

And G-d loves unique prayers...

Live & Laugh

Non-Jewish Driver Wanted

Issy and Hetty, a young observant married couple, were expecting their first baby. Unfortunately, Hetty's water broke on Shabbos and they had no choice but to call for a taxi to take them to the hospital's maternity ward.

Because Issy wanted to try and minimize the Shabbos violation, he told the controller that he must send them only a non-Jewish driver.

The taxi quickly arrived, but when Issy and Hetty were getting in, they overheard the controller on the two-way radio ask the driver, "Have you picked up the anti-semites yet?"

What's Nu?!

The Barmy Boy
Judd Lobel

Mazal Tov to Mandy Price & Jason Lobel and grandparents Maureen Latinsky & Ruth Bogatie.

Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Shul Brocha in the Seeff Hall in honour of Judd's Bar Mitzvah.
- ◆ **Smorgasbord of Shiurim.**
- ◆ Mincha: 5:10 pm
- ◆ **Shalosh Seudos**
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 5
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 6:19 pm
- ◆ Mincha next week 5:35 pm

- ◆ The **Scottish Leader Signature** whiskey at Shul is sponsored by **Distell &** available for purchase at **Norman Goodfellows.**
- ◆ **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.**
- ◆ **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.

Celebrating 10 YEARS
of Dynamic Young Adults Programmes & Services

youngjewishjoburg

DINNER ON MAIN
WITH
HERMAN MASHABA
Mayor of Johannesburg • Entrepreneur

FRIDAY NIGHT
18 AUGUST
SHUL SERVICE IN THE SPIRITSHUL
SYDENHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE
6PM

DELICIOUS FULL COURSE DINNER BY STAN & PETE

Ages 19-39 only | Bookings: www.yjj.co.za/events
R210 online or R230 through office
Students: R160 (limited availability - online only)
Info: 011 640 5021 or youngadults@sydshul.co.za

Sydenham SpiritShul
SYDENHAM-HIGHLANDS NORTH
HEBREW CONGREGATION

STARTS MONDAY 21 AUGUST. BOOK NOW!

SHOULDN'T WE WANT CONVERTS?

WHAT'S WITH JEWS AND FOOD?

IS "CHOSEN" PEOPLE RACIST?

HOW CAN EGGS BE PAREV?

PART 2 all new **JEWISH COURSE of Why?**

A new 4 week Multi-Media Course from the respected Ruhr Jewish Learning Institute of New York

SIGN UP TODAY FOR AN UNUSUALLY ENLIGHTENING EXPERIENCE!

INSTRUCTORS:
RABBI YOSSY GOLDMAN
RABBI YEMUDA STERN

What happens when you survey 30,000 people, asking them to submit the questions they are most curious about, and address them with insights from some of the greatest minds in Jewish history? You get *The Jewish Course of Why!*

Judaism is known for its rational approach, as a place where questions are freely asked and ideas are freely debated. It is that spirit of questioning and discovery that you will encounter in *The Jewish Course of Why!*

The Jewish Course of Why? spans a diverse range, from fun, light, and off-the-beaten-track questions to more complex and controversial issues. Prepare to tackle the seemingly unanswerable questions about Jewish belief and practice while you enjoy the quizzical curiosities of Jewish tradition.

"The Jewish Course of Why? presents the awesome intellectual, philosophical, and spiritual depths of Judaism in a remarkably accessible way. As the wisdom of Hashem, the Torah has the answers to life's most difficult and profound questions. I commend it!"
Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein

DATES: Mondays 21 August - 11 September 2017
TIME: 7:45pm **VENUE:** Sydenham Community Centre
BOOK: 011 640 5021 or www.sydshul.co.za
COST: R300 per person or R500 per couple sharing one Student Notebook.
Only R180 if you already have the Student Textbook from Part 1 of the course.

CAJE The Central Agency for Jewish Education
ILIT Institute for Jewish Learning and Teaching
Octagon Jewish Education

In Loving Memory of Yaakov ben Chaim Leib and Miriam bat Yoel Isaacson

NOW IN OUR 75TH YEAR OF INSPIRATION

Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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

12 Aug 2017 Parshas Eikev 20 Menachem Av 5777

Me, You and Us

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Who is more important, the Jew or the Jewish people? Is it Reb Yisroel or Am Yisroel?

