his father to secure her as his wife, whilst still holding Dinah captive. Yaakov's sons are outraged. Chamor speaks to them, suggesting that their two families unite in marriage, as well as offering them trade and land prospects. Shechem offers a large dowry for Dinah. Yaakov's sons trick Chamor and Shechem – they offer the Israelite girls only if all the town's males are circumcised. Chamor and Shechem agree; all the men of the town circumcise themselves. Three days later, when they are in great pain, Shimon and Levi kill them all, take Dinah back and plunder the town. Yaakov rebukes them.

God appears to Yaakov, telling him to go back to Beit El, where he originally built an altar when escaping from Esav. As the angel had previously foretold, God changes Yaakov's name to Yisrael.

Point to Consider: *Why did Yaakov rebuke Shimon and Levi? (see Rashi to 34:30)*

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 35:12-36:19

Rachel dies whilst giving birth to Binyamin and is buried in Beit Lechem. After Rachel's death, Reuven, Leah's son, moves his father's bed out of Bilhah's tent and into Leah's (Rashi). Yitzchak (Isaac) dies, aged 180. He is buried by Esav and Yaakov. Esav's descendants are listed.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 36:20-36:43

The Torah lists eight Edomite kings and their origins.

HAFTARAH (HOSHEA 11:7-12:12)

The Haftarah, according to the general United Synagogue custom, is taken from the Book of Hoshea. The prophet refers to events in Yaakov's life, including his struggle with the angel. Hoshea encourages the people to learn from Yaakov's responses to the spiritual challenges he faced, so that they can become worthy of being his descendants.



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

FEELING THE FEAR

This essay is adapted from a Covenant & Conversation essay last published in 2022, marking the recent 5th yahrzeit of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at www.rabbisacks.org

When Yaakov (Jacob) heard that his brother Esav (Esau) was coming to meet him with a force of four hundred men, he was terrified. To prepare, he took three actions: He sent Esav a huge gift of cattle and flocks, to make peace with him. He prayed to God. And he prepared for war, dividing his household into two camps, so at least one would survive.

What happens next is one of the most mysterious episodes in the Torah, but also one of the most important; it is the moment that gives the Jewish people its name: Yisrael, meaning someone who "wrestles with God and with men and prevails".

The story of Yonah (Jonah) provides the key...

Alone that night, Yaakov wrestled with a stranger until dawn. It is not clear who the stranger was. One fascinating interpretation is from Rashi's grandson, the Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir, 1085-1158). He sees it as a type-scene, an episode that is repeated in *Tanach* (the Hebrew Bible), because it reminds him of two others: the story of Yonah, and of the time when Moshe (Moses) was on his way back to Egypt... "When they were in the place where they spent the night along the way, God

confronted Moshe and wanted to kill him" (*Shemot* 4:24). Tziporah saved Moshe's life by performing a *brit milah* on their son.

The story of Yonah is key to understanding these stories. When Yonah was told to warn the people of Nineveh that God would destroy their city if they did not repent, he instead fled in a boat to Tarshish, but God brought a storm that threatened to sink the ship. The prophet was thrown into the sea and swallowed by a giant fish that later spat him out alive. Yonah realised that escaping was impossible.

The same, says Rashbam, applies to Moshe who, at the Burning Bush, repeatedly showed he was unwilling to undertake the task God had set him. He was still trying to avoid his mission even after beginning the journey, which is why God was angry with him.

So it was with Yaakov. Rashbam says he was afraid of encountering Esav, despite God's promises. His courage failed him; he was trying to run away. God sent an angel to stop him. Here are three great men, Yaakov, Moshe, and Yonah. All three, teaches

Rashbam, were afraid. Of what? None were cowards. They were afraid, essentially, of their mission.

