12 DECEMBER 2026 | 2 TEVET 5787 VOLUME 40 | #15

DAF HASHAVUA

מִקֵּץ | MIKEITZ

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 4.45pm
Birmingham: 4.49pm
Bournemouth: 5.00pm
Cardiff: 5.02pm
Dublin: 5.03pm
Edinburgh: 4.41pm
Glasgow: 4.47pm
Hull: 4.44pm
Leeds: 4.43pm
Liverpool: 4.54pm
Manchester: 4.48pm
Nottingham: 4.49pm
Sheffield: 4.49pm
Southend: 4.42pm
Southport: 4.54pm
Jerusalem: 5.16pm

Shabbat Chanukah II



The United Synagogue

"[Pharaoh] fell asleep and dreamt a second time, and behold! seven ears of grain were sprouting on a single stalk – healthy and good" ***(Bereishit 41:5)***

SIDRA BREAKDOWN

מִקֵּץ
MIKEITZ

10th Sidra in:
בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

By Numbers:
146 VERSES
2,022 WORDS
7,914 LETTERS

Headlines:
YOSEF (JOSEPH) RISES TO PROMINENCE

MIKEITZ
Artscroll p.222
Hertz p.155
Koren Sacks p.271
Soncino p.252

MAFTIR (CHANUKAH)
Artscroll p.770
Hertz p.599
Koren Sacks p.917
Soncino p.831

HAFTARAH (CHANUKAH)
Artscroll p.1212
Hertz p.990
Koren Sacks p.1653
Soncino p.1187

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 41:1-14

Pharaoh dreams that he is by the River Nile, from which seven healthy cows emerge. Seven lean cows follow them out of the river and consume them. Pharaoh then dreams about seven good ears of grain on a stalk, which are swallowed up by seven thin ears growing after them. Pharaoh's magicians cannot interpret the dreams satisfactorily. The cupbearer, who had been imprisoned with Yosef, tells Pharaoh that Yosef interprets dreams. Pharaoh summons Yosef from prison.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 41:15-38

Pharaoh relates both dreams to Yosef, who explains that there will be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. He advises Pharaoh to appoint someone to oversee grain storage during the years of plenty.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 41:39-52

Pharaoh appoints Yosef as viceroy of Egypt to implement his economic plan. Pharaoh gives Yosef his ring, dresses him in regal clothes, changes his name and gives him a woman called Asenat to marry. They have two sons, Menashe and Ephraim. Yosef organises mass grain storage during the seven years of plenty.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 41:53-42:18

The famine begins and the Egyptians are starving. Yosef sells them spare provisions. There is also a famine in Cana'an. Yaakov (Jacob) tells his sons, apart from Binyamin, to go to buy food in Egypt. The sons arrive in Egypt. Yosef recognises them but they do not recognise him. Yosef accuses them of spying and imprisons them; they will only be released after one of them goes to fetch Binyamin.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 42:19-43:15

Three days later, Yosef changes the conditions. One of the brothers must stay in prison; the others must go to Cana'an to bring Binyamin. Yosef imprisons Shimon and sends back the brothers with grain in their bags. Yosef also plants money in the bags. During their journey, Levi discovers the money in his bag and fears that Yosef will accuse them of theft (Rashi). The brothers arrive home and tell Yaakov their story. They discover that in fact each one of them has money 'planted' in his bag. Yaakov refuses to let Binyamin go. Yehuda (Judah) persists, guaranteeing Binyamin's safety. Yaakov finally agrees, telling them to take a tribute for Yosef, in addition to the original 'planted money' and payment for the new grain.
Point to Consider: *Why did Yosef specifically choose to imprison Shimon? (see Rashi to 42:24)*

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 43:16-44:17

The brothers arrive in Egypt. Yosef instructs his chamberlain to invite his brothers to come in and eat a meal. Shimon is released. Yosef asks them if Yaakov is still alive. He identifies and blesses Binyamin. Overcome with emotion, Yosef rushes to his room, cries, composes himself, then returns and gives them all food. Yosef orders them to be sent home, but has his own silver goblet 'planted' in Binyamin's sack. Yosef's chamberlain chases after them, accusing them of stealing the goblet. After denying the charge, they find the cup in Binyamin's sack. They return to the palace. Yosef demands that Binyamin remain as his slave, allowing the others to leave. Yehuda says that they will all stay as slaves, not just Binyamin.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – (BEMIDBAR 28:9-15)

The reading for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is taken from parashat Pinchas and details the additional Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh offerings in the Temple.

