



Saturday Night in the Beit Midrash: Parent-Child Learning at KMS

by Rachel Levitt Klein

It started, like many great ideas, from discussions at various Shabbat tables, and continued to develop in phone calls and meetings. The dream was simple: create a spiritual place for KMS families to learn Torah together. KMS has such a special approach to learning—an openness, a connectedness and the belief that learning should be accessible to all at many different levels, and that all questions are both powerful and welcome. How to package these things in a family-centered program?

We decided to create Parent-Child Learning to run at KMS on motza'ei Shabbat when Shabbat ends early during the winter months. We have scheduled the sessions every other week in order to coordinate with a similar program held at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah. The kickoff session was held in November. Evenings include source sheets with translations to allow participants to learn the materials provided. Each week a different family sponsors refreshments and prizes. Families are greeted at the door with candy and tickets for prizes, in addition to the source sheets relating to the upcoming Parashat haShavua. The Beit Midrash is transformed into a large room for learning, with mechitzot off to the sides, and groups of chairs in circles,

ready for eager participants to join together or learn on their own. When about ten minutes are left in the evening, I ask one person from each group (always a delicious child) to report about one idea he or she was wondering about during the study session. This is always a highlight!

Some of the thought-provoking topics we've covered: "What are the top ten mitzvot in your opinion?" "Different points of view regarding the same situation: the Yosef story" and "the Mishkan: what does it mean to make a sacred space?" Alternatively, participants are welcome to bring their own materials to learn. Some participants catch up on homework; others prepare for their b'nai/b'not mitzvah. It's especially wonderful when a grandparent comes and three generations are learning together!

The cherry on top is having Rabbi Bieler be the sho'el umeishiv—the teacher who circulates, answers and asks questions and helps

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photo by Lisi Levisohn

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FROM THE RABBI

Different Levels of Revelation when the Sea of Reeds Split

by R. Yaakov Bieler

Pesach 5773



Our discussions at the Pesach Seder focus on the ten plagues, which rose in a crescendo of ever-increasing destruction of the Jews' enemies, and was so powerful a demonstration of God's Might. Although the plagues were the catalyst that finally caused Pharaoh to grant permission for the Jews to leave Egypt, the Haggada seems to hold that the Kriyat Yam Suf (the splitting of the Sea of Reeds), which occurred on the seventh day of Passover, was five times greater than all of the previous plagues combined!

In Egypt it says of them [Shemot 8:15], "The magicians said to Pharaoh 'This is the *Finger* of God.'" At the sea it says [Ibid. 14:31], "Israel saw the Great *Hand* that the Lord Laid against Egypt; and the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His Servant Moshe." Now, how often were they smitten by "the finger"? Ten plagues!

Thus you must conclude that in Egypt they were smitten by ten plagues, at the sea they were smitten by *fifty* plagues!

Rabbi Eliezer said: ...Each individual plague which the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt consisted of four plagues....

Thus you must now say that in Egypt they were struck by forty plagues, and at the sea they were struck by *two hundred* plagues.

Rabbi Akiva said: ... Each individual plague which the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt consisted of five plagues....

Thus you must now say that in Egypt they were struck by fifty plagues, and at the sea they were struck by *two hundred and fifty* plagues.

The Rabbis assume that God's Power and intense Presence at the Sea was so tangible that everyone, young and old, regardless of where on the social spectrum they may have found themselves, experienced a literal visual Revelation:

Mechilta, Parashat HaShira #3 on Shemot 15:2 "This is my God and I will glorify Him."

R. Eliezer said: From where do we know that even a *hand-maiden* at the Sea saw what Yeshayahu and Yechezkel and the other prophets did not see? For it is said [Hoshea

12:11], "I have also *Spoken* unto the prophets, and I have Multiplied Visions; and by the ministry of the prophets have I used *Similitudes/Parables*." And it is written [Yechezkel 1:1], "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar that the heavens were opened, and I *saw visions* of God [as opposed to God Himself, so to speak]." A parable: A human king that comes to the State and he is surrounded by a group of bodyguards, and warriors are to his right and to his left, and soldiers in front of him and behind him. Everyone asked, "Which one is the king?" because they were all flesh and blood. But when the Holy One, Blessed Be He was Revealed at the Sea, no one had to ask, "Which one is the King?", but rather when they saw Him, they recognized Him and they all as one proclaimed, "This is my God and I will glorify Him."

In the Talmud, the event is described as even more remarkable by including babies as well as those still in utero in the Revelatory experience!

Sota 30b-31a

Our Rabbis taught: R. Yosi the Galilean expounded: At the time the Israelites ascended from the Red Sea, they desired to utter a song; and how did they render the song? The babe lay upon his mother's knees and the suckling sucked at his mother's breast; when they beheld the Divine Presence, the babe raised his neck and the suckling released the nipple from his mouth, and they exclaimed: "This is my God and I will glorify Him" as it is said [Tehillim 8:3]: "Out of the mouths of babes and

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Further Reading

Many of Rabbi Bieler's lectures, articles, and Divrei Tora, including some audio files suitable for playback on a computer or a mobile device, are available at the KMS website..

To access this material, go to www.kmsynagogue.org and click on "Rabbi" near the upper left-hand corner of the home page.