Moshe kept telling God at the Burning Bush: They won't believe in me; I am not a man of words. Yonah was reluctant to deliver a message from God to *Bnei Yisrael's* enemies. And Yaakov had just said to God, "I am unworthy of all the kindness and faith that You have shown me." (*Bereishit* 32:11) This is not physical fear. It is the fear that comes from a feeling of inadequacy. Sometimes the greatest have the least self-belief, because they know how immense is the responsibility, and how small they feel in relation. Courage does not mean having no fear. It means having fear but overcoming it. That is true of physical courage, and no less true of moral and spiritual courage. To feel fear is fine. To give way to it, is not. For God has faith in us even if, at times, the best lack faith in themselves.





BRINGING SUCCOT INTO CHANUKA

HOW TO SURVIVE THE "EVERYDAY"

BY: **RABBI YOSHI HAMBLING**

Rabbinical Coordinator, KLBD

As the nights draw in and the temperatures drop, Succot seems like a distant memory, and our next Biblical festival – Pesach – has not even crossed the most organised of minds. In this winter "lull", it is the Rabbinic festivals of Chanuka and Purim that loom large.

These festivals can often feel disconnected from the *Chagim* of the Torah, relating to a different stage of Jewish history and impacting our lives in a very different way. Nevertheless, a fascinating relationship between Succot and Chanuka can be perceived which may transform our experience of these cold, "eventless" months.

Rabbi Chaim Kapusi of Cairo (17th century) characterises Succot as the festival on which we celebrate God's love for the Jewish People. Indeed, he argues, this is why Succot was established, to commemorate the *Ananei HaKavod* (Clouds of Glory) that surrounded us in the desert. There was no festival established to commemorate the Manna, a miracle of similar magnitude, and the Manna was ESSENTIAL for our survival. Without this miracle, *Yetziat Mitzrayim* (the Exodus) would have marked the end of our nation rather than its beginning. On the other hand, whilst we would have been more exposed to the harsh realities of the outside world without

them, we could have survived in the desert without the *Ananei HaKavod*. Rather, God only provided them as an expression of his love and care for us as we developed a national relationship with Him.

Chanuka, too, relates to this theme. In his work *Baruch She'amar*, Rabbi Baruch HaLevi Epstein (1860-1941) suggests that there were two such elements to the miraculous events of Chanuka.

By ensuring that we won our unlikely battle with the Syrian Greeks, God ensured that there would be a Jewish future. However, on some level, this was almost a "necessary" miracle, as per the promises God made to the *Avot* (forefathers). Whilst we have endured incredible challenges throughout our history, the Jewish nation as a whole has been promised that we will never be destroyed.

The miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days, however, was an "unnecessary" miracle, the only purpose of which was to symbolise God's closeness to the Jewish People – who were, in turn, seeking to become close to Him through their daily *Avoda* (service) in the *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple).

Rabbi Epstein argues that appreciation of the military victory is much more significant in the eyes of the masses,

whereas only the more spiritually attuned can understand the significance of the oil. Why should this be the case? If we could all appreciate God's love for us on Succot, why should this theme recede into the background on Chanuka?

Perhaps the answer is simple. As we emerge from Yom Kippur, forgiven for all our past shortcomings, God's love for us is obvious. Only a loving God would be willing to overlook our mistakes, allowing us to turn over a new leaf year upon year! But now we find ourselves close to two months into the winter, without any *Chagim* and sometimes God's hand can seem distant.

Enter Chanuka which shows us that God's love for the Jewish People persists each and every day. It is up to us to make the effort to see His Hand in the "messiness" of our daily lives.





CHAI: A VISION FOR HUMANITY

BY: **REBBETZEN LAUREN LEVIN**

South Hampstead Synagogue



Parashat Vayishlach is high impact drama. Each story teaches us key qualities that will shape us into the Jewish people. Jacob wrestles with an angel, faces his fears and meets his brother Esau, Dina is raped, Shimon and Levi take revenge, Benjamin is born and Isaac and Rachel die. Amidst all this, there is one line that appears totally insignificant both to the narrative in *Bereishit* and our national story:

"Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and was buried under the oak below Bethel; so it was named Alon-bachut.¹"

The sages explain that Jacob's return to the land of Canaan was poignant. He had not been there when his mother Rebekah passed away. But he was comforted that throughout her life, she did have support: Deborah. He went to mourn for both his mother and her nurse together, at the '*Alon bachut*', the tree of weeping².

