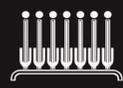




# Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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25 Mar 2017 Parshas Vayakhel-Pikudei 27 Adar 5777

## The Day After By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Some years ago, here in Johannesburg, the United Nations held the International Summit on Sustainable Development. The Summit was a great success. One wonders, though, whether all the wonderful decisions and resolutions that were adopted were ever implemented. In other words, were they themselves sustainable?

*minyan* the next morning?  
A son says Kaddish for his father or mother faithfully - for the week of Shiva. And then? Or perhaps he comes to Shul regularly and recites Kaddish for the full 11 months. And the next day he's gone.

Good ideas and worthwhile projects are suggested regularly. The question is, do they get off the drawing board? And if they do, how long do they last? What degree of permanence do they enjoy?

And it's not only about Shul, it's about life. What happens after the honeymoon? Or the first anniversary? Do we have the commitment and the staying power to be in for the long haul?

*Moses gathered the assembly of the Children of Israel* – these are the opening words of Parshat Vayakhel. Rashi tells us that this day of assembly was the day after Yom Kippur. Moses came down from Mount Sinai on Yom Kippur bearing the message of G-d's forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf. The next day, he gathered the people and commanded them to build the Sanctuary.

Many people get inspired at one time or another. Over the years, I've seen hundreds of men and women go through a phase of dedicated Jewish living only to see them fall back on old habits and lifestyles. And it wasn't because their commitment faltered, but because they did not implement a sustainable programme for that commitment to thrive.

Why is it important to know that this was the day after Yom Kippur?

Take Shabbat. A person experiences a real sense of Shabbat for the very first time in his or her life. Then again, and again, until they decide that they really want this for themselves. It's so serene, so spiritual, and so special. So, they commit to keeping Shabbos. They start walking to Shul every Saturday. There's only one problem. They live three miles from the Shul that inspired them. O.K., it's not impossible to walk three miles; lots of people do it every day to keep in shape. So, as long as they are still on a spiritual high it works, but the reality is that it is simply not sustainable. If they don't move closer to their favourite Shul, something will snap.

Perhaps it is because while on Yom Kippur everyone is holy, the challenge is to be good **after** Yom Kippur. It is relatively easy to be holy on the holiest day of the year. The test of faith is to maintain our good behavior in the days and weeks following that awesome, sacred experience. Will we still be inspired or will our enthusiasm have waned straight after *Neilah*? How many Synagogues are filled to capacity on Yom Kippur and struggle for a

I remember a couple who went so far as to buy a special Shabbos apartment near the Shul and they

giving. A passion that never wavers and burns as bright as the first time it was lit—by a Rebbe whose smile was so wide, it looked like he was laughing.

I didn't buy her a gift and when she asked me why

Maybe, just maybe, he was. Maybe he saw something beyond the daunting future. Maybe it filled him with a satisfaction and vindication that he could not, would not, did not want to, contain.

I replied, "Well, you still haven't used the gift I bought you last year!"

This I know. My grandmother lived with whatever it was that he gave her. Without meaning to sound coarse, but realizing I do, I am grateful that her perhaps "selective" memory gave me a glimpse of something burning that was never extinguished, consuming but never consumed.

She built in America what architects of the land said could not be supported. But then, looking at blueprints, it can be hard to see passion.

We will read these portions. We will think they are redundant. We will remember that bringing heaven to earth demands a passion of the heart that allows for no redundancy. We will repeat it with a passion that has not abated.

## Live & Laugh

My wife and I were sitting at a table at her high school reunion and she kept staring at a drunken man swigging his drink as he sat alone at a nearby table.

I asked her, "Do you know him?"

"Yes", she sighed, "He's my old boyfriend.... I understand he took to drinking right after we split up those many years ago, and I hear he hasn't been sober since."

"My G-d!" I said, "Who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?"

And that's when the fight started....

One year, I decided to buy my mother-in-law a cemetery plot as a Christmas gift. The next year,

## Pesach Kashering

Sunday 2 April 10:00 am - 12:00 noon at the Bayit.

Metal utensils only and they must be perfectly clean and unused for the previous 24 hours. Thank you Rabbi Stern.

## Calendar

*Shabbos Mevorchim Nissan  
Molad: Mon 27 Mar 19:04:10  
Parshas HaChodesh—2 Torahs*

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; ShTibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall.
- ◆ **Sushi & Black Label Farbrengen**
- ◆ Mincha: 5:35 pm
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 6:45 pm
- ◆ **Rosh Chodesh:** Tues 28 March

Welcome to **Harry Sideropolous** and all the guests here for the YA dinner.

**LADIES PESACH SHIUR**  
with **Rebbetzin Estee Stern**  
Sunday 26 March 9am  
Sydenham Community Centre  
Coffee, tea & refreshments

**SYDENHAM SHUL'S**  
**"JERUSALEM 50!" ISRAEL TOUR**  
18-25 May 2017  
**32 people are signed up.**  
**We have room for a few more.**  
**Speak to Rabbi Goldman or Louis Gorsky in Shul or on 083 310 6140.**

- ◆ 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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would move in every weekend. They managed for a while but even that was not sustainable. It became a bothersome *schlep* to have to move out every Friday and move back every Saturday night. It just didn't last.

So, this is a call not only to maintain the momentum of our spiritual inspiration but to take practical steps to do so. To succeed in the long term, we must have a pragmatic plan; a realistic, workable, achievable program to see us through to the end. Otherwise, G-d forbid, our fervent feelings of the moment may turn out a flash in the pan.

Let us be inspired enough to make sure our inspiration lasts.

