בס"ד

5 DECEMBER 2026 | 25 KISLEV 5787 VOLUME 40 | #14

DAF HASHAVUA

וַיֵּשֶׁב | VAYEISHEV



SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 4.46pm
Birmingham: 4.50pm
Bournemouth: 5.00pm
Cardiff: 5.03pm
Dublin: 5.04pm
Edinburgh: 4.43pm
Glasgow: 4.49pm
Hull: 4.45pm
Leeds: 4.44pm
Liverpool: 4.55pm
Manchester: 4.49pm
Nottingham: 4.50pm
Sheffield: 4.50pm
Southend: 4.43pm
Southport: 4.56pm
Jerusalem: 5.15pm

Shabbat Chanukah I

Shabbat Mevarechim

Rosh Chodesh Tevet is on Thursday and Friday

The United Synagogue

SIDRA BREAKDOWN

וַיֵּשֶׁב
VAYEISHEV

9th Sidra in:
בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

By Numbers:
112 VERSES
1,558 WORDS
5,972 LETTERS

Headlines:
JOSEPH'S DREAMS AND BEING SOLD INTO SLAVERY

VAYEISHEV:
Artscroll p.198
Hertz p.141
Koren Sacks p.249
Soncino p.229

MAFTIR (CHANUKAH)
Artscroll p.764
Hertz p.596
Koren Sacks p.909
Soncino p.826

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll: p.1210
Hertz: p.987
Koren Sacks: p.1649
Soncino: p.857

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 37:1-11
Yaakov (Jacob) settles in the Land of Cana'an (later Israel). Yosef (Joseph) brings negative reports to his father about the sons of Leah, his half-brothers (Rashi). Yaakov makes a woollen tunic for Yosef, his favourite son. Yosef's brothers become jealous. Yosef has a dream in which all 12 brothers are binding sheaves in the field. The brothers' sheaves gather around Yosef's sheaf and bow to it. This increases their hatred. Yosef has another dream; the sun and moon and 11 stars bow to him. He relates this to his brothers and to Yaakov, who rebukes him.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 37:12-22
Yosef's brothers shepherd Yaakov's flock. Yaakov sends Yosef to meet them. His brothers plot to kill him. Reuven dissuades them, advising them to throw Yosef in a pit, but not to kill him. Reuven plans to rescue Yosef and return him to his father.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 37:23-36
Yosef's brothers remove his tunic and throw him in the pit. They see a caravan of merchants approaching. Yehuda (Judah) suggests selling Yosef to the merchants. Yosef is sold on repeatedly (Rashi), eventually arriving in Egypt. The brothers dip the tunic in the blood of a slaughtered goat and show it to Yaakov, who concludes that Yosef was killed by an animal.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 38:1-30
Yehuda has three sons – Er, Onan and Shela. Er marries Tamar, but is killed by God. Yehuda instructs Onan to marry Tamar. Onan also dies. Sometime later, Yehuda's wife dies. Tamar disguises herself and approaches Yehuda at a crossroads. Unaware of her identity, he consorts with her, for the wage of two kid goats. He leaves her his ring, coat and staff as surety. Yehuda sends a friend to take the payment to the unidentified woman but he does not find her. Yehuda is later told that Tamar is pregnant and orders her to be put to death. As she is taken out, she declares that the owner of the surety is the father. Yehuda recognises the objects and admits his role. Tamar is spared and gives birth to twins, Peretz and Zerach.
Point to Consider: *Why did Yehuda not instruct Shela to marry Tamar after the death of Onan? (see Rashi to 38:11)*

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 39:1-6
Yosef is sold to Potiphar, the Chamberlain of the Butchers. Yosef is very successful and Potiphar places him in charge of his household.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 39:7-23
Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Yosef, who rejects her advances. One day they are alone in the house. She tries again and catches his garment; he runs away. With Yosef's garment in her hand, she summons her household, shows them his garment and accuses Yosef of attempting to seduce her. Potiphar imprisons Yosef, who earns the trust of the chief prison officer.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 40:1-23
Pharaoh's baker and butler transgress against Pharaoh and are sent to the same prison as Yosef. Each one has a dream, which Yosef interprets: both will be taken out of prison in three days – the baker to be hanged and the butler to be restored to his post. Yosef asks the butler to mention his plight to Pharaoh, but he forgets to do so.

