

CONGREGATION BAIS TORAH

January 5, 2008 · 89 West Carlton Rd · Suffern, NY 10901 · (845)352-1343 · www.baistorah.org · ארא שבת פרשת וארא כ"ז טבת

ארב שבת פרשת וארא

הדלקת נרות 4:23 PM

מנחה 4:30 PM

שקיעה 4:41 PM

Rabbi Gottlieb's שבת הלכות shiur at the Oneg.

ארב שבת פרשת וארא

היוםי 8:00 AM - Rabbi Gottlieb

שחרית 8:45 AM

סוף זמן קריאת שמע 9:42 AM

מברכים החודש שבט

גמרא שיעור 3:25 PM

מנחה 4:10 PM

שקיעה 4:42 PM

סעודה שלישית

מעריב 5:24 PM

שחרית 7:45 AM

Weekday שחרית

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

Tues.: 6:10 and 7:35 AM (ראש חודש)

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

Weekday מעריב מנחה

Sun. through Thurs.: 4:30 PM

Second מעריב 8:00 PM (Mon.-Thurs..)

ארב שבת פרשת בא

הדלקת נרות 4:30 PM

מנחה 4:35 PM

שקיעה 4:48 PM

Shiurim

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

Tuesdays at 8:15 PM – Partners in Torah

Wednesdays at 8:15 PM – מלכים א – Rabbi Yisroel Gottlieb

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

היוםי II, Monday through Friday 7:00 AM – Rabbi Yisroel Gottlieb

Monday through Friday at 7 AM - גמרא מסכת ברכות - ירושלמי - Mordechai Rudman

Monday through Friday after the second שחרית עם רשי - שחרית פרשת השבוע עם רשי - Rabbi Yosef Fischer

Monday through Thursday at 9:45 AM - גמרא שיעור - Rabbi Leibel Reznick

היוםי III, Monday through Thursday 10:00 AM and Sunday at 9:30 AM – Rabbi Yosef Fischer

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

Shul Announcements

Join us for an **Oneg Shabbos** this Friday evening at the Eliezri home, 14 Carlton Lane, at 8:15 PM.

Moe and Bayla Tilson invite the entire congregation to a kiddush this Shabbos in honor of their children and grandchildren, David and Rachelle Schwartz, Elon, Orlee, and Yardena making aliyah. The kiddush is also in honor of their new granddaughter, Malkie, born to Aviva and Moishe Brandsdorfer and their new grandson, Avraham Leib, born to Yael and Yehuda Jacoby.

סעודה שלישית is being co-sponsored by Yossie Stern and Avi Becker for their respective yahrzeits.

Bais Torah's popular **Avos U'Banim** program continues this Motzoei Shabbos, January 5th at 6:15 in the Library. This week's program is being sponsored by the **Rhines**. Bring your children or grandchildren each week - everyone is welcome! There will be hot pizza on hand and a chance for participants to win prizes. Sponsorships are invited at \$50 per session and all information will be listed on our website. For further details, please contact Michael Kronenberg at mkron1950@gmail.com or call 368-1064.

This Motzoei Shabbos, January 5th, we will present a movie "**Inspired Too - Kiruv Across America**." Rabbi Eliyahu Bergstein will speak after the movie about his experiences in kiruv and Project Inspire, the movement to share the beauty and wisdom of our heritage with our fellow Jews.

On Motzoei Shabbos January 19th at 8:15 PM, everyone is invited to hear Simcha Friedman speak on the topic of "**Where Do We Go from Here?**" He will discuss the Jewish afterlife and beyond based on the thoughts of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, with whom he is writing a book.

On February 1st and 2nd, Bais Torah will be hosting a **Shabbaton for Our Way**, an NCSY-affiliated organization for the hearing impaired. If you are able to provide housing for couples or singles that Shabbos, please speak to Moshe Lehmann or write to ourwaymonsey@aol.com.

On February 2nd & 3rd, Bais Torah will be holding two special events, "**Remembering the Rav**." On Saturday night, we will show a new documentary film entitled, "Lonely Man of Faith, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik." On Sunday morning, Rabbi Dr. Aaron Rakeffet, a noted author, lecturer and former student of the Rav, will speak at a breakfast on the topic of, "**The Uniqueness of the Lonely Man of Faith**." Save the date! Everyone is invited to attend.

Save the Date - Sunday, May 18th 2008 - **Annual Bais Torah Dinner** honoring Yis and Bella Helprin.

Get great discounts with the **Ultimate Kosher Discount Card** for \$18. Available from Aviva at our shul office (352-1343) or Leslie Goldress (352-3257).

The DVD of the **Hachnosas Sefer Torah** is available upon request. Suggested donation is \$10. Email mkron@optonline.net or call 368-1064 to place your order.

Mazel Tov

Josh Pomeranz on making Aliyah.

Irwin and Ann Citron on the engagement of their daughter, Linda, to Reuven Segall of Passaic.

Jonathan and Chavy Rosenstock on the birth of a daughter, Rochel Penina.

Max and Gina Frommer on the marriage of their grandchildren, Gabiella and Josh Sarner, daughter of Yingy and Ruth Frommer.

Hamakom Yenachem

Elliot Shapiro on the p'tira of his father, Howard Shapiro. He is sitting at his home, 52 Briarcliff, until Sunday morning.