KMS Observes Jewish Disability Awareness Month

by Gail Javitt

On Saturday night, February 16, the KMS Special Needs Committee presented a screening of *Silent Games* and a concurrent hands-on youth workshop.

The event was held in honor of North American Inclusion Month, which has been designated by the Orthodox Union's (OU) Yachad/National Council for Disabilities (NJCD) as a time to develop methods for integrating people who live with disabilities into the larger community, and to cultivate an empathic understanding of what life is like for them. Federations of North America is similarly observing Jewish Disability Awareness Month.

Yachad organized the youth workshop in KMS's spacious, newly-renovated Youth Beit Midrash. Participants could walk around to different stations, each focusing on a different disability, including auditory, visual,

reading, writing, fine motor, gross motor, ADHD, and autism spectrum. Guided by KMS parents and teen volunteers, the young participants engaged in hands-on activities designed to

help them better understand the experiences of those with these challenges.

Silent Games is a documentary focusing on the Israeli National Deaf Soccer Team in its quest to place among the first eight teams in the World Championship in Bulgaria. The film was followed by a panel discussion with deaf members of the community, including KMS members

Larry Fass and Rebecca Blumenfeld. They were joined by Karen Alkoby, a professor at Gallaudet University, who is the first Deaf woman to receive a Ph.D. in computer science.

The panel fostered a frank and illuminating discussion, facilitated by sign-language interpreters. An audience member started off the question-and-answer session by asking whether, when speaking with a deaf person, it was more appropriate to look at the interpreter or at the person being addressed. The panelists agreed that conversation should be directed to the deaf person, as the interpreter is present only to aid communication.

Another audience member asked what could be done to make deaf people feel more included in shul. Panelists commented that it was very difficult for deaf people, particularly those unfamiliar with Hebrew, to be completely comfortable in a hearing service. This led to a discussion about what could be done to make the shul davening experience, which is primarily an audible one, more meaningful for our deaf congregants, who might be more comfortable if services were signed or if we were to offer a guided learner's minyan for those unfamiliar with Hebrew or the siddur liturgy.



photos by Tina Rosenbaum



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Greatest Thing

by Joey Turitz



With the Super Bowl behind us and Spring Training not yet in full swing, the American sports world focused much of its attention on basketball over Presidents' Day Weekend. There was the NBA All-Star Game as well as compelling college basketball games. But

this year there was an additional element—Michael Jordan's 50th birthday.

The media had a field day. Retrospectives. Lists. Interviews. Comparisons. Highlights. There seemed to be no end to the fascination of celebrating and reminiscing about one of the greatest basketball players in history. (The coverage brought back the bitter taste of Michael Jordan's routinely beating up on my New York Knicks.) In one interview he is asked to complete the following sentence: "The greatest thing about the game of basketball is . . ." Jordan thought for a moment and gave that trademark million-dollar smile before answering.

Parashat Terumah begins a series of parashiyot focused on the building of the Mishkan. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in his book *Covenant and Conversation* notes that the opening statement regarding the building of the Mishkan emphasizes the voluntary nature of the gifts that Moshe is asked to collect from the people for the project. After exploring historical events surrounding Shlomo's building of the Beit Hamikdash, Rabbi Sacks points out, as others do, that the essence of the Mishkan is that Hashem is intended to dwell not in the building but in the minds and souls of people who dedicate themselves to Him. Hashem lives in the minds and souls of free human beings whose belief and faith are an expression of their freedom and liberty. Hence the Torah emphasizes that the contributions for the building of the Mishkan were to be voluntary in nature.

In a dvar torah about Megillat Esther, Harav Aharon Lichtenstein discusses the nature of the "Yemei Kehilla" (Days of Gathering), which the Gemara regards as acceptable for the reading of the Megilla. In short, Harav Lichtenstein points out that the Jewish community in the time of the Megilla was, like the general society, characterized by extreme individualism. Thus, when Esther asks Mordechai "go and gather all the Jews" before she approaches the king, the gathering she has in mind is more than an assembly for communal prayer and fasting. Rather, in order for the Jews to be successful, they first

had to be formed into a community. Only with the Jews as a unified community could Esther hope to approach the king on her mission.

KMS will be facing many new challenges over the coming years. How will we continue to provide excellent programming while balancing the roles of lay volunteers and professional staff? How will we manage the ever-increasing demands on our aging building and our ability to house a growing membership? Where will we obtain needed financial support? What positions will we take as a Shul on important communal issues that may arise? And how will we go about the important transition from the leadership of Rabbi Bieler to our next Rabbi?

I am convinced from my service as president that the lessons of volunteerism and community are critical in our ability to navigate the waters ahead of us. As in the case of the Mishkan, KMS is really the result of each person's voluntary expression of his or her devotion and dedication to a committed religious life of Modern Orthodoxy. And just as in the Megilla, our success will depend on our ability to come together as a community in discussion, debate, action and behavior. Not by coercion and not by individualism.

So what does Michael Jordan have to do with all of this? Well, here is what he answered: MJ said that the greatest thing for him about the game of basketball was his passion for the game. As I heard that, it was quite revealing. Here is perhaps the greatest individual talent the game has ever seen, and what he cherished most was the love he had for the game itself—not for his statistics, not for the championships, not even for his team or the city he played for. Perhaps it was that love that enabled this superbly talented person to harness both volunteerism and community among his teammates so that together they accomplished more than any of them could have done alone.

