



# Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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19 May 2018 Parshas Bamidbar 5 Siven 5778

## Every Jew Counts

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Nine of the holiest Rabbis cannot make a Minyan. Enter one little Bar Mitzvah boy, and suddenly the Minyan is complete. When we count Jews, there are no distinctions. We don't look at religious piety or academic achievement. The Rabbi and the rebel, the philanthropist and the pauper - all count for one; no more, no less.

This week in Bamidbar, we read of the census of the Jewish people. This portion is always read on the Shabbat before Shavuoth, the Season of the Giving of the Torah. One important and obvious connection is that in the Torah, too, every letter counts. One missing letter invalidates the entire scroll. Likewise, one missing Jew leaves Jewish Peoplehood lacking, incomplete.

If we count Jews because every Jew counts, then that implies a responsibility on Jewish communal leadership to ensure that no Jew is missing from the Kehilla, from the greater community. We must leave no stone unturned to keep those Jews on the periphery inside. Make sure they feel that they belong and are welcome - even if they haven't paid any membership fees.

But it also means that the individual Jew has commitments and obligations. If you're important, make sure you don't get lost. You are needed.

Once there was a small town consisting of only a few Jewish families. Between them, they had exactly ten men over the age of Bar Mitzvah. They were all dedicated people and

they made sure that they never missed a Minyan. One day, a new Jewish family moved in to town. Great joy and excitement; now they would have 11 men. But a strange thing happened. As soon as they had 11, they could never manage a Minyan!

When we know we are indispensable, we make a point of being there. Otherwise, 'count me out.'

Today, we are losing a lot of Jews to ignorance. But sometimes we also lose them because we didn't embrace them as we could have. At a time when they were receptive, we didn't make them feel welcome.

Other faiths, ideologies and cults are using "love bombs" to entice Jews to their way of life. Yes, very often they prey on the weak and vulnerable among us. Anyone desperately seeking warmth, love and a sense of belonging will be an easy target for such groups. But there are lots of ordinary, stable people who crave these things too. Don't we all? If the Jewish community doesn't provide that warm welcome, we may very well find them going elsewhere.

Some years ago, we had a visiting Rabbi from Canada speaking in my Shul. His talk was about the very real threat of Jews for J. and Hebrew-Christians who preyed on unsuspecting Jews by using Jewish symbols and even so-called "Shuls," or Messianic Synagogues, which are really nothing more than churches in disguise. He described how these individuals make every deceitful effort to confuse ignorant Jews into believing they are going to a "Jewish" house of worship.

A woman in the audience then asked, "Rabbi, if I am travelling out of town and want to go to Shul,

## Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:45 am (one minyan)
- ◆ Brocha across the road.
- ◆ Mincha: After Brocha
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 6

### SHAVUOS NIGHT - Sat 19 May

- ◆ Candlelighting: 6:01 pm from a pre-existing flame (Blessings for Yom Tov & Shehecheyanu)
- ◆ Yom Tov Service: 6:00 pm

his car and as he opened the door he heard one worker say to the other, "I never saw anything like that before and I've been putting in septic systems for over 20 years."

What do you get when you cross a dyslexic, an insomniac, and an agnostic? Someone who lays awake at night wondering if there is a dog.

### SHAVUOT HIGHLIGHTS @ SYDSHUL

- Beautiful Services with Yudi & Choir
- **Hallel & Duchening** – Sunday and Monday
- **Join the whole community**, young and old, for **The Ten Commandments** on Sunday morning
  - **Children's Bikkurim Parade** – Sunday morning
- The most **moving and meaningful Yizkor service** - Monday morning
  - **Inspiring Droshas** by **Rabbis Goldman and Stern**
  - **Dairy Delicacies** at the **Brochas** – Sunday and Monday

### TIKKUN LAYL - Late Night Learning Programme

## Sleepless in Sydenham!

**10:30PM**  
**"JEWISH MEDIA: RELIGIOUS, RESPONSIBLE, OR RELEVANT?"**  
*Can Jewish Media Be Good? Can Good Media be Jewish?*