Refuah Shelaimah

Henry Shapiro -

חיים מאיר יחיאל בן מלכה לאה

Ben Zauderer - ביליה בן בילה

Manny London - מונש בן חנה פרידא

Ken and Judy Gribetz's grandson, Eitan Witkin -

איתן אפרים בן נחמה יטה

Sam Colman - שמואל בן שרה רחל

Kathy Resnick - אביה בת שרה

Tova Eizik's grandson - יונתן בן חנה רייזל

Renee Rosenbaum's mother, Fanny York -

רחמה פייגל בת רבקה

Yossie Stern's granddaughter -

ציפורה יהודית בת דינה רבקה

How to Reach Us

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

President Allen Nussbaum president@baistorah.org

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

Maintenance Yis Helprin 494-7446

Shul Secretary Aviva Schmutter 352-1343 aviva@baistorah.org M-TH 9:00-3:00

Simcha Room Reservations/Kiddushim Jack Gross, 357-4121

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

Eiruv 362-4302

Mikvah 425-6101

Chesed Committee Charlie Grandovsky, 425-4683

Youth Michael Kronenberg 368-1064

Sisterhood Liaison Betty Schloss, 369 – 1833

Hachnosas Orchim Facility for homeless, Shea Jacobs 425-9617

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, Mona Selzer 356-0129

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

In Case of Emergency

The **red Hatzolah 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 Hatzolah phone.

Parashas Vaera - 5768

“And I Will Harden the Heart of Pharaoh” (Shemos 7:3)

In describing the operational plan for the Exodus to the individual selected to be its human coordinator, HaShem informs Moshe that it is His intention to harden the heart of Pharaoh, so that he will refuse, at least initially to release the enslaved population of Israel. Now it is a cardinal principle of Judaism that the human being is granted freedom of choice, according to Rabbi Akiva in Pirkei Avos (3:19), “Everything is foreseen, but permission is granted.” According to this principle, at first glance, Pharaoh should always have had the option of release available to him. Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish in Eretz Yisrael, in the third century, may have been the first to deal with this theological problem in the explicit context of Mitzrayim. On the verse in *Shemos 10:1*, “*For I have hardened his heart...*” we find “Rabbi Yochanan said, ‘Here is an opportunity for the heretics to say that the Pharaoh was denied freedom of choice.’ Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish responded, ‘Let the mouths of the heretics be stopped up. The principle in play is in accordance with the verse in *Mishlei 3:34*, ‘*To the mockers, he will return mockery.*’ He warns the sinner of the consequences once, twice, three times, and if the sinner does not change his ways, then the Almighty locks the Door of Repentance in order to punish him for his sins.”

“So was it in the case of the wicked Pharaoh, that Moshe was sent to him five times, and he paid no heed to the words of Moshe. Then the Holy One, Blessed is He said to him, ‘You stiffened your neck and hardened your heart - now I will add uncleanness to your uncleanness;’ ” by withholding the ability to repent for the last five plagues (for in the case of the first five plagues, the Torah writes “*VaYechezak*,” and he hardened his own heart, whereas with respect to the last five plagues, the Torah writes, “*VaYechazek*,” He (the Almighty) hardened Pharaoh’s heart).

Rabbi Yochanan’s view, as explained by the Ramban, in 13th century Spain, is that freedom of choice was withheld from Pharaoh from the very beginning of the plagues, because of the gross and inhuman, Nazi-like excesses with which the Egyptians carried out the historical mission of enslavement of the Children of Israel during the preceding 210 years, for which they had been appointed by the Hashgachah, Divine Providence.

In the 12th century, the Rambam, at the end of Chapter Five and the beginning of Chapter Six of Hilchos Teshuvah, the Laws of Repentance, deals with this issue, in the general context of Repentance and the specific context of the Pharaoh of Mitzrayim. In (5:5) the Rambam poses the question of the conflict between Freedom of Choice and G-d’s Foreknowledge, and answers “as a human being lacks the ability to grasp the true essence of the Creator, as it says, ‘*for a human cannot perceive Me in the context of his mortal life,*’ so is it impossible to grasp and comprehend the ‘Knowledge’ of the Creator. That is what the Prophet meant when he said, ‘*My Thoughts are unlike your thoughts, and My Ways are unlike your ways...*’ (*Yeshayahu 55:8*)”

For introducing the question without providing a comprehensive and complete answer, the Rambam is criticized sharply by the Torah critic and discussant Rabbi Avraham ben David (the Ravad), whose comments are printed alongside the text of the Rambam throughout the Mishneh Torah, “This author did not act wisely, in opening a discussion without knowing how to complete it. He begins by asking questions, and leaves the question without resolution, requiring the reader to fall back on faith. It would have been better to leave the entire subject to faith, and not raise the issue, for perhaps he has brought someone to doubt concerning the topic.”

The Kessef Mishneh, Rabbi Yoseph Karo, the sixteenth century author of the Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law, another of the “*Nosei Kelim*” or armor-bearers of the Rambam, responds to the Raavad. He writes that it is impossible for a thinking Jew not to be bothered by this question. And therefore it is to the credit of the Rambam that he pointed out that the nature of this question, that asks a question concerning G-d, based on human premises, places it beyond the boundaries of human reason.

With regard to the wicked Pharaoh, the Rambam appears to adopt the view of Rabbi Yochanan, cited above. In Mishneh Torah (6:3), we find “It is possible that a human being can sin a very great sin, or very many sins, such that the judgment before the Judge of Truth, for those sins that he committed willingly and consciously, is that the ability to repent be withheld, and permission is at the end not granted to him to repent from his evil ways. Therefore it is written ‘*And I will harden the heart of Pharaoh,*’ because earlier he had done terrible evil to the People of Israel who lived in his land, as it says ‘*Come, let us outsmart this nation.*’ (*Shemos 1:10*)” – which covered over his real intention; namely, to “outsmart the Creator,” Who chose this nation. PF