As we move forward over the coming months and years together, it is my hope that each of us can find that inner love and passion for our Hashem and our Jewish life that MJ had for basketball. And that out of that love we will devote ourselves to volunteerism and unity so that we—like our ancestors before us—can continue to build a shul and a kehilla that we are all proud of. And in five years, ten years and beyond, we will look back at the great things we accomplished together with pride and satisfaction.

Best wishes for a Chag Kasher V'Sameach.



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peace always.

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Part 27

Mishlei 31, “Eishet Chayil”

by R. Yaakov Bieler

In R. Adin Steinsaltz’ monumental two-volume work on prayer,¹ he lists the following customs leading up to the Friday evening Kiddush:

“Shalom Aleichem” is said. And afterwards, it is customary... to recite the prayer in honor of Shabbat beginning “Ribon [Kol] HaOlamim,” wherein a person declares that he has made all of the appropriate preparations [for Shabbat], and from this point on he is asking from HaShem the Bestowing and Extension of Holiness and Blessing.² And afterwards, “Eishet Chayil” is said.

Popular wisdom views the recitation/singing of “Eishet Chayil” on Friday evening as a paean to the woman of the household who multitasks on an amazing level³ and thereby enables her family to be safe, supported and successful,⁴ but that has raised

questions in the minds of those with modern and specifically feminist sensibilities,⁵ as well as in household configurations that are different from the traditional paradigm of the Jewish family. Commentaries on these verses from Mishlei suggest multiple layers of meaning. Eishet Chayil occurs in the order of the Friday night home rituals after both Shalom Aleichem, which is based on the Talmudic passage that describes how the two angels that accompany one everywhere will comment about

the Shabbat-readiness of one’s home on Friday evening,⁶ and Ribon Kol HaOlamim, which is also a very spiritual Techina (supplication). It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that the insertion of Eishet Chayil at this point, at least originally, had more to do with metaphysics and theology than an attempt to advance Shalom Bayit (domestic tranquility). Avigdor Shinan introduces Eishet Chayil in the Siddur that he edited and annotated,⁷ as follows:

This biblical passage has been included in the Siddur since the 17th century [when Kabbalists established other portions of the Friday night liturgy, such as poem Lecha Dodi]. Its recitation on Friday evening is interpreted alternately as referring to Shabbat, the Tora, or the Divine Presence, and it describes the Sephira of Malchut according to the Kabbalists. Nevertheless, many today understand it as a song of praise and thanks that the members of the family sing in honor of the matriarch of the home for all that she does during the week in general, and what she has done getting ready for Shabbat in particular.

Although the principle Ein Mikra Yotzeh Midai Peshuto (no biblical text can be understood contrary to its literal meaning) appears in the Talmud⁸ and is held by some traditional commentators to indicate

It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that the insertion of Eishet Chayil at this point, at least originally, had more to do with metaphysics and theology than an attempt to advance Shalom Bayit

that the first and foremost meaning that any biblical text can have must be its literal interpretation,⁹ nevertheless, the book in which Eishet Chayil appears is named *Mishlei*—i.e., Parables/Sayings—suggesting that the symbolic meaning of this particular book’s contents cannot be ignored, and might even take precedence over its more prosaic understandings.¹⁰ Such an approach provides room for all points of view and sensibilities to

embrace the recitation of Eishet Chayil on Friday evenings without reservation.

In order to illustrate how the principle of Shivim Panim LaTora (there are seventy faces for the Tora)¹¹ is borne out in the verses of Eishet Chayil, let us consider three examples of how different schools of thought can interpret the same words appearing in Mishlei 31 in radically different ways:

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Singin' through the Rain

by Gail Javitt

Despite the dismal weather, more than fifty people gathered on Friday night, February 15, in the living room of Alan and Fran Broder for an Oneg Shabbat featuring Dr. Elli Kranzler, the long-time Ba'al Tefillah of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale and member of the musical group Dveykus.

The Friday night Oneg featured traditional zemirot (Shabbat songs) and niggunim (melodies), including those by Shlomo Carlebach, on whose musical and spiritual influence Dr. Kranzler reflected. Rabbi Bieler, Rabbi Ari Israel, and Erica Brown also added insights on Parashat Terumah and on the role of music in bringing us closer to Hashem. Rabbi Bieler noted that unlike in the time of the Mishkan, when the relationship between Hashem and B'nai Yisrael was mirrored by whether the Keruvim (golden angels placed on the Holy Ark) were facing toward or away from each other, today we do not have visible signs to give

us that direct feedback, but still must strive for that closeness. Dr. Kranzler commented that the Keruvim are often depicted as children, signifying the purity, innocence, and simplicity that should characterize our relationship with Hashem. Rabbi Israel noted how niggunim can break down emotional barriers and set us free on our spiritual path. Erica Brown shared a teaching of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad movement, who wrote that the "tongue is the pen of the heart, but melody is the pen of the soul." She suggested that when we sing together, we become that pen of the soul.

The spirited singing lasted late into the evening, fueled by music, words of Torah, and delicious refreshments. In addition to the Oneg Shabbat, Dr. Kranzler led Kabbalat Shabbat and Musaf at KMS and gave the D'var Torah at the 8:45 a.m. minyan, where he spoke about the people and services that inspired his own musical and spiritual journey.



