

7 MARCH 2026 | 18 ADAR 5786

VOLUME 39 | #26

DAF HASHAVUA

כִּי תִשָּׂא | KITISA

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 6.38pm
 Birmingham: 6.45pm
 Bournemouth: 6.48pm
 Cardiff: 6.53pm
 Dublin: 7.02pm
 Edinburgh: 6.51pm
 Glasgow: 6.56pm
 Hull: 6.43pm
 Leeds: 6.43pm
 Liverpool: 6.52pm
 Manchester: 6.47pm
 Nottingham: 6.45pm
 Sheffield: 6.47pm
 Southend: 6.32pm
 Southport: 6.53pm
 Jerusalem: 6.18pm

Shabbat Parah



"You shall observe my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you for your generations, to know that I am God, Who makes you holy"
(Shemot 31:13)

כִּי תִשָּׂא
KI TISA

9th Sidra in:
שְׁמוֹת
SHEMOT

By Numbers:
139 VERSES
2,002 WORDS
7,424 LETTERS

Headlines:
**THE GOLDEN CALF
AND AFTERMATH**

KI TISA:
Artscroll p.484
Hertz p.352
Koren Sacks p.581
Soncino p.540

MAFTIR (PARAH):
Artscroll p.838
Hertz p.652
Koren Sacks p.1003
Soncino p.898

HAFTARAH (PARAH):
Artscroll p.1216
Hertz p.999
Koren Sacks p.1663
Soncino p.1194

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – SHEMOT 30:11-31:17
God instructs Moshe (Moses) to take a census. Instead of counting people, each man over 20 will give a half-shekel coin towards the construction of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle); the census will be based on the money collected.

God instructs Moshe to make a copper washing basin (*kiyor*) for the *Kohanim*. Moshe is to make anointing oil to anoint Aharon, his sons, and the vessels of the *Mishkan*. God tells Moshe to make incense (*ketoret*) from specific spices, to be offered twice daily. God designates Betzalel to supervise the construction of the *Mishkan* and tells Moshe to again instruct the people about keeping Shabbat.

Point to Consider: *Why is the mitzvah to keep Shabbat restated specifically here? (see Rashi to 31:13)*

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 31:18-33:11
According to Rashi, the narrative moves back in time to the aftermath of the giving of the Torah. Moshe has been on Mount Sinai for 40 days. The people calculate that Moshe is late returning. Fearing he is dead, they decide to fashion and worship a golden calf (see Rashi). God threatens to wipe out the nation, but Moshe successfully pleads with Him to relent. When Moshe sees the calf, he throws down and breaks the two stone Tablets (*Luchot*). Moshe burns the calf and instructs the tribe of Levi to kill the sinners. Moshe asks God to forgive the nation. God responds that He will no longer lead the people; an angel will lead them through the desert instead.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 33:12-16
Moshe appeals to God to directly ‘accompany’ the nation and requests that Israel retain a special status. God agrees to both requests (Rashi).

4TH ALIYA (REVI’I) – 33:17-23
Moshe asks God to show him a vision of His divine majesty. God responds that no mortal can see a ‘full view’ and live, but He will show Moshe a glimpse of His presence.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 34:1-9
God instructs Moshe to carve a new set of Tablets, containing the same words as the first set. Moshe ascends Mount Sinai with the new Tablets. God appears to Moshe and teaches him the 13 Attributes of Mercy. Moshe appeals to God to bestow His full guidance and protection upon Israel.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 34:10-26
God tells Moshe that He is making a covenant with the people. After entering the Land of Israel, they must not follow the idolatrous ways of the Canaanite nations. The mitzvah of coming to the Temple with an offering for the three festivals (Pesach, Shavuot and Succot) is restated, as well as the mitzvah to redeem a firstborn male child (*pidyon ha’ben*) and not to mix meat and milk.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI’I) – 34:27-35
Moshe descends with the new Tablets, his face radiating with light. He has to cover his face with a mask when speaking to the people.

MAFTIR (BEMIDBAR 19:1-22)
The special reading for parashat Parah is taken from the beginning of parashat Chukat, in which God instructed Moshe and Aharon how to purify someone who had come into contact with a human corpse. This involved slaughtering an unblemished red heifer (*Parah Adumah*) and mixing its ashes with water.

HAFTARAH (YEchezkel 36:16-38)
The prophet Yechezkel (Ezekiel) admonishes the nation for worshipping idols and desecrating God’s Name. However, God will purify us, giving us a ‘new heart’ and returning us to the Land.



