This Shabbat in shul we shall read Parashat Reeh. Among its many precepts it introduces our Jewish practices of bereavement and mourning. The passage begins with the famous verse *Banim atem LeHashem Elokaychem*, you are children of God. The commentators explain the verse in context – just as God is eternal, so too do His children have an eternal quality in their everlasting soul. They explain that while of course it is fitting and appropriate to mourn; just as our biblical ancestors grieved when their loved ones passed on; even so, we should be accepting of death and not fear it.

Our Parasha begins not with death but with life and the instruction to live it to its Godly full. We children of God must act with love of humanity like our spiritual father. We must show compassion and charity. Like God, when we can act to help we must act to help. When we can heal, we must heal. And like God who saw the world and proclaimed it as good, we must seek out and celebrate the blessings that our life sets before us.

Diana, Wendy, Sue and Sahdna, friends and family of Stan; in all these senses, we can truly say of Stan Goulston that he was a child of God. He was a man of good deeds; a man of action; a man of healing; he truly sought to improve the world within his expertise. And Stan the husband, the father, was also Stan the poet and story teller, the gardener and the seeker of knowledge.

He was born on 26th July 1915, the son of John Goulston and Flora Henrietta nee Wolf. Stan’s father was a draper and a businessman, who, though he had left school aged 12 was determined to give his children a good education. Stan was the fourth of John’s six children. Olive, Eric, Edna, Stan; then Peggy and Roy. Tragically Flora died three weeks after Stan was born and he would cite as his great regret that he never had the chance to know her. She had played the violin and Stan tried to learn the instrument in her memory. John remarried Golda Danglow, sister of the esteemed Rabbi. The three boys, Eric, Stan and Roy all pursued medical careers and all remained very close.

Born in the Great War, living through the depression, Stan was raised in tough times and remembered the family not being able to afford new shoes for him.

Among his early memories, he told of walking with his father from their home in Elizabeth Bay to The Great. With his father on the Board, he would sit next to him in the executive box, not the family seat. He and later Jean, would always enjoy the mixed choir. Apparently in the walk to shul from Elizabeth Bay he recalled hearing the lions roaring in the zoo across the harbour.
His Bar Mitzvah was shared with two other boys. He approached the day with apprehension. However he describes his excitement at taking his position on the Bimah to sing his portion. Suddenly everyone was listening to him. It was a thrill and he didn’t want it to end.

Stan attended Sydney Grammar School. He had a flair for English (in which he got first class honours) and was a proficient sportsman enjoying tennis, cricket and hockey. He was selected for the school team and would dearly have loved to represented the school at the highest level however he would not play on Shabbat. He didn’t like to raise the religious prohibition on Saturday sports with his teachers. Nor did Stan want to discuss the quandary with his father and thereby admit to his passion for the sport.

He went on to study medicine at University. As well as being a keen student, running with his mates discussing their studies as they exercised, he was a Hockey Blue. Sadly his irreplaceable and treasured team jacket was stolen from the beach. After graduating with honours in medicine in 1939, Stan became an intern at the Royal Prince Alfred hospital. That year he also married his childhood sweetheart Jean Danglow, Rabbi Jack Danglow’s daughter – his step-mothers niece. The outbreak of war meant that for the first seven years of their marriage they were substantially apart.

Stan enlisted in the AIF. He served as regimental medical officer to the 2/1st Australian Pioneers Battalion and went to the Middle East in the 6th Division. He saw action in Palestine, Egypt and Libya then at the decisive siege of Tobruk. In 1942 he wrote his first medical article in the Medical Journal of Australia in which he described his Regimental Aid Post. He wrote that “the enemies were Germans, flies, fleas, heat and dust storms.”

He was twice mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Military Cross. His citation read “he set a splendid example of devotion to duty and courage under fire, setting an inspiring example to every member of the battalion.” Even more precious to him was the rare Tobruk Rat medal, one of only three, and made by his own men from the fuselage of a downed German plane. It is that medal that Diana is wearing with due pride this morning.

He returned to serve in Darwin in 1942 and from 1944-46 was posted to London as senior medical officer of the Australian Army Staff. Throughout his life, Stan was proud of his service and that he had seen action in the front lines. He attained the rank of Lt-Colonel.

