



# THE CHEVRA

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

Joe Smith - President

## This Shabbat:

### **Shabbat Parashat Shemini** **26 Nissan 5767; April 13-14, 2007**

Haftorah Samuel II 6:1-7:17.

#### **Friday**

Candle Lighting 7:15 PM  
Mincha 7:20 PM

#### **Shabbat**

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur 8:00 AM  
Shacharit 9:00 AM  
Sof Zman Keriat Shema: 9:38 AM (Gra"h)

**We bless the month of Iyar**  
Mussaf

Mincha 7:10 PM  
Shabbat Ends 8:18 PM

#### **Sunday**

Shacharit 8:30 AM

## Next Shabbat:

### **Parashat Tazria-Metzora** **3 Iyar 5767; April 20-21, 2007**

Haftorah is Kings 7:3-20

#### **Friday**

Candle Lighting 7:23 PM  
Mincha 7:25 PM

#### **Shabbat**

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur 8:00 AM  
Shacharit 9:00 AM  
Sof Zman Keriat Shema: 9:32 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha 7:15 PM  
Shabbat Ends 8:26 PM

#### **Sunday**

Shacharit 8:30 AM

## **Shabbat Mevarchim**

The Molad for Iyar will be Tuesday, April 17th, 45 minutes and 13 Chalakim after 12 noon.

## **Daily Minyan**

Our daily Minyan is at 7:00 AM. Please help us with the Minyan. Any day(s) you could come to help would be greatly appreciated

## **Annual Journal Dinner**

**Please save the date -**  
**June 3, 2007 for the YIFL**

## **Honorees:**

### Baalei Keria:

Aaron Kor, Aaron Safier, Betzalel Bacon, Brad Kaufman, Dovie Fischer, David Gottlieb, David Schwartz, Ephraim Loewy, Evan Silver, Josh Herbert, Leslie Gabor, Covey Schnipper, Phil Kestenbaum, Yechiel Boussi.

### Awardees:

Rabbi Avidan Elkin – Hakarat Hatov  
Jerry Halpern – Talmud Torah  
Joe Smith – Manhig  
Sam Lorber, Paul Cooper – Founders  
Stu Mentzel – Minyonaire

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

### **Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Shemini**

#### **Leviticus: 9:1-11:47**

Efrat, Israel – One of the most moving ritual experiences of the Jewish week is the havdallah (lit. separation) ceremony, when we intone the sweet – sad melody chanting. "Behold, the Lord of my salvation in Whom I trust and thus I do not fear," as we bid a sorrowful and faithful farewell to the warm comfort of the fleeting Shabbat amidst wine, spice and fire. It is as if the good feeling which emerges from within us as we divide the wine and the sweet smelling fragrance of the spices are necessary refreshment and re-energization of our spirits as we are sensing the leave-taking of the Sabbath Queen. And as we intone the blessing over the fire – our Sages teach us that fire was created by Adam on that first, primordial Saturday night – we customarily look at our fingernails. Why our fingernails?

The most rational explanation is that we can see in the reflection of the light on one side of our fingers and not on the other the actual power of light to provide enhanced vision. The early commentary (Rishon) Rabbi Menahem Meiri (citing the Gaonim) suggests that when Adam was first created, his entire body was covered by nails as a kind of protective coat; as a result of his having eaten of the forbidden fruit of knowledge of good and evil, this

protective coat was removed – with only the finger-nails remaining as a reminder of his earlier more protected and invincible state. Since we are soon to intone the prayer for the speedy arrival of Elijah the Prophet, herald of redemption, we are in effect requesting a return to the more exalted and guarded human estate in Eden.

I would like to expand on this interpretation, and at the same time attempt to understand the incomprehensible account of the tragic death of Nadav and Avihu, the two sons of Aaron, the High Priest. Our Biblical portion of Shemini opens, "And it happened on the eighth day..." with Rashi commenting, "the eighth day of the consecration ceremonies of the Sanctuary, the first day of the month of Nissan, the very day on which the Sanctuary was erected..." And it was on this very eighth day – in the midst of the exultant celebration following the descent of a Divinely – sent fire which consumed the offering on the altar as a sign of heavenly acceptance – that Nadav and Avihu were also consumed by a Divine fire! What occasioned such Divine wrath, and what is the significance of the eighth day, which gives the Biblical portion its very name?

The "eight day" is indeed fraught with significance. Let us return to the initial seven days of creation, when the Almighty created the heavens and the earth, and all of their hosts. On the sixth day He created the human being and placed him – Adam together with his wife Eve – in the Garden of Eden. The first couple sinned by plucking the fruit of Knowledge of good and evil from off the tree and eating it, by severing good and evil from its Divine source, thereby subjectivizing morality. The good and the evil, what is good and what is evil, became no longer rooted in G-d and Divine objective morality; good and evil became what the individual human being would think is good for him/her, and or evil for him/her. That is why our mystical literature refers to Adam's sin

as his having "severed the plantings" (Kitzetz banetiyot), removed the seed from its source. And so Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden.

Then came the first Sabbath Day, the period when each individual can find refuge and comfort under the wings of the Divine Presence, the day when the Almighty especially extends his arms to embrace the penitent. Indeed the Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah) teaches us that Adam recited the Psalm for the Sabbath Day for the first time, genuinely uplifted by the understanding that there truly existed a road back to Eden and that it was paved with stones of repentance and repair.

And then came the first Saturday night, the beginning of the first eighth day "This was the first time that darkness began to descend upon the world.... And the Almighty prepared for Adam two flint stones; Adam rubbed them together and there emerged fire...." (Bereishit Rabbah 11,2). Hence the first eighth is parallel to the very first day: on the first day G-d created light (ohr) for the world, and on the eighth day Adam created light and warmth (eish) for the world.

But it is much deeper than that. On the seven days of creation, G-d created a world for the human being to live in; on the eighth day, Adam descended – through fire – how he could repair that world, improve that world, re-create that world as a true picture of the Divine. And if on the primordial seven days of creation, G-d made a world for humanity, on the eighth day of the consecration of the Sanctuary the Israelites made a Sacred Space – an improved world – in – miniature – in which G-d could dwell together with humanity: "They shall make for a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in their midst." (Exodus Trumah).

Fire is the human response to G-d's light. But fire is a double-edged sword; it can strengthen and purify, or it can

subvert and petrify; it can bring light and warmth, or it can bring cannon fire and nuclear destruction. The blessing over fire, which attributes fire to its ultimate Divine source, must remind us that we must serve G-d in accordance with His Divine laws, that we dare not remove our creativity from its Divine direction. To do so would be a repetition of Adam's original sin.

G-d sent down His Divine light and fire as a sign that He accepted our Sanctuary, the work of human hands – which carried out to perfection the Divine architectural directions. Then Nadav and Avihu came along with "a strange fire, which they had not been commanded to bring...." Yes, we must use our creativity in the service of G-d to perfect ourselves and our world – but only in accordance with His will, in accordance with the limits He has placed on Divine Service, so that we never fall into the trap of bringing the strange fires of Moloch (Deut 18:10) and the immoral wars of Jihad. Human hands created fire – but human hands must use that fire to recreate and not to destroy. And so we look at our fingers as we make the blessing over fire every Saturday night, the beginning of our weekly "eighth day." We are telling ourselves that everything – the entire future of our lives and our world – lies in our own hands!

**By Shlomo Riskin**

**Shabbat Shalom**

Shlomo Riskin

Chancellor Ohr Torah Stone

Chief Rabbi - Efrat Israel