

**COME CELEBRATE THE
50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE SIX DAY WAR
AND THE REUNIFICATION
OF JERUSALEM... IN ISRAEL!!!**

Join **Rabbi Yossy Goldman**
& the Sydenham Shul
Israel Tour this coming May 2017!

Tour Highlights: *Relive the Six Day War
*Yom Yerushalayim 50th in Jerusalem
*Shabbat at the Kotel *Sound & Light
Show @ Tower of David *Yad Vashem
with expert Tour Guide *Hebron and
Rachel's Tomb *Golan Heights
*Tzfat

18th - 25th May

UNBEATABLE PRICE!!!

If you are interested, please advise **Rabbi
Goldman** on 011 640 5021 or
rabbi@sydshul.co.za, or **Louis Goralsky**
on **083 310 6140**.

Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall.
- ◆ **Smorgasbord of Shiurim.**
- ◆ Mincha: 6:20 pm
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 7:31 pm
- ◆ **Mincha during the week: 6:00 pm**

Shiurim @ Sydenham Shul

- Sunday morning 9 am—**Mishna (Pirkei Avos)** *Rabbi Goldman* (boardroom)
- Tuesday 1 pm—**Ladies Shiur** *Rabbi Goldman* (Elk Hall)
- Tuesday 7:45 pm - **Gemorra Sotah** *Rabbi Goldman* (Rabbi's home)
- Tuesday 8:00 pm - **Young Adults 'SpiritShul & Social'** (Factory on Grant)
- Wednesday 8:00 pm - **Gemorra Sukkah** *Rabbi Stern* (Rabbi's home)
- Shabbos 8:15 am - **Garments of the Soul** *Rabbi Stern* (Shtibl)

NEW!

**Young Mother's Learning Group
with Rabbi Yehuda Stern**

13 Fundamentals of Jewish Faith

Alternate Thursdays @ 9:15am

Beginning Thursday 9 February

Sydenham Community Centre

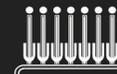
RSVP preferred at Shul office

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



Good Shabbos
SYDENHAM!

Published by the
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Hebrew Congregation
Johannesburg, South Africa



28 Jan 2017

Parshas Bo

8 Shevat 5777

Let My People Go
By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

The words ring out again and again in the biblical account of the Exodus story, as Moses repeatedly demands of the unrelenting Pharaoh that he grant the Jewish people their freedom.

Actually, the precise words that Moses conveys to the stubborn monarch in the name of G-d are, "*Shalach ami v'yaavduni*," "Let My people go so that they may serve Me."

It is interesting to see how some expressions and phrases become memorable and popular, while others just don't seem to catch on. "Let My People Go" became the theme song for the story of Egypt and the Exodus way beyond the Jewish community. It has been used as a catchphrase for a variety of political causes. Unfortunately, the last Hebrew word of the phrase somehow got lost in the shuffle: *v'yaavduni*—"that they may serve Me"—never quite made it to the top of the charts. The drama of the Exodus captures our imagination, while the fact that that the purpose of leaving Egypt was to go to Sinai, receive G-d's Torah and fulfill Jewish destiny is less emphasized. The call to freedom excites the human spirit; the challenge of service and commitment, by contrast, doesn't seem to elicit as much enthusiasm.

I remember back in the early '70s, when Jews the world over were demonstrating for their oppressed brethren in the then Soviet Union, demanding of the Russian government that they allow Jews the freedom to leave if they wanted to. Their rallying cry was, "Let My People Go!" Sadly, they left out the *v'yaavduni*.

We were so concerned about political liberties that we forgot a primary purpose of being free: to enjoy religious freedom and live fulfilled Jewish lives.

Indeed, for so many of our Russian brethren, obtaining their exit visas and acquiring freedom of movement did little to help them reclaim their spiritual heritage and identity. Seventy years of organized atheism behind the Iron Curtain left their toll. We are delighted that they can live in Israel (or Brighton Beach), but the fact remains that far too many remain outside of the Jewish community and its spiritual orbit.

In my own backyard, here in South Africa, this idea has become blatantly obvious. We have now enjoyed over fifteen years of democracy. There have been four free and fair elections where all citizens have had the opportunity to cast their ballots. It was a long, hard struggle, but political freedom has been achieved. And yet, while confidence levels in our country's future are at an all-time high, millions of people living here are still suffering from the very same hardships they endured under apartheid—ignorance, poverty and poor health. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu has castigated the country's black leaders for allowing a situation where a small number of well-connected blacks have become enriched while the masses remain impoverished. HIV/AIDS is still public enemy number one, and even the family members of some of the most high-profile political figures have succumbed to the deadly disease.

