



# THE CHEVRA

Young Israel of Fair Lawn  
The Morris J. Kraut z'l Torah Center

Joe Smith - President

## This Shabbat:

### **Parashat Beshalach** **15 Shevat (TU B'Shvat), 5767** **Feb 2, 3 - 2007**

The Haftorah is read from Judges  
4:4-5:31.

#### Friday

Candle Lighting	4:56 PM
<b>Mincha</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b>

#### Shabbat

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur	8:00 AM
Shacharit	9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema:	9:37 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha	4:50 PM
Shabbat Ends	5:59 PM

Sunday Shacharit	8:00 AM
Monday-Friday Shacharit	7:00 AM

## Next Shabbat:

### **Parashat Yisro** **22 Shevat, 5767** **Feb 9, 10 - 2007**

The Haftorah is read from Isaiah  
6:1-7:6 and 9:5-6.

#### Friday

Candle Lighting	5:05 PM
<b>Mincha</b>	<b>5:10 PM</b>

#### Shabbat

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur	8:00 AM
Shacharit	9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema:	9:34 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha	5:00 PM
Shabbat Ends	6:07 PM

Sunday Shacharit	8:00 AM
Monday-Friday Shacharit	7:00 AM

## **Kiddush**

The Shabbos Shira Tu B'Shevat  
Kiddush this Shabbos is being  
sponsored by Evelyn and Larry  
Kraut in honor of their  
granddaughter Aliza Tova.  
May they see BE"H much Nachas  
from her in the future for many  
years to come.

## **TU B'Shvat**

Source: Eras Torah

The Haftorah is read from Judges  
4:4-5:31. (no "Kel Malle", No "Av  
Harachamim")

The custom is to eat fruits that grow  
on trees, for Tu B'Shevat is the  
"New Year of the Trees" (We  
always make the Bracha **וְהָחַיִּינוּ** on  
any seasonal fruit that one is eating  
for the first time that year. The  
Bracha is not made on artificially  
preserved fruits or on fruits that are  
deficient in appearance or taste in  
comparison to those of the regular  
seasonal crop.) (At Mincha **צדקתך**  
**צדק**)

**Condolences** to Marilyn Barth on  
the passing of her Father Z"L earlier  
this week. Marilyn will be sitting  
Shiva in Fair Lawn at her home at 4-  
25 Lyncrest Ave. until Tuesday  
morning. May the family know no  
more sorrow and be comforted  
among the mourner's of Zion and  
Yerushalayim

## **Torah Insights – Harav Shlomo Riskin**

### **Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Beshalach** **Exodus 13:17-17:16**

Efrat, Israel – Our Sages teach us,  
"It is more difficult for the  
Almighty to bring two individuals  
together in marriage than it was  
for Him to split the Reed Sea."  
(Sota 2a) Superficially speaking,  
the analogy seems to make no  
sense whatsoever. In what way is  
there any logical comparison  
between the splitting of the Reed  
Sea and the making of a shidduch?

The usual interpretation which is  
given is that both events – the  
splitting of the Reed Sea and the  
bringing together of two  
individuals in marriage – are  
totally unexpected and illogical.  
The Israelites find themselves  
being chased by Egyptian  
charioteers from behind and facing  
the formidable Reed Sea right in  
front of them. They could see no  
clear exit; in no way whatsoever  
could they ever have predicted a  
miracle like the splitting of the  
sea. Similarly, two single  
individuals – especially if they are  
getting on in age – begin to lose  
faith that they will find the  
complementary mate for whom  
they are dreaming. It seems as if  
they will never succeed in  
discovering a suitable life's partner  
with whom to create a family.  
More often than not, the one with  
whom they eventually stand under  
the nuptial canopy was a most

unlikely prospect who would never have been an initial logical choice. From this perspective, the analogy between the two makes much more sense. However, the axiom which serves as the very bedrock of the analogy is not only that the splitting of the Reed Sea was totally dependent upon G-d's miraculous action but also that marriage is much more a result of Divine direction than it is a product of human efforts in relationship.