We have only heard of Deborah the nurse once before. When Rebekah made the courageous decision to travel into the unknown and leave her home to marry Isaac the Torah says: *"So they sent off their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his*

entourage.³" However strong Rebekah was, she could not achieve her goals alone. The appearance of Deborah the nurse at the beginning of Rebekah's journey into the land of Canaan and at the moment Jacob marks her passing creates a literary sort of bookends. It reminds us of the critical importance of having a support system. This may be less action packed and glamorous than some of our other narrative but the Torah carefully chooses to insert it here to convey that it is no less important.

All the way back in the Garden of Eden, God declared, "it is not good for man to be alone"⁴. And yet here in *Parashat Vayishlach*, the protagonist Jacob is attacked when he is at his most vulnerable, when "Jacob remained alone". Deborah represents the antithesis of loneliness, which is the nemesis of humanity. This is an intrinsic part of our national

story – providing support is in our DNA.

Chai Cancer Care is the 'Deborah of Anglo Jewry.' Just over the last year, Chai has provided support to 1068 new clients, supporting up to four generations of a family. Their strapline of 'together we can cope' is not only words, but a mantra that their incredibly dedicated team live by. Louise Hager's vision and commitment to Chai over the last 35 years has enabled the provision of over 70 services today. Chai's impact is felt across Anglo Jewry. Like Deborah, they are often in the background. But their support to all those warriors battling cancer is critical. It is the response to God's call in the Garden of Eden that "it is not good for man to be alone". As an organisation that does not charge, this weekend is our opportunity to show our gratitude.



¹ 35:8.

² See Rabeinu Bechaye

³ 24:59

⁴ *Bereishit* 2:18

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY'S DEDICATED CANCER SUPPORT SERVICE



CHAI SHABBAT
5th & 6th December 2025

59,926
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has provided
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individual
appointments
over the year

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up to
4
generations
of a family

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has provided
support to
1,068
new clients

Chai does
not charge
for services

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visit **chaicancercare.org** today.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYISHLACH

5-6 DECEMBER | 16 KISLEV

PRIDE, HUMILITY AND THE GOLDEN MEAN

BY: **THE TRIBE TEAM**

In 1952, after President Chaim Weizmann died, Israel quietly asked Albert Einstein to become its next president. Einstein, the world's most famous scientist and a proud Jew, declined with striking honesty. He wrote that he was "deeply moved" yet lacked "the natural aptitude and the experience to deal properly with people," and that advancing age had weakened his strength. It was a lesson in humility from a giant who knew his limits.

Yaakov (Jacob) models the same spirit as he prepares to meet Esav (Esau). He prays, "I have been diminished by all the kindnesses and by the truth that You have done with Your servant." Rashi (1040-1105) reads this as Yaakov feeling unworthy, worried that past

blessings may have spent his merit. Humility here is not insecurity. It is clarity about the Source of success and about our dependence on God.

The Rambam (1138-1204) often teaches the Golden Mean, which is the practice of shaping character between harmful extremes. Courage stands between cowardice and recklessness. Generosity stands between stinginess and waste. With pride, however, the Rambam advises leaning further toward humility, because arrogance so easily distorts our relationship with God and with other people.

Yaakov lived this balance. He prays first and then plans carefully, taking responsibility for the vulnerable in his camp. He sends gifts to repair the past and addresses Esav as "my lord" while calling himself "your servant."

He bows seven times, meets his brother face to face, and speaks gently. He urges Esav to "please take my blessing," which quietly returns what he once took. He declines Esav's armed escort and chooses to travel at the pace of the children and the flocks. He builds an altar to thank God, and later removes foreign gods from his household before going up to Beit El. This is humility as steady leadership, not as self-erasure.

