



# Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS  
NEWSLETTER  
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

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Parshat Toldot

Volume: 17, Issue: 16 | December 2-3, 2016

Kislev 3, 5777

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

## Shabbat Times



Friday, December 2	
Candle Lighting:	4:10 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:15 PM
Shabbat, December 3	
Shacharit:	8:45 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:25 AM
Mincha / Shalosh Seudot:	3:50 PM
Shkiya:	4:28 PM
Maariv:	5:08 PM
Shabbat Ends:	5:13 PM
Next Friday, December 9	
Candle Lighting:	4:10 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:15 PM

- ❖ **Mazal Tov** to Debra and Haim Tawil on the birth of a baby girl, Eliana Hadassah!
- ❖ **Tzeitchem L/Shalom** to our dear friends Elisheva & Michael (and baby Sammy) Klatsky, who are moving to the Shaare Tefillah area of Teaneck! Michael served as the secretary last year and VP of Walraven the year before.
- ❖ **NEW VICE PRESIDENT:** We are honored to announce our new VP of Terrace Circle, Alex Daitech! He joined at the best time... he doesn't have to build a sukka!
- ❖ **Welcome to Rav Daar and Yeshivat He'atid!** Rav Daar will be joining us as a Scholar-in-Residence this shabbos and will be speaking Shabbos morning before Musaf. Yeshivat He'atid is also sponsoring a HOT kiddush!

## 2016-2017 Membership

Membership for the 2016-2017 year is now open. Thank you to all the members who have already signed up! For more information (including how to sign up and dues), visit [www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com/membership.html](http://www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com/membership.html).

## Weather Report

Friday night: Mostly Cloudy, 37° Shabbos day: Partly Cloudy, 47°/33°

**Men's Shiur** - Shiur given by Rabbi Yoni Mandlestam on Wednesday, 12/7. Location: TBD

**Women's Shiur & Brunch** - All women in the community are invited to a special brunch and shiur with Yoetzet Halacha Shoshana Samuels! מה אנחנו שרים? What Are We Singing About? A Closer Look at Ma'oz Tzur Sunday, December 11th at 9:45 a.m. There will be time for Q & A after the shiur. If anyone is interested in hosting, sponsoring or helping out, please contact the sisterhood.

**Welcoming Committee** - If you would like to be part of the Welcoming Committee, please reach out to the board. If you are not interested, ask yourselves, why not?

**Mystery Shabbos 2017** - Will be happening in January! We are looking for a few volunteers to help us put it together. If you are interested, please reach out to the board. If you are not interested, ask yourselves, why not?

**Mizrachi-The Religious Zionists of America** invites you to attend a very special lecture that will be given by Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter. His presentation is entitled **"THE CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL: RESHIT ZEMICHAT GEULATENU?"** The lecture will take place on **Tuesday, December 13th at 7:30pm** at Congregation Rinat Yisrael in Teaneck, NJ. We hope that you will join for this event as RZA-Mizrachi launches the newly formed Teaneck chapter of the Religious Zionists of America. There is no cost to attend. Refreshments will be served.

**Executive Vice President Emeritus of the Orthodox Union**, will speak at Congregation Beth Aaron on Sunday, December 4, at 8:15 p.m., on "Heroes to Inspire Us: A Personal List." He will discuss one historical figure from American Jewish history, one Hero of the Holocaust who was a prominent Religious Zionist, and the recently-deceased Ben Zion Shenker, whose "heroic" songs will be heard. Congregation Beth Aaron is located at 950 Queen Anne Road in Teaneck.

**Allison Josephs**, Founder/Director of "Jew in the City," which works to break down stereotypes about religious Jews, will speak at Congregation Beth Aaron on Sunday, December 11, at 8:15 p.m. She will discuss Project Makom, an initiative of JITC; Project Makom helps former and questioning *charedi* Jews find their place in Orthodoxy. Congregation Beth Aaron is located at 950 Queen Anne Road in Teaneck.