MAFTIR (BEMIDBAR 7:1-17)
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 FOR SHABBAT CHANUKAH I (ZECHARIA 2:14-4:7)
Yehoshua (Joshua) was the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) at the time of the inauguration of the second Temple. The prophet Zecharia describes an angel warning Yehoshua to listen to God's laws and perform the Temple services properly. The angel shows Yehoshua a Menorah with olive trees on either side of it, symbolising prosperity and spirituality.

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THE STORY IS NOT YET FINISHED

BY: **RABBI BARRY LERER**
Central Synagogue

Parashat Vayeishev contains one of the most famous and perhaps most painful episodes in the Torah.

Yosef (Joseph) is betrayed by his own brothers, who, driven by jealousy and resentment, strip him of his special coat, throw him into a pit and ultimately sell him into slavery. They then deceive their father into believing that Yosef has been killed by a wild animal.

For Yosef, everything appears to be falling apart. After that betrayal, he is taken far from home and falsely accused and eventually imprisoned in Egypt.

Yet, with the benefit of hindsight, we know something Yosef could not possibly have known at the time. This apparent disaster is the beginning of a remarkable journey. From prison he will rise to the palace, becoming the leader who ultimately saves Egypt and his own family, ensuring the survival of the Jewish people.

And what we can learn from here is a profound lesson about perspective.

Very often, we judge events while we are still in the middle of the story. We experience a setback or challenge and immediately conclude that something has gone terribly wrong. But life rarely reveals its full meaning in the moment. Sometimes only years later can we look back and understand how a difficult chapter actually helped shape our future.

That message feels especially relevant today. The Jewish world continues to face enormous challenges and uncertainty with rising antisemitism and hostility towards Israel. At times, it can feel as though we are living through a chapter whose ending remains hidden from view.

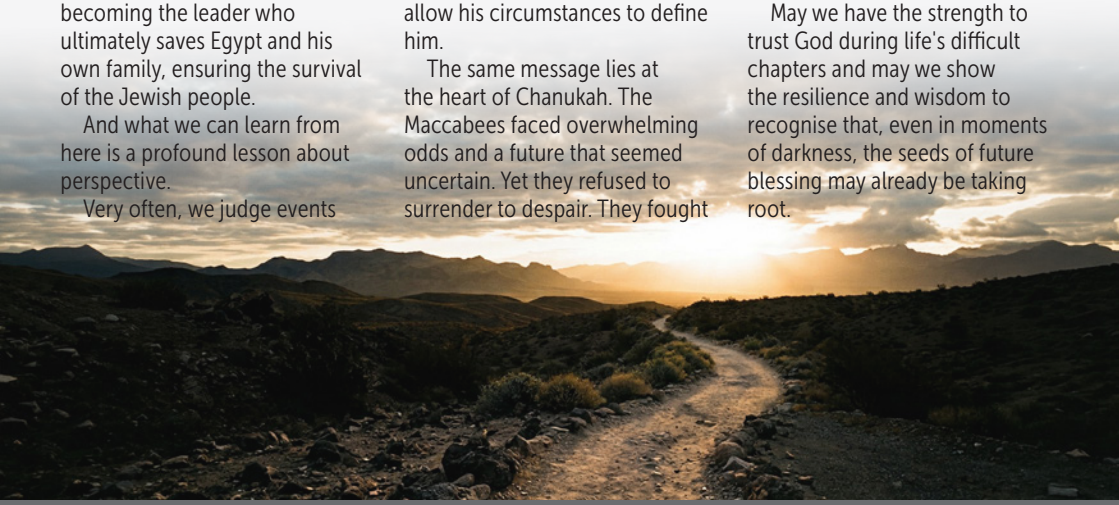
But the story of Yosef reminds us that we must never mistake the current chapter for the entire book. Despite everything he experiences, Yosef refuses to allow his circumstances to define him.

The same message lies at the heart of Chanukah. The Maccabees faced overwhelming odds and a future that seemed uncertain. Yet they refused to surrender to despair. They fought a war to defend the Jewish way of life, then lit a small flame. That flame became a symbol of Jewish resilience for generations.