In last week's Parsha we read the first chapter of the Shema. This week, we read the second. Yet there are so many similarities between the two. In fact, certain sentences are virtually identical. Why would the Torah, normally so cryptic, be so repetitive?

If one examines the text closely, a significant distinction between the two chapters becomes immediately discernible. The first chapter is in the singular and the second is in the plural. Teach Torah to your *son* in the first and to your *children* in the second. Put Tefillin on your *hand* in the first and on your *hands* in the second.

But why the need for both? Why not use one or the other? Why a paragraph for each expression?

The answer is that while G-d speaks to the individual, He also speaks to the community. He addresses the Jew; and also the Jewish People. The first paragraph of the Shema teaches us that each and every single individual is important, even critical, and G-d addresses each one of us personally. The second paragraph reminds us that there is also a sum of all the parts; that together, individuals make up a community. And communities, too, are very important.

A community is not only a motley collection of disparate individuals. A community is an important entity in its own right. In some

ways, a community is supreme; in others, we acknowledge the supremacy of the individual. Yes, there is a tension at play here. The Talmud captures these seemingly conflicting notions when it examines why humankind was created differently from the animal kingdom. They were created in herds while only one man and one woman were created initially. Says the Talmud, this is to teach us that a) it was worthwhile for the Almighty to create the world for but one man and woman, i.e. one single individual, and b) so that no human being could boast that his or her pedigree was better than anyone else's. We **all** came from Adam and Eve, so you are no better than me nor I than you. On the one hand, the individual human being is king, while on the other, humanity reigns.

Over 800 years ago, Maimonides ruled that communal leaders were obliged to safeguard the community and ought not to pay exorbitant ransom monies if one of its members was taken hostage. However, should a dangerous enemy demand that Jewish leaders hand over to them a particular individual lest they attack the entire community; it is not permitted to sacrifice even one individual for the sake of the community.

So we need both sections of the Shema, because both are important, the individual and the community.

Why do I focus on this theme today? Because in approximately five weeks time we will usher in the New Year. And the ongoing tension between the single and plural will manifest itself very blatantly. "Why must we pay to pray?" some will demand. They will decry the shameless commercialism of

organized religion. And, yes, a Shul should have a heart. And our Houses of Prayer should not be allowed to become materialistic and mercenary, lest we lose the young, the poor and the idealistic. At the same time, individuals need to be sympathetic to the hard facts of congregational life. We cannot take for granted or take advantage of our established - and costly to maintain - infrastructures. The tension is sometimes tangible as we struggle to balance these two, seemingly exclusive, imperatives of Jewish life.

Statistics vary. In some communities, not more than 30% of Jews are officially affiliated. In others, the figure is much higher. The community must be sensitive, welcoming and embracing of every individual who seeks to belong. Still, individuals must be fair too. If everyone demanded a free ride how would a congregation support itself?

Let us keep reciting both chapters of the Shema. Then we can look forward to healthy Jews and wholesome communities.

Parsha Pointers

*Eikev: Artscroll Chumash pg 980;
Living Torah pg 905*

In the Parshah of Eikev ("Because"), Moses continues his closing address to the Children of Israel, promising them that if they will fulfill the commandments (mitzvot) of the Torah, they will prosper in the Land they are about to conquer and settle in keeping with G-d's promise to their forefathers.

Moses also rebukes them for their failings in their first generation as a people, recalling their worship of the Golden Calf, the rebellion of Korach, the sin of the spies, their angering of G-d at Taveirah, Massah and Kivrot Hataavah ("The Graves of Lust"). "You have been rebellious against G-d," he says to them, "since the day I knew you." But he also speaks of G-d's forgiveness of their sins, and the Second Tablets which G-d inscribed and gave to them following their repentance. Their forty years in the desert, says Moses to the people, during which G-d sustained them with daily manna from heaven, was to teach them "that man does not

live on bread alone, but by the utterance of G-d's mouth does man live."

Moses describes the land they are about to enter as "flowing with milk and honey," blessed with the "seven kinds" (wheat, barley, grapevines, figs, pomegranates, olive oil and dates), and as the place that is the focus of G-d's providence of His world. It is also the source of the precept of prayer, and includes a reference to the resurrection of the dead in the Messianic Age.