## Congregation Ahavat Shalom Board Members 2016-2017

**President:** Jason Shor **Vice Presidents:** Jason Bloom | Alex Daitech | Moty Raven | Binny Steinig **Secretary:** Liron Gamzeh **Treasurer:** Jason Felder

**Sisterhood:** Sarit Anstandig | Tali Wigod **Gabbaim:** Sam Lightstone | Ezra Blain | Shua Joseph | Dani Weinberger

We welcome your input! Please send your newsletter announcements by Wednesday.

[board@teaneckapartments.com](mailto:board@teaneckapartments.com) | [president@teaneckapartments.com](mailto:president@teaneckapartments.com) | [rabbihalpert@verizon.net](mailto:rabbihalpert@verizon.net)

## Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here for Shabbos on: 12/3, 12/10, 12/17, 12/24. He can be reached via email at [rabbihalpert@verizon.net](mailto:rabbihalpert@verizon.net), or phone in the evenings at 201-836-3828. In the event of an emergency, Rabbi Halpert can also be reached at 212-909-6951.

## Yeshivat Noam Youth Groups

Groups for children ages 2-3 are located in the room across the Shul from 9:30am - 10:45am. Morah Shira and Morah Melissa, two Yeshivat Noam teachers, will supervise. Toys and books will be provided by Yeshivat Noam. We ask parents to please send your child with a snack. Signup is on the website.

## Welcoming Committee

If you or anyone you know has moved in recently, let us know! Check out [ahavatshalomteaneck.com/movingin](http://ahavatshalomteaneck.com/movingin) for more information.

Welcome to Ahavat Shalom

Households: 86  
(Adults: 169, Kids: 50)



Esther Shayowitz

SALES ASSOCIATE

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## A Responsibility to Succeed

Rabbi Daniel Stein

Eisav decided to sell his birthright to Yaakov because he reasoned, "behold, I am going to die, so why do I need this birthright?" (Bereishis 25:32). Rashi writes that before relinquishing the birthright, Eisav initially questioned Yaakov regarding the nature of the responsibilities and the avodah service that would be incumbent upon him as the first born. Yaakov explained to him, "there are many prohibitions, punishments, even punishments by death that are involved with it," leading Eisav to conclude, "I will eventually die as a result of my birthright, if so, why should I desire it." Therefore, Eisav chose to trade away the birthright rather than risk suffering his possible demise as a result of a flawed performance. However, the Torah closes the discussion by stating that Eisav offended the birthright by trading it away, as the pasuk says "And Yaakov gave Eisav bread and a pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank and arose and left, and Eisav disparaged the birthright" (25:34).

Rav Moshe Feinstein (Darash Moshe) asks, how did Eisav disparage the birthright by abdicating and being unwilling to serve? He was understandably afraid of the grave consequences of not being able to adequately discharge this sacred duty. Rav Moshe explains that Eisav was not motivated primarily by a fear of the penalties he might incur, but rather by an aversion to assuming the responsibilities of the post in the first place. In that sense, Eisav's visceral reaction, to recoil and retreat in the face of this hallowed responsibility, was itself a tacit insult to the very institution. His refusal to assume this obligation and responsibility revealed a fundamental lack of appreciation for the cosmic significance of representing humanity in serving Hashem.

It emerges that one of the principle differences between Eisav and Yaakov was in their attitude towards accepting responsibility, or achrayus, for others. While Eisav was busy fleeing from the burden of representing others in serving Hashem, Yaakov was bargaining for more. Perhaps this was not only because Yaakov had a greater understanding of the significance of serving Hashem, but also because he recognized that accepting achrayus, responsibility for others, is a transformative undertaking which endows one with the strength and capabilities necessary to succeed despite the risks and dangers involved. Yaakov knew that assuming responsibility for others itself engenders and breeds success, making failure no longer a concern.

Perhaps we find this notion expressed most poignantly with regards to Yehoshua ben Gamla. The Gemara (Yoma 18a) records that, regrettably, during the period of the second Beis Hamikdash the selection process to fill the position of kohein gadol had been corrupted. Instead of appointing the worthiest candidate, the position was often awarded to the highest bidder. The Gemara continues that the most egregious and disgraceful example of an undeserving layman who unceremoniously purchased the position of kohen gadol, was Yehoshua ben Gamla who acquired the position from Yannai the King. However, the Gemara (Bava Basra 21a) elsewhere presents us with an entirely different narrative regarding the identity and personality of Yehoshua ben Gamla. The Gemara ascribes the establishment of the entire system of yeshivos and Jewish schooling to the efforts and initiative of Yehoshua ben Gamla. How could the same individual who epitomized religious corruption also be the seminal figure accredited with the perpetuation of Torah learning in Klal Yisrael?

