

of nationality, were refused entry into the old Jewish quarter to meditate and pray at the Wall, the last vestige of Solomon's temple. It is important to remember: had Jordan not joined Egypt and Syria in the 1967 war against Israel, the old city of Jerusalem would still be Arab. Clearly, while Jews were ready to die for Jerusalem they would not kill for Jerusalem.

Today, for the first time in history, Jews, Christians and Muslims all may freely worship at their shrines. And, contrary to certain media reports, Jews, Christians and Muslims ARE allowed to build their homes anywhere in the city. The anguish over Jerusalem is not about real estate but about memory.

What is the solution? Pressure will not produce a solution. Is there a solution? There must be, there will be. Why tackle the most complex and sensitive problem prematurely? Why not first take steps which will allow the Israeli and Palestinian communities to find ways to live together in an atmosphere of security. Why not leave the most difficult, the most sensitive issue, for such a time?

Jerusalem must remain the world's Jewish spiritual capital, not a symbol of anguish and bitterness, but a symbol of trust and hope. As the Hasidic master Rebbe Nahman of Bratslav said, "Everything in this world has a heart; the heart itself has its own heart."

Jerusalem is the heart of our heart, the soul of our soul.

## Live & Laugh

A dog walked in to the telegram office one day. He took out a blank form and wrote on it: "Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof."

Then he handed it to the clerk. The clerk examined the paper and said to the dog, "You know there are only nine words here? You could send another 'Woof' for the same price." The dog replied, "But that would make no sense at all!"

A man went to his lawyer and told him, "My neighbor owes me \$500 and he won't pay up. What should I do?"

"Do you have any proof he owes you the money?" asked the lawyer. "Nope," replied the man.

"OK, then write him a letter asking him for the \$5,000 he owed you," said the lawyer. "But it's only \$500," replied the man.

"Precisely. That's what he will reply and then you'll have your proof!"

## Calendar

*Shabbos Mevorchim Sivan*

*Molad: Thursday 25 May 20:32:12*

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Shul Brocha in the Seeff Hall.
- ◆ **Sushi & Black Label Farbrengen**
- ◆ Mincha: 4:50 pm
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 5
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 6:00 pm
- ◆ Mincha from Sunday: 5:20 pm
- ◆ **Rosh Chodesh:** Friday 26 May

### SPECIAL LADIES SHAVUOT SHIUR

With Rebbetzin Estee Stern  
**Sunday 28 May 9am @ Elk Hall**  
Coffee, tea and refreshments

### ANNUAL SHAVUOT DINNER catered by Nussbaums

Tuesday 30 May  
Adult R165 / Child (3-12) R135  
Bookings: Shul office or sydshul.co.za

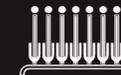
Dinner will be followed by  
**'Sleepless in Sydenham'**  
All-night learning programme  
Starting at 10:30 pm

- ◆ 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**
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# Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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20 May 2017 Parshas Behar-Bechukosai 24 Iyar 5777

## Louder!

by: *Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

One section stands out from the rest in this week's *Parsha*. It is known as the *Tochecho*, or, The Rebuke. There we read a whole litany of disasters that will befall our people should we turn our backs on G-d and abandon His way of life. The tradition is that the *Baal Koreh* (Torah Reader) himself, without being called up, takes this Aliya and when he reaches the relevant section, he lowers his voice to soften the blow of these terrible curses.

For 24 years, I produced and hosted South Africa's only Jewish radio show, The Jewish Sound. Once, my guest on air was Rabbi Shlomo Riskin from Efrat, Israel. He told the story that as a child growing up in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, one Shabbos he went to *daven* in the Shul of the Rebbe of Klausenberg. Originally from Hungary, the Rebbe was a spiritual giant of a man who had lost 11 children in the Holocaust and never sat *shiva* because he was pre-occupied with saving as many lives as he possibly could. After the war, he settled in America and developed a large following. Subsequently, he relocated to Israel and among other things set up the Laniado Hospital in Natanya.