MAFTIR (BEMIDBAR 7:54-8:4)

The special Maftir reading for Chanukah is taken from parashat Naso, which details the offerings brought by the tribal heads to celebrate the inauguration of the *Mishkan* (portable Sanctuary).

HAFTARAH (I KINGS 7:40-50)

The haftarah for Shabbat Chanukah II describes the great opulence of the furnishings of King Solomon's Temple. There were ten *menorot*, "five on the right and five on the left", which, Rashi adds (v. 49), flanked the original *Menorah* of Moshe which was used in the *Mishkan*.

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A LIMIT TO THE DARKNESS

BY: **RABBI NICK KETT**
Radlett United Synagogue

Parashat Mikeitz begins with one of the great turning points in the story of Yosef (Joseph). For two years, Yosef has remained in prison. At the end of the previous *parasha*, the chief cupbearer had promised to remember him when he returned to Pharaoh's service. Yet the Torah tells us:

"The chief cupbearer did not remember Yosef; he forgot him." (*Bereishit* 40:23).

And then, at the beginning of our *parasha*:

"*Vayehi mikeitz shnatayim yamim* - And it came to pass at the end of two years..." (*Bereishit* 41:1).

Pharaoh dreams. Suddenly, Yosef is remembered. He is brought out of prison, interprets Pharaoh's dreams and is appointed viceroy over Egypt.

The word *Mikeitz* – "at the end" – is significant. Our sages connect it to the verse in *Sefer Iyov* (The book of Job): "*Keitz sam lachoshech* - He has set a limit to darkness" (*Iyov* 28:3).

The Midrash (*Bereishit Rabbah* 89:1) explains that a fixed period was appointed for Yosef to remain in the darkness of prison. When that *keitz* - end - arrived, Pharaoh dreamed, setting Yosef's salvation into motion.

This teaches us a powerful lesson. Darkness is real. It may be painful. We may not know when it will end. But it is not infinite. God has set a limit to darkness.

Perhaps this is also one of the messages of Chanukah. Each night, we add another flame, gradually increasing the light. We do not banish the darkness by pretending it does not exist; we respond to it by bringing more light.

But when Chanukah ends, the chanukiah is put away. The candles go out. The physical light disappears. It then becomes our responsibility to carry that light with us.

This is particularly important when we think about how we support one another through dark times. When someone is experiencing a crisis, bereavement or major life challenge, we are often wonderfully responsive. We visit, bring meals, make phone calls and organise practical help. We surround people with *chesed*, kindness, when they need it most.

But there comes a point when the support begins to fade. The *shiva* ends. The meal rota finishes. Everyone else goes back to their ordinary routine. For the person who has suffered, however, the darkness may not have ended simply because the immediate crisis has passed.

So perhaps we should ask ourselves some questions:

> **"We do not banish the darkness by pretending it does not exist; we respond to it by bringing more light.**

Who has returned to work but is not really ready? Who is going through the first birthday or *Yahrzeit* after a bereavement? Who has become isolated after a difficult experience? Who has stopped coming to shul because life has become too difficult? Who seemed to be coping when everyone was looking, but may now need someone to notice?

"*Keitz sam lachosech*" teaches us that darkness has a limit. But we do not know when that *keitz* will come for another person. Until it does, we can be their light.

We can make the phone call. We can invite them for a meal. We can offer the lift, the practical help or simply the opportunity to talk. We can remember when everyone else has moved on.

Yosef's salvation came suddenly, but his years of darkness were long. Our task is not to know when somebody else's darkness will end. Our task is to make sure that while they are waiting for that light, they do not have to wait alone.