It is clear that political freedom minus spiritual purpose equals disillusionment. Leaving Egypt without the vision of Sinai would be getting all dressed up with nowhere to go. It is not enough to

Sydenham Shul's Learning Launch 2017

DAVOS
MINI
SOUTH AFRICA & THE NEW WORLD ORDER

President Trump, Brexit, the Global Economy and SA's Changing Political Landscape

Dr Azar Jammine
Director & Chief Economist
Economics

Mr Johnny Copelyn
CEO of RCI Jewellery Trade Sectors
and Member of Parliament

Dr Reuel Khoza
Author, Political Analyst
Past Chairman, National & Ekom
Daily Maverick, Political Analyst

Mr J Brooks Spector
Former CEO of Embassy, Asset Sectors
Daily Maverick, Political Analyst

**COME HEAR OUR EMINENT TEAM OF EXPERTS
ADDRESS THE BURNING ISSUES OF THE DAY**

MONDAY 20 FEB, 7:45 pm
Sydenham Community Centre, Seeff Hall

Entrance: R50. Tea will be served. Secure Parking
Pre-paid reserved seating recommended 011 640 5021 or www.sydshul.co.za

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 Jewish Education

**SYDENHAM-HIGH AND NORTH
HEBREW CONGREGATION**

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

let our people go. We have to take them somewhere. "That they may serve Me" means that we need to use our political freedom to experience the freedom and fulfillment of faith, and a life of spiritual purpose dedicated to G-d's service.

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.

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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.

The Power of Revival

By Rabbi Zalman Posner

The Jews as a people receive their first commandment in today's Torah portion. (The few preceding commandments were given to individuals—for example, Abraham was given the mitzvah of circumcision.) The reckoning of the calendar according to lunar cycles introduces Israel to formal Judaism. The lunar calendar must obviously have a special quality beyond its specific function, a pervasive characteristic, to merit its beginning Jewry's service of G-d.

The moon has phases of growth, decline, disappearance and rebirth. The sun is relatively constant, not appreciably different from day to day. The lunar calendar, rather than the solar, governs the religious life of the Jew, because it is more symbolic of that life. Fallible, easily tempted man is not expected to be an immaculate angel impervious to worldly distractions. Neither is man simply a higher form of animal life, not radically different from the beasts and hence not subject to restraints, free to indulge his passions.

In finding his place in the world, man may vacillate between the inspiration that elevates and the perverseness that misleads man. He is on a sort of spiritual seesaw, saintly and sinful in a confusing sequence. If we enjoy occasional moments of true religious inspiration, our failure to maintain those feelings may lead to disillusionment. We taunt ourselves (and others) with the sneering charge of hypocrisy if we do sin. Some may feel, with good cause, that the spark in the recesses of every Jew's heart is extinguished for them.

Here the lunar calendar has a lesson for us. The moon declines to the point of disappearance. But decline is as much a part of life as birth. Decline is not extinction. Like the moon, the Jew has the power of revival. The spark is never extinguished. Then there is the process of change and of growth in live people, also implicit in the lunar cycle. The Jew is expected to add to his spiritual trove, to progress in learning (an all-but-forgotten Jewish virtue) and piety, in kindness and selfless charity, in developing better character traits. The Jew is constantly trying to perfect his deeds and himself.

The sun, with its original and unchanging brightness, cannot teach man what the always changing, developing, growing and revitalized moon can.

Why We Say Shkoyach!

By Rabbi Aron Moss

Question:

My conversion process has been a huge learning curve. One of the many challenges is getting my head around all the terminology. I can finally pronounce Chanukah correctly, and I now know the difference between Kiddush and Kaddish (was embarrassing when I didn't), but there is one word that still confuses me: Shkoyach (spelling?). I hear people shout "shkoyach" after the rabbi's sermon, after someone gets called to the Torah, and sometimes even when I pass the herring at the Shabbos table. What exactly does shkoyach mean and when is the right time to say it?

Answer:

According to the Oxford Etymological Dictionary of Jewish Jargon[*], Shkoyach is a condensed version of the Hebrew phrase Yeyasher Kochacha, literally, "May your strength be extended." Ironically, the word "extended" was shortened, and people didn't have the koach (strength) to say the two guttural 'ch' sounds at the end, so it became Yasher Koach, which when said quickly sounds like Shkoyach.

Shkoyach is a versatile expression. It can be used to say bravo for a great sermon, good on you for being called to the Torah, or thank you for passing the herring. But the meaning is always the same. You have done something good, you should have the strength to do more.

This is much deeper than just saying thank you. Thank you is an acknowledgement of the good deed that has been done in the past. Shkoyach also encourages more good deeds in the future. It is bravo and encore rolled into one.

The message is that no matter how much good we have done, we can always increase. No matter how much we know, we can always learn more. As you know from your conversion process, in Judaism the learning never ends. The Talmud says, "Don't be shy to ask, or you will never learn."

So I'm glad you asked. Shkoyach for the question.

Live & Laugh

A woman found that she had locked her keys inside the car. She found an old wire coat hanger on the road beside the car. She looked at it and said, "I don't know how to use this."

She bowed her head and asked God to send her some HELP. Within 5 minutes a beat-up old motorcycle pulled up, driven by a bearded man who was wearing an old biker skull rag. He got off of his cycle and asked if he could help.

She said: "Yes, I've locked my keys in my car. Please, can you use this hanger to unlock my car?" He said, "Sure." He walked over to the car, and in less than a minute the car was open.

She hugged the man and said, "I thank God for sending me such a very nice man." The man heard her little prayer and replied, "Lady, I am NOT a nice man. I just got out of prison yesterday...I was in there for car theft."

The woman hugged the man again sobbing, "Oh, thank you, God! You even sent me a Professional!"

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