

What's Nu?!

The Barmy Boy
Kevin Klucznik

Mazal Tov to Walter & Ronit Klucznik and to grandparents Henry & Trudy Woolff.

Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl: 8:45 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Boma sponsored by the **Klucznik Family** in honour of Kevin's Bar Mitzvah.
- ◆ Mincha: 6:25 pm
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 7:38 pm

All SydShul Shiurim

resumed this week.

Join a Shiur now!

- **Sunday morning 9-10 am: Mishna (Brochos) & Mysticism with Rabbi Yossy Goldman** (boardroom). Brand new book. Great time to start.
- **Tuesday 1:15-2:00 pm—Ladies Shiur. Parsha & Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Yossy Goldman** (Elk Hall)
- **Tuesday 7:45 pm - Gemorra Sotah with Rabbi Goldman** (Rabbi's home)
- **Wednesday 8:00 pm - Gemorra Ta'anis with Rabbi Yehuda Stern** (Rabbi's home). Brand new book. Great time to start.
- **Thursday 9:15 am (alternate) - Young Mother's Torah Class with Rabbi Yehuda Stern** (Elk Hall).
- **Shabbos 8:15 am - Soulful Study with Rabbi Yehuda Stern** (Shtibl)
- **Shabbos After the Brocha - Smorgasbord of Shiurim: "Halacha of the Week" with Rabbi Yossy Goldman**
"Tanya" with **Rabbi Yehuda Stern**
"Kings & Prophets": **Tales from the Book of Samuel with Rebbetzin Estee Stern**

Go to the Shiur of your choice, but go to a Shiur!

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

Our New Rabbinic Interns at Sydenham Shul 2018 now offering

"A TASTE OF TORAH" With Rabbis Levi Ulman and Mendel Teitlebaum

Between now and Pesach, here is your chance to utilise this amazing opportunity - a once-a-week personal *chavrusa*' (learning partner) or '*chabura*' (small study cell) with one of our new **Rabbinic Interns** on almost any topic of your choice, including:

HEBREW READING for absolute **Beginners**, or Hebrew **Refresher**, or even **Speed Reading** classes!

Basic Judaism, Parsha, Siddur, Talmud, Halacha, Philosophy, take your pick!

Or, learn your **Bar Mitzvah Haftorah** and sing it in Shul!

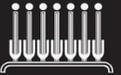
For **gentlemen**, learning will take place in Shul after Shachris in the morning and before Mincha in the afternoon. For **ladies** and families, our Interns will make house calls and do **Family Learning** in the evening.

To book your slot, contact **Rabbi Goldman** or **Rabbi Stern** at Shul or **Rabbi Levi** on 065 806 0264. First come, first served, so do hurry!!



Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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20 Jan 2018

Parshas Bo

4 Shevat 5778

The Money or the Box?

by: *Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

What? Is the Rabbi turning TV Quiz show host? Has he become a gambling man?

Believe it or not, this Rabbi is talking about what all good traditional Rabbis talk about - the Parsha. Have no fear; the Bible isn't going to Vegas. The Money or the Box really does relate to the 10th Plague G-d visited upon Egypt prior to the Exodus.

The final, devastating Plague of the First-Born saw the Israelite first-born spared. Therefore, they are eternally indebted to G-d for their very lives. So ever since then, the firstborn of Israel "belong to G-d." And that's why this Parsha gives us the Mitzvah of Pidyon HaBen, the Redemption of the First-born.

In a tradition that is practiced to this day, when the first-born is a male, the father together with a Kohen - who as minister in the Temple would serve as the Almighty's agent - perform a redemption ceremony after the child has passed his first month of life. This is known as Pidyon Haben.

(The reason the Pidyon Haben is not nearly as well known as the Bris is because it is the exception rather than the rule. It only applies to the first-born and only when the delivery is natural - not by caesarian section - and if either father or mother are of Kohen or Levite families they are exempt from the procedure.)

In this quaint and curious ceremony, a fascinating dialogue takes place between father and Kohen. The child is brought in and the father makes the following declaration to the

Kohen.

