



Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS
NEWSLETTER
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

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Parshat Va'eira
Rosh Chodesh Shevat

Volume: 17, Issue: 24 | January 27-28, 2017

Shevat 1, 5777
Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Shabbat Times



| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Friday, January 27 | |
| Candle Lighting: | 4:49 PM |
| Mincha/Maariv: | 4:50 PM |
| Shabbat, January 28 | |
| Shacharit: | 8:45 AM |
| Kriyat Shema: | 9:40 AM |
| Mincha / Shalosh | |
| Seudot: | 4:40 PM |
| Shkiya: | 5:08 PM |
| Maariv: | 5:46 PM |
| Shabbat Ends: | 5:51 PM |
| Next Friday, February 3 | |
| Candle Lighting: | 4:58 PM |
| Mincha/Maariv: | 5:00 PM |

- **Welcome** to Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky and Ohr HaTorah from Bergenfield, NJ! Rabbi Sobolofsky will be joining us as a Scholar in Residence this Shabbos and will be speaking Shabbos morning.
- **BIG, HOT Kiddush** after davenning sponsored by Ohr HaTorah!

Weather Report

Friday night: Partly Cloudy, 40° Shabbos day: Sunny, 41°/29°

Mystery Shabbos 2017 - Will you be a host or a guest? Will be happening on February 11th! Make sure to sign up on the Shul's website or the Shul's weekly email!

Ski/Snowboarding Trip - Stop hibernating, stop watching Netflix all day and join Ahavat Shalom's first ever ski/snowboard trip on Sunday February 12th! Carpool coordination and group rates available based on number of responses. To register and let us know you plan to join us, see <http://www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com/skitrip2017> for more info.

Membership Directory - Ahavat Shalom will be putting together a Membership Directory over the next few weeks! More information to come. Feel free to reach out to the Board with any questions or concerns.

2016-2017 Membership - Membership for the 2016-2017 year is **still** open. If you paid for Membership but do not receive emails (and would like to receive them), reach out to the Board for more information. www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com/membership.html

Basketball Leagues - The shul is looking to coordinate Basketball games during the week (Men's games and/or Women's games). If you would be interested, please reach out to Yoni Kushner and/or the Sisterhood.

AIPAC - Upcoming Teaneck community AIPAC event with Howard Kohr, AIPAC CEO. This event will be taking place on February 22nd at Congregation Bnai Yeshurun. We are reaching out to area synagogues to join us that evening as we learn from Howard about the latest developments in the UN, the US, the Mideast, and their impact on the safety and security of Israel.

Beth Aaron - On Friday, February 3, and Shabbat, February 4, at Congregation Beth Aaron, Rabbi Paysach Krohn will be the Scholar-in-Residence for the Itzhak Zeidel z"l Memorial Lectures, on his first yahrtzeit. On Friday at 8:15 p.m., the topic will be "Tefillah: A Way of Connection." Following the Main Minyan on Shabbat morning, Rabbi Krohn will speak on "Becoming a Person of Blessing," and on Shabbat afternoon, between mincha and maariv, he will discuss "The iPad, the iPhone, and the iPod: Becoming an 'Upper Case' Personality." Congregation Beth Aaron is located at 950 Queen Anne Road, Teaneck.

Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here for Shabbos on: 1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/25. He can be reached via email at 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

There are no groups this week.

Welcoming Committee

If you or anyone you know has moved in recently, let us know! Check out ahavatshalomteaneck.com/movingin for more information.



Upcoming Events

- February 3-4: Cong. Anshe Chesed, Rabbi Hess, Linden, NJ
- February 10-11: Mystery Shabbos
- February 17-18: Celebration Kiddush

Congregation Ahavat Shalom Board Members 2016-2017

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

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Chosenness and Unity

Rabbi Mordechai Willig

Hashem brings punishment upon the nations so that Yisrael should hear and be afraid, as it says (Tz'fania 3:6,7), I have destroyed nations etc. I said "Just fear Me, accept mussar" (Rashi Shemos 7:3). According to the Chafetz Chaim (Kuntres Bais Yisrael, Hashmata 2, Ma Lecha Nirdam) Hashem does this in modern times as well. Thus, while Divine justice is always present, a distant natural disaster which claims many lives is a message to Am Yisrael to fear Hashem and repent. World events are ordained by Divine Providence. This extends beyond earthquakes and floods. It applies to human actions as well. Like streams of water, the heart of a king is in the hands of Hashem. Wherever He wishes He moves it (Mishlei 21:1). Hashem restricts a king's freedom of choice (bechira) since his decisions affect all those under his rule (Ralbag). Therefore, we should pray to Hashem, since He controls the decision of the king (Rabbeinu Yona).