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The Manners Maven

Dear Manners Maven,

Friends, acquaintances, or visitors in our shul often try to engage me in conversation while I am trying to daven. It almost always happens when conversation is expressly forbidden, such as while I'm trying to recite the Shema or the Amidah, or during a Kaddish or the Torah reading. Nodding my head and smiling in acknowledgement of their presence don't always clue them in that I can't talk just then. I don't want to offend anybody, and I especially don't want guests to get negative impressions of our community, but my primary purpose in being in shul is to daven. Can you help?

Distressed Davener

Dear Distressed:

Thank you for sharing your dilemma with me. I have stood in your shoes. And also, I confess, in those of the people you describe (MM is not perfect after all). Indeed, MM would venture to guess that talking in shuls is as old as shuls themselves. Even in the Beit Hamikdash I imagine there was great temptation to discuss who had the best prices on lambs for the Korban Pesach and why Ploni Almoni was bringing another Korban Chatat (sin-offering).

But, turning to our own Mikdash Me'at, the bottom line, as you note, is that the halacha prohibits talking during many parts of Tefilla. Even during those parts of tefilla when talking is not prohibited, it certainly is not encouraged. Tefilla is a time for introspection and reflection, and conversations and other extraneous noises interfere with that experience.

But, gentle davener, you are to be commended for being concerned not only about your tefilla but also about how to respond in a sensitive way that will not offend the shmoozers. Really, smiling and nodding, then quickly returning your eyes to the siddur, should give most people the message, but for those who just don't take that subtle hint, here are a few strategies to try.

First, try and figure out why they are talking to you. Is it because they've lost their place in the siddur? Or are unfamiliar with the service? Try and lend a hand if so. Show them the place in the siddur. Make sure they have a Chumash.

Of course they may just be more interested in schmoozing than davening. In that case, consider whether they are regulars or new members. If the latter, try to give them the benefit of the doubt: perhaps they are coming from an environment where talking in shul is the norm, and are just trying to be friendly. Make it a point to go up to them after the service and introduce yourself. You can say, "I'm sorry I couldn't speak during the service, but at KMS we really try to keep our services quiet. I

wanted to introduce myself and welcome you to KMS." Make it a point to introduce them to others, and make plans to invite them to Shabbat lunch.

For the truly repeat offenders (those who really should "know better"), I recommend carrying an index card with you (or, if the eruv is down, leave it in your cubby) that says "I would love to talk with you, but can we do it after services? Thanks for your consideration." A few "don'ts" to keep in mind as well: hostile glares, sharp shushes, and irritated body language are more likely to insult and alienate than a kind, understated approach.

Ultimately, you cannot control whether people take offense or not; you can only try to insure that your approach is aimed at gently correcting the behavior, and models the behavior you'd like others to follow. After all, which of us does not need some reminding from time to time?

Wishing you quiet and meaningful davening.

Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim, Laws of the Synagogue 151:1 Synagogues and Places designated for Tora study, while one is within them, he should not engage in frivolity, e.g., telling jokes, teasing and inconsequential conversation.*

Mishna Berura #2

"Inconsequential conversation"—even non-Mitzva discussions having to do with earning one's livelihood.... And all the more so one should be careful in the synagogue and house of Tora study to avoid the sin of prohibited speech, e.g., Lashon HaRa, gossiping and disputes and feuds, because in addition to such things constituting serious infractions in their own right, the transgression is increased that much more when it occurs in a holy place, because he is belittling the Honor due to the Divine Presence, and a sinner who sins privately cannot be compared to one who sins in the King's Palace, in the King's Presence. And the Aveira is multiplied even more when it might lead others to join in and sin in a significant manner.... And sometimes it takes place in front of the Sefer Tora, which is also a severe transgression in itself....

Therefore, one who is in awe and is highly sensitive to the word of God will always focus his eyes and heart so that he will not engage in any inconsequential conversation in the synagogue and the house of Tora study, so that these places will be exclusively dedicated to Tora and prayer.

*The Shulchan Aruch allows for the possibility of conversations regarding Mitzva performance, such as discussions by the Gabbaim regarding to whom to distribute honors. But even such conversations should be kept to a minimum wherever possible.

—Rabbi Bieler



Davening and Shabbat Schedule

Except for Special Occasions, the schedule for **Shacharit** is:

Shabbat: 7:00 am (Sanctuary); 8:00 am (Beit Midrash);
8:45 am (Sanctuary); 9:15 am (Youth Minyan in Youth Beit Midrash)

Weekdays (Beit Midrash)

Monday, Thursday: 6:45 am

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 7:00 am

Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah: 6:30 am

Sundays and Federal Holidays: 8:00 am (7:45 am on Rosh Chodesh, Chol Hamoed, Chanukah)

9:00 am (Youth Minyan)

Weekday Mincha/Maariv

Standard Time:

Sundays and Federal Holidays: Mincha/Maariv B'Zman;

