

Live & Laugh

I decided to stop calling the bathroom the “John” and renamed it the “Jim.” I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning.

What’s Nu?!

Choson Kallah Mazal Tov
Dov Halpern & Michal Berman
Gavin Smith & Laura Dukan

The Barmy Boy
Dean Levy

Mazal Tov to Jonathan & Bev Levy and grandparents Philip & Francis Bartkunsky and Bernard & Sharon Levy.

Calendar

Shabbos Nachamu

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Shul Brocha across the road in honour of Gavin & Laura’s wedding.
- ◆ Mincha: 5:05 pm
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 4
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 6:16 pm
- ◆ Mincha next week 5:30 pm

YoungJewishJoburg
FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER
WITH HERMAN MASHABA

Mayor of Johannesburg
Celebrating 10 YEARS of
Young Adults dynamic programmes
 Ages 19-39 | RSVP: yjj.co.za/events
 Price: R210. Students: R160 (limited)

- ◆ 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.

YOU ARE INVITED!
Siyum Sefer Torah: The Completion & Dedication Ceremony
 of a new Torah Scroll
THIS Sunday
 •11 am Siyum •1 pm Parade
 •2 pm Dancing •3 pm Festive Meal
 Kindly Donated by the Herring Family

‘Relentlessly Funny’ The Jewish Chronicle
 ‘A Haredi Michael McIntyre’ Haaretz
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AN EVENING OF

History & Destiny

Celebrating the Past as we Shape the Future

Commemorating 75 Years of Sydenham Shul, our spiritual home. Honouring Three Decades of Dedication and spiritual leadership by our Senior Rabbinic Couple,

Rabbi Yossy and Rachel Goldman,
 a Decade of Innovation resulting our to the next generation by
 Rabbi Yehuda and Estee Stern,
 the Bar Mitzvah year of Chazan Yudi Cohen

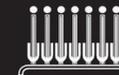
WEDNESDAY 9 AUGUST
COCKTAILS 6:30 PM
 Sydenham Community Centre

R160 per person
 RSVP ESSENTIAL: www.sydenham.co.za or at Sydenham Shul



Good Shabbos
SYDENHAM!

Published by the
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 Hebrew Congregation
 Johannesburg, South Africa



5 Aug 2017 Parshas Va'eschanan 13 Menachem Av 5777

Ten Commandments Checklist

by: *Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

Everyone has an opinion on the Ten Commandments, even the U.S. Supreme Court. So often, I hear people say, “Well, I am not all that religious but I do keep the Ten Commandments.” I’m tempted to say, “Really? You do know that The Ten Commandments are not multiple choice.” I sometimes wonder if the people who glibly make that claim actually know what the Ten Commandments are. Seeing as in this week’s Parsha Moshe reviews the Big 10, why not go through the list so we can all get a better idea and see how we score.

1) *I am the L-rd Thy G-d.*

Basically, this is the command to believe in One G-d. I have every confidence that you all get full marks on this one.

2) *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*

O.K., so you don’t make a habit of bowing down to that bust of the Buddha in your entrance hall. The question is, should it be there in the first place? And isn’t it interesting that today we have all these Idols competitions being run around the world. Then, of course, there are all those well-established contemporary idols we tend to ogle and worship, even those ridiculous self-appointed celebrities whose names I’d rather not mention.

3) *Do not take the name of G-d in vain.*

This is not only about taking the oath or swearing in court. What about swearing in the street? How many choice 4-letter words are in your vocabulary? And why drag G-d into those graphic expressions? And should your

children be hearing these expletives?

4) *Observe the Shabbos day to keep it holy.*

Interestingly, the Ten Commandments appear twice in the Torah. In Exodus, the fourth Commandment begins with *Zachor- Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*. This week, we read *Shamor - Observe the Sabbath day*. “Remembering” is achieved through positive acts such as Kiddush, Candle lighting etc. “Observing” Shabbos, to guard it from any desecration, is the hard part. It may cramp our current lifestyles. That is where true commitment comes in.

5) *Honor thy Father and thy Mother.*

Many people do indeed fulfill this Mitzvah in exemplary fashion. I stand in admiration of sons, daughters, and often daughters-in-law, who care for and tend to the needs of an aged parent or parent-in-law. They *shlep*, they cook, they humor, and often tolerate irritable, cantankerous elders. This commandment seems to get more difficult as time progresses. Yet the Torah makes no distinctions based on age. It is our responsibility to look after our parents when they are dependent on us as they looked after us when we were dependent on them.

6) *Thou Shalt Not Murder.*

Well done. Here’s another easy one to fulfill. I’m sure not one of you reading this ever murdered anyone. You *thought* of doing it, you *almost* did it, but, in the end, Jews are not the murdering type. You can safely tick another one.

7) *Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery.*

Next!
 8) *Thou Shalt Not Steal.* Strictly speaking, this refers to kidnapping. However, all white-collar

crimes apply.

9) *Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness.*

How truthful are we? Even if we are not under oath, our word should be sacred. I remember hearing an old Rabbi being introduced to a group of university students simply as a “man who never told a lie.” Wow! Not simple at all. How many of us could make that claim?

10) *Thou Shalt Not Covet.* Not easy either. Commentary defines this injunction as a prohibition against badgering someone, or conniving, to acquire - even legally - that which belongs to another. Go get your own. Why must it be *his* wife, house or car?

There you have it. Did you score full marks? Did you pass, or are you in the forty percent or less bracket? Worth working on, isn't it? Hopefully, we can all improve our score and one day be able to claim with justification that we really do observe the Ten Commandments.