Israel is the land that Hashem investigates (Devarim 11:12), and, through it, other lands as well (Rashi). Hashem's eyes are always on it (ibid.) to see what it needs and to initiate decrees for good or bad (Rashi). Divine Providence is more intense in Israel (Ramban Vayikra 18:25), and affects other lands and nations as well.

In his opening comments on the Torah (Breishis 1:1) Rashi presents these ideas. The Torah begins with the story of creation so that that if the nations of the world will say to Yisrael "You are robbers that captured the land of seven nations", they will respond "Hashem gave it to us". Moreover, the world was created because if of Yisrael who are called reishis.

These ideas are part of the nature of the chosenness (bechira) of Am Yisrael, emphasized repeatedly in our daily tefilla, in birchos haTorah, birchos Krias Shema, and elsewhere. This idea, which is a cardinal principle of Judaism, will ultimately be accepted by all of mankind. That acceptance is an eschatological phenomenon emphasized repeatedly by the Nevi'im. Historically, nearly all Jews, including many non-observant ones, accepted that we are the Am Hanivchar - the chosen nation.

Nowadays, however, some Jews question our biblical right to the land of Israel and our unique state of chosenness. The zeitgeist of liberalism and universalism rejects particularism and nationalism of any kind. (See The Failure of Jewish Universalism, American Thinker, Jan. 11, 2017). Idealism and utopianism, essential elements of proper Jewish belief and practice and of our ability to survive as a nation despite persecution and temptation, have been misappropriated by Jews who deny their chosenness.

The recent elections and presidential decisions, veritable political earthquakes, have exposed seismic fault lines within the Jewish community as well (See Trump's Jews and Obama's Jews, FrontPage Mag, Jan 13, 2017). Reaction to Trump's election and to Obama's UN abstention was, predictably, split along political lines. However, the vitriol and unqualified denunciations within the Jewish community itself are cause for great concern.

The Seforno (Breishis 37:2) comments that the events of Parshas Vayeishev (which was read on the day after the aforementioned abstention) resemble the events of the second Beis Hamikdash and its destruction. Specifically (37:18), the brothers imagined that Yosef plotted to kill them physically, spiritually, or both, in order that only he would survive as the blessed son. Since the Torah said, "one who tries to kill you, kill him first" (Sanhedrin 72a), they decided to kill Yosef.

Ultimately (37:28), they sold Yosef. Similarly, during Bayis Sheini, when Hasmonean kings quarreled they sold one another out to the Romans. This caused our present exile, just as selling Yosef caused the exile in Egypt (Shabbos 10b).

On Yom Kippur (Mussaf) we link the ten martyrs of Roman times with the ten brothers who sold Yosef. The Netziv (Meishiv Davar I, 42) writes that the dispute of that time between the Prushim and the Tzdukim led to the baseless hatred and illicit bloodshed. One who saw a fellow Porush sin would, because of sinas chinam, decree him a Tzduki and lower him (into a pit, see Avodah Zara 26b).

Writing in the late nineteenth century, the Netziv fears that one who sees a fellow observant Jew who serves Hashem in a different way will decree him a heretic. He will distance himself, and they will pursue (rodfim) one another permissibly according to their false imagination, chas veshalom.

The erroneous labeling of another Jew as a rodef, which existed in biblical, Roman and modern times, is a present danger as well. Notwithstanding the danger of anti-Zionist activities by Jews lobbying the governments of the U.S. and Israel, a direct and violent clash between the Jews themselves presents an even greater danger. Moreover, the ultimate decision of rulers in both countries is in Hashem's hands. By avoiding sinas chinam and respecting even Jews with whom we strongly disagree, we can earn Hashem's positive intervention (see Yerushalmi Peah 1:1, contrasting the armies of David and Achav) and hasten the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash.



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