A Panel Discussion featuring:  
 Howard Sackstein, Chairman, S A Jewish Report  
 David Saks, Editor, Jewish Affairs  
 Howard Feldman, Breakfast Show Host, Chai FM  
 Rabbi Yossy Goldman, Sydenham Shul

<p><b>12:00am</b>  <b>J.C. IN THE TALMUD?</b>  <b>Origins of Christianity</b>  <i>Rabbi Yehuda Stern</i></p>	<p><b>1:00am</b>  <b>Did ALL the Nations Really say NO to the Ten Commandments?</b>  <i>Rabbi Eliezer Auerbach, Lecturer in Talmud at Yeshiva College &amp; Mesivta Shaarei Torah</i></p>
<p><b>2:00am</b>  <b>HOW TO CREATE A RELIGION 101:</b>  <i>Who wrote the Torah? Hashem or Fred, the charismatic cultist?</i>  <i>Dani Kedar</i></p>	<p><b>2:45am</b>  <b>HOW ODD OF G-D TO CHOOSE THE JEWS! No, not odd, the Jews chose G-d! WHICH WAS IT?</b>  <i>Rabbi Levi Ulman</i></p>
<p><b>3:30am</b>  <b>LIFE IN OUTER SPACE: A Torah Perspective</b>  <i>Rabbi Mendel Teitelbaum</i></p>	<p><b>4:15 am</b>  <b>OPEN MIC! CLOSING SESSION</b>  <i>Refreshments throughout the night. Cheese, Caki and Blintzes in the wee hours.</i></p>

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how will I know if I am going to a *real* Shul or one of these impostor synagogues?"

The Rabbi laughed and said, "When you go into these places, they bombard you. As soon as they see a new face, a dozen people will come over to welcome you and give you a seat and a book and make you feel at home. But what happens when you go into a *real* Shul? Nobody greets you. Nobody looks at you. And the first person to say a word to you growls at you because you're sitting in his seat!"

A h bittere gelechter!

Of course, we need to do more than just wait for people to come to Shul in order to make them feel they belong. We need to go out and find our people wherever they may be. Certainly, though, when someone does show a spark of interest - a soul seeking its source - we need to be there; as an organized community, and as individuals.

Indeed, every Jew counts. So, let's count them in.

## Parsha Pointers

*Bamidbar: Artsroll Chumash pg 726;*  
*Living Torah pg 655*

In the Sinai Desert, G-d says to conduct a census of the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses counts 603,550 men of draftable age (20 to 60 years); the tribe of Levi, numbering 22,300 males age one month and older, is counted separately. The Levites are to serve in the Sanctuary, replacing the firstborn, whose number they approximated, who were disqualified when they participated in the worshiping of the Golden Calf. The 273 firstborn who lacked a Levite to replace them had to pay a five-shekel "ransom" to redeem themselves.

When the people broke camp, the three Levite clans dismantled and transported the Sanctuary, and reassembled it at the center of the

next encampment. They then erected their own tents around it: the Kohathites, who carried the Sanctuary's vessels (the ark, menorah, etc.) in their specially designed coverings on their shoulders, camped to its south; the Gershonites, in charge of its tapestries and roof coverings, to its west; and the families of Merari, who transported its wall panels and pillars, to its north. Before the Sanctuary's entranceway, to its east, were the tents of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons.

## The Desert Bride

*By Rabbi Shimon Posner*

When you first come to the desert,  
You know it by what it doesn't have:  
"Wow there are no trees!"  
"No grass!"  
"All you have here is rocks and sand!"

Often people feel it so bare and foreign:  
They quickly cover the desert with green like the Amazon.

Later, sometimes, they see  
That the vastness of the desert has its own stark beauty.

They see that this nothingness of the desert  
Is really a lack of noise and distraction.  
And with all the distraction gone  
You can sense something that you never knew was there.  
And then you have fallen in love with the desert.  
G-d too fell in love with the desert.