Monday-Thursday: Maariv only at 9:00

Summer Time (Daylight Saving): Sunday-Thursday B'Zman

Date	Parasha	Candle Lighting (Plag)	Friday Mincha	Shabbat Mincha	Shabbat Ends	Weekly Mincha/Maariv
March 22	Tzav ¹	7:04	6:15/7:05	6:55	8:03	Sunday-Thursday ⁴
April 5	Shmini ²	7:17 (6:15)	6:30/7:20	7:05 5:00 ³	8:18	Sunday-Thursday 7:25
April 12	Tazria-Metzorah	7:24 (6:20)	6:30/7:25	7:15	8:25	Sunday-Thursday 7:30
April 19	Acharei Mot-Kedoshim	7:31 (6:25)	6:30/7:30	7:20	8:33	Sunday-Thursday 7:40
April 26	Emor	7:38 (6:30)	6:30/7:30	7:30	8:41	Sunday-Thursday 7:45
May 3	Behar-Bechukotai ²	7:45 (6:36)	6:30/7:30	7:35 5:00 ³	8:48	Sunday-Thursday 7:55
May 10	Bamidbar	7:51 (6:41)	6:30/7:30	7:45 5:00 ³	8:56	Sunday-Thursday 8:00
May 17	Naso	7:58 (6:46)	6:45/7:30	7:55	9:03	Sunday-Thursday 8:05
May 24	Beha'alotecha	8:04 (6:51)	6:45/7:30	8:00	9:10	Sunday-Thursday 8:10
May 31	Shlach ²	8:09 (6:55)	6:45/7:30	8:05 5:00 ³	9:16	Sunday-Thursday 8:15
June 7	Korach	8:13 (6:59)	6:45/7:30	8:10 5:00 ³	9:21	Sunday-Thursday 8:20
June 14	Chukat	8:17 (7:02)	6:45/7:30	8:15 5:00 ³	9:25	Sunday-Thursday 8:25

¹Shabbat Hagadol

²Shabbat Mevarchim

³Women's Tefilla Group

⁴See Pesach schedule on p. 13 for Mincha/Maariv times throughout this week.



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Pesach Schedule

Erev Pesach : Sunday Evening March 24-Monday March 25

Mincha/Maariv.....	7:10 pm	Bedikat Chametz.....	after 8:05pm
Fast begins.....			5:43 am
Shacharit followed by Siyum			6:30am
Youth Shacharit followed by Siyum			8:30am
Last time to eat Chametz.....	10:44am	Last time to destroy Chametz.....	11:59pm

Yom Tov Days 1 and 2

	Monday March 25 Erev Pesach	Tuesday March 26 Yom Tov 1	Wednesday March 27 Yom Tov 2
Shacharit		7:00, 8:00, 8:45, 9:15 am	7:00, 8:00, 8:45, 9:15 am
Mincha	7:10 pm	7:10 pm	7:10 pm
Candlelighting	before 7:07 pm	after 8:07 pm	
Maariv	after 7:25 (Shkia)	after 7:26 (Shkia)	8:08 pm
Kiddush/Seder	after 8:06 pm	after 8:07 pm	
Yom Tov ends			8:08 pm

Chol HaMoed Pesach

	Thursday March 28	Friday March 29
Shacharit	6:30am , 9:00 am	6:30am , 9:00 am
Mincha/Maariv	7:15 pm	See below

Shabbat Chol Hamoed: Friday Evening March 29–Shabbat March 30

Candlelighting.....	7:11 pm	Mincha/Maariv	7:15 pm
Shacharit			7:00, 8:00, 8:45, 9:15 am
Women's Tefilla Group Shir HaShirim (Beit Midrash)			5:00 pm
Mincha.....	7:00 pm	Maariv/Shabbat ends	8:11 pm

Yom Tov Days 7 and 8

	Sunday March 31	Monday April 1 Yom Tov 7	Tuesday April 2 Yom Tov 8
Shacharit	7:45, 9:00 am	7:00, 8:00, 8:45, 9:15	7:00, 8:00, 8:45, 9:15
Yizkor (approx)			8:00, 9:15, 10:15 am No Yizkor at Youth Minyan
Mincha	7:15 pm	7:15 pm	7:15 pm
Candlelighting	7:13 pm	after 8:13 pm	
Maariv	after 7:32 (Shkia) pm	after 7:32 (Shkia) pm	8:14 pm
Yom Tov Ends			8:14 pm

Shavuot Schedule

	Tuesday May 14 Erev Shavuot	Wednesday May 15 Shavuot 1	Thursday May 16 Shavuot 2
Shacharit	7:00 am	Vatikin: 4:30 am (Earliest Talit 4:55) 7:00, 8:00, 8:45 am No Youth Minyan	7:00, 8:00, 8:45, 9:15 am
Yizkor (approx)			8:00, 9:15, 10:15 am No Yizkor at Youth Minyan
Ruth (Women's Tefilla Group)			5:00 pm
Candlelighting	7:55 pm	after 9:00 pm	
Mincha	8:00 pm	8:00 pm	8:00 pm
Kiddush, and Seudah	After 8:59 pm	After 9:00 pm	
Maariv	8:59 (Tzeit)	After 8:14 (Shkia)	9:01 pm
Yom Tov ends			9:01 pm
Tikkun Leil Shavuot	12:00 am		

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sucklings hast Thou Established strength.”