Parsha Pointers

Vaeschanan: Artscroll pg 958;
Living Torah pg 884

Moses tells the people of Israel how he implored G-d to allow him to enter the Land of Israel, but G-d refused, instructing him instead to ascend a mountain and see the Promised Land.

Continuing his “review of the Torah,” Moses describes the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah, declaring them unprecedented events in human history. “Has there ever occurred this great thing, or has the likes of it ever been heard? Did ever a people hear the voice of G-d speaking out of the midst of the fire . . . and live? . . . You were shown, to know, that the L-rd is G-d . . . there is none else beside Him.”

Moses predicts that, in future generations, the people will turn away from G-d, worship idols, and be exiled from their land and scattered amongst the nations; but from there they will seek G-d, and return to obey His commandments.

Our Parshah also includes a repetition of

the Ten Commandments, and the verses of the Shema, which declare the fundamentals of the Jewish faith: the unity of G-d (“Hear O Israel: the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is one”); the mitzvot to love G-d, to study His Torah, and to bind “these words” as *tefillin* on our arms and heads, and inscribe them in the *mezuzot* affixed on the doorposts of our homes.

Consolation

By Rabbi Yanki Tauber

When you're feeling sad, do you go to your father or to your mother?

When I seek my father's counsel, it's usually to hear him tell me that these things happen in our lives and the trick is to rise above them. As I grow in years and knowledge, he explains, my trouble will seem smaller, and ultimately insignificant. After this little speech, I feel a little cheated—after all, this is *my* big sorrow he's talking about—but it does seem diminished now, and I can begin to see a path to its eventual overcoming.

When I go to my mother, it's to hear how well she understands what I'm going through. She cries with me, and I see how my sorrow is as painful to her as it is to me. In this shared, broader context, my sorrow undergoes a subtle change. No longer is it a meaningless weight bearing down on me, deadening my heart and mind and cutting me off from the world, but an environment to inhabit, a world to navigate, a force to employ. My sorrow does not become smaller, but it is now bearable, even useful.

“As a father has compassion upon his children,” sings the Psalmist, “so does G-d have compassion for those who fear Him.” “Like a man whose mother does console him,” proclaims the prophet Isaiah, “so shall I console you.” Which is it? Who is G-d—mother or father?

Is G-d the transcendent force in our lives, the voice compelling and empowering us to grow beyond the here and now? Or is G-d our source

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of comfort, the solacing embrace that assures us that nothing we experienced is meaningless, that everything we are, know and feel can be borne, inhabited and redeemed?

“Console, console My people,” we read in this week's *haftorah*, the first of a series of seven consoling readings that follow the three weeks of mourning over the destruction of the Holy Temple and the exile of Israel. “I, I am your comforter,” begins a later reading in the series. The prophets are not stuttering, nor are they merely being poetic. According to the Midrash, the repetitious wording means that G-d is saying: “I shall do both. I shall be both father and mother to you.”

The Shabbat Man

By Rabbi Shimon Posner

Some called him Reverend Abrahamson. Others called him Cantor. My father called him Chazzan and bristled at the other names: evidently those other names were too cold and distant to identify our Chazzan. However you would call him, Chazzan Abrahamson was the oldest person I knew, at least he seemed that way, with a small, pure-white moustache and a head of snow-white hair to match.

He was small and walked with slow, deliberate steps. His wife would always walk with him to synagogue, even Friday nights when no other women came for services. She was prim but more quick-footed and I sensed even then that she was somehow protecting him.

He was from Europe, with genteel, old-world manners. Delicate and compact in speech and deed and presumably in thought also, he was unfailingly polite. A *yekke*, such people were called in the old country.

He wore an old-style cantor's hat, black, silken, rising six inches above the head and crowned with a somber pom-pom which bemused me even then. He draped his *tallit* gently over his shoulders.

None of us children had much to do with him. Nor do I remember many adults having much conversation with him beyond respectful salutation.

He would stand on the platform in front of the Ark when the Torah was being taken out. He led the congregation in the *Shema*, reciting each word

forcefully, precisely, dramatically and finishing off the sacred phrase with a flourish: *Echad!* Looking back, I can now identify what I noticed then: there was also a controlled emotion.

A number of years ago, I heard that he had been a diamond cutter when he first came to Nashville from the old country, arriving in the Twenties, I believe. He was looking for work and even with a sharp eye for stones and the steady hand of youth he had a hard time landing a job. Finally someone made him an offer. He would work eleven hours a day, six days a week, Sunday off.

But I don't work on Shabbat, the then-young man protested. If you don't work Shabbat, replied the only person who had offered him a job, then you don't work Monday. The genteel personality, so reminiscent of Western European finery, so appreciated in the South, looked at his would-be employer:

"I will die in the streets of hunger before I work on Shabbat."

It wasn't until decades later that he became *Chazzan*, cantor, of my father's synagogue. Personality, I guess, is only so deep, beneath that is primordial essence. When you're not hostage to your personality, the mores around you or anything else, then you can be true to your essence.

The Chazzan passed on nearly twenty-five years ago. Many a Shabbat it is I who now stand before the congregation and the Ark, holding the Torah and leading the *Shema*.

I hope that somehow, with something beyond me, I am conveying something more than the tune. Something the Chazzan conveyed without ever articulating it. That nicety should be a proper setting for the stone but never overpower it. That polish should enhance the metal, but never make you doubt the metal. That underneath it all must burn a fire in the belly and a passion of the spirit that niceties can never smother. That enveloped in a silken personality must be an iron will that in the face of multiplicity, division, even duplicity, the cry will ring clear, precise and dramatic. *Hashem Echad!* G-d is One.