That Shabbos, The Rebuke was being read. When it came to the part of the curses, the Reader did what he always did. He lowered his voice and read in a softer tone. Suddenly, the Rebbe shouted in Yiddish, "*Hecher!*" "Louder!" The Reader was confused. He was simply following the tradition of generations. Perhaps he was not hearing right, so he continued reading in the softer tone. "*Hecher!*"

"Louder!" thundered the Klausenberger Rebbe. "Let the Almighty hear what is being read! All the curses have already been fulfilled. Now there must be only blessings for our people." ("*Zol Der Ribono shel Olom heren! Alle kelolois zenen shoin mekayem gevoren. Yetzt darf men nor brochos.*")

Many of our Sages have described the Holocaust as the birth pangs of Moshiach and the ultimate redemption. Never will there be a repeat of such calamities. We have endured more than enough of exile, wanderings, pogroms and persecutions. The curses, in all their tragic, cataclysmic imagery have actually materialised. Now there must be only goodness, happiness, warmth and blessing for Am Yisrael.

At the end of The Rebuke, G-d says *And I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the Land.*

Not only will the Almighty remember us, the Jewish People, He will also remember His Holy Land, our Land of Israel. Perhaps we might interpret this as a message to the anti-Semites of the world who hide behind their anti-Zionist or anti-Israel rantings and ravings. *I will remember the Land - a message also to the nations of the world who claim to be our friends, the shrewd manipulators who are expert in political backstabbing in Washington, London, France, etc. I will remember the Land - a message to our own Jewish fantasiers who would undermine their own brothers with their hopeless attempts at appeasing mortal enemies. To all of them the G-d of Israel says I will remember the Land. I will never forsake My land or My people.*

And as He remembers us, let us remember Him and our eternal Covenant. May we prepare for Shavuot and the Giving of the Torah with earnestness and joy. May G-d and His people always remember each other. *Amen.*

## Parsha Pointers

*Behar-Bechukosai: Artscroll pg 696;  
Living Torah pg 630*

On the mountain of Sinai, G-d communicates to Moses the laws of the Sabbatical year: every seventh year, all work on the land should cease, and its produce becomes free for the taking for all, man and beast.

Seven Sabbatical cycles are followed by a fiftieth year—the Jubilee year, on which work on the land ceases, all indentured servants are set free, and all ancestral estates in the Holy Land that have been sold revert to their original owners. Additional laws governing the sale of lands, and the prohibitions against fraud and usury, are also given.

G-d promises that if the people of Israel will keep His commandments, they will enjoy material prosperity and dwell secure in their homeland. But He also delivers a harsh “rebuke,” warning of the exile, persecution and other evils that will befall them if they abandon their covenant with Him. Nevertheless, “Even when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away; nor will I ever abhor them, to destroy them and to break My covenant with them; for I am the L-rd their G-d.”

The Parshah concludes with the rules on how to calculate the values of different types of pledges made to G-d.

## Don't Sit Back and Enjoy the Ride!

*By Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg*

This week's Torah reading speaks about the prohibition of lending money on interest. The problem with lending on interest is that the money has now passed on to the other party, yet I continue to receive benefit for the use of the money despite its no longer being in my possession. I receive profits in

return for a one-time effort a long time ago, even without any continuing effort on my part.

In whatever field it may be -- work, family life, educating children, etc. -- we find ourselves, at one time or another, in a position to influence others and to advise and guide people in a positive manner. When we feel we have had an impact -- that we have managed to impart positive values, methods or attitudes to another person -- it gives us a feeling of accomplishment.

There is always the danger, however, that we sit back and bask in the glory of our accomplishments. We think to ourselves, now that we have influenced someone else we can relax and reap the benefits of their achievements. Along comes the Torah and tells us that this is not so. No matter how many others we may have influenced or helped, it does not in any way change our own obligations to achieve to the fullest degree, to be a living example to others of the values we cherish.

They used to say that what singles out an Israeli Army commander is that rather than saying "Forward, soldiers!" they would say, "After me!" I am with you, I am "one of you." Whatever I taught you, I am doing exactly the same thing myself. We are all together in the same boat.