In loving memory of Reuven ben Avraham z"l



SPREAD THE LIGHT

BY: **SHEVI GRUNEWALD**
Education Executive

When it comes to the weekly Haftarah readings, we usually try to find the hidden link between the Haftarah and the *Parasha* of that week or the *Chag* we are celebrating. There is often a deep, thoughtful connection between the two.

On Chanukah we focus on *Pirsumei Nisa*, the mitzvah of publicising the miracle. It is the central theme of what Chanukah is all about and the Haftarah is chosen accordingly. This central theme is so important that when *Rosh Chodesh* coincides with Chanukah and Shabbat, Chanukah trumps Rosh Chodesh and is the Haftarah reading we choose, unlike every other Rosh Chodesh on Shabbat.

On a Chanukah such as this year where there are two Shabbatot, we get to read a Haftarah on this second Shabbat that we do not read very often (the last time was 17 years ago).

The Haftarah comes from *I Melachim*, the first book of Kings, and talks about King Chiram of Tyre making the physical vessels for the first *Beit Hamikdash* (Temple).

At first, it feels a bit disconnected from the essence of Chanukah. Aside from mentioning the gold menorahs, the text reads more like a long list of architectural elements and bronze furnishings rather than a theme related to the Chanukah story. Since *Pirsumei Nisa* (publicising the miracle) takes precedence on Chanukah, reading about bronze pillars and basins is puzzling.

There is an interesting idea from Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (also known as the Beis Halevi, 1820–1892), who points out that the message of Chanukah reaches beyond the Jewish people and speaks to the wider world. King Chiram was a non-Jewish leader who helped significantly toward the building of the *Beit Hamikdash*. In fact, the text tells us that King Shlomo (Solomon) left many of Chiram's brass and golden items unweighed simply because there were too many to count and they were so heavy.

His help stands in total contrast to King Antiochus who, years later, tried to destroy the *Beit Hamikdash* and wipe out Jewish life, as we learn in the Chanukah story.

King Chiram showed his deep respect for the holiness of Judaism and the *Beit Hamikdash*. He also showed how nations can relate to each other and co-exist through respect and partnership instead of aggression.

> **“ This Haftarah also reminds us that our tradition looks forward to a day when all the nations of the world will find inspiration in Jews and Judaism rather than seeking their destruction.**

In a quiet way, Chanukah points toward a future time when the wisdom and light of Judaism will inspire everyone, and people everywhere will come to recognise God in the world.

The Chanukah lights we set up in our homes, shining out onto the streets for all to see today, give us a small taste of that future time. We use our light to illuminate everyone around us and we celebrate the fact that Antiochus failed to put out our light. This Haftarah also reminds us that our tradition looks forward to a day when all the nations of the world will find inspiration in Jews and Judaism rather than seeking their destruction.



In loving memory of Dovid ben Avraham z”l

ISRAEL IN THE PARASHA

This series is an adaptation of short ideas written by former Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits z"l in the 1960s, which were later reprinted in a compilation of his writings, 'Mishnat HaSar'.

MIKEITZ: THE LAND OF ISRAEL AS THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD

Even in this *parasha* and those that follow, where the events take place primarily in Egypt, the focus on the Land of Israel never disappears.

The journey from Canaan to Egypt is repeatedly described as a "descent" (*yeridah*), while the return journey is called an "ascent" (*aliyah*). From the fact that the term *aliyah* is used for travelling to the Holy Land from any other country, our sages concluded that "the Land of Israel is higher than all other lands" (*Kiddushin* 69a). Likewise, the Temple in Jerusalem, to which people "ascend" from elsewhere (*Devarim* 17:8), is considered higher than the rest of the Land.

The Maharsha offers a fascinating explanation. Since the world is spherical, and the Temple Mount, together with the Holy Land surrounding it, forms the centre of the world, it follows that this location is its highest point. Interestingly, this is true even geographically: In the hemisphere that contains the largest concentration of land, as seen in an atlas, the Land of Israel appears at the centre, making it the closest place to the inhabited centre of the earth. The same is true of Jerusalem within the Land of Israel.