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DIVINE DESIGN

BY: **RABBI TOBY WEINIGER**

Hadley Wood Jewish Community

When God announces Betzalel as the 'designer' of the artefacts of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) to Moshe (Moses), he does so with an unusual introduction: **ראה** – "see, I have called by name, Betzalel...I have filled him with a divine spirit, with understanding, with knowledge and with all craftsmanship (*Shemot* 31:2-3). Moshe uses similar wording in next week's sidra, *Vayakhel*, to introduce Betzalel to the people. God does not merely announce an appointment. He asks the people to look, to reflect, and to understand. This choice of language demands explanation.

The Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, 1816-1893) addresses this directly. What, precisely, does God, then Moshe, want the people to grasp?

The Netziv explains that Moshe was drawing attention to the unique nature of the *Mishkan*. A royal palace, however grand, is fundamentally a mundane structure. Its construction depends on human expertise, and anyone who has acquired the necessary

knowledge and skill can build it successfully. The *Mishkan*, however, was different. Like the Torah, which could only be transmitted through Moshe, and the priesthood, which could only be conveyed through Aharon, the *Mishkan* could only be brought into existence through an individual imbued with divine inspiration, not necessarily by someone who was an expert in the field of architecture.

Yet this comparison is striking and demands further thought¹. The *Mishkan* is a physical structure, fashioned from gold, wood and fabric. Why should its construction require the same exclusive, divinely-mediated process as the transmission of Torah or the priesthood itself?

The answer lies in what the *Mishkan* represents. It embodied a radical Jewish idea: that God can be encountered within human action, creativity and disciplined work. This is why only the one designated by God, imbued with the divine spirit, could be the master craftsman.

This idea, of divine spirit resting on the making of the *Mishkan*, and within the *Mishkan* itself, reaches far beyond the desert. The majestic appointment of Betzalel teaches that architecture too can be holy.

Judaism teaches that there is a Jewish way to act in every area of life. Our professions are not value-neutral spaces, but moral arenas, in which honesty, integrity and compassion must shape the choices we make and the way we treat those around us. Our leisure and recreation are no less significant. And how we respond to pressure, how we manage frustration, and how we treat competitors all speak to who we are and what we value. Whether on the football pitch or in the boardroom, Jewish values are meant to guide not only what we do but how we do it.

When human creativity is guided by divine values, the physical itself can become a home for the sacred. The *Mishkan* reminds us that holiness can be built into the structures of our lives every single day.

¹ Heard first from a *derasha* by Rabbi Michael Laitner at Finchley Synagogue in March 2021, quoting Rabbi Chaim Brovender.



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HAGGADAH INSIGHTS - PART 1

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

BY: **DAVID FREI**

US Director of External and Legal Services and Registrar of the London Beth Din

What is the connection between the opening and closing sections of the Haggadah?

The answer is that they were both composed by Frenchmen.

The opening section is a short Hebrew poem, which we encourage the children to recite, comprising the 15 stages of the Seder which we are about to commence.

The number 15 symbolises spiritual growth and corresponds to the 15 steps in the Holy Temple, often accompanied by the 15 "Songs of Ascent"; it corresponds to the *gematria* (numerical value) of one of God's names (*Y-ah*) and to the 15 verses of *Dayenu*, itself a spiritual - and physical - progression from slavery in Egypt to the service of God in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Reciting these 15 stages of the Seder at its outset reminds us that we, too, are setting out on a spiritual journey.

The first stage, *Kadesh*, refers to kiddush - over the first cup of wine - proceeds to *Urchatz* - the washing of hands prior to the subsequent *Karpas*, dipping of the vegetable in salt water - then to *Yachatz*, the splitting of the middle matzah - followed by *Maggid*, the longest section of the Haggadah, in which we recite the tale of the exodus from Egypt.

We then reach the specific items eaten on this night, starting with *Rachatz* - washing for matzah - and

then *Motzi Matzah* - a reference to both *berachot*, blessings, made before eating the matzah - followed by *Maror* - bitter herbs - and *Korech* - the Hillel sandwich.

At this point we eat the meal, *Shulchan Orech*, followed by *Tzafun* - the eating of the Afikoman - before *Barech*, Grace After Meals.

Hallel - praises of the Almighty - is followed by *Nirtza*, which will be explained below.