After discharge he remained in London with Jean, who had joined him and Diana was born there. He worked as senior Medical registrar at the Postgraduate medical school and attained his FRCP.

He remained close to the service, a proud member of Legacy, a since 1949.

Back in Australia, Stan had a distinguished 33 year career at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. He specialised in gastroenterology, setting up the first specialist unit in the field. He
published 34 articles. He was active in the Royal Australian College of Physicians and served on the Federal Council as Censor, Censor in Chief and a five year period as its President. His daughters have memories of the austere censors meeting at their home, where Jean often entertained and recall the pride with which Stan would show them off and the interest these senior medical personalities showed in his beautiful family.

One of his earliest students was Joachim Schneeweiss, who cherishes his as a mentor and then a friend.

Stan remained a medical practitioner till he was 79. He then enrolled as a student at the University of Sydney and read for an MPhil in poetry and literature, enabling him to embark on a new and exciting career as a pioneer teacher of Medical Humanities.

Stan’s love of literature went back to childhood. His book, Poetry for Pleasure opens with poems written in his teens dedicated to Jean, aged 17 and to her dog. From the earliest, his poems emphasise companionship, loyalty and friendship; a passion for nature, his quest for knowledge and a desire to be a healer. Directly and obliquely, his poetry is suffused with his love for Jean.

Wendy describes their marriage as “amazing... Mum’s whole life was about making things special for Dad” Growing up, they didn’t see much of him as he was always on call. She remembers that in the evenings he would come into her room and just put his hands on her shoulders. It was a special bonding time before he went out again – back to work.

Sue recalls that she was a mediocre student and that he used to help her with French and Science. One day they were both rather fed up of the studies and he just asked if she’d rather study or see a film. They both agreed that the cinema would be more fun – so off they went to see The Guns of Navarone.

Dinner time together had its ritual. Sadhana notes that he would always cut off a piece of his steak for the kids to savour. His always tasted better than ours – possibly because it had been peppered. He would stuff his pockets with lollies and feign being attacked by a bee in his pocket. He’d thrust his hand in and then he’d shower them with the candy. While the older siblings remember it as an occasional antic, by the time Sadhana was growing up it had become a daily Mars bar.

The tenderness and the show are both highly illustrative of Stan’s love for children; his desire and ability to relate to them, his humour and his love of people.

Fond memories are of the holidays at the beach, Stan fishing as well as his green thumbs, a passion for gardening, for roses, camellias and orchids. Wendy cherishes the memory of walks together checking all the plants – to see how much each had grown. “We’d inspect them for changes each day.”
Diana went with him to the hospitals, accompanying him on honorary rounds. Jean and
Stan ensured that each of the girls was treated to time for individual bonding. Diana,
Wendy, Sue and Sadhana each had their own relationship. Sue remembers going to a Larry
Adler concert.

He was kind and gentle but always firm and strong. The girls all appreciate his modelling of
integrity – only doing what feels right. They emulate his reliability and his ability to see all
sides of a problem. He was a good listener. He had true humility. And he was a gentleman.

Stan would hold open the door for women, walking in the street he would position himself
between them and the gutter. Even in his old age, he would humorously get up from his
wheelchair and tell his carer that it was his turn to sit and is to push her around.

Says Sadhana, every single member of the family was treated with absolute love. Not only
the children, and his grandchildren but his sons in law, Joel, Larry, Hal and Asanga; his nieces
and his nephews. Ever the keen writer, he made up stories for them and posted them to
family overseas – each had their own fictitious world and characters. He knew each one and
loved the details of their lives, the gurgling pipes in their homes. For Tamara there were
imaginary boyfriends indulging her passion for Swiss chocolates.

He understood how important relationships were in healing – and he brought that into his
well-attended medical humanities classes. Says Wendy, he awakened his students’
emotions to make them better and more perceptive doctors.

Kerry notes with admiration how popular his courses were. In his 80s his presentations at
the Grand Rounds were fully attended. He also lectured at the U3A and was invited to
present at poetry dinners.

Together with Jean, they loved travel, the medical conferences, always taking in the family
overseas. They loved to bring presents.

Lucy appreciates how Stan always knew what each of his grandchildren was doing.
Whatever was going on he was always happy when they came over. It was never too much
trouble for him. He used to sing to May and enjoyed their time together.

