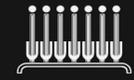




Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!



Published by the
Sydenham Highlands North
Hebrew Congregation
Johannesburg, South Africa

22 June 2019 Parshas Beha'aloscha 19 Sivan 5779

Path of Least Resistance?

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

By now you have surely recovered from Pesach so we can break the news to you that there is also a Second Pesach. But don't worry; you won't have to do it all over again.

This week's Parsha tells the story of a group of men who were unable to bring the Passover offering on Erev Pesach in the wilderness and approached Moses with a sincere request. "Why should we lose out?" It so happened that they had been occupied with a good deed - according to some it was nothing less than carrying the remains of Joseph from Egypt en route to his final resting place in Shechem - and because of their contact with the dead were spiritually unfit to participate in the Paschal lamb service.

Moses consulted G-d and was told that, in fact, the men were quite right. Henceforth, those who were spiritually impure or far away at the time the Passover offering was brought on the 14th of Nissan would be given a second chance exactly one month later on the 14th of Iyar to make good their lost opportunity.

There are many important lessons from this law, known as Pesach Sheini, such as "It's never too late." There are second chances in life for all of us. Or, that G-d sometimes waits to see if we really want something badly enough to demand it and only then does He give it to us. But now I'd like to share with you an important message I once heard from the former Rosh Kollel of Johannesburg, the late Rabbi Mordechai Shakovitzky *dov hashdom*

He said that what those men in Moses' day did was actually quite inspiring. You see, they did-

n't really have to come and plead with Moses for a second chance. After all, they had the perfect alibi. They could have simply said, "Sorry, we were busy with another mitzvah." They were tamei and spiritually unable to participate. They had no reason to feel guilty. They couldn't be faulted. And yet, it did bother them. They felt left out and genuinely desired to be together with their brethren in the observance of another mitzvah, the Pesach offering. People who had every opportunity to be free of obligation and wilfully choose to actively seek obligation are indeed deserving of honourable mention. It is right that they should be singled out in the Torah for their sincerity and devotion to the word of G-d.

Lots of us make excuses lots of times. It's too cold, too hot, too expensive, too difficult etc, etc... Too many of us take the path of least resistance. Parents arranging a Bar Mitzvah for their son sometimes look for the easy way out. "Can we have it at Mincha, Rabbi? That will be less demanding on our son. He's very active in the school sports programme and won't have that much time to learn." Brides and grooms don't always appreciate the beautiful way of life Judaism can offer our most intimate relationship. "Do we have to attend the classes, Rabbi? Is the Mikvah compulsory?"

"The difference between a success and a failure is that a failure makes excuses and a success makes a plan."

Let's not look for excuses. Don't opt for the easy way out. Let us learn from the men in the wilderness who could have had every excuse in the book and yet happily chose to look for a new mitzvah and to share in the good deed of their community.

SYDENHAM SHUL MEMBERS SURVEY

All members have received an email with an important *Questionnaire*. We want everyone's input. Husbands, wives, young adult children. Please respond *ASAP*. It will take you only *10 minutes*. *Thank you* for helping us build our future together.

What's Nu?!

Choson Kallah Mazal Tov
Lloyd Broude & Dana Gordon

The Barmy Boy
Joey Paiker

Mazal Tov to Mark & Ilanit and grandparents Harold Steinbuch, Tziona Jones and Shirley Paiker.

The Battie Girl
Elisheva Kay

Mazal Tov to Nachi & Adi and grandparents Cliffy & Jessie Kay, Hylton Diamond and Shirley Diamond.

Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl: 8:45am
- ◆ Brocha across the road.
- ◆ **Social Shabbos.**
- ◆ Mincha: 4:50 pm
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 2
- ◆ Shabbos Ends: 5:59 pm

◆ **Nathan Fine** of Ideal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**

◆ **Academic Achievers Tutoring Services** for grades 1 – 12. All school subjects in the privacy of your home. Personalised one-on-one lessons to suit student's needs. R260 per hour. Contact Dror Taylor 079 873 4662 or Amir Taylor 071 600 2251

◆ **Vehicles wanted. Any make, any condition. Best prices. Phone ARNOLD ORKIN 082 823 7826**

◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org

◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.

