

Torah Study – Let's Talk
By Rabbi Mike Lotker

Many of you have been kind enough to share your impressions and feedback concerning our High Holy Days services. The Board and I have been compiling these thoughts and will use what you've told us to try to make services better and better each year. One of the most gratifying impressions that I've heard, however, is how much so many of you enjoyed the Yom Kippur afternoon discussion. I confess (as appropriate concerning Yom Kippur) that this is also one of the highlights of my High Holy Days' experience.

My sense is that many of us enjoy the discussion because of the ability to talk about what really bothers us and really delights us about Judaism, God, religion, services and even life. There is no need to have a great store of knowledge or information; what is valued and valuable is our opinions, our experience and our ability to share and to listen. Since there is no specific agenda or curriculum that we must cover, there is no rush and it is a delight to digress into areas that interest us. I've been attending and leading these kind of discussions for more than 20 years and I never fail to come away invigorated and enlightened.

For those of you that enjoy these kinds of discussions, I've got wonderful news; We have three such sessions each week and you may not have realized it! The sessions are:

1. Torah Study – the Women's Perspective: led by our Student Rabbi Lisa Bock each Wednesday afternoon from 12 noon to 1:30PM.
2. Lunch n Learn: A discussion group led by Rabbi Mike each Thursday from 12:30 – 2PM.
3. Shabbat Morning Torah Study: Led by Student Rabbi Lisa and Rabbi Mike each Saturday morning from 9:30-11AM

I have a strong suspicion that many of you do not attend these "Torah Study" sessions because you are under the misunderstanding that you need to know Hebrew, be very familiar with the Torah and Bible, or think that the sessions will be long winded, dry, expositions of boring (or at least tedious) material. Nothing could be further from the truth!

The discussions are conducted using the Torah (or other text) as a starting point but focusing on issues and questions that concern us all. You don't need to be an expert because we have wonderful texts and commentaries available to us. You don't have to come every week although we hope you will make it part of your regular spiritual discipline. And you never know who you will see or meet – it was at Torah Study that I first met my lovely Sonia who is now my wife and your Rebbitzin.

When we pray, we speak to God. When we gather for this kind of study, God speaks to us. *Shema Yisrael!* Listen up, Israel! So, try it it! You'll like it!