

HAVURAT YISRAEL WEEKLY NEWS

7— 8 Shevat 5770

Shabbat Bo

January 22 — 23, 2010

Shabbat Shalom!

4:42 PM Candle Lighting
4:55 PM Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat (H)

NEW! On cold weather days, we will daven in the heated Dov Revel lunchroom

Please Come Early

Several families will be away at the Ski Shabbaton this week. Please come to shul early to assure that we will have a Minyan on time.

Parsha: p.340, Maftir, p.890, Haftorah p.1151
9:00 AM Shacharit (D)
9:40 AM Latest time for Shema
10:00 AM Beginner's Minyan—R. Kraft
10:30 AM Youth Groups (D)
11:30 AM Kiddush (D)
3:45 PM Gemara Shiur - R. Sebrow (H)
4:35 PM Mincha, Seudah Shlisheet (H)
5:45 PM Maariv, Havdalah (H)

H = HAVURAT HOUSE: 108-11 69th Rd.

D = DOV REVEL 71-02 113th St.

Kiddush and Seudah Shlisheet are sponsored by the members of Havurat Yisrael.

Next Shabbat, Rabbi and Tamara Algaze are sponsoring a Kiddush in honor of the birth of their grandson, Yaacov Mordechai and also in commemoration of the yahrzeit of the Rabbi's mother, Bahia bat Zekie, z"l. Everyone is invited.

DUES: We would greatly appreciate if you could please pay your 2010 shul membership dues as soon as possible. We need these funds for our basic operations. Thanks!

MEMBERSHIP — It Pays to Belong!

Among the significant benefits of being a paid Havurat member in good standing is our cemetery privileges. This program provides a solution to planning for this eventuality in a stress-free and low cost way... just \$15 per person annually.

*The Sisterhood of Havurat Yisrael invite you to our
Tu B'shevat Celebration
(A New Year for the trees)*



Where : At Havurat House

108-11 69th Rd, Forest Hills. Tel 718-261-5500

When: Saturday January 30, 2010 at 7:30pm

*Featuring foods of the earth, spiritual explanation by the Rabbi.
Music and activities for the kids*

Come make a new friends, plant, play and grow with us

Cost adults : \$20 ,Kids \$ 5

Call the office and make a Reservation 718-261-5500

email hyoffice@nyc.rr.com

HAVURAT CREATES THE FOREST HILLS JEWISH SINGLES

Havurat Yisrael is spearheading the creation of the Forest Hills Jewish Singles and will invite representatives from all synagogues in the area to join together in order to develop creative programs for Singles. Our first meeting took place last Thursday with Rabbi Algaze and a steering committee was elected to further these concepts and plan our future meetings. Next meeting February 4 at 8pm at Havurat Yisrael house .For information, contact Shelli Kalton in the office.

THE UNIVERSE AND THE MEANING OF MAN

TUESDAYS AT 8 PM

A lecture series and seminar by the renowned lecturer and scholar
RABBI DAVID ALGAZE

This series will examine the wonders of the universe and the questions that perplex Man from time immemorial. "What am I doing in this life?" "Why do I suffer?" "What is my place in the Universe?" and many other such problems in our existential perspective.

Texts from the Talmud, the Zohar and other Kabbalistic literature will be examined in a careful textual approach. At the Havurat House

Tuition for 15 lectures : \$75 / Individual lecture: \$10

SUNDAY Jan. 24/ 9 Shevat	MONDAY Jan. 25/ 10 Shevat	TUESDAY Jan. 26/ 11 Shevat	WEDNESDAY Jan. 27/ 12 Shevat	THURSDAY Jan. 28/ 13 Shevat	FRIDAY Jan. 29/ 14 Shevat
7:30 AM Amud Yomi 8:00 AM Shacharit 9:00 AM Gemara Shiur	6:10 AM Amud Yomi 1 6:30 AM Shacharit 7:15 AM Amud Yomi 2 7:30 AM Shacharit 7:00 PM Free Hebrew class with Mora Chanah Hochman	6:10 AM Amud Yomi 1 6:30 AM Shacharit 7:15 AM Amud Yomi 2 7:30 AM Shacharit 8:00 Rabbi Algaze's class.	6:10 AM Amud Yomi 1 6:30 AM Shacharit 7:15 AM Amud Yomi 2 7:30 AM Shacharit 8:30 PM Rabbi Kraft's class	6:10 AM Amud Yomi 1 6:30 AM Shacharit 7:15 AM Amud Yomi 2 7:30 AM Shacharit	6:10 AM Amud Yomi 1 6:30 AM Shacharit 7:15 AM Amud Yomi 2 4:51 PM Candle Lighting 5:00 PM Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat

HAVURAT YISRAEL (C/O AGUDAT ACHIM)
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THE MAGIC CLOCK

By Rabbi David Algaze

“This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.” (Shemot 12:2)

The Torah’s first commandment is very puzzling. Why did G-d choose to open the mitzvot of the Torah with this commandment of determining the beginning of the month? This is the mitzvah of *Kiddush hachodesh*, the procedure by which the Court determined and announced the first day of the month. The Rabbis called this a gift:

G-d gave Israel a special clock, one that would transform their lives. “Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: This may be compared to a king who had a watch by which he knew the time of the day. When his son grew up, the king gave him this special watch. He said to his son, ‘Until now the knowledge of time was in my hands, from now on, they will be in yours.’” (Yalkut Shimoni). This magic watch was the special gift that Hashem gave to His grown up people.