This idea is connected to the Talmudic teaching that the Land of Israel was created first, with the rest of the world formed around it (*Ta'anit* 10a). Other sources identify the Temple site as the point from which Creation began (*Bereishit Rabbah* 3:4). All of these approaches emphasise the centrality of the Holy Land within God's design of the universe.

PHRASE OF THE WEEK

X
Y
Z

BY: **RABBI ALEX CHAPPER** | Borehamwood & Elstree United Synagogue

Each week, working our way through the alphabet, we explore a Jewish word or phrase, bringing clarity and deeper understanding to its meaning.

Does ***YASHER KOACH*** mean:

1. Straight strength? | **2.** Well done? | **3.** Good job?

Yasher Koach, based on the term *Yishar kochacha* (see below), literally translates as "straight strength" and is used to mean "well done" or "good job". It is a form of blessing, expressing the wish that the recipient should, as we say, "have continued strength."

It is commonly employed to acknowledge and encourage someone who has performed a *mitzvah* or religious duty. For example, it may be said to someone who received an *aliyah* during the Torah reading in Shul, or to a person who led part of the service.

It reflects the idea in the *Mishnah* (*Pirkei Avot* 4:2) that doing one *mitzvah* leads to another. By saying *Yasher Koach*, we are blessing someone that, having fulfilled one *mitzvah*, they should have the ability and opportunity to continue and do another.

The origin of the term is linked to the episode in the Torah when Moshe (Moses) broke the first set of tablets after discovering the Jewish people worshipping the Golden Calf. The Talmud (*Shabbat* 87a) records God's response as saying, "*Yishar kochecha* - May your strength be true for having broken them."

When said regularly, *Yasher Koach* is often abbreviated to "*Shkoyach*". An appropriate response by the recipient is to say "*Baruch Tihyeh*," meaning "may you be blessed".

It is interesting to note that saying *Yasher Koach* is an Ashkenazi tradition and, as an alternative, Sephardim say "*Chazak u'Baruch* - May you be strong and blessed".



THE FOUNDING OF THE MOSSAD

BY: **RABBI MICHAEL LAITNER**
US Director of Education, Head of Research at the Rabbi Sacks Legacy

When there is no counsel, a people falls, but in the multitude of counsellors there is deliverance. (Mishlei 11:14, the motto of the Mossad)[1]

On 13 December 1949, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion signed an order approving the creation of the Mossad (literally the 'institution'), which has become Israel's famous intelligence agency.

Although significant archive materials remain classified, we can nonetheless paint a limited picture of the Mossad's early activities from those materials in the public domain.

The Mossad did not emerge in a vacuum. Prior to May 1948, the Haganah (pre-state defence forces) had run a successful intelligence agency known by the acronym of Shai (*Sherut Yediot*, Information Service) prior to being disbanded on 30 June 1948. Shai contributed to the defence of Jews and planning for statehood.



Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's signed order approving the creation of the Mossad

To consolidate its position, Israel had to create a coordinated, integrated set of parallel intelligence agencies focusing on internal security, military intelligence and foreign intelligence. This need for centralised, more professionalised coordination explains the longer, formal name of the Mossad (as shown in the first paragraph of Ben Gurion's order) and was the task from July 1948 of its founding director, Reuven Shiloach, which he completed by December 1949.

In the early 1950s, under the leadership of Isser Harel, it began to perform covert and overt work overseas. This included conventional espionage work such as creating relationships with other intelligence agencies and setting up networks of agents for political and military gain.

Uniquely, Mossad also worked to help Jewish communities in distress, especially those suffering Communist persecution in Eastern and Central Europe and oppression in Arab lands and elsewhere. A key Zionist objective was to bring as many of those Jews as possible to safety in Israel, as demonstrated by Mossad's work to bring Jews from Morocco after emigration to Israel from there was forbidden in the early 1950s.

Perhaps its most famous early special operation, which demonstrated significant development beyond its initial scoping, was the audacious abduction in 1960 of the Nazi butcher Adolf Eichmann, from Buenos Aries to Jerusalem, where he would be placed on trial. Successful operations showed existing and potential allies what Israel could achieve, which would be helpful in alleviating the diplomatic isolation from which Israel too often suffered.