Public life today needs that combination of strength and modesty. Share credit. Speak firmly without contempt. Thank those who helped. Pray before and after you act, so the story you tell yourself stays true. Pride asks: what do I deserve? Humility asks: what have I received, and how can I use it to heal? Yaakov chooses the second question and walks toward his brother with that answer.

Parasha Word Scramble

How many of these *parasha*-related words can you unscramble?

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. OVAKYA | 9. GSSEINBL |
| 2. ESVA | 10. AACBNEL |
| 3. TYIHUMLI | 11. ESHTGRTN |
| 4. EIDPR | 12. ODSEMTY |
| 5. AMRBAM | 13. ESIEHLPDAR |
| 6. GRCOAEU | 14. ARLAT |
| 7. SYNEIORTEG | 15. IGFTS |
| 8. RPAYRE | 16. NAITIRNCEIOLOC |

Answers: 1. Yaakov 2. Esav 3. Humility 4. Pride 5. Rambam 6. Courage 7. Generosity 8. Prayer 9. Blessing 10. Balance 11. Strength 12. Modesty 13. Leadership 14. Altar 15. Gifts 16. Reconciliation





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYISHLACH: SLAM DUNK!

IN THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA, YAAKOV** (JACOB) WRESTLES WITH AN ANGEL ALL NIGHT AND WON'T GO UNTIL HE GETS A BLESSING!

SOUNDS FAMILIAR? MEET **TAMIR GOODMAN**. HE WRESTLED WITH PRESSURE, INJURIES, AND BIG CHOICES, BUT HELD TIGHT TO HIS FAITH... AND CAME OUT A WINNER.

Tamir Goodman AKA the Jewish Jordan, grew up in **Baltimore** and loved basketball more than anything!



BASKETBALL IS NOT JUST A GAME FOR ME - IT'S MY LIFE! I'LL PLAY BIG ONE DAY - BUT NEVER ON **SHABBAT**!

I'M GOING TO KEEP AT IT UNTIL I GO PRO! I'LL PLAY FOR MY TEAM AND FOR **GOD**. MY MISSION IS TO MAKE **GOD** PROUD THROUGH THE GAME.



WE'RE BEHIND YOU ALL THE WAY!

THAT WAS BRUTAL. I'M DONE!



THEN YOU'VE GOT TWO CHOICES, KID! GIVE UP... OR GET UP!

GUESS WHICH ONE HE PICKED.

WOW! THE **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**! MY DREAM TEAM! ONE THING, THOUGH... I DON'T PLAY ON **SHABBAT**.



OH... YOU CAN'T CHANGE THAT? THEN I GUESS **GOD'S** GOT A DIFFERENT TEAM FOR ME.

TOWSON U CHANGED THEIR SCHEDULE SO YOU CAN PLAY - NO GAMES ON **SHABBAT**! WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



WOW, THANKS COACH! TALK ABOUT TEAMWORK.

DOESN'T BEING **JEWISH** MAKE IT HARDER TO BE AN ATHLETE?



NO WAY! **JUDAISM** IS MY TRAINING. IT TEACHES ME DISCIPLINE, TEAMWORK AND BOUNCING BACK. THAT'S HOW YOU WIN - ON THE COURT AND OFF!

I WAS LIVING THE DREAM, PLAYING PRO BASKETBALL IN **ISRAEL**. WHEN I GOT INJURED, I THOUGHT IT WAS GAME OVER. BUT **GOD** WAS JUST CHANGING MY POSITION. NOW I'M A COACH, A HUSBAND, A DAD - STILL PLAYING FOR TEAM **GOD**, BUT WEARING A NEW JERSEY.



TODAY I COACH KIDS, INVENT COOL BASKETBALL GEAR, AND HELP FANS TO PLAY, CONNECT, AND WIN. MY BOOK, **LIVE YOUR DREAM**, SHOWS THAT YOUR CHALLENGES CAN BE YOUR SUPERPOWERS.



NEXT TIME LIFE THROWS YOU A TOUGH MATCH, DON'T QUIT - THINK OF **TAMIR**, AND SCORE ONE FOR **GOD'S** TEAM!



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.