The vastness and emptiness  
Where nothing calls attention away from Him.  
No water, no plants, no agriculture,  
No accomplishment and really no endeavour.  
Just Him.

He likes it when people appreciate the desert  
In themselves.  
Notwithstanding accomplishment and gumption,  
Simply realizing that in the face of Him  
There is no accomplishment, no endeavour large enough  
To be worthy of taking away from Him.

He loved the desert so much  
That he wanted to get married there.  
And he wanted his kalla-maiden to have that desert quality.  
"That you followed after me into the desert,  
A land where nothing grows."

So the Jewish people got married in the desert of Sinai  
And have a 600,000-letter document to prove it.  
And this document they cherish.  
We got this at Sinai, they say,  
Because they treasure where they got it too.

Now the Jewish people are again in the desert:  
Part of the Jewish people.  
The Coachella, in my case.

We see something more about the desert.  
We see that it is full of water, but the water is down below  
And we have to bring it up.  
The desert too now has room even for our accomplishment.  
And it still is vast and beautiful  
With a stark and awesome beauty.

## Why Do Jews Love Jerusalem?

*By Rabbi Yeruchem Elifort*

The Jews' love of Jerusalem as Judaism's permanent capital stems from the Torah itself. The Holy City is referenced hundreds of times throughout Tanach (the Five Books of Moses, Prophets and Writings, also known as the Written Torah). The Talmud elaborates in great depth on our bond with that city. On the other hand, it is never mentioned in the Koran, no matter what is claimed by the Muslim world.

Concerning our fixation on Israel in general and Jerusalem specifically, one may ask, "Why do we focus so much attention on one place? Is G-d's presence not found everywhere?"

The question may be broadened regarding time as well. We can ask, "Why are certain days considered holy? Can G-d's presence not be experienced at any time?"

The answer is it is true that G-d's presence can be experienced everywhere at any time. That is because G-d is unlimited, and indeed created both time and space, and so He is superior to both. Nonetheless, the Torah (a creation of G-d that also supersedes time and space) decrees that there are special times and special places.

As the Torah represents G-d's immutable will, we see that the holiness of Jerusalem does not waver nor diminish. It has always been, and will

always be, the holiest place in the world.

In fact, we find that the holiness of Jerusalem surpasses that of Mt. Sinai. That is because the holiness revealed on Sinai came through G-d's initiative and revelation to the people. The people themselves did not cause the giving of the Torah to occur. On the other hand, the holiness of Jerusalem was cemented by the efforts of human-kind. It was human hands that built the Holy Temples and consecrated the ground of Jerusalem. This adds to its permanent holiness.

King David, great prophet that he was, purchased the land for the Holy Temple from the local inhabitants, knowing full well the holiness of the site. It was, after all, on that site that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice. It was on that same site that Jacob laid down his head and had his prophetic dream of angels on the ladder. The site of the Temple is a veritable gate to heaven found here on earth.

The Jewish heart stirs upon approach to the last remnant of the Holy Temple that we have. The Wailing Wall, also known as the Western Wall, was built as a retaining wall during Herod's renovations of the Temple Mount above it.

Oh, the stories the stones could tell! All of the heartache and suffering of Jewish history is contained in those massive stones. Millions of tears have been shed, and millions of prayers have been uttered, in that holy place. The lower stones have been polished by the hands leaning on and caressing them, as countless Jews have touched their hallowed surface, attempts to touch the "Face and Heart of G-d," as it were.

## Live & Laugh

Rabbi Sapperstein, fresh out of rabbinical school, had to officiate his first funeral for a homeless man with no friends or family. The funeral was to be held at a new cemetery across town and this man was the first to be laid to rest there.

Rabbi Sapperstein arrived late, but noticed a few workers gathering around the grave opening. Young and enthusiastic Rabbi Sapperstein poured out his heart and soul as he gave his eulogy and recited the prayers. He was so powerful that he brought the cemetery workers to tears.

When the service was over, the rabbi walked to

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