As with every country, Israel's intelligence agencies did not solely experience success; a ring of agents was discovered in Egypt during the 1950s, for example, and ruthlessly eliminated by Egyptian authorities. This was a chastening and painful blow.

Today, the Mossad defines its purpose as, "*dedicated to gathering strategic and operational intelligence to promote stability in the Middle East and worldwide…to support the strategic objectives of Israel and its allies.*" It also pays tribute to its exceptional people who, "*are at the heart and soul of the Mossad's family.*"

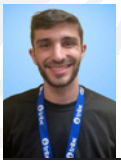
The final words of this purpose statement make the Mossad's motto especially fitting, both for its biblical source and its meaning. Its emblem, which shows the motto surrounding the Menorah depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome, also symbolises, with God's help, the restoration of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel centuries after the Roman exile. Israel and its allies owe immense gratitude to the Mossad's courageous and resourceful operatives.

[1] See the Mossad's official history page at www.mossad.gov.il/en/history for more background to this article.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT MIKEITZ 11-12 DECEMBER | 2 TEVET

EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON



BY: **YEHUDA JACOBSON**

Tribe Community Youth Worker

There is a story told about King David that teaches us a powerful lesson about this week's *parasha*.

When David was young, he worked as a shepherd. He would spend his days appreciating the beautiful world God had created and thanking Him for everything. But there was one thing he could never understand: spiders. Why had God created these tiny creatures that spent their time weaving webs on trees? Surely everything He creates must have a purpose, but what was theirs?

Years later, David found himself running for his life. King Shaul (Saul), who had once loved David like a son, had turned against him and was determined to capture him. David fled into the desert and found a cave to hide in. But the cave was shallow, and anyone passing by would easily spot him.

As Shaul and his men approached, David desperately prayed to God for help. Suddenly, a spider appeared and began weaving a web across the entrance to the cave. When Shaul's men saw the web, they assumed nobody could have entered the cave without breaking it, and they moved on.

David finally understood. Even the smallest creature, whose purpose he had never understood, had a role to play.

We learn a similar lesson in *Parashat Mikeitz*. Last week, we read about Yosef (Joseph), a righteous man who endured terrible hardships. He was thrown into a pit, sold into slavery and imprisoned. At the time, it must have seemed as though everything was going wrong. But in this week's *parasha*, we begin to see the bigger picture. Yosef rises to become a powerful leader in Egypt and saves his family from hunger. Even the painful experiences that brought him there played a part in God's plan.

The same applies to our lives. Sometimes, we go through things we cannot understand. We may wonder why certain things happen to us, or struggle to see the bigger picture. But just as David discovered and Yosef demonstrated, we must remember that there may be a purpose we cannot yet see.

That belief gives us hope for the future and faith that, even when things seem difficult, there is a bigger picture.

Shabbat Shalom!

Parasha Wordsearch

Find these words in the grid. The words can go in any direction and can share letters as they cross over each other.

T	B	W	N	E	H	S	A	N	E	M	H	A
A	E	V	L	I	B	J	L	S	S	T	T	D
F	V	L	G	G	M	N	H	E	K	Z	Q	O
Q	R	B	B	I	T	A	Y	V	R	K	N	N
U	Z	O	M	O	T	M	Y	E	X	F	V	C
B	F	N	N	I	G	A	E	N	Z	L	L	H
V	A	A	W	R	A	R	X	S	I	M	A	P
M	M	F	T	J	E	R	E	C	V	B	F	F
O	I	A	I	C	P	V	H	V	C	R	M	U
V	N	T	E	I	O	P	O	P	L	Y	V	O
X	E	N	M	R	J	W	X	G	E	I	L	K
W	H	W	P	A	D	Y	S	W	C	E	S	V
S	E	S	W	O	C	N	A	E	L	G	W	L

DREAM
FAT COWS
SILVER GOBLET
LEAN COWS
GOVERNOR
MENASHE
EPHRAIM
FAMINE
SEVEN
BINYAMIN



THE BOOK OF JUDGES: PART TWO

THE TRIBE SCRIBE

The Guardians of God's Ways!



Writer: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Cartoonist: Paul Solomons

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