This poem was reputedly composed by Rabbi Samuel of Falaise, a 13th century Tosafist, also known as Sir Morel, who was associated with the towns of Chateau Thierry and Falaise (the Normandy birthplace of William the Conqueror).

Rabbi Samuel was also one of the four defenders of the Talmud in the famous Disputation of Paris in 1240.

The main part of the Haggadah ends with *Nirtza*, which means 'pleasing'. *Nirtza*, which begins with the words '*Chasal siddur Pesach kehilchato*' is a prayer that God will be pleased with our conduct of the Seder, deeming us to have fulfilled all the obligations of the night in accordance with *halacha*, and that we should merit the celebration of the Seder in a rebuilt Jerusalem.

This poem was written by Joseph Bonfils as the conclusion of his lengthy liturgical poem still read in many synagogues today on Shabbat HaGadol, the Shabbat before Pesach. In this poem, he

“ Reciting these 15 stages of the Seder at its outset reminds us that we, too, are setting out on a spiritual journey.

sets out in verse all the laws of preparing for Pesach and the rules of the Seder.

Rabbi Yosef Tov Elem (Bonfils) lived in the 11th century and is associated with the French city of Narbonne.

The aforementioned Rabbi Samuel of Falaise wrote a commentary on the Halachic rulings summarised in Rabbi Tov Elem's poem, thus further connecting the end of the Haggadah to its introduction.

Many versions of the Haggadah end at this point, but Ashkenazi communities have developed the lovely tradition of ending with a group of songs like *Adir Hu* and *Chad Gadya* and a big favourite amongst children - *Echad Mi Yode'a*, Who knows One.





SEFER YESHAYAHU (ISAIAH) – PART 7

YESHAYAHU'S WORLD VIEW

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and US Educator

Last time, we discussed how Yeshayahu (Isaiah) spoke out against the preparations for battle with the Assyrians, repeatedly urging Chizkiyahu (King Hezekiah) to sit back and trust in God. Similar messages were given to the previous king, Achaz, whom the prophet also urged to neither rebel nor to surrender. Considering the wider context, we can imagine the immense pressure the kings would have been under. The people wanted them to take action to protect their kingdom, making it very difficult for them to listen to the prophet's advice.

It is important to understand that Yeshayahu is not simply focused on international politics. He was also speaking out against the prevailing ideology of the generation. Despite Chizkiyahu's extensive religious reforms, the people were still not fulfilling the Torah commandments to create a society of *Tzedek u'mishpat* (justice and righteousness). The preparations for war exacerbated this problem. For example, they tore down houses to build a wall around Jerusalem, leaving fellow Jews homeless (*Yeshayahu* 22:9-11).

Ahead of battle, we might imagine them focusing on prayer or improving acts of charity to gain Divine favour. Instead, they

partied, stating: "Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (*ibid.* 12-14). The idea that the people were drinking and feasting, rather than helping each other or turning to God is a shock, especially when we consider that they were ruled by Chizkiyahu - a righteous king. Clearly, the king's reforms only went so far.

The king had reinstated a true Temple service and had rid the land of idolatry. After these spiritual reforms, Chizkiyahu worked hard to physically prepare the city for war. He ensured a water supply and built a strong wall. However, this distracted him from other elements of his rule, which allowed corruption and exploitation to reign free. For example, Chizkiyahu's senior governor, Shebna, is criticised by Yeshayahu for commissioning his own grand tomb in the royal cemetery. He uses public resources for his own selfish desires (see *Yeshayahu*, chapter 22).

Yeshayahu is a tragic figure. He spends his lengthy prophetic career urging four different kings to "direct their powers inward and not outward, to focus on the moral state of their own people, and not on Yehuda's (Judah's) prestige in the eyes of surrounding nations".¹ While Jerusalem ultimately survives, the towns and

“ The message of *Sefer Yeshayahu* up until now is two-fold. Firstly, we must create a society of *Tzedek u'mishpat* (justice and righteousness). Secondly, we must trust in God and serve Him properly.

villages of Yehuda are violently destroyed by the Assyrian army, leaving the holy city impoverished.

The message of *Sefer Yeshayahu* up until now is two-fold. Firstly, we must create a society of *Tzedek u'mishpat* (justice and righteousness). In fact, this phrase appears over ten times in the book, always as a standard for human leadership. Secondly, we must trust in God and serve Him properly. The prophet repeatedly rebukes an empty service of God, explaining that ritual alone is meaningless unless accompanied with acts of charity and justice. Yeshayahu emphasises that these dual elements are far more important than the international politics of the region. Unfortunately, the people do not manage to internalise this message.