> “ **Sometimes only years later can we look back and understand how a difficult chapter actually helped shape our future.**

Parashat Vayeishev and Chanukah remind us that not every pit is the end of the story. Sometimes it is the beginning of a journey whose purpose we cannot yet see. Like Yosef, and like the Maccabees, we may not always understand God's plan in the moment. But we can continue forward with faith, courage and hope.

May we have the strength to trust God during life's difficult chapters and may we show the resilience and wisdom to recognise that, even in moments of darkness, the seeds of future blessing may already be taking root.



In loving memory of Chaim ben Moshe Bentzion z”l



BONDI: ONE YEAR ON

BY: **RABBI DR BENJAMIN ELTON**
Senior Rabbi, The Great Synagogue, Sydney, Australia

At around 7pm on 14 December 2025 I was driving back from a wedding I had conducted a couple of hours' drive out of Sydney. I was looking forward to being back home in time to light candles for the first night of Chanukah with my wife and children. At about that time, a local Jewish WhatsApp group I belong to was overwhelmed with messages as news seeped out of an attack on the edge of Bondi Beach. Chabad of Bondi were holding their annual public Chanukah lighting and celebration, when a father and son started shooting into the crowd, killing 15 people including a ten-year-old girl, injuring many others and traumatising far more.

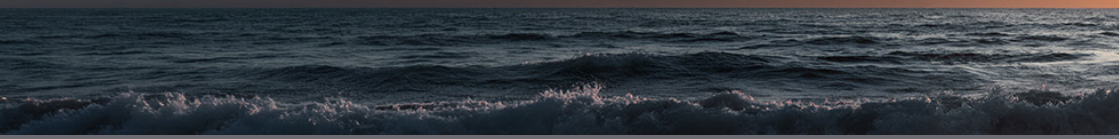
My family were at a similar event a short drive away. At one point rumours spread on the WhatsApp group that there was a shooter at that location too, and I couldn't make contact with my wife. For a few minutes I did not know what I was coming home to, on a personal as well as a communal level.

As it was, they were taking shelter behind a fairground ride. At one point my wife had to cross open ground to retrieve one of my children, and they were then locked down in a private home until 10pm, when they were finally able to come home, and we did light the first candle for Chanukah. That was the start of a tension that lasted the whole week: how to continue to observe and even celebrate Chanukah, largely for the sake of the children, while also responding appropriately to what we had all experienced.

It was the worst case of domestic terrorism in the history of Australia, and certainly the most horrific event ever to befall the Australian Jewish community. There followed day after day of funerals, public vigils, hospital visits, *shiva* calls, drop-in centres and meetings with faith leaders, politicians and public figures. I will never forget the first funeral I attended, which was for Rabbi Eli Schlanger. He had been the primary organiser of the Chabad of Bondi event. As I entered the synagogue where the funeral was being held, I was overcome by the sound of wailing as we were confronted with the enormity of the tragedy. I remember attending another funeral, watching the readings and the eulogy, and thinking 'I have seen this image many times from other communities around the world, and now it has come to my community; now it is not

> **"A year on, as we continue to bind up our wounds, we support each other, and we remain grateful to everyone around the world who is standing with us.**

> **"We could not complete the job in one night, and the effort will have to go on forever, but there was a clear determination that we are not going to hide away as Jews, we are not going to be driven out of Australia and we will not be defeated.**



In loving memory of Harav Yisrael ben Uriah z"l

on a screen, it is happening right here'.

On the day after the attack all shuls and Jewish schools were closed. My children at that point were seven, four and one. We had to find a way to talk to the older two about what had happened before they found out when they went back to school and saw their classmates and teachers, some of whom had lost parents, spouses, aunts and uncles. Their school, which caters to the Chabad community as well as others, was the most dramatically impacted, and its leaders have been working hard and thoughtfully ever since to support their families.

The Rabbis joined a roster to be present at the site for the week or so after the attack for people coming to find services or someone to talk to. I saw a couple there I had married a few years previously, and I assumed they had come to pay their respects, until they told me they were present during the attack, and they had thrown themselves on their children, and felt the bullets fly over their heads. A young man I know of hid in a toilet in case the gunmen were picking their way through the crowd. We also heard stories of how some of the victims had died trying to overcome the attackers, and fell as true heroes, who saved lives by slowing, distracting and throwing the murderers off course.