In fact, this tension and apparent inconsistency in the chronicling of the activities of Yehoshua ben Gamla led the Ritva to conclude that there were two different individuals, both coincidentally bearing the name Yehoshua ben Gamla. However, the Sfas Emes explains that in fact they were one in the same. Even though prior to his appointment Yehoshua ben Gamla was nothing more than a fraudulent ignoramus, upon being appointed as kohein gadol a personal transformation occurred. The yolk of responsibility for others and for the nation awakened within Yehoshua ben Gamla reservoirs of untapped potential enabling him to become a champion of the mesorah and a visionary hero in the annals of Jewish history.

Similarly, in Parshas Mikeitz, the Torah tells us that Yaakov was initially reluctant to send Binyamin down to Mitzrayim with the other shevatim because travelling was inherently dangerous and "lest misfortune befall him" (Breishis 42:4) along the way. Even after Shimon was taken captive and Yosef demanded to have an audience with Binyamin, Yaakov remained steadfast in his refusal to allow Binyamin to go. It wasn't until Yehudah accepted responsibility for Binyamin when he stated "I will guarantee him; from my hand you can demand him. If I do not bring him to you and stand him up before you, I will have sinned against you forever" (43:9) that Yaakov finally relented. What changed when Yehudah accepted achrayus, responsibility for Binyamin? Travelling was still perilous and an accidental tragedy could still occur. Why did Yaakov change his mind and allow Binyamin to go?

The Shem Mishmuel explains that Yaakov was afraid that in the absence of an absolute responsibility and obligation to succeed, any impediment or difficulty experienced by the shevatim in securing Binyamin's safety could be confused with an "accident". When we enjoy impunity to attribute our failures to circumstances beyond our control, failure becomes all the more likely. However, when Yehudah accepted the achrayus, that under all circumstances he would be held accountable for ensuring Binyamin's wellbeing, Yaakov knew that the very obligation and responsibility to succeed would transform Yehudah and endow him with the resolve and the strength necessary to ultimately be successful.

In our own lives, we should seek to emulate the example of Yaakov Avinu. We should eagerly undertake additional responsibility for others, in each of the three primary realms of Torah, avodah, and chesed. Only in that way will we be able to discover and achieve our individual potential and collectively realize our national destiny. By virtue of a Divine command as well as a historical imperative, we have an obligation to succeed, and we can only attain our goal by joining together and realizing our mutual responsibility to avodas Hashem and to each other. In other words, to fulfill our responsibility to succeed we must take responsibility for one another.

Rav Ephraim Shapiro from Miami Beach once explained that the letters of the Hebrew word for taking responsibility for others, achrayus - aleph, ches, reish, yud, vuv, and tuf - instruct us in the proper progression we should follow in assuming responsibility for one another. The first letter is an aleph representing the number one and the notion that before looking to help others, we must first make sure that we have taken responsibility for our own actions and needs. The following letter is ches which together with aleph spells the word ach or "brother". Only after we been successful in taking care of ourselves can we begin to take responsibility for our brothers, families, and relatives. The next letter is reish, which together with the first two letters spells acheir, or "other". Once our families are secure we can use that stability as a platform to aid and help others as well. The following letter is yud, which turns the word acheir in to acharai or "behind me" or "follow me", because one who takes responsibility for others becomes a natural role model and leader within the community. The next letter is vuv which added to the previous letters changes acharai to acharav or "after him", since a role model who takes responsibility for others will inspire people to follow their example. Finally, the letter tuf, because achrayus begins with aleph, the first letter in the alphabet, and ends with tuf, the last letter in the alphabet. This symbolizes that taking responsibility for others should occupy us constantly, and that it has the ability to embolden, enrich, and uplift every aspect of our lives all the way from aleph to tuf!



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