

VAYEISHEV וישב

In memory of Rabbi Dr Irving Jacobs, Harav Yitzhak ben Shlomo,
on his first yearzeit.



Volume 35 | #9

27 November 2021
23 Kislev 5782

Shabbat ends:

London 4.50pm
Sheffield 4.54pm
Glasgow 4.54pm
Edinburgh 4.48pm
Birmingham 4.54pm
Southport 5.00pm
Hull 4.49pm
Jerusalem 5.15pm

Shabbat Mevarechim
Rosh Chodesh Tevet
is next Shabbat and
Sunday

Chanukah begins on
Sunday night.

Vayeishev
Artscroll p.198
Hertz p.141
Soncino p.229

Haftarah
Artscroll p.1142
Hertz p.152
Soncino p.248

Daf Hashavua

*"Hear, please, this dream which I dreamt... Behold!
Your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to
my sheaf"
(Bereishit 37:6-7)*



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Sidra breakdown

וישב Vayeishev

9th Sidra in:

בראשית Bereishit

By Numbers:

112 verses
1,558 words
5,972 letters

Headlines:

Joseph's dreams and being sold into slavery



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True Leadership – Humility Over Perfection

by Rabbi Akiva Rosenblatt, Hadley Wood Jewish Community



Jacob's thirteen children were all special in their own unique way. Indeed, in Parashat Vayechi, the Torah tells us that before Jacob died, he highlighted the strengths and talents of each tribe and expressed his appreciation not for their similarities, but for their differences. He understood the exact areas of their lives in which each would excel and blessed them accordingly. Traditionally, the leadership role is given to the eldest child. Strangely, however, Jacob decides that it is Judah, his fourth child, not Reuben, his eldest, who should be the tribe from which all future kings of Israel

should descend.

What was it about Judah that earned him the position of leader over all the other tribes despite the fact that he had three older brothers?

I believe a clue to understanding this can be found in this week's portion.

Parashat Vayeishev tells the story of Joseph. It begins with the famous episode of his brothers selling him into slavery and ends with him being thrown into jail in Egypt. However, right in the middle of all this, the Torah switches scenes and tells of a dramatic episode that occurred with Judah. Tamar, his daughter-in-law, is accused of a capital crime and sentenced to death. Based on the

Sidra Summary

1st Aliya (Kohen) – Bereishit 37:1-11

Yaakov settles in the Land of Canaan (later Israel). Yosef 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

evidence, Judah is confident that she is guilty, but Tamar knows that she is not. Not wanting to embarrass her father-in-law (and being willing to die, if necessary, rather than do so) she sends Judah new evidence proving that he is in fact the guilty party, rather than her (long story!). Judah immediately declares, “*tzadka mimeni*” – “she is more righteous than I”. Publicly embarrassing himself and seriously damaging his reputation, he humbly and honestly accepts that he was wrong.

When his older brothers make mistakes, they defend themselves (see Bereishit 34:30-31). But not Judah. With incredible moral courage and humility, he is willing to face his shortcomings head-on and accept responsibility for them.

It is unfortunate when individuals do not own up to their mistakes, but catastrophic when they are in positions of leadership because, inevitably, they will end up sacrificing the people for their status and reputation.

Judah values doing what is right over being right. And to Jacob this is

the number one quality a true leader must have.

Rabbi Sacks zt”l, at what was his final *Selichot* address, bemoaned the fact that we live in ‘an unforgiving age’, where people are vilified and ‘cancelled’ for the mistakes they make and are rarely given a chance to apologise and move on. We, as a society, often make the very same error with our leaders. We do not forgive them for the mistakes they make and oust them even when they have the courage and humility to accept responsibility and apologise. The truth is, though, every person makes mistakes – it comes with being human. A great leader is not one who is never wrong, but one who is never afraid to be wrong. Because when they have the humility to put others before their own egos and desires, they will always act in the best interests of the people.

Let us learn from Jacob to appreciate humility over perfection in our leaders because, ultimately, that is what matters most.



In loving memory of Devorah bat Avraham z'l

merchants approaching. Yehuda 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 lady but he does not find her. Yehuda is later told that Tamar is pregnant and orders her to be burned 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.

