

# SHABUOT

Insights from the Past, Present, and Future

*The Tawil & Ades Edition*



# THE HABURA

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# Introduction

*Senior Rabbi Joseph Dweck*

Rabbi Joseph Dweck is the Senior Rabbi of the S&P Sephardi Community of the UK – the country's oldest Jewish community. He is also the Rosh Bet Midrash of The H̄abura. He studied in Jerusalem at Yeshivat H̄azon Ovadia under the tutelage of the former Sepharadi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. He has an MA in Jewish education. In his capacity as Senior Rabbi, Rabbi Dweck serves as a President of the Council of Christians and Jews, Deputy President of the London School of Jewish Studies, Ecclesiastical Authority of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Standing Committee Member of the Conference of European Rabbis. Visit [www.SeniorRabbi.com](http://www.SeniorRabbi.com) to find out more about his work and initiatives.

**T**he Valmadonna Collection is the largest private collection of Hebrew books from around the world. The age of its contents spans a thousand years. The owner of this collection, Mr Jack Lunzer z”l, brought it to Sothebys auction house in New York in 2009. It was the major Jewish scholarly event of the year. I, along with thousands of others, went to view it. When I walked into the rooms where the collection was displayed and saw, from floor to ceiling, shelves upon shelves of books, I was deeply impacted.

As I looked closer, I saw that the books had been displayed in order of the country in which they had been written or published. From Amsterdam, Paris, Izmir, Bombay, Ferrara, Calcutta, London, Shanghai, Alexandria and on and on...

Seeing it displayed this way I thought: *where have we not lived? What language have we not spoken? What culture have we not absorbed into our national psyche?* But cultures change, languages change, and customs are adjusted. Seeing these books displayed by country made me realise that the one constant in the Jewish diaspora - the one element that has always accompanied us throughout our sojourns - has been our Torah. No matter where we have lived in this world, no matter the languages we have spoken, we managed to study, write and publish Torah. We immersed ourselves in its thought and shared its teachings. We taught our children - whether we were in Berlin or Baghdad - the high value we placed on literacy and meaningful questioning. It is our Torah that has been our one constant comrade in our journeys throughout the ages. And it is our Torah that will bring us into the future.

But it must be a Torah that brings us into the world, not one that forces us to close ourselves away from it. It is a Torah that answers our questions through encouraging exploration rather than pre-tailored solutions. It is a Torah that, as it always has, brings us the ecstasy of discovery. That is the Torah that was and is, as King

Solomon wrote (Proverbs, 1:9), our “*graceful escort*” through time and space.

Shabuot is a time to celebrate the giving of the Torah and to reflect on the role that the Torah has played in Jewish history and culture. It is a time to renew our commitment to the values and principles that the Torah represents and to rekindle our passion for learning and studying it.

In this book of essays on Shabuot, we explore the many facets of the Torah's influence on our lives and its meaning within our people. We also delve into the rich aspects and traditions of Shabuot and explore its significance in the context of Jewish life. We examine the ways in which the Torah has inspired the Jewish people throughout history and explore its continuing relevance in the modern world.

I am thankful to Sina Kahen for his undying dedication to making the H̄abura a thriving centre for Torah study and for the cultivation of our unique Sephardi heritage. We would not be able to do any of it without him. May he continue to see *nahat* from his work and care.

I am grateful to my dearest friends, Jojo Tawil and Louis Ades for recognising the great worth in this project and for sponsoring this Shabuot edition of the Moadim series. May God bless them in its merit with health, happiness and success in their endeavours.

Finally, I thank all of you who are reading this volume. Your attention and care allow the H̄abura to flourish. We have only just begun.

*Tizku leshanim rabot,*

Joseph Dweck  
*Rosh Bet Midrash*  
Senior Rabbi, S&P Sephardi Community

# What is The Ḥabura?

The Ḥabura is an online and physical *Bet Midrash* dedicated to studying, teaching, and publishing Torah as a lens through which we view and interact with God's world. This approach is rooted in, but not exclusive to, the classical Sephardi *mesora* that we uphold and cherish.

Since our inception in 2020, we have grown to teach thousands of people from across four continents and who work in a variety of professions. We have been honoured to host *Dayanim*, *Rabbanim*, and leading experts from around the world to teach us *Miqra*, *Halakha*, *Talmud*, *Maḥshaba*, Science, and History.

Under the guidance of our *Rosh Bet Midrash*, Rabbi Joseph Dweck, and with the assistance of the S&P Sephardi Community, the Montefiore Endowment, and Dangoor Education, The Ḥabura has been able to utilise the latest technologies to teach and publish authentic, cutting-edge, and relevant Torah-study materials to an unlimited and ever-growing number of Jews, wherever they may live.

For information about our online curriculum, publishing house and more, please visit [www.TheHabura.com](http://www.TheHabura.com) and [www.daat.press](http://www.daat.press).