His grand-daughter Molly writes, “I think we are incredible individuals and an amazing
family because of who Grandpa was and what he instilled in us. I feel blessed to have known
him and Granny as intimately as I did, and for Grandpa to have met Jeff and Alex. To have
spent time in his presence was to understand genius, dignity, joy, camaraderie, gentleness,
strength, humour and pure love. Our lives are so enriched because of both, our
grandparents but will never be the same without them.”

Tali writes of respect & humour becoming love, generosity and total familial immersion.
She also recalls a favourite Stan quote, “Save water... Shower together.”
His oldest grandson, James writes how amazing that a family so far flung could be so close. It is a credit to Grandpa’s influence and Granny’s.

“As anyone who ever saw the twinkle in Grandpa’s eyes knows, he never fell victim to cheap sentimentality or meaningless euphemism. For someone so polite, nurtured with the nuances of appropriate behaviour, Grandpa could be a mischievous tweak of what others considered “proper”. He quietly relished his role as a clever and subtle contrarian, especially evident in his interactions with children. He simply enjoyed their company - their honesty, their happiness - experiencing the world through their eyes.”

His Jewish heritage was important. Friday nights at home were a must for the girls. It was the one time that the whole family would necessarily be together. Stan put a lot of effort into Sedarim. He’d plan who would read each paragraph – not leave it to chance on the evening. Till recently he’d run the family Seder with song and humour.

Mum used to cook. Says Sadhana, as mum was dying he told her that he would be able to look after himself – and he did learn to cook – preparing himself a proper meal every evening. He hated to be dependent on anyone. Even in his old age he asserted his independence. Never too old or too proud to learn.

He was sanguine about life. It was there to be lived and enjoyed. Age or frailty shouldn’t interfere with one’s whisky or chocolate. When she was ill, he’d tell Jean to eat what she enjoyed and really loved. A brilliant doctor, he knew himself. He didn’t want to be bound by pills. When a nurse came round and asked about his medication he simply said “no”. “Medications?” she enquired repeating the question, as if he hadn’t understood. But he replied again, “No”. And a third and a fourth and a fifth time. “What medications do you take?” she spelled it out in exasperation. But he’d not be medicated.

“You can live too long,” he’d say – a phrase borrowed from his father or from Eric.

Stan filled his life. James reflects that he has touched not only his children and his grandchildren – but also his great-grandchildren – who will know him though their parent, so much did he influence and shape their lives.

“When Life continues after Ninety,” wrote Stan.

**Life continues after Ninety**

Living on after ninety,  
Health reasonably maintained,  
What is left to be achieved?  
What still to be gained?

Now widower, children grown,  
There still must be a purpose,
Still a debt to pay for all that happiness
Than the simple label 'surplus'.

No more doctoring; no more teaching;
No more lectures; no more preaching;
Work for so long inspiring;
Now my students are retiring!

That incredible cardiac muscle
Beating seventy times each minute
Faithfully supporting life
With emphasis 'one is still in it'

My peers have an answer to it all.
Never alone with the telephone,
Airmail, email, and fax,
Writing, reading to fill the cracks.

And yet, life is so different without 'her' there
Despite the depth of family care,
Be ever grateful for those sixty plus years,
Away the groans, the moans, the tears.

Time moves on and so it should,
You had the peaks, the lows, the highs,
You had more than your deserts;
You have the memories somewhere in those skies.

Banim atem leHashem. You are children of God. The Torah exhorts us to live our lives to the full – to achieve their godly potential. To appreciate the beauty of His creation; to emulate His ways of learning, love, compassion and healing. To appreciate what we have... and yet to strive to make the world a better place.

Stan Goulston modelled this exhortation to the full and has inspired the generations of his family as well as generations of his students.

Oh Lord, we commend to you this afternoon Stanley Jack Marcus Goulston, Yona ben Yona HaCohen. Take him now into Your eternal protection and give him the reward of the righteous. Give comfort and blessing in his memory to his devoted family; to Diana and Joel, to Wendy and Larry, to Sue and Hal, to Sadhana and Asanga.

May his ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren continue to feel his keen love for them, to celebrate their family and keep it close. So will his spirit and example live on.

May Stan rest in peace. And let us say, Amen.