

Live & Laugh

What does the world's top dentist get? A little plaque.

Welcome
RABBI YOSSI PALTIEL
New York, USA
Guest Speaker at Shalosh Seudos
this week.
Early Mincha: 4:50 PM
Ladies & Gentlemen welcome.

Young Adults SpiritShul 'n Social
Tuesday night sessions for the month of
August begin this coming week.
Join **Rabbi Stern** and **YoungJewishJoburg** for a
weekly get-together to discuss, debate and
discover topics and issues of young people of
today.

What's Nu?!

The Barmy Boys
Amit Frankel

Mazal Tov to Darryl & Tali and grandparents
Michael & Leonie Rootshtain and Marge
Frankel.

Lyam Jasven

Mazal Tov to Richard & Hayley and to grandpar-
ents Mannie & Estelle Sherman and Ben Jasven.

Calendar

Shabbos Rosh Chodesh

*Thank you to our Chazonim: Rabbi Yossy
Goldman on Friday night and Shmuli Brill on
Shabbos morning.*

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am: Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall sponsored by the **Frankel Family** in honour of Amit's Bar Mitzvah and by **Jasven Family** in honour of Liam's Bar Mitzvah.
- ◆ **Sushi & Black Label Farbrengen** and a report back on the men's tour to Israel.
- ◆ Mincha: 4:50 pm
- ◆ **Pirkei Avos**: Chapter 5
- ◆ Shabbos Ends: 6:18 pm
- ◆ Mincha next week: 5:35 pm
- ◆ **Rosh Chodesh**: Shabbos 11 & Sun 12 Aug

CAJE
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Presents
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Monday 13 August | 7:45 pm
CAN WE REALLY CHANGE? AND IF SO, HOW?

Rabbi Yossy Goldman
Senior Rav, Sydenham Shul

Dayan Rav Yoel Smith
SA Beth Din

Serene Kaplan
Clinical Psychologist

Monday 20 August | 7:45 pm
REGRET, REMORSE & MOVING FORWARD

Rabbi Yehuda Stern
Sydenham Shul

Rebbetzin Aidel Kazilsky
Teacher, Radio Host

Ilanit Gerson
Educational Psychologist

Sunday 2 September | 9 am
**SPECIAL PRE ROSH HASHANAH
LADIES LECTURE**
Rebbetzin Estee Stern

Sydenham Community Centre | 24 Main Street, Rosetten, Jhb
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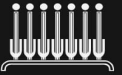
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Good Shabbos
SYDENHAM!



11 Aug 2018

Parshas Re'eh

30 Menachem Av 5778

The Tests of Life

by: *Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

Will the real prophet please stand up? There are false prophets out there, always have been. Way back in the Bible (Deuteronomy 13), the Torah was already warning us that we would encounter individuals who looked like prophets. They might even seem to make miracles like prophets but, in truth, they are really false prophets.

But why would G-d allow a false prophet to make a miracle or do wondrous things that are really impressive? (I mean, you've got to admit that walking on water is pretty awesome.) The answer, says our Parsha, is that G-d is testing us. If we really and truly love G-d with all our heart and soul then we won't be impressed by any fancy wonders or miracles. The acid test will always be, does this would-be prophet encourage us to follow G-d's laws or to ignore them? And if this "prophet" is not faithful to the word of G-d then he is no prophet but an imposter and a false prophet.

So how can a false prophet look so awesome? Because it is a test of faith for us.

If you think life's tests were over when you finished school, guess again. There are many tests in life and they can be much more difficult than chemistry or physics. And there isn't that much homework we can do to prepare for these kinds of tests either.

Poverty is a big test of faith. Even affluence can be a test that's tougher than we think.

Failing health is no easy one and tragedy is worse. Every individual faces his or her own unique tests and challenges. We might wish the other fellow's tests upon us but our tests are ours and ours alone to deal with. What tempts one person may not tempt the next. What is difficult for me might be simple for you and vice versa. If we remember that the challenge of the moment is, in fact, a test we might be better able to handle it and pass the test.

But we don't always realize that this may just be our very own personal, spiritual challenge, perhaps even the most important one of our entire existence. We don't necessarily appreciate that our souls might have come down to this world for the express purpose of passing these tests.

So we rationalize.

If there is a G-d in the world where was He at Auschwitz?

If G-d didn't intend for me to take the money, why did the boss leave the cash register open?

If this relationship is wrong, why does it feel so right? This poor woman is locked in a loveless marriage. Isn't she entitled to a little happiness? Shouldn't I be there for her?

If G-d really wanted me to keep Shabbos, why is my biggest turnover on Saturday?

If a yarmulke was meant for me to wear, why am I bald? I can't even find any hair for the darn clip!

But if we accept the concept of a test of faith then it becomes easier to deal with the challenges, as formidable as they may be.

The question remains - why does G-d test us? Is it really *to know whether we do, in fact, love G-d with all our heart and soul?* Doesn't G-d know all that already? How will we enlighten Him one way or the other? Is there anything G-d does not know?

The answer, according to Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi in his classic *Likutei Torah*, is that it is not for *G-d* to know but for *man* to know. Of course G-d knows. But He deliberately places tests and obstacles in our path so that when we overcome them we develop and bring to the fore the inner, latent love of G-d that was always there inside our hearts and souls. We are stronger after conquering the hurdles than we were before we faced them.

