



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.

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

<u>Shabbat</u>		
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.

<u>Friday</u>		
Candle Lighting		5:05 PM
Mincha		5:10 PM

<u>Shabbat</u>		
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 **וְהַחַיִּינוּ** 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 dawned 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