



Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS
NEWSLETTER
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

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Parshat Toldot

Volume: 19, Issue: 15 | November 9-10, 2018

Kislev 2

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

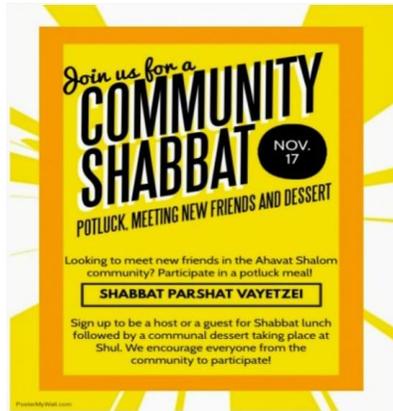
Shabbat day: 45°, Sunny

Shabbat Times



Friday, November 9	
Candle Lighting:	4:25 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:30 PM
Shabbat, November 10	
Shacharit:	9:00 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:08 AM
Mincha / Shalosh	4:15 PM
Seudot:	
Shkiya:	4:42 PM
Maariv:	5:20 PM
Havdalah:	5:25 PM
Next Friday, November 16	
Candle Lighting:	4:15 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:20 PM

Weather Report: Friday night 45°, Rain



This Week: The next sisterhood cookbook club is Thanksgiving themed being hosted by Gabee London 110 Ayers Court, 1B this Sunday, November 11th at 8:00pm.

Awareness Seminar - The Chesed Committee is proud to announce it's newest project; The Raising Awareness Seminar, a lecture series aimed to increase awareness yet to decrease stigmas about important yet often embarrassing and hard to talk about conversations within the Jewish Orthodox Community. The first topic of this series will be on Anxiety and Mental Health. Guest Lecturer (Ahavat Shalom's very own,) Binny Steinig will address the public. This will take place next week, Parshat Vayetzei on Friday night at 8:00pm in the Shul. All are welcome and refreshments will be served.

Last Chance for Next Shabbat - New to the community? Never got a chance to meet 'that couple'? Now's your chance! The shul will be

continuing in its traditional community themed shabbat, where potlucks are arranged by the sisterhood, allowing new and old members to meet, bond and build friendships. The event will take place on November 17th, Shabbat Parshat Vayetzei. If you are interested in partaking please fill out the link <https://goo.gl/forms/8DQm6h1M9oL5d10s2> and specify if you'd like to be a host or a guest. The community will then reconvene for a communal dessert at the shul. All are welcome and encouraged to sign up!

Learning Opportunity - The newly launched Beit Midrash of Teaneck (BMT) has attracted over 50 participants to its twice weekly sessions. Located at Yeshivat Heichal Hatorah Jewish Center of Teaneck, BMT meets on Monday and Wednesday mornings between 9:15 am and 12:45 pm. For this coming week (November 12 and 14), the first session will consist of a talmud seder and shiur (9:15-10:45am) led by Rav Ronen Dvash. The second session (11-11:45am) will feature Rav Mordechai Willig discussing Beit Din: The Intersection of American Law and Halacha. The third session (12- 12:45pm) features Rav Chaim Angel teaching Sefer Ezzrah. BMT welcomes all men and is free of charge. For information, contact David Jacobowitz at djacobow@gmail.com.

RAISING AWARENESS SEMINAR #breakthestigma

A Lecture Series by Congregation Ahavat Shalom to increase awareness and decrease stigma about important conversations in the Jewish community

1st Topic:
Anxiety and Mental Health

When: Friday night November 16, 2018
8:00PM - 9:00PM
Where: TABC Shul

Guest Lecturer: Binny Steinig, LMHC
Licensed Psychotherapist

We will also hear a personal experience from a community member.

Refreshments will be served.
ALL are welcome!

RYNJ Parlor Meeting invites prospective parents to join us at a parlor meeting on November 27th at 7:45PM at RYNJ, 666 Kinderkamack Road, River Edge. The evening will feature a talk with Rabbi Daniel Price, Head of School, on how to inspire today's children, as well as an opportunity to hear from the other members of our administrative team about RYNJ's educational philosophy and approach to educating the next generation of B'nai and B'nos Torah. Please email Tamar Kahn, Director of Admissions, at tkahn@rynj.org for more information or to RSVP.