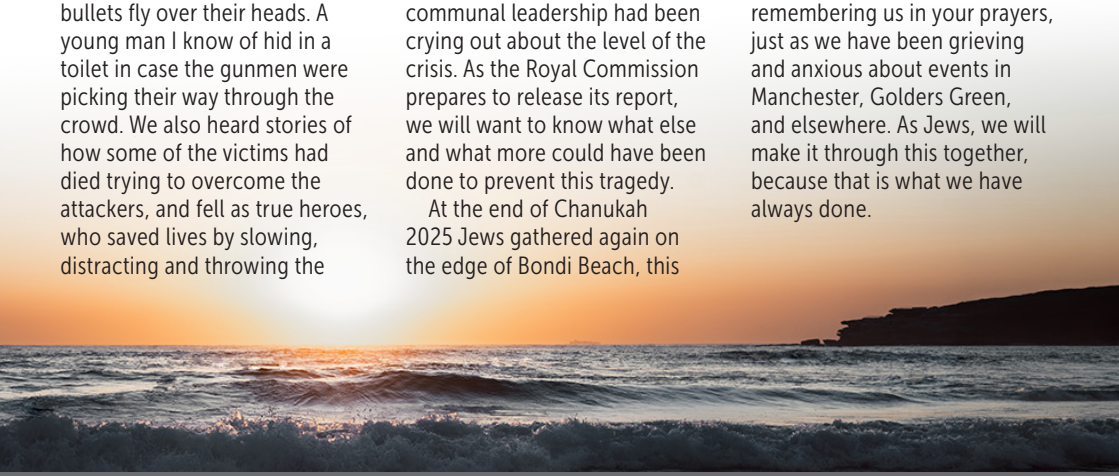
We visited many people in hospital, made sure their families had food, and brought *minyanim* to waiting rooms so they could *daven*. We had to bear in mind that this would be a very long process. It is always the case that visitors leave a *shiva* after a week and their lives return to normal, unlike those of the bereaved; this time that was even more true. There was a lot of political advocacy to make sure state agencies were providing whatever they could in a long-term program of assistance.

There was pressure from the Jewish community and its allies, ultimately successful, for the Australian government to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the causes and context of the attack. Antisemitism had been an increasing problem since 7 October 2023, and in late 2024 and early 2025 there was a wave of physical attacks including the burning of the Adass synagogue in Melbourne. The Jewish communal leadership had been crying out about the level of the crisis. As the Royal Commission prepares to release its report, we will want to know what else and what more could have been done to prevent this tragedy.

At the end of Chanukah 2025 Jews gathered again on the edge of Bondi Beach, this time with thousands of allies in person, and millions watching on television, to reclaim that place for light, hope and healing. The Chief Rabbi, who had come from London to provide comfort and solidarity, was an important presence that night. We could not complete the job in one night, and the effort will have to go on forever, but there was a clear determination that we are not going to hide away as Jews, we are not going to be driven out of Australia and we will not be defeated. A year on, as we continue to bind up our wounds, we support each other, and we remain grateful to everyone around the world who is standing with us.

> **“ As Jews, we will make it through this together, because that is what we have always done.**

Our thanks go to you, the British Jewish community, for holding us in your hearts, and remembering us in your prayers, just as we have been grieving and anxious about events in Manchester, Golders Green, and elsewhere. As Jews, we will make it through this together, because that is what we have always done.



In loving memory of Yosef Dov ben Yehoshua 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'.

VAYEISHEV: THE JOY OF LIVING IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The story of Yosef shifts our attention away from the Land of Israel, yet it opens with a reminder of Yaakov's attachment to it: "Yaakov settled in the land where his father had lived, in the land of Canaan" (*Bereishit* 37:1). According to Ibn Ezra and Ramban, the Torah emphasises that Yaakov deliberately chose to live in the "chosen land."

Indeed, the Midrash teaches that Yaakov found true contentment only in the Land of Israel: "Our forefather Yaakov did not truly enjoy a settled life until he dwelt in the land of his fathers" (*Bereishit Rabbah*).