Social Media and Publicity – What Can We Learn From the Mitzvah of Chanukah?

by Joanne Greenaway, Chief Executive of the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS) and graduate of the Chief Rabbi's Ma'ayan Programme



Over four billion people actively use social media today – that is almost half the global population. As well as incredible connectivity, the harm this has brought in terms of mental health, particularly of young people, is well-documented.

We use social media to publicise our lives and our achievements. For many, it provides a temptation to brag, heightening the ego. But using publicity positively can also be tremendously powerful. From the messages of Chanukah we can learn to focus our social media use on a higher purpose.

The teachings of *Pirkei Avot* emphasise the types of character traits which we strive for, authentic humility being an utmost value. We value private acts of kindness, and participation in the *Chevrá Kadisha* (Burial Society) is classed as an ultimate unseen mitzvah. Our forefather Abraham was described as an unassuming man. Similarly, Moses was described as the humblest person who ever lived, a trait which defined his leadership.

The Rambam (Maimonides, 1138-1204) in *Hilchot De'ot* famously cautions against the perils of arrogance in his guidelines for character development. Whilst he advocates the concept of the "middle path" or "*shevil ha-zahav*", the 'golden mean', in all character traits, he cites personal arrogance as an exception, and stresses the necessity to eliminate even traces of pride, focusing on the trait of humility. Our use of social media is generally not conducive to building this trait.

So how can Chanukah guide us? On Chanukah we have a central mitzvah – *pirsumei nisa*, publicising the miracle. We light candles to publicise the miracle of the oil which lasted for eight days. We are taught to place these lights in a doorway or by a window to the street where they can be clearly seen, as well as lighting after nightfall.

When it comes to publicising God and His miracles, we should be deliberate and maximise our opportunities. As the mitzvah of lighting the Chanukah demonstrates, our role is to draw attention to God's active presence in the world. What better use of social media than to

similarly draw attention to God's role in our lives, rather than focusing exclusively on our ourselves. What better direction of the publicity we generate on a daily basis than to actively find ways to magnify and amplify God's presence in the world. This could be through addressing issues that help to repair His world, ideally more widely than only to our own social circles. One example is the work of Dov Forman, a teenager from Finchley Synagogue, and his great-grandmother and Holocaust survivor Lily Ebert, TikTok sensations with over a million followers, using the platform to raise awareness of the horrors of anti-semitism. Other ways of using social media to great effect include sharing stories of *chesed* (acts of kindness), disseminating Jewish education and publicly acknowledging God as the ultimate source of goodness in our lives when sharing good news.

As Rabbi Sacks zt"l said "Technology is made to serve us. We were not made to serve technology." Let us use it wisely and continue to publicise God and His miracles not only on Chanukah but throughout the year.

In memory of Shmuel Nissim ben Yaacov z'l

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.

Haftarah

The prophet Amos sends a warning message to the people to stop persecuting the poor, a sin that cannot be overlooked. He also accuses them of corrupting the prophets and the Nazirites. The rich and powerful will not be able to escape God's ultimate judgement.

Foreign Places in the Mishna

Part Nine:

Tadmor–Palmyra

by David Frei, US Director of External and Legal Services
and Registrar of the London Beth Din



A *Nazir*, one who voluntarily accepts upon themselves a temporary period of increased sanctity, is forbidden

to cut their hair, drink wine and to become ritually impure through contact with a corpse (see Bemidbar ch. 6).

At the end of the period of being a *Nazir*, they must bring three sacrifices to the Temple: a Sin Offering, a Burnt Offering and a Peace Offering.

What happens if, after offering one of the sacrifices, the *Nazir* comes in to contact with a corpse?

The Mishna in Tractate *Nazir* (6:11) quotes Rabbi Eliezer as saying that, after purifying himself, the *Nazir* must bring all three offerings, as the sacrifice already offered must be discounted.

The other Sages disagree, saying that this is what happened to Miriam of Tarmod (some texts read Tadmor; in Jewish writings, Tadmor and Tarmod are interchangeable), who had offered one sacrifice at the end of her period of being a *Nazir*, when she was told that her daughter was dangerously ill. She hurried to see her child, but on reaching her, found that she had died, and she thereby contracted ritual impurity. The Rabbis at the time ruled that after becoming ritually pure again, she could offer the remaining two sacrifices and the first one still counted.