Manna, Food of Starvation

By Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum

A family friend once told me that she would notice a peculiar quirk whenever her father-in-law, a Holocaust survivor, would stay at her house.

Every night before retiring to bed, Zeide would wander into the kitchen and unobtrusively check out the contents of her pantry. If there was bread on the shelf, he'd relax and head off to his bedroom. But if there was none, he would invariably leave the house to buy a loaf.

He never made a big fuss about it, and she does not remember whether he ever explicitly said that he could not go to sleep unless there was bread in the house, but that was his custom.

Obviously, his war experience influenced this behavior. We who have never been really hungry cannot possibly fathom the effect of the years of privation that he and his generation suffered in the ghettos and camps. But I can imagine, in an abstract sense, the anxiety of never really knowing where one's next meal is coming from.

The Food of Starvation

We find a parallel concept in this week's Torah reading. The manna that fell from heaven throughout the 40 years in the desert is referred to by the Midrash as "starvation food." On the face of it, this doesn't seem to make sense. The manna was the food of miracles, falling every day and feeding the nation. Every single person received an exact portion, sized to

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

sate one's hunger, and it had the miraculous property of tasting like whichever food one desired. What could be more satisfying than that?

However, on reflection, it's understandable that if you had to rely on a daily miracle to eat, you'd always feel hungry. Imagine going to bed every night for 40 years nervously wondering if G-d would send food again the next day. You might have been fed today, but how confident would you be of the next day's sustenance? You'd always be thinking about food.

The Food That Satisfies

It is interesting to note, however, that in the first blessing of Grace After Meals, we quote the words "You shall eat, be satisfied and bless the L-rd your G-d," which according to our tradition is a reference to the manna.

Now, that's really strange. Is the manna satisfying or not? Is it the bread of starvation or the food that fills you up? How can one foodstuff, miraculous as it may be, be variously described in such different ways?

Because the feelings a person has towards the manna are influenced by his perspective on life and his relationship with G-d.

From one perspective, the food you buy with the money you've earned is far more satisfying than the potential manna still to fall from heaven. Your resources are measurable and quantifiable, and you can relax in the knowledge that you have enough to eat today. However, from another perspective, the money you've got right now and the food that you can buy with it is limited. There is only so much that you will ever be able to achieve on your own.

G-d, however, is infinite and has unlimited resources to share. No matter how difficult it is now and how tough your current circumstances, you can feel confident that things can and will improve. Even in times of loss and suffering, you can look forward to a better tomorrow, with hope and confidence that G-d will provide the resources for your salvation.

The manna that comes to us as a gift directly from G-d is the truest and most satisfying food one can possibly receive. And the sprinkling of G-dliness that falls in our life is the daily bread of faith that sustains our body and spirit forever.

Uniformity: The Key to Uniqueness

By Rabbi Naftali Silberberg

The Biblical commandment of prayer is worded as an enjoinder to serve G-d with "all our hearts"--which the Sages understood to be a commandment to pray. Originally, everyone offered personalized prayers, employing words which expressed their unique feelings. And as feelings fluctuate, so did every individual's personal prayers fluctuate on a daily basis. Eventually, the Men of the Great Assembly instituted uniform prayer for all Jews, creating the basic text of the prayer book which is used to this very day.

But can a person's relationship with his Creator be scripted? Is it possible to dictate the feelings one should be expressing to G-d?

In the teachings of Chassidut, words are considered to be "vessels"—vessels for the feelings and thoughts which generate them. Two people can say the exact same words, words which seemingly express the same sentiment, but only the "vessel" is the same, the emotions behind the words can be worlds apart. Two people can tell their spouses, "I love you"; does that mean that their love is the same, in either quantity or quality? Obviously not.

We live in a world largely obsessed with external trappings. Everything is judged by its most revealed dimension, while the essence goes unnoticed. Uniqueness is expressed through a nose-ring or sports car, not through emphasizing character and wisdom. Sometimes it is necessary to have two items which are externally alike in order to appreciate the profound difference which actually exists between the two.

The challenge we have is to create a personal prayer filled with personal feelings and sentiments -- while using the same words as the person sitting next to us in the synagogue. This means truly immersing oneself in the prayer, for if the vessels are empty, if the words lack a backing of feelings and concentration, then the prayer which is being offered is actually no different than the prayer of every other John Doe.