"My Israelite wife has borne me this firstborn son."

Whereupon the Kohen asks the million dollar question, "Which would you rather have - your first-born son or the five silver shekels you are obligated to give me for his redemption?"

The gathered crowd waits in suspense to hear the father's response. What will he choose? To keep the five silver shekels and give the hassles of newborns, daybreak nappie changes and future school fees to the Kohen, or will he keep his child and hand over the shekels? Thankfully, Jewish fathers have always made the correct choice, albeit sometimes with a little gentle prodding from their wives.

Now I ask you, is this not ridiculous? 'The money or the kid? This is a serious question? I mean, which normal father is going to willingly give away his child to save a few bucks? What is the point of this discussion? Why engage in ancient, obsolete ceremonies that have no relevance?

The answer is that it is very relevant. The Money or the Child means much more than just here and now at the ceremony on Day 31 of this boy's life. The Kohen is asking the father a very serious question indeed. "Throughout your child's life, what will be most important to you, what will be uppermost in your mind? Will it be money, materialism, and acquiring more status symbols than your friends, or will it be your children and your family life? Where will your priorities lie? Will you slave away building up your business and become an absentee dad? And you, Mom, will you while away the days drinking cappuccino and doing your nails

or will you be personally involved in raising your children, teaching and nurturing them?

That is the Kohen's question. And based on experience, every father should think very carefully before he will answer that question, hopefully in the affirmative.

So the next time you're invited to attend a Pidyon Haben ceremony and you hear that seemingly preposterous question being asked, 'do you prefer the money or the child,' don't laugh and don't snicker. Don't grimace and don't even giggle. Be dead serious. Because a Jewish father is about to decide the future for his family and indeed for our people. Let's hope he makes the right choice.

Parsha Pointers

Bo: Artscroll Chumash pg 340;
Living Torah pg 301

The last three of the Ten Plagues are visited on Egypt: a swarm of locusts devours all the crops and greenery; a thick, palpable darkness envelops the land; and all the firstborn of Egypt are killed at the stroke of midnight of the 15th of the month of Nissan.

G-d commands the first mitzvah to be given to the people of Israel: to establish a calendar based on the monthly rebirth of the moon. The Israelites are also instructed to bring a "Passover offering" to G-d: a lamb or kid is to be slaughtered and its blood sprinkled on the doorposts and lintel of every Israelite home, so that G-d should pass over these homes when He comes to kill the Egyptian firstborn. The roasted meat of the offering is to be eaten that night together with matzah (unleavened bread) and bitter herbs.

The death of the firstborn finally breaks Pharaoh's resistance and he literally drives the Children of Israel from his land. So hastily do they depart, there is no time for their dough to rise, and the only provisions they take along are unleavened. Before they go, they ask their

Egyptian neighbors for gold, silver and garments, draining Egypt of its wealth.

The Children of Israel are commanded to consecrate all firstborn and to observe the anniversary of the Exodus each year by removing all leaven from their possession for seven days, eating matzah, and telling the story of their redemption to their children. They are also commanded to wear *tefillin* on the arm and head as a reminder of the Exodus and their resultant commitment to G-d.

Door to Holiness

By Rabbi Moshe Bryski

So what's with the blood on the doors?

The Torah tells us of the final steps leading up to the liberation of Israel from slavery in ancient Egypt. On that fateful night, G-d dealt the final blow to the Egyptians by smiting the firstborn of each of their households while sparing the firstborn of the Israelite households — precipitating total Egyptian surrender.

"They [the Israelites] shall take some of its blood [of the Paschal sacrifice] and place it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses.... When I see the blood I shall pass over you; there shall not be a plague of destruction upon you when I strike in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:7-13).

A simple question: Did G-d really need a sign on the door in order to know which home was inhabited by Israelites and which not?

Well, the suggestion goes, perhaps G-d didn't need any extra demarcation, but you know, with it being such a busy night and all, perhaps the *Malach Hamavet* (Angel of Death) needed that extra marker while making his sweep through the neighbourhood.

