



Congregation Ahavat Shalom

**The ACHDUS
NEWSLETTER**
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

Davening TABC, 1600 Queen Anne Rd.
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Parshat Re'eh

Volume: 17, Issue: 5 | August 30-31, 2019

Av 30 - Elul 1

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Assistant Rabbi David Schlusselberg

Shabbat day: 82°, Partly Cloudy

Shabbat Times



Friday, August 30

Mincha/Maariv: 7:15 PM
Candle Lighting: 7:14 PM

Shabbat, August 31

Shacharit: 9:00 AM
Kriyat Shema: 9:39 AM

Mincha / Shalosh Seudot: 7:05 PM
Seudot:

Shkiya: 7:31 PM
Maariv: 8:08 PM

Havdalah: 8:13 PM

Next Friday, September 6

Mincha/Maariv: 7:05 PM
Candle Lighting: 7:03 PM

Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will not be here. He can be reached via email at RabbiYehudaHalpert@gmail.com, or phone at 201-836-3828. In the event of an emergency, Rabbi Halpert can also be reached at 212-909-6951.

Rabbi Schlusselberg's Contact Info

Rabbi Schlusselberg can be reached at (201) 543-9308 or daveschluss@gmail.com

Fertility Resources

The resources are now live on the shul website and can be accessed directly from the homepage. The resources include reproductive specialists, support groups, and helpful organizations.

Chesed

Our very own Dina Shaw, a Registered Nurse, has graciously offered to teach Lamaz classes. For information or assistance, reach out to Dina at (845) 826-5295 or dina5295@gmail.com



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We welcome your input! Please send your newsletter announcements by Wednesday of each week to ensure they make it in!

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Assistant Rabbi David Schlusselberg

Deep Faith and Deep Love

"That we should now contemplate how to live with people whose ideas are distant from us, to engage them with love and brotherliness, even as we firmly distance our opinions and intuitions from their positions." [1]

That this quote comes from the correspondence of one of the leading figures of the *mussar* tradition describing one of the goals of the annual Ellul spiritual journey came as a surprise to me. It was penned by none other than Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv z"l (1824 - 1898), known as "the Alter of Kelm". He accepted this title, "the elder member of the group", because he felt unworthy of being known as a *talmid* of his *rebbe*, Rav Yisroel Salanter.

Needless to say, he was one of the greatest students of Rav Yisroel and in turn shaped his own students, Rav Yerucham of the Mir, Rav Eliyahu Dessler, Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, and Rav Elia Lopian, all of whom had impacted their generation immeasurably. His piety was otherworldly and his *yiras Shomayim* was apparently entirely all-embracing, mesmerizing, and frightening all at once.

Indeed, it is this profound and practical awareness of Hashem which produces a person who can be totally true to all the nuances of the truths that shape his life and at the same time love the brother who disagrees. According to Rav Wolbe z"l, the influential and thought provoking *mashgiach* of the Mir, it is only the profound awareness of how much we all mean to our Creator that can produce the balance the *Alter* strived to achieve. That is why this balance has its place among the spiritual heights to be sought during Ellul.

As I was studying this quote and Rav Wolbe's interpretation that it speaks to the depth of one's *emunah*, it occurred to me that it also sheds light on the juxtapositions and flow of ideas in this week's *parsha*. We first study about the aggressive evangelical idolater who does not receive the routinely mandated judicial patience and assumptions of innocence. Then we learn the *parsha* of the *ir hanidchas* the theoretical *parsha* of the city in Israel that is inundated by belligerent idolaters and is to be destroyed. Following all that we read, "You are Hashem's children - *lo sisgodadu*..." What a jarring non sequitur!

Now, the literal reading of "*lo sisgodadu*" (14:1) bans the early Semitic practice of cutting oneself and views that as an overreaction, or at least as a poorly directed reaction, to loss. According to Ibn Ezra this is the meaning of the introductory phrase of the *pasuk*, "You are children of Hashem", i.e. our belief in His concern for us should blunt the depth of our reaction to tragedy. However, the *mesora* teaches that "*lo sisgodidu*" also rules against establishing "*agudos agudos*", factions and walls within a community[2].

After reading about the obligation to confront and remove those who aggressively and programmatically seek to destroy the very core of our faith, we are forcefully reminded to see all who do not cross that line as Hashem's offspring. In turn, Hashem asks that we all subscribe to the unity of our people and subject ourselves to its requirements.

It is that attitude, "*banim atem laShem* - you are Hashem's children", that, according to Rav Wolbe, determines that one's deeply felt faith and religiosity will be empathetic and engaging, rather than fierce, threatening and self-righteous. He argues that the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Shomayim* - to love Hashem - assures that our beliefs must be accompanied with that love and that it spills over to all that Hashem loves, all of his children.

Studying the *parsha* of the cities and the well-planted spies that attempt to undermine our entire enterprise reminds us of how uncompromisingly protective we must be of the greatest gifts and challenges given to us. It is palpable faith naturally coupled with a robust *ahavas Shomayim* that in turn assures that we are as protective and as loving of Jews as we can possibly be.

[1] Quoted in rav wolbe's "be'emunoso yichye" page 93. Loosely translated

[2] That means that whereas we are all encouraged to maintain authentic and well-based customs and practices, we must refrain from doing so within a community that has a decidedly different observance. Refraining from putting on *teffilin* on *chol hamoed* in a *bais hamedrash* in Yerushalyim, despite one's personal practice, is the classic modern illustration of the *mesorah*'s principle. Clearly, maintaining one's practice of putting on *teffilin* on *chol hamoed* when it does not set one apart from the community is mandated. Yet even a firmly based communal legacy must be set aside if it would create the image of two groups distinguishing themselves in their observance.

Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger

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