R. Meir used to say: Whence is it that even the *embryos* in their mothers’ womb uttered a song? As it is said, Ibid. 68:27], “Bless ye the Lord in the Congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain [a poetic reference to the womb] of Israel.” But these could not behold [the Divine Presence]! — R. Tanchum said: The abdomen became for them a kind of transparent medium and they did behold it.

However literally one takes such Midrashim and Aggadot, the perception they share is that something truly spiritually extraordinary transpired on that day, something far beyond the physical miracle of a path suddenly appearing in the midst of a body of water allowing millions of people to escape their pursuers. And while it appears incredibly difficult for us to imagine what that experience must have been like, the need to personalize it is explicitly stated as a religious *obligation* in Mishna Pesachim 10:5 and echoed in the Haggada:

In every generation a person is “chayav” [obligated] to regard himself as if he had come out of Egypt, as it is said [Shemot 13:8]: “And you shall tell your child on that day: ‘It is be-

cause of this that the Lord Did for me when I left Egypt.”

It then stands to reason that what we are expected to recreate in our minds is not only the sensation of leaving Egypt, which we celebrate by word¹ and deed,² but also what transpired while we stood at the Sea and participated in the grand Revelation. On the seventh day of Pesach, the Tora reading consists of verses from Parashat BeShalach, including Shirat HaYam (the Song of the Sea), and we could imagine ourselves literally standing on the far side of the seashore and singing God’s Praises.³ R. Adin Steinsaltz, in his stirring book of personal spiritual interpretations of the Jewish holidays throughout the year, *Change and Renewal: The Essence of the Jewish Holidays, Festivals and Days of Remembrance*,⁴ challenges us to come to grips with an important lesson about man’s very nature via our thinking about, and even re-experiencing, the splitting of the Sea, based upon the Zohar I 18a:

People generally act like creatures of dry land, and their consciousness deals with the visible world. The higher, exalted elements of man—all that transcends plain and ordinary consciousness—are represented by the sea.

These are the concealed worlds in a man. [R. Steinsaltz points out that this is not a reference to the subconscious, but rather the *superconscious*, i.e., the parts of the soul that transcend consciousness.] As a rule we see only the lower end of the exalted things, the “tip of the iceberg” protruding above the surface. Usually we do not see what is happening within. It is as though man’s essence is sunk inside the great space, within the hidden sea, and what is visible to our eyes is but a small part, the thin stratum in which we operate....

The parting of the sea—the revelation of the sea and its transformation into dry land—brings about the unification of the worlds, so that man sees the complete form of himself and of the world. The ability to experience the parting of the sea and to live like *amphibious creatures*

[what an interesting metaphor!] in the sea and on dry land, is what distinguishes us as human beings. For such duality exists in man, as well, in the combination of body and soul....

In this process, all the heavens open, yet man continues to stand on the earth; sea and dry land, heaven and earth intermingle, and the whole mystery is revealed at once. The world, as it were, is split open, and one can view all the layers of reality, creation as a whole spec-

trum. This explains the well-known saying of the sages: “Maid servants beheld at the sea what even the prophet Yechezkel never saw....”

From R. Steinsaltz’ perspective, the plagues were merely means to the end of human beings’ coming to realize not only God’s Power, but the spiritual, Godly dimension, whether one calls it “Tzelem Elokim” (the Image of God) or “Neshama” (soul), that is to be found in each one of them. There is virtue in not only perceiving the actual “land” that lies at the bottom of the concealing sea within us, but setting foot on that land and traversing it. Kriyat Yam Suf itself then serves as a stepping stone to the ultimate purpose of the Exodus, the receiving of the Tora on Shavuot (Atzeret), bound to Pesach by the Commandment of Sephirat HaOmer (the counting of the Omer). While Tora could be understood in an external manner, approaching it internally and soulfully by connecting its teaching with our inner essences can only enhance our religious experience. The study of the Tora can be understood not only as a way to adhere to God’s Will, but also as an act of

continued on page 16

self-understanding and growth, when it resonates with those elements within us that we come to understand only by recognizing the deep wells of holiness that we possess.

We certainly will not be able to better understand our true natures as long as we are enslaved to elements from without. But once we achieve freedom from those distracting and consuming forces, it is incumbent upon us to contemplate our true essences in order to embrace Tora and Mitzvot as complying not only with our Master the Creator, but the essence of ourselves as we did when (Shemot 14:29) “the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.”

Moadim LeSimcha!

NOTES

¹Retelling the story at the Seder as well as instructing our children whether or not they ask about it (the illustration of the four sons who require different educational approaches).

²E.g., drinking four cups of wine, reclining, being waited upon, eating the Pesach sacrifice or its present-day substitute, singing songs of praise and thanksgiving.

³In the spirit of empathy, an additional emotion that we are called upon to recreate within ourselves, even for the deaths of those bent upon destroying us, only partial Hallel is recited in accordance with Yalkut Shimoni, II Divrei HaYomim #1085. See RaShI on Yeshayahu 21:3 for another example of how a prophet was disturbed when he was called upon to predict defeat and devastation for Israel's tormentors.

⁴Trans. Daniel Haberman, Maggid Books, New Milford, CT, 2011, pp. 244-9.



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create those sacred moments of connections with our junior congregants that form the basis for their positive relationships with shul and rabbis forever. For me, those moments when Rabbi Bieler pulls out hands-on materials about techeilet or a quill used for writing a Sefer Torah because a young person asked him about it, these moments are the most wonderful.