The ruins of Tadmor (Palmyra)

Tadmor is the Hebrew and Arabic name for the city of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage City in the Syrian desert, famous for its Greco-Roman ruins which were badly damaged when ISIS occupied the city for two periods between 2015 and 2017.

The ancient city prospered because of its location as a flourishing oasis in the middle of the Syrian desert, on an important trade route between Damascus and Mesopotamia.

According to Jewish tradition, King Solomon, who greatly increased the territory ruled by the Israelites, actually built Tadmor; see I Kings 9:18 where Tadmor is written as ‘Tamar’ but traditionally read as ‘Tadmor’ and also appears as ‘Tadmor’ in the *Targum Yonatan* (Aramaic translation of Tanach). Furthermore, a parallel reference in II Chronicles 8:4 specifically refers to Tadmor.

There is much written about

Tadmor and its population in Rabbinic literature.

The Talmud in Tractate *Shabbat* (31a) recounts that one of the questions asked of Hillel as he was washing his hair on a Friday in preparation for Shabbat - by a man who had wagered that he could make Hillel lose his temper - was “Why are the eyes of the Tarmodians bleary?” Hillel’s reply was that because they dwell among the sands (Tarmod being an oasis), the sand gets into their eyes.

When Rabbi Yochanan (Tractate *Shabbat*, 21b) was asked to define the latest time when one could light Chanukah candles, he explained that it was when the Tarmodeans, who sold wood for lighting fires and who therefore remained in the marketplace later than everyone else, had packed up for the night.

The non-Jewish Tarmodeans are understood to have been active participants in the destruction of Jerusalem and its First and Second Temples. This being the case, on the blessing given to Avraham after the *Akeida* (Bereishit 22:17) that “your descendants shall inherit their enemies’ gates (cities)”, the *Midrash Rabba* (56:11) comments, “This is a reference to Tarmod. Happy is the person who will see the downfall of Tarmod which participated in the destruction of the two Temples.”

Sefer Shmuel (the Book of Samuel)

Chapter 15: Shaul Misses the Mark

by Phina Savery, US Jewish Living Educator and
Participant in the Chief Rabbi's Ma'ayan Programme



In this chapter Shaul is commanded to wipe out Amalek, Israel's nemesis and the primary force of evil in the world¹. Amalek, a nomadic tribe living on the plunder of others, was the first nation to attack the Israelites after they had been freed from slavery in Egypt. Worse still, they attacked the rear of the camp, which was made up of the weak and vulnerable (see Devarim 25:17-19). Amalek also harassed the Jewish people during the time of the *shofetim*, judges (see Shofetim 6:3-5).

Shaul successfully wages war against Amalek – however, he leaves King Agag alive. The text states that “Shaul and the people took pity on Agag” (1 Shmuel 15:9). Shaul also disregards the command to destroy all of Amalek's possessions, taking their cattle and sheep as plunder.

When questioned by the prophet Shmuel (Samuel), Shaul explains that he intended to bring them as sacrifices to God. This angers Shmuel, who explains that one cannot honour God by disobeying Him! Instead, he accuses Shaul of lusting after the material booty of war. Even if this was driven by the people, Shaul, as king, should have

taken control.

One of the key reasons Amalek attacked the Israelites in the desert was to take their material possessions. This illustrates the ideology of the nomadic Amalekites: everything is spoils for their taking. In contrast, in Judaism, items should only be acquired morally, as derived from the Torah. When Shaul takes the possessions of Amalek as his own, he is going against this worldview. It also might imply that this was the purpose of the war. Thus, taking the booty undermines the moral grounds according to Torah law that provides justification for wiping out Amalek in the first place.

At first glance, one might consider keeping King Agag alive a humanitarian act. However, Rav Ammon Bazak of Yeshivat Har Etzion, Alon Shvut, Israel, contends that Shaul's failure to follow through with God's command in full stemmed from self-interest. In ancient warfare, it was common practice to keep the enemy king alive in order to humiliate him and celebrate personal victory. Thus, perhaps Shaul was motivated by the desire to glorify his own name.