Why did Israel need this watch and why is this the first mitzvah in the Torah? The Jewish calendar differs from the calendars of any other civilization. While the Roman calendar, on which our calendar is based, is strictly a solar one, and the Muslim calendar, as others in pre-Columbian America, are solely based on the lunar cycle, but our calendar is a complex and accurate system that combines both the solar and the lunar cycles.

This amazing feat, that demanded mathematical and astronomic knowledge, is the institution of the “sanctification of the month and the mystery of the ‘ibbur”—the science of making a leap year at the appropriate times. This knowledge will amaze the nations of the world as the Torah predicts, “For this will be regarded as your wisdom and discernment in the eyes of the peoples” (Devarim 4:6). The Rabbis possessed such an accurate knowledge of the lunar cycles that today we have been able to determine, with the aid of atomic clocks, that the Rabbinic calculation, as found in the Talmud and the codes, is within a fraction of seconds of the astronomic cycle. This was the special “gift” that G-d gave His people, the gift of time. Seforno explains that slaves do not own their own time; that belongs to their masters. Now that they were free, the first experience of freedom is felt by their owning their time, they were the masters of their own time.

Time is one of the parameters from which we cannot be free. We are always controlled by the parameters of time (space and will are the other two). Everything must happen in time and Man, under normal circumstances, cannot transcend Time and its speed. Therefore, this was a gift of special significance to a newly liberated people that was going to carry on the universal mission of transmitting fundamental messages to the world. Israel sanctifies Time—this is one of the essential principles of the Torah.

Human intervention in the establishment of the calendar is the mark of Man’s control over Time. This fact is evident in the process by which the month was sanctified. Although the Rabbis possessed exact tables that tracked the lunar cycles and

they could with great accuracy determine when the New moon would appear, nonetheless the Torah requires a procedure by which two reliable witnesses must appear in front of the Court and testify that they actually saw the New Moon. Why was this necessary when the Rabbis already knew the time when this would occur? Since the appearance of the New moon was an astronomical phenomenon, why was it necessary to have people come and testify? The answer is that the Torah says “for you” (*lachem*)—twice in fact—meaning that the calendar will not be established by an objective fact, visible to all, but rather by a subjective act, performed by human beings. This fact is clear from the following halakhah. “If the entire Court and all of Israel saw the New moon (on the 30th day of the cycle) but the Court did not have enough time to declare “The month is sanctified” before sunset, the previous month is automatically declared to be 30 days long and the New month commences on the following day.” (Rosh Hashana 25) Despite the fact that the astronomical phenomenon was witnessed by everyone, the mere fact that the legal procedure was not completed makes the New moon “appear” the next day.

This is proof of the need for human intervention and active participation by people in the determination of the calendar. This was the gift if the watch that G-d gave His people. This commandment highlights the basic notion that Nature ought not be our master and that Man need not be subjected to its laws all the time. On the contrary, it is we, as human beings, who can establish Time according to our own moral compass and the Divine codes that G-d gave us. If time and calendars were determined by astronomic phenomena and Nature alone, if the Moon declared to us when a holiday was to be observed, then we and our morality would be subservient to them. This indeed was the underlying philosophy of Egypt and the basis of the slavery. The mitzvah of the sanctification of the month and all the details attendant to it proclaim that Man is free from Nature and that he has the capacity, with the aid of His Creator, to chart his own course in the world. Thus, freedom meant that Israel had to control Time and therefore, the first gift had to be the magic watch that G-d gave us.

KIDDUSH FUN

There’s no fun like Kiddush fun! Let us join in so we can continue to enjoy this beautiful time to honor Shabbat. Contributions of \$50 per family will go a long way to insure that we all keep having Kiddush every Shabbat. Our shul does not currently have the resources to be able to provide this service unless we all help. So, let’s chip in and enjoy the Kiddush that **we** have sponsored.



JEWISH LIFE AND THOUGHT

- ☆ Rabbi Mordechai Kraft
- ☆ Wednesdays at 8:30 PM



FREE HEBREW CRASH COURSE

- ☆ Morah Chanah Hochman
- ☆ Mondays at 7 PM