Sacks speaks of the great personalities he met, how he sensed their greatness. In the Rebbe's room he sensed something else: he sensed his own greatness.

He maintains there is a common misconception about the Rebbe; that the Rebbe created followers. Sacks insists that he did not; he maintains that the Rebbe created leaders.

"And you shall raise the (flames of) the candles."

Kindle those flames, encourages the Talmud, until they burn steady and strong, until they neither flicker nor waver. Then and only then are they ready for you to remove the fire with which you kindled them and you can move on to your next candle.

I am now raising my grandchildren's parents. Many of my students are now rabbis and rebbetzins. I pray that like Jonathan Sacks, they sense their own greatness.

Live & Laugh

A young man asks his father, married many years, the secret to his marriage's success. His father had this to say: "Well, we have different friends, drive in separate cars, eat separately, take vacations separately...In short, we do everything to stay together..."



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Parsha Pointers

*Beha'aloscha: Artscroll pg 774;
Living Torah pg 702*

Aaron is commanded to raise light in the lamps of the menorah, and the tribe of Levi is initiated into the service in the Sanctuary.

A "Second Passover" is instituted in response to the petition "Why should we be deprived?" by a group of Jews who were unable to bring the Passover offering in its appointed time because they were ritually impure. G-d instructs Moses on the procedures for Israel's journeys and encampments in the desert, and the people journey in formation from Mount Sinai, where they had been camped for nearly a year.

The people are dissatisfied with their "bread from heaven" (the manna) and demand that Moses supply them with meat. Moses appoints 70 elders, to whom he emanates of his spirit, to assist him in the burden of governing the people. Miriam speaks negatively of Moses and is punished with leprosy; Moses prays for her healing and the entire community waits seven days for her recovery.

Fire!

By: Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum

I've never (yet) been tempted to burn down a school building, nor do I follow fire trucks, but I admit to a lifetime fascination with fire. I don't know why, but the dancing flames, the interplay of subtly different hues of light and the heat produced as wood slowly smolders has always had me enthralled.

I certainly picked the religion with sufficient outlets to satisfy my attraction. How many of our festivals and observances revolve around kindling a flame? Off hand I can think of Friday night candles, The Havdallah service marking the conclusion of Shabbat, Chanukah, Lag BaOmer bonfires and burning of leaven before Passover, not to mention the baking of matzah, lighting candles the night before a Brit and the lantern-bearing procession to the *dupah* (wedding canopy).

Apparently there's a psychologically recognized condition, Seasonally Affected Disorder (SAD), where people become depressed in winter due to lack of sunlight. The presence of light and fire in

all their brilliance, warmth and beauty directly influence our feelings of health and contentment.

In the Torah we read about the Divine command for the High Priest to kindle the seven-branched candelabra. The Temple was the source of splendor and enlightenment for the physical world, and the priest's responsibility was to ignite these flames of glory, and thereby illuminate the universe.

We have a similar mission in our daily struggles in this gloomy world: to transmit the radiance of G-d from within ourselves, to brighten our surroundings and illuminate the lives of our families, friends and acquaintances.

Aaron was commanded to light the wicks "until the fire blazes up by itself." As anyone who has ever battled a coal barbeque or labored to start a campfire without fire-starters or kerosene would attest, there is more to kindling than just holding a match to the fuel. It takes skill to find the right spot, determination to keep the lighter there till the fire catches and sometimes it takes a few tries (and a half-dozen matches) to guarantee the flame spreads. Once well lit, the new fire is incomparably more powerful and useful than the puny matchstick from which it was ignited.

It's not easy to reach out to others. We often feel shy or awkward, worried about interfering, and unconvinced of our ability to be of any use. Far easier to hide in one's own little huddle and let the world take care of itself.

