



# THE CHEVRA

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

Joe Smith - President

## Shabbat Parashat Bamidbar

2 Sivan 5767; May 18-19, 2007

Haftorah is read from Hosea 2:1-22

### Friday

Mincha	7:00 PM
Candle Lighting	7:51 PM

### Shabbat

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur	8:00 AM
Shacharit	9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema:	9:14 AM (Gra"h)

### Shiur Pirkei Avoth

Mincha	7:50 PM
Shabbat Ends	8:59 PM

<u>Sunday</u> Shacharit	8:30 AM
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<u>Monday, Tuesday</u>	7:00 AM
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## 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 Bamidbar Shavuot

#### Numbers 1:1 - 4:20

Efrat, Israel – I constantly marvel at the extent to which the Hebrew calendar educates – and never more subtly and strikingly than in the Megillah Scroll with which our spring festivals begin and the Megillah Scroll with which our spring festivals conclude: from Purim to Shavuot, from the Scroll of Esther to the Scroll of Ruth.

Purim falls out exactly four weeks before Passover and serves as a kind of introduction, or warm up, for the Festival of our freedom. Indeed, our Sages made sure to link Purim with Passover even in a leap year, when there are two months of Adar, and when logic would dictate that we ought celebrate Purim on Adar I, our first opportunity to do so; nevertheless, the Talmudic ruling insists that the Purim Festival be established on Adar II, so that the holiday of the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar always be celebrated just one month before the Passover holiday of the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Nissan.

Passover is in turn linked by the counting of the Omer to its concluding Festival of Shavuot,

seven weeks later; the Talmudic Sages even refer to Shavuot as Atzeret, or the Closing Holiday (paralleling Shemini Atzeret, the Eighth Day which concludes the fall festival of Succot). And while Passover only celebrates the very first burgeoning expressions of our freedom, when we left Egyptian slave-labor and suffering but only got as far as a hostile and homeless desert, Shavuot marks the Festival of the first fruits brought by the Israelites who have not only reached their Israeli homeland but have also established their Holy Temple in Jerusalem !

Remarkably enough, the holidays of this spring period are sandwiched between the public readings of two of our five Biblical Scrolls (Megillot) each of which features a heroic woman as its main personality: Purim is marked by the reading of the Scroll of Esther and Shavuot by the reading of the Scroll of Ruth. And just as Passover moves from the description of a nation still smarting from slavery and only tasting the beginning of a mere desert freedom to the far more satisfying Shavuot realization of home and hearth, State and Sanctuary, the Purim (pre-Passover) Esther Scroll centers upon Jews in vulnerable galut (exile) and inexorably leads into the culminating Shavuot Scroll of Ruth, with its majestic reach for messianic geulah (redemption). A study of the contrasts and comparisons between these two

feminist – featuring Scrolls from galut to geulah will clearly elucidate the upward march of our calenderical journey, which clearly points us in an Eastward direction to Zion.

First of all, the entire story of the Scroll of Esther takes place in Persia, and opens with an exquisitely detailed description of the Dining Hall of the Persian King in Shushan. (Esther 1:6). The Scroll of Ruth, on the other hand, opens in Bethlehem, Israel – and although the rest of that chapter takes place in Moab, the succeeding three chapters of the Book all take place in Israel, in Bethlehem and Efrat. It is even fascinating to note that ten years of life in Moab are described in that first chapter, whereas it takes the next three chapters to detail the crucial events in Israel of only three months duration: from the beginning of the barley harvest to the end of the wheat harvest. These three months prepare the stage for Jewish eternity!

Secondly, according to the Midrash (B.T. Megillah 11a), the Scroll of Esther describes Jews who have the opportunity to return to Judea but opt to remain in the "diaspora;" Ahasveros was King of Persia immediately following Cyrus – who conquered Babylon and permitted the Jews who were exiled there to return to their homeland and rebuild their Temple . Esther even has had her name changed from the Hebrew "Hadassah" to the more Persian "Esther" (probably from the Persian word for star, and the Persian goddess Astarte). In the Scroll of Ruth, however, the text makes fairly short shift of the sons of Elimelekh, who leave Bethlehem (Lit. House of Bread) for the falsely glittering fields of Moab (lit. "from father," a reminder of a Biblical act of incest between Lot and his daughter); their names, Makhlon ( illness) and Kilyon

(destruction) succinctly sum up their galut experience of assimilation and intermarriage. The remaining three quarters of the Book tell of Naomi's return to her homeland, and of the triumph she eventually experiences there as the "ancestor" of the Messiah David. The Scroll of Ruth describes Jews who leave exile for return to Israel.

Thirdly, the Scroll of Esther tells the story of a Jewess in exile who is forced to forsake the home of her relative Mordecai (cousin, uncle, nephew, husband?) and live with a Gentile King in order to save her people; moreover, the salvation she achieves is only temporary, with the Talmud ruling that we don't even recite Hallel on Purim since we still remained slaves of Ahasveros even after Haman's demise (B.T. Megillah 14). The Scroll of Ruth on the other hand, tells the story of a Gentile Moabite who becomes a Jewess – by – choice, journeys to Israel to live with her Jewish mother-in-law, and enters the royal family of Judah when she marries Boaz; moreover, she becomes the progenitrix of ultimate Jewish salvation through the eventual descendant of her great - grandson, David.

Finally, the manner in which we celebrate Purim is by drinking until "we can no longer distinguish between praising Mordecai and cursing Haman," perhaps because it was the arch anti-Semite Amalekite Haman who forcibly reminded the assimilating Jews of Persia that they were after all – Jews; nevertheless, such raucous celebration is certainly not identified with the way in which our Sages generally asked us to celebrate. Shavuot, however, is celebrated by our bringing first fruits to the Temple and singing praises to G-d. Apparently true Jewish piety, Jewish future and

eternal Jewish salvation can only come out of Zion!

**By Shlomo Riskin**  
**Shabbat Shalom**

Shlomo Riskin  
Chancellor Ohr Torah Stone  
Chief Rabbi - Efrat Israel