¹ Yoel Bin-Nun and Binyamin Lay, *Isaiah, Prophet of Righteousness and Justice*, p.206.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT KI TISA

6-7 MARCH | 18 ADAR

DO IT WITH FIRE!



BY: **BEN ROSS**

Tribe gap year student

Picture the scene: you're walking down the street, and a guy comes up to you and asks what a 50p coin looks like. You can't believe it, is this guy being for real?! Even with Apple Pay nowadays, how can he not know what a 50p coin looks like?

In this week's *parasha*, this is the exact scene that seems to play out. God gives Moshe (Moses) the mitzvah of *machatzit hashekel*, the half-shekel donation that every Jew needs to give to the *Beit Hamikdash* (the Temple) to pay for communal

offerings (offerings brought on behalf of the whole Jewish People). When giving Moshe this mitzvah to pass on to the Jewish people, the *Midrash* tells us that He showed Moshe "a half-shekel of fire" when explaining the commandment. But why? Surely he knew what a half-shekel coin looked like, and what's this idea of the coin being "made of fire"?

Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Rotenberg-Alter (known as the Chiddushei HaRim, 1799–1866) explains that, by showing Moshe a half-shekel coin made of fire, God was teaching Moshe an essential lesson. Oftentimes, we see *mitzvot* - especially ones that demand us to give of ourselves, for example, our time or our money - as tick-box

exercises. We sometimes view the Torah as a list of 613 things on our to-do list; simply to get the mitzvah done and then move on. But God tells Moshe this mitzvah of donating money to the *Beit Hamikdash* isn't only a donation to leave your bank account and arrive in the Temple's, but rather the half-shekel symbolises that this part is only half of the mitzvah. What's the other half? The fire. To do this mitzvah with excitement, passion - emotion that radiates and warms those around you to excite them too.

The half-shekel of fire teaches us that, on a deeper level, doing every mitzvah robotically isn't enough - to do them properly, we need to do them with fire, with joy, with energy!

Spot the Difference!

See if you can find all 10 differences between these 'half-shekel of fire' scenes!





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

KI TISA: WHISTLE WITH WISDOM!

Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldweir Writer: Shira Chaik Cartoonist: Paul Solomon

MUAHAHA! TSORIS WILL SHOW THEM WHAT REAL REFEREEING LOOKS LIKE. I'LL BLOW THEM AWAY!

TOOOOT!

TAP!

TOOOOT!

DR T! IF YOU BLOW THE WHISTLE ALL THE TIME, HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN SOMETHING IS ACTUALLY SERIOUS?

RIGHT, NO MORE WHISTLING. I'LL STAY COMPLETELY CALM.

SHOVE!

TOOOOT!

HEY! DR T - THAT WAS A CLEAR FOUL! WHERE'S THE WHISTLE!?!

BLOWING THE WHISTLE ISN'T THE PROBLEM - OVERBLOWING IS! STRONG SIGNALS SHOULD BE RARE, NOT EVERYWHERE!

IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHA, MOSHE (MOSES) SEES THE PEOPLE DANCING AROUND THE GOLDEN CALF. THIS IS A HUGE FOUL! A CHAMPIONSHIP-FINAL-LEVEL FOUL! MOSHE SHOWS STRONG ANGER BY BREAKING THE TABLETS - AND GOD AGREES IT WAS THE RIGHT WHISTLE MOMENT.

LATER, WHEN THE PEOPLE ARE THIRSTY AND UPSET, MOSHE GETS ANGRY AGAIN AND HITS THE ROCK. BUT THIS TIME GOD SAYS 'THAT WASN'T THE RIGHT WHISTLE MOMENT.' THEY NEEDED HELP AND CALM, NOT A YELLOW CARD.

WHAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE? MAIMONIDES (1135 - 1204) EXPLAINS THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO NEVER GET ANGRY. BUT SOMETIMES WE NEED TO SHOW ANGER TO GIVE A STRONG MESSAGE AND MAKE IT CLEAR THAT SOMETHING IS REALLY NOT OK.

SO WHEN I'M FUMING, I CAN ASK: IS THIS A CALM DOWN MOMENT, OR IS THIS A WHISTLE MOMENT? LET'S WHISTLE WISELY!



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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.

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