## Parsha Pointers

*Vayakhel-Pikudei: Artscroll pg 516;  
Living Torah pg 465*

Moshe relays the Almighty's commands to refrain from building the *Mishkan* (the Tabernacle or Portable Sanctuary) on the Shabbat, to contribute items needed to build the *Mishkan*, to construct the components of the *Mishkan* and the appurtenances of the *Cobanim*. The craftsmen are selected, the work begins. The craftsmen report that there are too many donations, and *for the first and probably the only time in fundraising history*, the Jewish people are told to refrain from bringing additional contributions!

Pekudei includes an accounting of all the materials that went into the making of the *Mishkan* and details of the construction of the clothing of the *Cobanim*. The Tabernacle is completed, Moses examines all of the components and gives his approval to the quality and exactness of construction, the Almighty commands to erect the Tabernacle, it's erected and the various vessels are placed in their proper place.

## Halt!

*By Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum*

*I'm fascinated by work, I could sit and watch it for hours...*

The most common and probably most frustrating argument I have the privilege of repeatedly needing to engage in, is explaining

the Torah's definition of the word "work."

The verse states "*Six days melachah (work) may be done, but the seventh day should be holy for you, a day of complete rest for G-d*" (Exodus 35:2). Surely that which is forbidden on Shabbat is real work, hard labour for financial reward, not this irritating nit-picking list which the rabbis try to forbid?

Let me state for the record that I agree with most aspects of their assertion; watching TV is pleasure, not toil, most actions forbidden on Shabbat are not particularly onerous, and there is plenty of useful things one can do even without receiving a pay check.

My case, however, is that work *per se* was never forbidden on Shabbat. True the closest literal approximation to the word *melachah* is "work," but looking at the verse in context, it becomes readily apparent that some specific tasks were forbidden; others were not, irrespective of the difficulty or degree of compensation involved.

On a number of occasions the Torah correlates the keeping of Shabbat with the building of the *mishkan* (the portable sanctuary that was the forerunner of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem). During last week's reading and again this week, we interrupt detailing the construction of the *mishkan* to reference the commandment to observe Shabbat. There were 39 broad categories of labour involved during the construction and functioning of the *mishkan*, and these self-same categories are representative of the actions one is forbidden to undertake on Shabbat.

Thus, nowhere is the prohibition of performing *melachah* on Shabbat limited to employment, toil, or making use of technology. Rather, *melachah* is defined as any forbidden labour on Shabbat, as performed during the construction and functioning of the *mishkan*.

When we are engaged on important business there is often the temptation to cut corners on the road to success. "Let me devote myself to my vision", says the visionary, "even at the cost of a trail of

physical and spiritual wreckage I might leave behind me. Family life can suffer, I allow myself to be tempted into some less than salubrious financial decisions, and my interpersonal skills are deplorable, all in the name of the higher purpose."

Building the *mishkan* was the most holy and intricate task that the Jews were assigned during their sojourn in the desert. Every one of the men and women chosen to participate in the mission was an exceptional artisan and morally righteous individual. This was to be the temporal home for G-d, the place where Divine inspiration would descend and minister to the masses. There could be no more noble or fulfilling purpose than to contribute to its construction.

Nonetheless, every Friday night all work on this magnificent edifice would come to a grinding halt. No matter how lofty a goal one is engaged in, there still needs to be a true sense of priorities, a recognition that, admirable as one's aspirations may be, they are not superseded by one's responsibilities. Suspending construction in honour of the Shabbat was a weekly reminder for the builders and craftsmen that even the most noble of goals must be accompanied by a sense of self-control, and a willingness to sacrifice one's own short term objectives to comply with one's duty.

## My Grandma's Selective Memory

*By Rabbi Shimon Posner*

My grandmother came to America from Russia—with a four-year stopover in Israel—around 1930. She, her husband and two infant boys settled in a Jewish neighbourhood in New Jersey. The older boys in the neighbourhood welcomed her sons by snatching their yarmulkes off their heads.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, visited America around that time. His Soviet-imposed death sentence had only recently been commuted to life in internal exile, and shortly thereafter he was deported from Workers' Paradise. In America, Jews lined up to seek his counsel, his blessing.

My grandmother visited the Rebbe for a blessing, her two-year-old on her arm, her three-year-old holding her other hand. She saw the Rebbe's face and burst into tears, crying, "How will I raise

children in such a hard land?"

The Rebbe smiled so widely that he was almost laughing; she thought at her, and was insulted. "It is a hard land," he conceded, growing serious, "but in this land you will raise *gutte yiddisher chassidische kinder* (good Jewish chassidic children)."

In her later years, my grandmother was no longer encumbered by recent memory. She told this story with its full emotion, and ten minutes later she told it again, not missing the slightest detail, the slightest emotion.

She would always end the story by saying, "But I did not let that blessing sit, I put it to work!"

I don't think she ever lost her initial enthusiasm. I think if she had, she would never have been the person she was. (When she joined her Americanized family for picnics, she brought along sandwiches to adhere to the kosher laws. They nicknamed her 'Mrs. Sendviches.' She told them that she worked hard to understand them, so why didn't they work to understand her? The teasing stopped.)

For two Parshiot, the Torah told us the details of the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary: the sockets of the walls, the decorative cups of the menorah, the seams of the clothing. Now, for two Parshiot, the Torah tells us that it was all fulfilled. The exhaustive repetition begs explanation, until we notice two words, "*nediv libo*," describing one who gave for the Tabernacle—that "his heart was full of giving."

The future is by definition daunting—your personal future and your people's. How do you get from divine concept to empirical reality? For that you need passion, a heart full of

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