

CONGREGATION BAIS TORAH

January 21, 2005 · 89 West Carlton Road, Suffern, NY 10901 · (845)352-1343 · www.baistorah.org כ"א מכת שבת פרשת שמות

ערב שבת פרשת שמות

הדלקת נרות: 4:40 PM

מנחה: 4:45 PM

Rabbi Gottlieb's הלכות שבת shiur at 8:15 PM

שבת פרשת שמות

שחרית 8:45 AM

סוף זמן קריאת שמע 9:42 AM

נמרא שיעור 3:45 PM

מנחה 4:30 PM

סעודה שלישית

מעריב 5:41 PM

Sunday שחרית 7:45 AM

Weekday שחרית

Mon. and Thurs: 6:20 and 7:45 AM

Tues., Wed and Fri: 6:30 and 7:45 AM

Weekday מנחה-מעריב

Sun. -Thurs.: 4:50 PM

Second מעריב Mon. - Thurs. 8:00 PM

ערב שבת פרשת וארא

הדלקת נרות: 4:49 PM

מנחה: 4:55 PM

Shiurim

Sundays at 8:30 AM – מסכת סנהדרין – Rabbi Yisroel Gottlieb

Mondays at 6:30 PM – מסכת ברכות – Rabbi Chaim Wein

Mondays at 8:00 PM - Hachnosas Kallah of Monsey lectures for women.

Tuesdays at 8:15 PM – Partners in Torah

Wednesdays at 8:15 PM - ספר עזרא - Rabbi Yisroel Gottlieb

Monday through Friday after the second שחרית - ספר מדע - שחרית – Rabbi Yosef Fischer

Monday through Thursday at 9:45 AM - ספר נמרא shiur - Rabbi Leibel Reznick

Friday night at 8:15 PM – Hilchos Shabbos shiur – Rabbi Gottlieb

דף I, Monday through Friday 5:25 AM and Sunday at 6:30 AM – Mordechai Rudman

דף II, Monday through Thursday at 7:00 PM and Sunday at 9:30 AM – Rabbi Yosef Fischer

Women's תהלים group meets on שבת 45 minutes before מנחה.

Shul Announcements

The **Avot U'Banim Learning Program** continues this Motzoei Shabbos at 6:30 PM in the library. Parents, children and grandchildren are invited to enjoy the learning, the pizza and the prizes. This week's program is sponsored by the Furmans to commemorate the yahrzeit of Ed Furman's father, Yaakov ben Moshe. .

This week's סעודה שלישית is sponsored by Michael Kronenberg and Jossi Lieder in memory of their respective father's yahrzeits. Bais Torah invites everyone to "see the stars appear after Shabbos" at a fun-filled **melave malka** on March 25th. (Note the change of date.) There will be a delicious buffet, a live performance by comedian Marc Weiner and music by Omek Hadavar.

For details and further information on shul events, be sure to visit our **website**, www.baistorah.org. To subscribe to **e-mail updates** on late-breaking shul news, write to baistorah@aol.com.

Keep us informed. Are you planning a simcha or special event? To avoid scheduling conflicts, please call Esther Garber, our shul secretary. She is in the office Monday through Thursday, 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM.

Please reserve Sunday May 14th (Mothers Day) for the shul **Annual Dinner** honoring Steve and Jackie Fessel. Further details and journal ad blanks will be forthcoming shortly. Kindly see Laurence Gordon or Moe Tilson, Dinner Co-Chairs, for further information.

Mazel Tov

Leon and Rena Pachter on the engagement of their son, Adiv, to Sarah Azran of Atlanta, Ga.

Refuah Shelaimah

דבורה בת בריינה - Dora - Yis Helprin's mother,

יעמק בת שרה - Ilse Rossman - Michael Rossman's mother,

שרה חנה בת בלומא - Shirlee Aaronson -

חיים מאיר יחיאל בן מלכה לאה - Mr. Shapiro -

יהונתן בן שושנה - Jerry and Roz Seigel's son, Yoni -

How to Reach Us

Rabbi Yisroel Gottlieb 357-3913, rabbigottlieb@yahoo.com – Daytime emergency 362-8362

President Peter Katz, 357-0129 peter@pkatech.com

Treasurer Barry Lifschitz, 352-0226, Fax 352-0841 or barry@lifschitz.net

Maintenance Yis Helprin 494-7446

Chesed Committee Charlie Grandovsky, 425-4683

Bikur Cholim Eveline Kranzler, 352-8410 and
Chosh Levy, 425-6827

Shul Secretary Esther Garber, 352-1343

Sisterhood Liaison Betty Schloss, 369 – 1833

Lost and Found Michael Loebenstein, 425-8895

Chevra Kadisha Steve Fessel, 425-1713, Ephraim Pessin, 914-420-6714 or Gloria Gordon, 425-1276

Sisterhood Tribute Cards Esther Garber, 352-1343

Bais Torah Bulletins Email baistorah@taxprof.net, Fax (845) 368-4172, or call (845) 368-2222. To receive e-mail updates, write to baistorah@aol.com. This bulletin is now downloadable from the web at www.baistorah.org.

