



THE CHEVRA

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

Joe Smith - President

This Shabbat:

Parashat Shemot 23 Tevet, 5767

January 12, 13 - 2007

The Haftorah is read from Isaiah
27:6-28:13, skipping to 29:22-23.

<u>Friday</u>		
Candle Lighting		4:31 PM
Mincha		4:35 PM

<u>Shabbat</u>		
Chevra Mishnayos Shiur		8:00 AM
Shacharit		9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema:		9:42 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha		4:20 PM
Maariv and Havdala		5:36 PM

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

Next Shabbat:

Parashat Vaera 1 Shevat, 5767

January 19, 20 - 2007

Haftorah for Shabbos and Rosh
Chodesh (Isaiah 66:1-24, repeating
verse 23 at the end),.

<u>Friday</u>		
Candle Lighting		4:39 PM
Mincha		4:40 PM

<u>Shabbat</u>		
Chevra Mishnayos Shiur		8:00 AM
Shacharit		9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema:		9:42 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha		4:30 PM
Maariv and Havdala		5:43 PM

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

Our condolences to Steve and the entire Plotnick family on the passing of Steve's Father, Lester Plotnick. May the family know of no more sorrow and may they be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim

Daily Minyan

The Young Israel of Fair Lawn is starting to have a daily Minyan at 7:00 AM. If your schedule allows, please help us with the Minyan. Any day(s) you could come to help would be greatly appreciated. Sunday (and Legal Holiday) Minyan will continue to be scheduled for 8:00 AM.

Torah Insights – Harav Shlomo Riskin

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Shemot Exodus 1:1- 6:1 By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel – Since the expulsion of the seven-to-eight thousand residents of Gush Katif at the behest of the Israeli Government by the IDF and the Israeli Police Force two summers ago, an expression of the then Governmental policy of unilateral disengagement, and ideological battle has raged within the Religious Zionist Camp regarding the right (or even

obligation) of an Israeli soldier to refuse to carry out military orders if they conflict with his conscience or religious standards. When, if ever, does individual conscience override governmental authority? Will anarchy not reign supreme, and Central governmental authority fall by the wayside, if every soldier of the IDF decides which orders are proper for him to carry out and when the authority of his Talmudic Academy overrides the authority of his army commander? This is a question with enormous ramifications for the future of our Jewish State. Some of these issues are touched upon by our Biblical portion of Shemot and are worthy of investigation.

The Book of Exodus opens with the cataclysmic difference in the manner in which the descendants of Jacob-Israel are treated by a tyrannical Pharaoh “who did not know Joseph.” The Egyptians embittered the lives of the Israelites with back-breaking slave labor – and they even attempted to commit genocide against the Jews by killing off the male babies: “The King of Egypt told (or ordered) the Hebrew midwives (or the midwives of the Hebrews), ‘When you bring about the birth of the Hebrew women and you examine the birth- stool, if it is a male child you must slay him and if it is a female child, she may

live.” (Exodus 1:13-17).

The classical commentary Rashi interprets these mid-wives to be Hebrew women, whom Pharaoh wished to diabolically co-opt into his service against their own people, as an ancient form of “Kapos,” if you will. The arch-anti Semites, like Hitler and Stalin, always attempted, by means of bribery, extortion and blackmail – to utilize Jews against the Jews in their attempt to exterminate our nation.

The Abarbanel and R. Shmuel David Luzzato, on the other hand, take the phrase to mean the Egyptian midwives of the Hebrew women – and since “These (Egyptian) midwives feared the Lord, they refused to follow the instructions of Pharaoh and allowed the (male) babies to live” (Gen 1:18). These true heroines apparently understood that, despite the totalitarian laws of a Pharaoh despot of Egypt, there was a higher ethical law of the Creator of humanity in His Divine image to whom one had to submit. This is the first case of civil disobedience in history.

They had a magnificent model, none other than Bitya, the princess daughter of Pharaoh himself. Baby Moses had been concealed in an ark (Teyva, the very same word used for the boat which had rescued humanity in the earlier days of Noah) left floating along the Nile; when the Princess of Egypt came down to the river to bathe, and saw this ark on the waters, she sent her maid-servant and – contrary to her father’s orders- rescued the Hebrew child. She names him Moses, or son (in Egyptian), because since she drew him forth from the waters of the Nile – and by so doing certainly

risked her life in the face of the wrath of Pharaoh should he learn of her willful and traitorous deed – she certainly deserved to consider him her son (Exodus 2:5, 10).

To the best of my knowledge, the first historical record of citizens risking their lives against an unjust governmental law to follow a higher law of G-d and conscience are the Biblical verses I have just commented upon. This is the tradition of non-violent, peaceful resistance followed by Socrates in this famous trial, enunciated by Henry David Thoreau in the middle of the nineteenth century and successfully carried out by Dr. Martin Luther King on behalf of civil rights for African – Americans in the 1960’s.

Biblical law, as delineated in the Book of Deuteronomy and explained by the Talmudic Tractate Sotah (45a), distinguishes between an obligatory war (Chiefly defined as a war in self-defense, wherein the future life the Israelite nation is at stake) and a voluntary war, which – although sanctioned and perhaps even initiated by the Great Sanhedrin Court – does not have the urgency of a war fought on behalf of the very life of the new nation. Such a voluntary war allows for exemptions: an individual who has just built a new home but has not yet lived in it, who has just planted a vineyard but has not yet tasted of its fruit, who is betrothed but not yet married, as well as one who is fearful or tender-hearted (Deut. 20:5-8). Rabbenu Bahiya and the Ibn Ezra, commenting on the latter two categories of exemptions, interpret the one who is fearful as he who does not wish to harm anyone who is not hell-bent upon murdering

him and one who is tender-hearted as he who is paralyzed by fear and will thereby reduce the morale of his fellow soldiers. The exemption of one “who is fearful” is an exemption for reasons of conscience.

In terms of the IDF, I do not believe that a democratically arrived- at decision of the government which is not absolutely counter to Jewish law – such as land for peace, about which there is a legitimate halakhic difference of opinion – should engender the refusal of an individual soldier to follow the orders of his army officer. Our State is too fragile, our army too precious, and democracy too vital of a Jewish unifying ideal to allow for such factional separatism.

But if law-abiding citizens of Israel are asked to leave their homes and jobs by the Israeli Government, and that Government does not provide for them suitably parallel dwelling places and suitably parallel means of employment, such an expulsion is inhuman, is removing from those individuals their most basic human rights, and even soldiers must have the right to follow their conscience and refuse to carry out orders of evacuation in such an instance. Even the most lofty and crucial of government institutions must have a humanity conscience check – and – balance if the ideals of our nation are to endure.

Shabbat Shalom

Shlomo Riskin

Chancellor Ohr Torah Stone

Chief Rabbi - Efrat Israel