



THE CHEVRA

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

Joe Smith - President

This Shabbat:

Parashat Ki Tissa Parashat Para

20 Adar, 5767, March 9, 10 - 2007

The Maftir reads Parshas Parah in
Chukas (Numbers 19:1-22).

The Haftorah of Parshas Parah is read
from Ezekiel 36:16-38

Friday

Candle Lighting 5:38 PM
Mincha 5:40 PM

Shabbat

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur 8:00 AM
Shacharit 9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema: 9:11 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha 5:30 PM
Shabbat Ends 6:39 PM

Sunday Shacharit 8:30 AM
Monday-Friday Shacharit 7:00 AM

Seuda Shelishit

This week's Seuda Shelishit is being
sponsored by the Goldschmidt family in
loving memory of Sandi's Father,
Moshe ben Simcha Z"L. May his
Neshama be elevated and may his
memory be blessed.

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

Next Shabbat:

Parashat Vayakhel-Pikudei Parashat Hachodesh

27 Adar, 5767, March 16, 17 - 2007

The Maftir reads in the second Sefer
Torah from Parshas Bo,
(Exodus 12:1-20)

The Haftorah of Parshas HaChodesh is
read in Ezekiel 45:16-46:18.

We bless the month of Nisan

The Molad for Chodesh Nissan Monday,
Mar. 19, 12:01 AM and 12 Chalokim

Friday

Candle Lighting 6:45 PM
Mincha 6:50 PM

Shabbat

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur 8:00 AM
Shacharit 9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema: 10:05 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha 6:40 PM
Shabbat Ends 7:46 PM

Sunday Shacharit 8:30 AM
Monday-Friday Shacharit 7:00 AM

Refua Shlema

Refuah Shalaima to Richard Geliebter
who is now at Maple Glen on Saddle
River Road.

He would love to have visitors so please
stop in when you have a chance.

Board Meeting

There will be a Board Meeting at the
Shul Monday evening, March 12th at
7:30 PM.

The agenda will include:

Committee Reports
Visiting Rabbi
Discussion of Fundraising
Other Business

All are welcome.

Torah Insights – Harav Shlomo Riskin

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Ki Tissa Exodus 30:11-34:35

By Shlomo Riskin

We may not count Jews, but every Jew counts

Efrat, Israel – “When you lift up
the heads of the children of Israel
to count them (in a census), let
each one give an atonement
offering for his soul when they are
counted, so that there not be a
plague in the counting of them”
(Exodus 30:12)

This opening verse of our Biblical
portion teaches that it is forbidden
to take a number count of the
Israelites, a census activity which

Jewish organizations are constantly involved in doing. This prohibition is reinforced by the prophet Hosea (chapter 2), when he ringingly declares: "The number of the children of Israel shall be as the sands of the sea, which cannot be numbered and cannot be counted..." And historically even King David learned the bitter lesson of the power of this command, when-against the will of his Chief Commander Joab- he ordered a census, and the Israelites suffered a plague (II Samuel, 24). Why can't we count Jews? What is the meaning of "giving atonement offering for his soul"? And didn't Hosea realize that we are not now- and were not in his day nor in any other time in Jewish history- as numerous as the sands of the sea?

The answer is to be found in a very strange incident during the judgeship of Gideon, great leader of Israel, against the Midianite enemy (Judges 6-7), which is cited by Chief Rabbi Sacks in his "Covenant and Conversation". G-d encourages war against Midian, Gideon assembles 32,000 soldiers, and G-d says they are too many for Him to place Midian in their hands (sic)!? Gideon allows exemption for those who are frightened and wish to return home; only 10,000 remain. G-d believes that there are still too many and orders Gideon to take his men to a waterway and have them drink. Ninety seven hundred knelt down on their knees to drink and three hundred lapped up the water with their hands, remaining in an upright position. G-d has Gideon wage the battle only with the 300 who did not kneel- with those soldiers who understand that it is only permissible to kneel before G-d. Even though the opposing Midianite forces were "innumerable (unable to be counted) like the sand at the edge of the sea in large quantity (Judges 7:12)", the

small band of 300- waging a surprise nocturnal battle accompanied with great victorious sounds of the Shofar- won the day!

The message is indubitably clear. A census presupposes that in battle and when compared to other nations, there is strength in numbers, numbers count. The Divine commandment forbidding a census comes to teach that if G-d is with Israel, then numbers become totally unimportant; to be alone with G-d is to always be with a majority of one. And to be with G-d means to be righteous, to be committed to the cause, to believe in oneself, in one's nation and one's mission. A small band of dedicated people willing to sacrifice one's life to a Divine cause- such as a Jewish homeland poised and inspired to teach the world about a G-d of love, morality, pluralism and peace- is automatically as numerous as the sands at the edge of the shores of the sea. Such an army is as united as are the sands of the sea, and such an army contains soldiers each of whom is willing to give up his life (soul) as an atonement for G-d. That is why we successfully defeated all of the Arab hordes with a population of barely 600,000 in our War of Independence, while our corrupt leadership claims we are even too tired to win wars today with a population of close to six million! Jews who lack the faith to risk their lives meaningfully in a just war for the sake of peace may well find that their lives will be taken absurdly by plague, G-d forbid. And if our Biblical portion begins by teaching that it is forbidden to count Jews in a census for the sake of comparison to other nations, it continues on to teach that nevertheless every single Jew within Israel certainly does count. Moses is atop Mt. Sinai (or in the supernal heavens) receiving the Decalogue of morality from G-d,

while the panicking Israelites- having expected their great prophet to return on the fortieth day when he planned his return for the forty first day- are worshipping the golden calf. G-d commands Moses: "Get down, because your nation whom you took up from the land of Egypt is acting perversely" (Exodus 32: 7)

The Sages of the Talmud expand on G-d's words: "Get down from our exalted state. I only gave you greatness because of your nation. Now that your nation is sinning, what do I need you for? " (B.T. Berakhot 32a). Picture the scene: here is the greatest Kollel (Rabbinical Seminary) in history, with the Almighty as Dean of the Academy (Rosh HaYeshiva) and Moses as disciple (avrech). Nevertheless, G-d explains that He did not enter into a covenant with the elite, most dedicated Jewish scholars; G-d entered into a covenant with every single Jew, from the elders and judges to the choppers of wood and the drawers of water.

Just as a Holy Torah Scroll is invalidated by a single letter which is missing, so is historic Israel (Knesset Yisrael) invalidated if one Jew is disaffected. Moses must go down to his errant nation and lift up each of the Israelites, restore every Jew to the commitment of the Divine message and mission. Yes, the Jews must not be counted, but each and every Jew certainly counts!

Shabbat Shalom

Shlomo Riskin

Chancellor Ohr Torah Stone

Chief Rabbi - Efrat Israel