Listening to the sounds of families learning together, asking great questions and really listening to one another is an amazingly powerful experience. How do the participants feel about the Saturday evening sessions?

"Parent-Child Learning is amazing! You get to learn as a family and eat dinner." (child, grade 2)

"Group study is awesome." (parent)

"I love Parent-Child Learning. You get to spend time with your family." (Benjamin Winters)

"It includes boys AND girls!" (child)

"I love the pizza!" (child)

"I like Parent-Child Learning because it's the best with

everything." (Leora Spielman)

"I like the time spent one on one with no other distractions ... it is just a blessing, a precious opportunity to learn with my child." (parent)

"The atmosphere is especially fun when you learn in here." (child)

"My favorite thing to do is learn, that's why." (Rafi Sloan)

"I love studying... and definitely the pizza!" (child)

"I like Parent-Child Learning because when you come, if you come, then you go learn! And then at the end, you get pizza and get to chat with friends!" (Ayelet)

The kids, and their parents, eagerly look forward to another great run next year. In the meantime, heartfelt thanks go to Gary Winters, Vice President for Youth, for pushing to make this program happen and for making sure the pizza, drinks and paper goods are always there! Most of all, thank you to all the families who have been coming out to celebrate the power of learning together. Modeling of lifelong Torah learning and family time does not get much better than this. Thank you, as well, to our many generous sponsors!



The current issue of *Kol MevaSer* is always available for reading or downloading at www.kmsynagogue.org, under **News & Downloads on the right-hand side of the page.**

<i>The verse.</i>	<i>Eitz Yosef¹² (commentary on Eishet Chayil as part of Friday night ritual).</i>	<i>GR"A (Vilna Gaon) (commentary on Eishet Chayil as a text in TaNaCh.)</i>	<i>MaLBI"m¹³ (commentary on Eishet Chayil as a text in TaNaCh.)</i>
31:10 "A woman of valor who can find? For her price is far above rubies."	Such a person is very valuable and rare, with a worth that surpasses that of precious jewels.	This is a reference to the Tora. The numerical value of "Chayil" is 48. ¹⁴ This corresponds to the number of ways by which the Tora is acquired, as delineated in Avot 6:5-6. ¹⁵	This is a reference to the spirit within a person that will hopefully be influenced by wisdom and understanding to become good.
31:20 "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."	She is charitable to the "Ani" who comes to her house looking for help. She is also charitable to the "Evyon" to whom she sends food and money to address his needs.	An "Evyon" is one who yearns to learn Tora and will literally go to great lengths without embarrassment, even if it means considerable travel, to pursue such knowledge. An "Ani" is someone who will only sit in his home because he does not wish others to become aware of his lack of knowledge. Both types of individual can benefit from Tora knowledge.	The "Ani" is one who is impoverished of spirit. The "Evyon" is someone who is impoverished in terms of his body. The performance of Mitzvot and good deeds will positively impact upon both the spirit and body in order to improve them
31:26 "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and the law of kindness is on her tongue."	Everything that she says is imbued with wisdom. She also teaches and encourages those with whom she comes into contact to engage in acts of kindness.	Even the ordinary conversation of scholars requires analysis so that one can learn from them. Sukka 49b defines "Tora of Chesed" as Tora that one studies for its own sake (as opposed to having an ulterior motive). When Tora is "LiShma" it is considered "Tora Shel Chesed."	The term "Peh" (the mouth) is generally associated with wisdom, while "Lashon" (the tongue) represents understanding. By means of applying understanding, all sorts of hidden meanings in the Tora become apparent. It is an act of kindness to discover through thoughtful analysis the hidden aspects of Tora.

So what should we be thinking about when we sing Eishet Chayil on Friday nights? Rather than assuming that there can be only one meaning and a single intention underlying the words of this beautiful poem, considering the multi-faceted approaches to understanding these biblical verses will hopefully serve to broaden and expand the spiritual quality of not only our singing around the table, but also our experience of both Shabbat in particular, and Judaism in general.

NOTES:

¹HaSiddur VeHaTefilla: Madrich LeMeAyen U'LeMitpallel, Vol. 1, Yediot Achronot-Sifrei Chemed, Tel Aviv, 1994, p. 377.

²"For I have lit my candles, prepared my bed, and changed my garments to honor the day of Shabbat. And I have come to Your House, setting before You my plea to banish my sighs [it is not clear where in the Ashkenazi liturgy such a statement appears, although it is implied

in the addition to the grace after meals on Shabbat: '...May it be Your Will, Lord our God, to Grant us rest *without distress, grief or lament* on our day of rest', and I asserted that You Created the Universe in six days [within the addition from Braishit 2 in the Amida of Ma'ariv on Friday evening—see Koren, p. 349]. I confirmed this a second time [during the quasi-repetition of the Amida—see Koren p. 357] and I will do so again, joyfully, over my cup [as part of the Friday night Kiddush immediately preceding the Shabbat meal—see Koren p. 381], as You have Commanded me to remember Shabbat (Shemot 20:8) and take delight in the additional soul You have Bestowed upon me [Beitza 16a based upon Shemot 31:17 'VaYinafash']. From R. Adin Steinsaltz, *The Miracle of the Seventh Day: A Guide to the Spiritual Meaning, Significance, and Weekly Practice of the Jewish Sabbath*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2003, p. 22.

