



# THE CHEVRA

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

Joe Smith - President

## This Shabbat:

### Parashat Vayechi

16 Tevet, 5767

January 5, 6 - 2007

The Haftorah is read from Kings I  
2:1-12.

Friday  
Candle Lighting 4:24 PM  
Mincha 4:25 PM

Shabbat  
Chevra Mishnayos Shiur 8:00 AM  
Shacharit 9:00 AM  
Sof Zman Keriat Shema: 9:41 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha 4:15 PM  
Maariv and Havdala 5:29 PM

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

## Next 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.

Friday  
Candle Lighting 4:31 PM  
Mincha 4:35 PM

Shabbat  
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

## Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Evelyn and Larry Kraut on the marriage of their daughter Sheri Anne to Eliezer Dov. Mazel Tov to Sheri's Grandparents Mrs. Elaine Kraut and Dr. Walter and Fern Silver as well as the entire Kraut and Brazil families. May they have continued Nachas and may Sheri and Eli build a Bayis Ne'emon B'Yisroel and celebrate many Smachos with their families in the future.

## Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Rachel and Ken Elkin on the engagement of their son, Elkanah to Rachel Demner of Springfield, NJ. Mazel Tov to the entire Elkin and Demner families. May the families have much Nachas in the future and may they celebrate many Smachot together with us for many years to come.

## 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.

## Board Meeting

There will be a Board Meeting at the Shul on Monday evening, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM.

The agenda will include: Committee Reports, Visiting Rabbi(s), YU Center for Jewish Future, Discussion of Fundraising, Other Business issues. All are welcome.

## Torah Insights – Harav Shlomo Riskin

This concluding portion of the Book of Genesis is fraught with poignant dreams: rapprochement between father and son after 22 years of alienation, rapprochement between siblings after complete lifetimes of jealousy and hatred, and the eventual unity of a family upon whose unity depends the future history of all of humanity. Within the context of these most significant resolutions are two issues which require further analysis: firstly, with all of the dominant and dominating personalities of Genesis, why does Joseph alone merit the "surname" of "the Righteous (haZaddik)" – especially after we have been given such a close glimpse into the ups and downs of his familial relationships; and secondly, if indeed this eldest son of Jacob and Rachel is the righteous one of the family, why does the ultimate prize

of “the sons of your father shall bow down to you... the scepter and lawgiver shall not depart ... from between his feet” (Gen. 49:8,10) elude Joseph and go instead to Judah? Yes, to Joseph is bequeathed material prosperity (Gen. 49:22-26) and even a double inheritance of land in Israel (Gen. 48:22), but the majority of religious leadership and the ultimate Abrahamic vision of the magnetic ingathering of all nations is reserved for Judah (Gen. 49:8,10)! What happens to Joseph’s dream, according to which all the brothers and even the universal cosmos must bow down to him?!

Despite the conventional wisdom that Joseph is awarded the appellation of “the Righteous” because he successfully withstands the seductions of Potiphar’s wife, I believe he deserves his “sobriquet” for an additional reason as well: Joseph demonstrates an almost superhuman quality to forgive, forget and even help those who sinned against him see the positive result of their action. Joseph places the sin of his brothers’ desire to remove him from the scene even if it meant murdering him within the context of the Divine Plan to save the Abrahamic family from extinction by famine. Among the most generous words of the Bible are those of the Grand Vizier when he reveals himself to be Joseph:

“And Joseph said to his brothers: ‘Come close now to me’, and they came close. And he said, ‘I am Joseph your brother whom you sold unto Egypt. But now do not be aggrieved and let there not be anger in your eyes (against yourselves) because you sold me here, because it was G-d who sent me away from you in order that (the family) be

sustained for life.’” (Gen. 45:4,5)

What gives Joseph the amazing capacity to rid himself of all natural and understandable feelings of revenge and to behave with such gracious forgiveness? Undoubtedly, part of the reason lies in Joseph’s new-found understanding that neither he nor any other human being stands at the center of the universe; it is G-d Almighty who directs world affairs, even if He operates from behind the curtains of the stage. Remember that it was the “old” Joseph who saw himself as the object of the obeisance of the sheaves of grain as well as of the sun, moon and stars, but it is the “new” Joseph who stood before Pharaoh and declared: “It has nothing to do with me; G-d will give the answer (interpretation) in accordance with the welfare of Pharaoh” (Gen. 41:16). The trials and tribulations of Egypt have not further contributed to his feelings of self-importance or his resentment towards his family; much the opposite, they have caused him to realize that the family destiny is guided only by G-d!

It also stands to reason that the mature Joseph also understands that he too contributed to the family dynamic of resentment, envy and hatred; yes, his father ought not have so blatantly demonstrated his favoritism, but Joseph should not have “played it up,” informing his father of every detail of his brother’s religious infractions and running to tell his brothers of the dreams in which they all bow down to him! He recognizes the arrogance of his youth and so is aware that he was not merely the innocent victim but was rather an active accomplice to the crime of his siblings.

However, despite the great-hearted noblesse oblige expressed by Joseph, the very grandiosity of his dreams exposed his fatal flaw – and was ultimately responsible for his ultimate loss of the grand prize of birth-right leadership. Joseph understood the universal vision afforded to Abraham, “through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth” (Gen. 12:3), and so he dreamt of Egyptian agriculture – for Egypt was the world’s leading power at the time – and even reached out for cosmic dominion.

He thereby gave fuel to the brothers’ fiery jealousy by overlooking the Land of Israel in his dreams and by placing himself – and G-d – at the center of his vision. In effect, they said to him: “If you want Egypt, we’ll give you Egypt” – and they sold him into Egypt. And Joseph miraculously succeeded in Egypt – and even brought G-d to Egypt, even if for but a brief instant. G-d and father Jacob understand that real redemption – and G-d recognition – can only emanate from Israel and Jerusalem. Joseph’s goal was correct – but his way to reach the goal was flawed. Hence his dreams of familial dependency upon and gratitude towards him were realized in – and limited to – Egypt, the world power of that generation. The ultimate Messianic dream of world redemption must await its fulfillment with a descendant of Judah, whose commitment to the Land of Israel and the centrality of the G-d of Israel remained constant throughout his life.

Shabbat Shalom  
Shlomo Riskin  
Chancellor Ohr Torah Stone  
Chief Rabbi - Efrat Israel