



# SHABBAT ZEST

Parshat Yisro 22<sup>nd</sup> Shevat 5777

Torah Reading / Haftara:

Artscroll – p.394/1154

Living Torah – p.344/1114

## SHABBAT TIMES:

Candle Lighting:  
5:00pm

Kabbalat Shabbat  
Davening: 6:30pm

Shabbat Morning  
Davening: 9:15am

Mincha: After Kiddush

Shabbat Ends 6:12pm

NEXT SHABBAT  
MISHPATIM

CANDLE LIGHTING  
@ 5:13 PM

## Parsha In a Nutshell

Exodus 18:1-20:23

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, hears of the great miracles which G-d performed for the people of Israel, and comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons. Jethro advises Moses to appoint a hierarchy of magistrates and judges to assist him in the task of governing and administering justice to the people.

The children of Israel camp opposite Mount Sinai, where they are told that G-d has chosen them to be His "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation." The people respond by proclaiming, "All that G-d has spoken, we shall do."

On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the Exodus, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai. G-d descends on the mountain amidst thunder, lightning, billows of smoke and the blast of the shofar, and summons Moses to ascend.

G-d proclaims the Ten Commandments, commanding the people of Israel to believe in G-d, not to worship idols or take G-d's name in vain, to keep the Shabbat, honour their parents, not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, and not to bear false witness or covet another's property. The people cry out to Moses that the revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the Torah from G-d and convey it to them.

## Haftarah

Isaiah 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6

This week's Haftarah discusses Isaiah's vision of the Heavenly Chariot (the merkavah), a revelation that was experienced by all the Israelites when G-d spoke the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai—an event recounted in this week's Torah reading.

Isaiah perceives G-d sitting on a throne surrounded by angels. Isaiah vividly describes the angels and their behaviour (in anthropomorphic terms). During the course of this vision, Isaiah volunteers to be G-d's emissary to transmit His message to the Israelites. He is immediately given a depressing prophecy regarding the exile the nation will suffer as punishment for their many sins—and the Land of Israel will be left empty and desolate, though there will be left a "trunk" of the Jewish people that eventually will regrow.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**25<sup>th</sup> February – Noah Caplan Bar Mitzvah**

**12<sup>th</sup> March: Purim** including 9am Shacharit, 10am Breakfast, 10:30am Megillah reading followed by **Purim Party including lunch**

**21<sup>st</sup> March – Ladies Guild Lunch** – Guest Speaker film and documentary producer Pamela Wagman

**11<sup>th</sup> April – Communal Seder.** Details to follow.

## 11<sup>th</sup> May: AGM

**21<sup>st</sup> May – Rabbi Half Marathon run.**

### Recurring Events

**Cheder CLOSED**

**Mummy and Me CLOSED**  
Resumes: 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017

**Yahrzeits for the coming week**  
22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> Shevat:

- 22. Debby Blow – Father
- 22. Pamela Blow – Husband
- 22. Howard Diamond – Daughter
- 22. Sally-Ann Teller – Father
- 26. Barry Capal – Mother
- 26. Connie Conway – Father
- 27. Phillip Leigh – Father
- 27. Jack Tancer – Father

# A Little Deeper – Just Do It

Moses orchestrates a full year of plagues which completely debilitates Egyptian society. After the climactic 10<sup>th</sup> and final plague, the slaying of the First Born, Pharaoh finally agrees to let the Jews leave Egypt. But, like any good megalomaniac, Pharaoh changes his mind and chases after them. When the Jews look in their rear-view mirrors and see the thundering Egyptian chariots fast approaching, panic spreads. The Jews feel trapped. There is no other outlet but the sea — the Red Sea. The Jews begin to berate Moses: "Why did you have to bring us out here to die in the desert? You should have just left us alone to work for the Egyptians!" (Exodus 14:11-12) Ludicrous! How could the Jews, after 210 years of intolerable suffering in Egypt, complain to Moses for liberating them?!

About 20 years ago, an incident occurred in Stockholm where terrorists captured and held hostages. The hostages were abused both physically and emotionally. At the news conference following their release, the hostages all spoke in complimentary, glowing terms about their captors! Psychologists have since identified the "Stockholm Syndrome," whereby prisoners develop comfort and satisfaction in captivity.

For the Jews in Egypt, life was comfortable. In slavery, the rations may be meagre and the bed made of straw, but there's an up-side as well: all one's needs are provided, and there are no challenging decisions to be made. No laundry, no shopping, no deals, no deadlines. The Hebrew word for Egypt, "Mitzrayim," means a "place of confinement." Sometimes it's the smallest box which makes us feel the most secure.

Three million Jews are standing at the shores of the Red Sea. Their options are either to go forward into the un-split sea, or back to Egypt. The sea is cold, strange and foreboding. Egypt is warm, familiar and comfortable.

The Egyptians are thundering closer. The Jews are panicked. And then Nachshon, from the tribe of Yehuda, steps foot into the sea. (The original "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.") But the sea still does not split. Nachshon continues as the water reaches his ankles, then up to his knees. Still no split. Nachshon forges deeper: Up to his waist, his chest. Still no split. By now the water has reached his neck. Nachshon is being challenged to his limit. Yet he continues into the sea. As the water reaches his nostrils, at this last possible moment... the Red Sea splits. The Jewish People all rush in after him. Finally, freedom.

The Red Sea appears in our own lives as well. Ultimately, the story of our lives comes down to a few key moments of decision. These spell the difference between a life of achievement versus one of regret. Often we procrastinate until the best option no longer remains. The door is closed and we comfort ourselves by saying, "Oh well, what could I do, things just didn't work out."

Unfortunately, our lives are not equipped with background music reaching its crescendo, to alert us that the "big moment" has arrived. Our only hope of escaping the confines of Egypt is to honestly confront our fears and embrace the opportunities that G-d gives us to grow. Of course, we cannot always know what's waiting on the other side of the sea. But that's part of the beauty. It's our chance to become invigorated with the fullness of life.

The Torah tells us: Nachshon chose life. We must do the same. The feeling is liberating. Our self-esteem depends on it. And it is our only true option.

Wishing you all a peaceful and uplifting Shabbos.