We can't, we mustn't. The exponential effects of inspiring others, the good engendered and inspiration effected have such powerful consequences, that to abnegate our responsibilities would be to condemn both ourselves and others to a sterile, frosty existence.

Nice Guys Finish Last

By: Chaya Shuchat

I always wondered about the motivation of someone who runs a marathon and comes in at last place. The amiable couple in their 60s, ambling

Sydenham Shul 24 Main Street, Rouxville, 2192.

Telephone: 640-5021, Fax: 485-2810

E-mail: sydshul@sydshul.co.za

Website: www.sydshul.co.za

www.facebook.com/sydenhamshul

together towards the finish line— what made them do it? Each year, some 36,000 people line up to participate in the New York City Marathon, a grueling 26-mile route that snakes through all five boroughs of the city. Of those thousands, only one will come out in front. Why do people run the marathon, knowing that they have no chance of coming in one of the top 10 or even the top 1,000?

I did a little research, reading first-person accounts of marathon runners. For one thing, completing a marathon is hardly a walk in the park. All the runners, even those who finish in last place, prepare for weeks in advance with fitness training. There's a vast difference between runner— even the one who finishes last— and the spectators on the sidelines. Neither of them has any hopes of winning the race. The participants, though, have an inner contentment and sense of satisfaction. They're in the race. For them, just completing the marathon itself is a badge of courage and pride, and they have no need for an external trophy.

The Torah portion of Behaalotecha (Numbers 8-12) describes the encampment of the Jewish people in the desert and the manner in which they traveled. After hearing the signal sounded by special silver trumpets, the 12 tribes of Israel packed up their camp, lined up in a designated order and marched forth into the desert. The tribe of Dan always marched last.

Their job was to bring up the rear and gather up any objects left behind— missing socks, perhaps, or lost children. They picked up after everyone else.

It's not a very glorious role. Not nearly as impressive as leading the tribes, like Judah, or carrying the holy vessels like the Levites. But it was a job that needed to get done.

Chassidic teachings explain that in addition to maintaining the baggage claim department, the Danites also ran a different type of "lost and found." There's something that people can lose when they're out in the front, soaking up all the glory. They can lose perspective. They can lose their sensitivity to others and the awareness of their own fallibility. The Danites were able to return this to the tribes who were out in front. They were in last place, but they were in the

race, eyes on the goal. Without any fanfare, they did what needed doing and stayed focused on the needs of others. With a wonderful blend of self-effacement and self-esteem, they felt no need to get ahead. They knew they were doing exactly what G-d needed from them.

The Danites are my inspiration, especially on those days when I'm in a slump and it seems that the world is passing me by. The days that no one returns my phone calls or reads my emails, and I feel like I'm the bottom of the heap. I'm so far behind in the social stratum that keeping up with the Joneses or the Greenbergs is not even a realistic possibility.

But maybe today there's someone who needs a smile from me or is losing their balance, and I can help them find it. Maybe someone out there needs a friend who will return their phone calls and respond to their e-mails. There's a little child right here who needs my full attention while he tells me about his day.

I'm chugging along in last place, the wind blowing in my face. Nothing is important; everything is important. I'm coming in last, but I'm in the race.

How to Make Great Kids

By Rabbi Shimon Posner

Have you ever met someone truly great? A giant? Have you felt the awe of their presence that is only enhanced when they extend themselves to you, when they draw you in? If you haven't yet, you have something to look forward to.

Some thirty-five years ago, a promising philosophy student at Cambridge set out to meet the great Jewish thinkers (and doers) of the times. He met the Rebbe, he asked questions and the Rebbe answered. Towards what he believed was the end of the interview, the Rebbe said that he too would like to ask a question, namely: "What are you doing for Jewish life in Cambridge?"

The student, Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of The British Commonwealth (and regardless of imposing titles, he truly, actually is great). When he assumed the chief rabbinate BBC interviewed him. They asked what made him become a rabbi. He responded that the Rebbe's question — what are you doing for Jewish life in Cambridge — started him on that road.