But let's be real about this. This is not some scene out of a Hollywood movie where the wrong guy is taken out at the wrong time. Surely the real Angel of Death doesn't use painted street addresses to locate his mark.

So again, what's with the placing of the sacrificial blood on the door? And for that matter, why the door? Why not the window, the stoop or the rooftop?

Let us take a moment here to analyse the concept — the symbolism — of a door. The door creates privacy, in addition to providing shelter and pro-

tection. The door is what separates the public person from the private person, the external self from the internal self. In the privacy of one's home is where all of the facades and inhibitions tend to fall away, allowing the best (and sometimes the worst) of what a person has to offer to come to the surface.

By way of example, some people can be very patient on the outside — all smiles and cheerful when in public, and yet, when they come home, it's moody-broody time; no patience for the kids, no tolerance for the spouse, not a smile anywhere in sight. On the other hand, some people can be very quiet, withdrawn, reserved and uptight when in public, but barrels of fun and laughter when within the confines of their own homes. The door is where that transition — from the superficial "you" to the real "you" — tends to take place.

Our Judaism asks of us: What sort of doors do you have? What transpires on the inside of those doors? Is there a spirit of sanctity and holiness on the other side of that threshold? Are there Jewish books on the shelves? Are there kosher products in the cupboard and in the fridge? Are the Shabbat and Jewish holidays celebrated therein with joy, meaning and depth? Are words of Torah shared? Are prayers recited? Only you and the Almighty truly know the answers to those questions.

There is a great deal of discussion about how Jews ought not shy away from behaving as Jews on the outside (as well there should be), but sometimes it behooves us to address the issue of not being lax with our Judaism on the inside — where it really counts.

The Talmud tells us that "there was a great custom in Jerusalem" that whenever a family sat down to a meal, they would tack a cloth on to the door of their home. This served as a sign to all strangers and passers-by that it was mealtime and that anyone who was hungry or so desired was welcome to walk on in and partake with them.

What is posted on our proverbial doors? Do we have a symbolic "welcome mat" at the door, or is it more like a "do not disturb" sign? Do we welcome the opportunity to be hospitable and benevolent to those in need of comfort, friendship or sustenance? Or do we (figuratively speaking) slam those doors in the faces of rabbis or needy individuals who seek entry to the sincerity of our hearts?

One of the most beautiful and enduring of all biblical precepts is that of the *mezuzah*, which is posted on the right doorpost of a Jewish home. The *mezuzah* testifies that this home is truly a Jewish home; a home where holiness, modesty, decency and goodness are a way of life — even (if not especially) behind closed doors. The *mezuzah* represents G-d's presence in the home as well as His protection over all who reside therein. It is not merely a nice Jewish ornament. Indeed, if we only appreciate the *mezuzah* for its facade — its external appearance — rather than its internal spiritual meaning and we're not too overly concerned about whether the scroll contained therein has been scribed in accordance with the Torah's instructions in that regard, then we're missing what it is that a Jewish door is all about. A Jewish door is where the facade is supposed to end and where truth and authenticity are supposed to begin. It's not what the *mezuzah* case looks like that's most important; it's what's inside that really matters. What is the true essence of the matter?

So, what was the significance of the Israelites' marking their doorposts with the blood of the Passover sacrifice? It was not an address or a door marker. It was their testimony that they were truly ready to leave Egypt. They were devoted — inside and out — to G-d and to Moses, indeed to the point of self-sacrifice. And that was why their homes were truly un-touchable by the Angel of Death. For the blood on the doorpost was there — not for G-d's benefit or for His messenger's benefit — but for the benefit of the Israelites who finally understood what it was that separates Jew from Egyptian. It's all in the door.

Live & Laugh

An elderly woman from the country was visiting the big city for the first time. She checked in at the hotel and let the porter take her bags. She followed him in. But as the door closed, her face fell. "Young man," she said to him. "I may be old, but I haven't lost my mind. I paid a lot of money for this room, but it's nothing like I expected. It's too small and there's no air conditioning. There's not even a bed here!" Porter replied: "This isn't your room. This is the elevator."

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