³E.g., Mishlei 31:13-22

She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchant-ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth food to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and maketh strong her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her lamp goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh for herself coverlets; her clothing is fine linen and purple.

⁴E.g., Ibid. 11-12, 23, 28

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, and he hath no lack of gain. She doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life... Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land... Her children rise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

⁵See for example http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat_The_Sabbath/At_Home/Friday_Night/How_To_Read_Eshet_Hayil.shtml and http://www.hillel.org/nr/rdonlyres/d8427b98-3f42-4f74-a355-aa9088ff8e15/0/eshet_chayil.pdf

⁶Shabbat 119b

It was taught, R. Yose son of R. Yehuda said: Two ministering angels accompany man on the eve of the Sabbath from the synagogue to his home, one a good [angel] and one an evil [one]. And when he arrives home and finds the lamp burning, the table laid and the couch [bed] covered with a spread, the good angel exclaims, "May it be even thus on another Sabbath [too]," and the evil angel unwillingly responds "amen." But if not, the evil angel exclaims, "May it be even thus on another Sabbath [too]," and the good angel unwillingly responds, "amen."

⁷*Siddur Avi Chai: Tefillot U'Berachot LaBayit U'LeMishpacha*, Yediot Achronot-Sifrei Chemed, Yerushalayim, 5760, p. 149.

⁸E.g., Shabbat 63a.

⁹See e.g., RaShBaM on Beraishit 37:2 d.h. Eileh.

¹⁰This certainly was R. Akiva's take on Shir HaShirim, another work classically attributed to Shlomo HaMelech. See Yadayim 3:5.

¹¹BaMidbar Rabba 13:15.

¹²Eitz Yosef begins his commentary in *Otzar HaTefillot* (Nusach Sefarad, Vol. 1, Nehora D'Orayta, Yerushalayim, 5720, p. 314) by quoting the GR" A's approach and only afterwards does he explain the verses in accordance with their literal meaning, suggesting that both levels of meaning should be understood as operating simultaneously.

¹³MaLBIM offers two separate interpretations—one that is entitled "Derech HaPashut" (the literal approach) and the one that is drawn upon for this essay, entitled "Derech HaMuskal" (the intellectual [!] approach), similarly implying that both levels of understanding should be understood to simultaneously be true.

¹⁴"Chet" = 8; "Yud" = 10; "Lamed" = 30.

¹⁵Avot 6:5

...But the Tora is acquired by means of forty-eight things: 1) the form of study, 2) attentive listening, 3) ordered presentation of one's study matter with one's lips, 4) reasoning of the heart, 5) intelligence of the heart, 6) awe, 7) fear and humility, 8) joyousness, 9) ministering unto the sages, 10) painstaking examination of a subject together with one's colleagues and fine argumentation of disciples, 11) sedateness, 12) knowledge of scripture, 13) knowledge of the Oral Tradition, 14) moderation in sleep, 15) moderation in gossip, 16) moderation in worldly pleasure, 17) moderation in hilarity, 18) moderation in worldly social interaction, 19) long-suffering, 20) a good heart, 21) the conscientiousness of the sages, 22) uncomplaining acceptance of Divine Chastisements.

Avot 6:6

The possessor of Tora is 23) one who recognizes his place, 24) rejoices in his portion, 25) makes a fence for his words, 26) claims no credit for himself, 27) is loved, 28) loves God, 29) loves his fellow creatures, 30) loves righteous ways, 31) welcomes reproof of himself, 32) loves uprightness, 33) keeps himself far from honor, 34) does not allow his heart to become swelled on account of his learning, 35) delights not in giving legal decisions, 36) shares in the bearing of a burden with his colleague, 37) uses his weight with him on the scale of merit, 38) places him upon a groundwork of truth, 39) places him upon a groundwork of peace, 40) composes himself at his study, 41) asks and answers, 42) listens to others, 43) adds to his knowledge, 44) learns in order to teach, 45) learns in order to practice, 46) makes his teacher wiser, 47) notes with precision that which he has heard, and 48) says a thing in the name of him who said it.

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 Miriam Nathan's son*
David to Nora
 Barbara and Elliot Schulder

*The Bar Mitzvah of
 Mark Kahan's grandson Eli*
 Barbara and Elliot Schulder

Freda Gelbtuch's 90th Birthday
 Barbara and Mel Ciment

*Rabbi Bieler's receiving the
 Rubenstein Award for Excellence
 in Rabbinic Leadership*
 Anita and Mel Plotinsky

*The birth of a granddaughter,
 Naomi Meira, to*
Lois and Robert Teichman
 Phyllis and Martin Fingerhut

*The births of a grandson, Levav,
 and a granddaughter, Maya, to*
Jackie and Esther Rozmaryn
 Alice and Noah Baer
 Sharon and David Butler

*David and Sharon Butler's
 anniversary*
 Alice and Noah Baer

Chaim Himmelfarb
 Sheldon Margulies

REFUA SHELAIMA

Rabbi Saul Koss
 Bea and Richard Greenberg

Cynthia Abrams
 Barbara and Elliot Schulder



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