When we pass life's tests we discover that we do have that inner strength after all, that we really are believers who are profoundly connected to G-d and that our commitment is true and genuine. In passing life's tests we become more confident in our own moral strength and enriched and ennobled with a higher awareness of G-d.

We don't go looking for tests. Every morning in our prayers we ask G-d to *lead us not to temptation*. But if it does come our way we must appreciate that it is critical to our success as moral human beings and as committed Jews that we face up to the challenge.

May we never be tested. But if we are, let us remember that it is a test. Please G-d, we will pass with flying colors.

Parsha Pointers

*Re'eh: Artscroll Chumash pg 998;
Living Torah pg 925*

This week's Parsha contains no less than 55 of the 613 Biblical commandments. "I set before you a blessing and a curse. The bless-

ing: if you obey the commandments of God...; the curse: if you do not ..." It continues with laws for the land of Israel about staying away from idol worship and paganism, including false prophets.

The source of the Chosen People concept: "You are a nation consecrated to G-d who has chosen you to be His own special nation." We are chosen for responsibility, not privilege --to act morally and to be a "light unto the nations." There are also instructions regarding permitted and forbidden foods, Tithes and Tzedakah, to be warm-hearted and open-handed, and it concludes with the three pilgrimage festivals Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

Holy Lunch

By Rabbi Yanki Tauber

Have you ever closed a deal, celebrated your marriage (or its anniversary), or simply spent time with a good friend—without eating something together? When you think of home, is it not in your taste buds that the most elemental memories reside? And what about the food itself—can you get any closer to something than by ingesting it into yourself and turning it into your own flesh, bone and blood?

Tell me what, how, where and with whom you eat, and I'll tell you who and what you are.

Numerous explanations have been offered for the Torah's kosher dietary laws. Some point out the health benefits. Others dwell on the unifying effect these laws have on a dispersed people, and their role as a shield against assimilation.

Nachmanides, the great 13th-century sage and Kabbalist, explains that "the birds and many of the mammals forbidden by the Torah are predators, while the permitted animals are not; we are commanded not to eat those animals possessive of a cruel nature, so that we should not absorb these qualities into ourselves."

But perhaps the most basic reason (insofar as a divine command can possess a "reason") is that presented by the Torah itself in the closing verses of its chapter on the dietary laws:

To differentiate between the impure and the pure, between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten. (Leviticus 11:47)

"To differentiate," *lehavdil* in the original Hebrew—this single word defines man's uniqueness as a moral creature. Or, in the Torah's terminology, a "holy" person.

As our sages point out in their commentary on this verse, the concept of *lehavdil* applies only to two ostensibly similar things. Cows, too, differentiate, between a nutritious grass and a poisonous weed. But the kosher-observant shopper will differentiate between a piece of meat from an animal that was slaughtered by a certified *shochet* in accordance with the detailed laws of *shechitah*, and a piece of meat from an animal that was simply killed in an abattoir. No laboratory will discover any physical difference between the two. But the Jew accepts the first and rejects the second. And if he unwittingly brings the second into his kitchen, he will blowtorch the pan that cooked it and discard the china on which it was served.

Morality is the capacity to accept that there are things to be embraced and things to be rebuffed. Sometimes the desirability or undesirability of a thing is obvious; sometimes we can smell the difference, and sometimes we can understand it. But if that's where it stops, we're nothing more than cows avoiding the poison.

The point at which we begin to lead moral and holy lives is the point at which we say: "There is 'Yes' and there is 'No' in G-d's world. These are objective truths, established by the Creator of reality. Often I will find that the 'Yes' things give me pleasure, safeguard my health, preserve society, and fulfill me spiritually, while the 'No' things achieve the opposite. But this is not what makes them 'Yes' or 'No.' On the contrary: because a thing is morally positive, it will invariably occupy a positive place in my life; because a thing is morally negative, it will inevitably hurt me. But my need to affirm the 'Yes' and reject the 'No' stands above these considerations, which are the result, not the source, of the intrinsic difference."

Of course, every time the Torah tells us to do something or not to do something, it is making this point. But nowhere is the imperative *lehavdil* as fundamental as when it dictates what we should eat and what we should not. Nowhere is it as intimately woven into our

lives as when applied to the act of eating, by which the eater and the eaten literally become one flesh.

If you accept a yes/no line of demarcation across the diameter of your dinner plate, then—and only then—have you mastered the art of holiness.

Pointing the Finger

By Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg

Two friends were walking when they saw a sign saying, "Your country needs you!"

"Hey, David," said one to the other, "what are you waiting for? It says that they need *you!*"

The first word of this week's Torah reading, *Re'eh* ("See!"), is in the singular form, even though Moses was speaking to the entire Jewish nation.

The commentator Ibn Ezra explains that this is so that people would realize that "he's talking to *me*," to each and every one of us on a personal level.

There was once a rabbi who gave a brilliant, inspirational sermon. Afterwards, one of the congregants came over and said, "Rabbi, that was absolutely brilliant. If that doesn't get through to them, nothing will."

Get through to them? What about *you*, sir!

It is too easy to think that they are talking to the next person, not to me.

Throughout our lives, we are being spoken to by different people — a spouse, a family member, a friend, an employer, a clergyman, maybe even G-d — trying to give us a message. It is so easy to fall into the trap of looking to the person next to us and thinking that they are the one being spoken to. Isn't it worth considering that maybe, just this one time, they're actually talking to *me*, and to take it to heart?

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