> **"Our forefather Yaakov did not truly enjoy a settled life until he dwelt in the land of his fathers.**
>
> *– Bereishit Rabbah*



PHRASE OF THE WEEK

U V W

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 **VIDUI** mean:

1. Excommunication? | **2.** Confession? | **3.** Spiritual affliction?

The Hebrew word *Vidui* is usually translated as "confession," but it also means "admission" or "acknowledgement." Indeed, *modeh* ("thank you") shares the same Hebrew root and is an acknowledgement of something good another has done for us. *Vidui* therefore goes beyond simply admitting wrongdoing.

Rambam teaches that *Vidui* is an essential part of *teshuvah*, the process of return to God. It requires us to acknowledge our mistakes, take responsibility for our actions and express them honestly in words. Regret alone is not enough; we must articulate what we have done and recognise where we need to change.

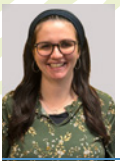
Vidui occupies a central place in our Yom Kippur prayers, but it is not confined to that day. We are encouraged to engage in daily self-reflection and confession. *Vidui* is also recited by a person approaching the end of life, providing an opportunity for reconciliation with God.

Our confessions are generally expressed in the plural, beginning with *Ashamnu* ("We have been guilty") and *Al Chet* ("For the sin we have committed"). The Ben Ish Chai, quoting the *Chesed Le'Alafim*, explains that we say the entire *Vidui*, even for sins we have not committed, because "all of Israel is a single body, and all are responsible for one another."

Vidui is not intended to leave us feeling guilty or defeated. It is an opportunity for honest self-reflection, transforming regret into responsibility and confession into commitment. Ultimately, it is not about dwelling on the past, but taking meaningful steps towards a better future.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY
PARASHAT VAYEISHEV 4-5 DECEMBER | 25 KISLEV

CHANUKAH: MAKING A DIFFERENCE



BY: **SHIFRA CHESLER**

Community Liaison Manager, Tribe

Many Jewish holidays commemorate times when enemies tried to destroy the Jewish people. Chanukah is different. The Greeks were not trying to wipe out the Jews. They were happy for Jews to live, as long as they lived like Greeks. They encouraged Jews to abandon what they viewed as old-fashioned traditions and instead embrace Greek culture, philosophy, sport and technology.

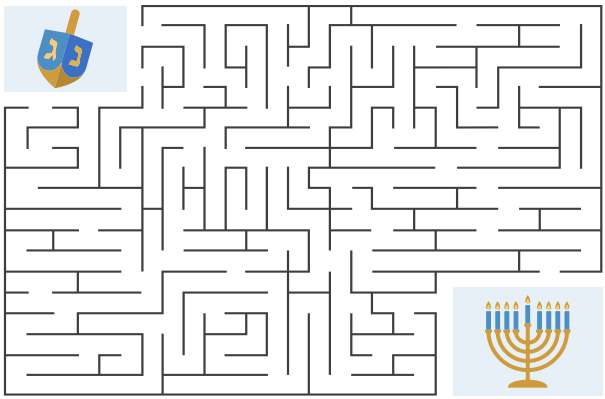
For many Jews, this was attractive. Greek society was sophisticated, successful and exciting. It offered status, opportunity and a chance to fit into the wider world. As a result, many Jews assimilated and gradually left behind parts of their Jewish identity.

The Maccabees, a family of *Kohanim* (Priests), saw things differently. They understood that Judaism is much more than customs or rituals. It is a way of life built on values, purpose and morality. They realised that if those values disappeared, the Jewish people would lose something essential. They might survive physically, but they would no longer be true to who they were and would eventually disappear just like every other ancient civilisation. So, the Maccabees took a stand. A small group recognised that something was wrong and refused to stay silent. With God's help, they fought back against a powerful empire. Although greatly outnumbered, they defeated a force many times their size and, against all expectations, they succeeded.

Chanukah teaches us an important lesson. You do not have to be the strongest, biggest or most popular person to make a difference. You do not need thousands of followers or the loudest voice. If you genuinely believe something is right, you can have the courage to stand up for it. The Maccabees did not ask, "Who are we to make a difference?" They saw a challenge and took responsibility. This Chanukah let's try and do the same - look around your school, shul or community and ask: "What can I improve? Where can I help?" By staying true to your values and acting when it matters, you can achieve far more than you imagine.

Menorah Maze

Help the dreidel spin its way through the maze to the glowing menorah.





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

The Land of Adventure: Judah Leads the Way!



Writer: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Cartoonist: Paul Solomons

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