No matter how much we achieve, or how many others we guide, we must never rest on our laurels. We cannot rely on prior investments from years ago. We have to remain active ourselves, true to ourselves and our values.

## Did I just Have a Spiritual Experience?

*By Rabbi Aron Moss*

*Question:*

I am just back from my big trip to Israel. I thought I'd never get there. I think it's the first Jewish thing I've done since my bar mitzvah (which wasn't so Jewish either).

But here's the weird part. I went to the Wall in Jerusalem, and you know me, I'm the last person

to have a "spiritual experience". But as I approached the Wall I started to cry uncontrollably. I felt this strange magnetism towards the Wall, almost as if G-d was pulling me. What do you think? Not bad for an agnostic, huh?

*Answer:*

You have a powerful Jewish soul, and you caught a glimpse of its power at the Wall.

The Wall is the last remnant of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. While ransacking Jerusalem 2000 years ago, the Romans burnt the Temple, and knocked down its stone walls. But one wall refused to budge, the Western Wall. The sages predicted long ago that the Western Wall will never be destroyed. It represents a holiness that no foreign power can ever touch. They can destroy the Temple, but there is something that is beyond their reach, a divine presence that never leaves Jerusalem.

The Kabbalists teach that man is a microcosm. Whatever exists in the world, can be found within ourselves. If there is a Wall that is so holy that it can never be destroyed, then within us must also be a spark of holiness that can never be lost. This is our spark of Jewishness, the essence of the Jewish soul. Our soul may be surrounded by foreign invaders - skepticism, ignorance, scars from negative Jewish experiences - but it nevertheless remains intact. Nothing can extinguish the Jewish spark, it is always there waiting to be ignited.

Even an agnostic Jew who has been dislocated from his spiritual heritage for generations, is Jewish at the deepest level of his being. Nothing can take that away. Eventually, if he allows it, that innate Jewishness will surface.

Everyone has a different catalyst that ignites this spark. In your case, the microcosm met the macrocosm. Your Jewish spark, the indestructible presence of G-d within you, was awakened at the Wall, the indestructible presence of G-d in the world. I guess it's not surprising that many have had that experience.

Now it's up to you. You have been given a gift. You have come face to face with your soul. These experiences don't happen often. But once you have discovered the Holy Wall within yourself, you can start to rebuild your inner Temple around it, so that sense of holiness will never be

lost again. That's the secret of faith. You don't get it from the outside, you discover it within yourself.

You may be an agnostic. You may even be an atheist. But your Holy Wall is always there.

## Jerusalem: Heart of Our Heart

*By Elie Wiesel*

*In April 2010 Nobel Prize-winning author and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel took out a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal, in the form an open letter to President Obama, with whom Wiesel visited the Buchenwald death camp the previous year. Here is the text of the letter.*

For Jerusalem

It was inevitable: Jerusalem once again is at the center of political debates and international storms. New and old tensions surface at a disturbing pace. Seventeen times destroyed and seventeen times rebuilt, it is still in the middle of diplomatic confrontations that could lead to armed conflict. Neither Athens nor Rome has aroused that many passions.

For me, the Jew that I am, Jerusalem is above politics. It is mentioned more than six hundred times in Scripture-and not a single time in the Koran. Its presence in Jewish history is overwhelming. There is no more moving prayer in Jewish history than the one expressing our yearning to return to Jerusalem. To many theologians, it IS Jewish history, to many poets, a source of inspiration. It belongs to the Jewish people and is much more than a city, it is what binds one Jew to another in a way that remains hard to explain. When a Jew visits Jerusalem for the first time, it is not the first time; it is a homecoming. The first song I heard was my mother's lullaby about and for Jerusalem. Its sadness and its joy are part of our collective memory.

When a Jew visits Jerusalem for the first time, it is a homecoming.

Since King David took Jerusalem as his capital, Jews have dwelled inside its walls with only two interruptions; when Roman invaders forbade them access to the city and again, when under Jordanian occupation. Jews, regardless

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