Bashert! This is the Yiddish word which describes what we have just said about marriage. G-d is the only real matchmaker "Forty days before a child is born, a message is proclaimed from Heaven: this individual will marry that individual" (Sota 2a). Parents and younger adults need not be concerned. Marriages are made in heaven, every pot has its lid, and just as G-d split the Reed Sea He will find the mate for you. And if it is taking a bit longer, not to worry. After all, our Sages also understood that arranging marriages is even more difficult than the splitting of the Reed Sea. Nevertheless it is all pre-ordained, bashert.

At the risk of sounding like a total heretic, I am very skeptical of the concept of bashert. Indeed, I would suggest a second look at the story of the Reed Sea as well as of the Jewish concept of marriage. I believe that at the end of our analysis we will arrive at a very different understanding of the logic of the analogy. Our Biblical portion opens its description of the splitting of the Reed Sea with a distinct description of the exact place of the Israeli-Egyptian encounter, and this place is non other than a central worshipping sanctuary of the Egyptian Idol Horus (Hebrew- Hirot) in front of the Idol of the North (Exodus 14: 2). Both of these idols were poised just in front of the Reed Sea. Why describe a place by emphasizing

the idols which were placed there? After all, with the splitting of the Reed Sea and the drowning of the Egyptians, the gods of the Egyptians will be of no account whatsoever.

Moreover, the pursuing Egyptians consisted of 600 choice chariots and three times that amount of regular chariots. (Exodus 14:7) Our Biblical portion also informs us that the Israelites (consisting of at least 600,000 men) exited from Egypt well armed (Exodus 13: 18). As the Ibn Ezra so logically queries, why did the Israelites not wage war against the Egyptians? Why do they seem to fall into such a paralyzed panic which causes them to rail against G-d for having brought them into the desert to die. It apparently never even dawns upon them to use the armaments which they took out of Egypt.

The answer to both of these questions lies in the very difference between the idolatry of Egypt and the new religion of Israel. The Bible emphasizes that the Israelites were stationed near the idol Huras, which reads in Hebrew "lifne pi hahiro" which can literally be taken to mean "before the mouth of freedom". Egyptian idolatry was the very antithesis of freedom. Humans under the idols were not free to act; only the gods acted while the only possible interference by humans was their propitiation or bribery of the gods. The Israelites are not yet wholly freed; hence they are paralyzed and never dream of actually waging war against their enemy. At best they can cry out to their G-d hoping that He will be stronger than Horus and the Idol of the North (Remember that Pharaoh himself was a god in Egypt and so he could enslave others).

The Almighty responds to the panic-stricken beseeching of Moses and of Israel with a decisive

message: "Why are you praying to Me? Speak to the children of Israel and have them move (into the Reed Sea)" (Exodus 11:15). G-d is explaining to the Israelites that in this new religion they must be active partners : unless they are ready to make the first movement and plunge into the waters of the Reed Sea, they will be destroyed by the Egyptians. But if they will take their destiny in their own hands and begin to act, G-d will complete their redemption and they will become free.

This is precisely the case with marriage as well. Yes, in the Divine scheme of things every individual has a destined mate with whom he/she will be able to make a meaningful life together. G-d may even set up the circumstances by which these two individuals will actually come into contact with each other. However, each of the two must take advantage of that contact; and if one or the other never leaves his/her home, even the planned initial contact may never take place. Each of us, must take advantage of all meeting possibilities, and must then work hard at continuing and even enhancing the quality of the relationship. This is the way in which I believe our analogy works. It is not necessarily easy; it is like the splitting of the Reed Sea. And it is even harder, because once the sea was split, the Israelites were freed. In marriage, even after the blessings are intoned at the Huppah, both partners must continue to work hard to make the marriage last in a meaningful way. But at the end of the day, marriage may be more difficult but it is more satisfying: after the Reed Sea was split, it was divided into many different parts. In a successful marriage, two separate individuals truly become united as one.

**Shabbat Shalom**