Simcha Room Reservations/Kiddushim Jack Gross, 357-4121

Eiruv 362-4302

Mikvah 425-6101

Youth Felise Katz 357-0129

Hachnosas Orchim Facility for homeless, Shea Jacobs 425-9617

In Case of Emergency

The **red Hatzoloh phone** is in the hallway on the wall between the rear washing station and the Simcha Room.

The **defibrillator** is in a cubby in the coat room opposite the Hatzoloh phone.

Parashat Shemot - 5766 –

The Concept of “Bechirah Chofshit,” Free Choice, in Sefer Shemot

The concept of “Bechirah Chofshit,” Free Choice, one of the cardinal principles of Judaism, is actually introduced in the Book of Devarim (10:12), where we find Moshe’s somewhat surprising specification of HaShem’s requirement of the People of Israel, implying also that it is a minimal requirement, “Now, O Israel, what is it that HaShem, your G-d, asks of you? **ONLY to fear HaShem, your G-d, to go in all His ways, and to love Him with all your heart and with all your soul...**” The Gemara (Berachot 33b) does in fact react with surprise to this verse, and asks “Was fear of HaShem really a small matter to Moshe?” And it answers “Yes; for Moshe, it was indeed a small matter.” In that context, the Gemara there cites Rabbi Chanina as saying “Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for ‘**Fear of Heaven...**’” Rashi explains this expression as follows: “Every attribute of a person is in the hands of the Holy One, Blessed is He – such as whether he is tall or short, poor or rich, wise or foolish... – these are all under the control of Heaven; but **whether he will be righteous or wicked is not under the control of Heaven.** This matter has been placed in the hands of the individual, before whom **He placed two paths** and advised him to choose the path of “Fear of Heaven.”

In Parashat Shemot, the first example of such a choice being made is in connection with the midwives Shifra and Puah (Identified by the Midrash as Yocheved, mother of Moshe, and Miriam, his sister). In his first attempted genocidal act, Pharaoh orders them to kill the male Jewish babies. But verse Shemot (1:17) tells us, “*The midwives feared G-d, and they refused to act in accordance with the command of the King of Egypt, and they let the baby boys live.*” When they were interrogated by Pharaoh as to why they had disobeyed his command, they responded that the Jewish women were not like their Egyptian counterparts, in that they gave birth without the aid of midwives (Shemot 1:19). But Scripture goes out of its way to acknowledge that HaShem was aware of the righteousness of the midwives, who had risked their lives to protect the persecuted People of Israel. “*G-d gave bountiful blessing to the midwives... because they chose to fear G-d, He made for them dynasties.*” (Shemot 1:20-21) Rashi defines these dynasties as the Houses of Priesthood and the Levites (via Aharon and Moshe) and Kingship (which would come from Miriam).

The next individual to be tested with a life-defining choice was Moshe Rabbeinu himself, in his confrontation with G-d at the Burning Bush. HaShem insisted that he be the exclusive agent for the mission of the Exodus of the Jewish People. But Moshe insisted, “*...Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should take the Children of Israel out of Egypt?*” (Shemot 3:11) and “*Please, my L-rd, I am not a man of words... for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of speech.*” (Shemot 4:10) To the point where Scripture tells us that “*The wrath of HaShem burned against Moshe...*” (Shemot 4:14), Moshe was demoted from one of the positions of greatness intended for him, and he was joined by his brother, Aharon, who became the Patriarch of the Priests. But Moshe Rabbeinu, at the same time, did make the choice and accept the mission of being the leader of the Children of Israel in their march towards freedom, and to be the human being who would ascend Mt. Sinai and receive the Torah from HaShem.

In verse Shemot (7:3), we find HaShem saying to Moshe, “***I will harden the heart of Pharaoh and I shall multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh will not heed you...***” This raises the fundamental question of how a just G-d could punish someone from whom He has taken Freedom of Choice? This is a classic question and there are (at least) two classic answers. One is that Pharaoh and his nation exercised Freedom of Choice and made crucial decisions concerning their treatment of the Jewish People long before the time of the Ten Plagues, for which they were punished by the Plagues. The other is that during the first five plagues, Pharaoh was still exercising Free Choice. The expression of “hardening one’s heart” can be understood as meaning granting the strength to resist the pain, thus **enabling** the exercise of Free Will.

In Parashat Yitro, in verses Shemot (19:5-6), the Almighty declares His intentions with regard to the People of Israel. “*And now, if you obey Me and guard My covenant, then you shall be for me the most beloved treasure of all peoples, because the entire World is Mine. You shall be for Me a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation.*” And, faced with the choice being offered to them by the Creator, “*The entire people responded together and said, ‘Everything that HaShem has spoken, we will do.’*” Shemot (19:8) PF