However, in light of Shaul's humility (noted previously on several occasions), I would like to

suggest that Shaul was not seeking to flaunt his own personal victory. Instead, Shaul planned to use the Amalekite king to display God's victory and ultimate power over the world. However, once again, Shaul has missed the mark. Like with his misguided plan to use the forbidden booty to sacrifice to God, here too he is trying to honour God in the wrong way. Essentially, the best way to serve God is by following his commandments in full.

Shaul is unable to accept responsibility; he attempts to justify his actions and blames others, claiming that he was responding to the actions of the people. This inability to own up to his mistakes, as we have seen before, highlights his inability to be a great leader.

Shmuel responds with great anger to Shaul's failures, announcing that God has “rejected” Shaul as king. Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi, 1160-1235) explains that this adds to a previous similar announcement (see Chapter 13) in two possible ways. Either Shmuel is telling Shaul that he is now beyond repentance or that before, God decreed that Shaul's children would not be king, but now Shaul himself would not reign much longer.

This tragically marks the point of no return for Shaul.

1 This is a complex commandment which is beyond the scope of this discussion. Here we will address Shaul's war with Amalek rather than the underlying principles of the mitzvah.

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KABBALAT SHABBAT: LIVE AND CHANUKAH CANDLE LIGHTING



FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER, 2:30PM

with
Rabbi Akiva Rosenblatt
Rabbi of Hadley Wood Jewish Community



Featuring musical accompaniment from
Yuval Havkin
With a special appearance from
United Synagogue primary schools

Live via the United Synagogue
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Parashat Mikeitz
(Shabbat Chanukah)
Light Chanukah candles
followed by Shabbat candles
before 3:39pm

Please note:
By participating in this live
stream you are not accepting
Shabbat until you light candles.





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYEISHEV: CRACKING JOKES!

Joey loved to laugh. Better still, he loved to make other people laugh.



He always had a smile for the recycling collector.

HOW'S MY FRIEND JOEY?

HOW'S YER BIN?



He always had a joke for the delivery lady.

WHAT'S THE BERACHA FOR ONLINE SHOPPING? BIRKAT AMAZON!

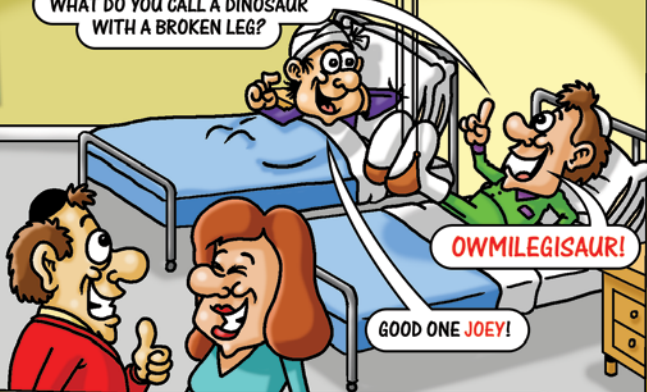


Before Covid, Joey broke both his legs in a skiing accident. He had to spend time in a rehab. centre helping his legs get strong. Joey's parents were worried he'd be down in the dumps.

REHABILITATION CENTRE



WHAT DO YOU CALL A DINOSAUR WITH A BROKEN LEG?



OWMILEGISAUR!

GOOD ONE JOEY!

By keeping everyone around him in good spirits, Joey felt better too. Before long, he was back home but the smiles he shared, stayed.

PERHAPS JOEY GOT THE IDEA FROM HIS NAMESAKE YOSEF. IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHA YOSEF IS THROWN INTO PRISON IN EGYPT. INSTEAD OF WALLOWING IN SELF-PITY, YOSEF SEES THAT HIS CELLMATES LOOK SAD AND TRIES TO HELP THEM.



EVEN THOUGH THEY COULD HAVE BEEN EXCUSED FOR FOCUSING ON THEMSELVES, YOSEF AND JOEY BOTH NOTICED THE NEEDS OF OTHERS AND REACHED OUT TO THEM. I'M GOING TO PUT OUT MY ANTENNAE TO TRY AND LOOK OUT FOR OTHER PEOPLE. HOW ABOUT YOU?



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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.