Join the YAD LEAH'S 5K - Clothing for Israel Dash for Dignity- Sunday November 11th, at Overpeck Park - Run, Walk or Stroll 1 Mile - For more information please reach out to Shoshana Poloner at sspol@optonline.net

Teaneck Mikvah's 9th Annual Women's Event is taking place on Wednesday evening November 14th at Congregation Keter Torah. This year's Event will feature a talk given by kosher food blogger Danielle Renov of peaslove&carrots fame (see website and Instagram).

Congregation Ahavat Shalom Board Members 2018-2019

President: Ben Wine **Vice Presidents:** Eliana Baum | Henry Bernstein | Eli Fenyes | Shira Russell-Giller **Secretary:** Yosef Chai Klein **Treasurer:** Yishai Kadry

Sisterhood: Deena Bernstein | Yael Wine **Gabbaim:** Eli Baum | Stephan Gilbert | Steven Lowinger | Avi Sonnenblick

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

board@teaneckapartments.com | president@teaneckapartments.com | rabbiyehudahalpert@gmail.com

Yeshivat Noam Youth Groups

Groups for children ages 2-4 will be located in Room 3 from 9:45am - 11:00am. 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.

Chesed Committee

If you or anyone you know has moved in recently or knows somebody moving in, please let Shira Russell-Giller know! Check out ahavatshalomteaneck.com/movingin for more information.

2018-2019 Member
Ticker:
93 Member
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"And these are the generations of Yitzchak the son of Avraham, Avraham begot Yitzchak" (*Breishis* 25:19). Rashi comments in the name of the *Medrash* that the *pasuk* stresses twice that Yitzchak was the son of Avraham, because Yitzchak's physical appearance bore an uncanny resemblance to that of his father Avraham. The *Medrash* continues that Yitzchak's likeness to Avraham was ordained deliberately and miraculously by Hashem in order to dispel the insinuations of the scoffers of the generation who were murmuring that since Avraham and Sarah had been married for decades without children, Yitzchok's biological father must have been Avimelech and not Avraham. This speculation was summarily dismissed when Yitzchak was born bearing a striking similarity to Avraham, attesting to their genetic relationship. The *meforshim* are troubled, why was Hashem so concerned with the baseless allegations of those who sought to malign and ridicule Avraham? Rav Mordechai Gifter (*Pirkei Torah*) suggests that the *Medrash* is instructing us regarding the malignant nature of negative speech, mockery, and derision. Even when it is completely without merit, it can be exceedingly pernicious and dangerous, to the degree that Hashem had no choice but to quash it swiftly and overwhelmingly. This is because even one cynical remark can have devastating and far reaching consequences, whose ripple of effects can sometimes still be reverberating generations later.

The *pasuk* states, "And Yaakov gave to Esav bread and a pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank and arose and left, and Esav despised the birthright" (*Breishis* 25:34). The *Gemara* (*Bava Basra* 16b) claims that the five consecutive verbs at the conclusion of the *pasuk* are an allusion to five transgressions that Esav performed on that very day: He engaged in relations with a betrothed maiden, he killed a person, he denied the existence of Hashem, he denied the resurrection of the dead, and he disparaged the birthright. However, even though he committed five misdeeds on that same day, the only *aveirah* mentioned explicitly in the Torah is that he denigrated the birthright, which is ostensibly the least egregious sin on the list. Rav Ahron Kotler explains that this is because Esav's precipitous decline and all that later ensued was triggered by his one comment besmirching the birthright. In fact, the *Baal Haturim* notes that the language "vayivez Esav", "and Esav disparaged", is only found once more in *Tanach* in the *pasuk* "vayivez be'evinav lishloach yad be'Mordechai levado", "but it seemed contemptible to him to lay hands on Mordecai alone" (*Esther* 3:6). This indicates that Haman's despicable plot to eradicate the Jewish people centuries later in the times of Esther, can also be attributed to Haman's ancestor Esav, and his flippant insult of the birthright all those years ago. Therefore, just as Hashem protected the reputation of Avraham and Sarah, we must all vigilantly protect our own reputation from the potential scoffers of our time. This includes conducting ourselves in a fashion which is beyond reproach and lacking any possible perception of impropriety.

The *Mishnah* (*Shekalim* 3:2) prohibits the treasurer of the *Beis Hamikdash* from entering into the vault while wearing clothing, shoes, or an amulet, that could conceal a potential theft, "lest he become rich and people say that he became rich from the appropriation of the chamber; for one must be free of blame before others as he must be free of blame before Hashem, as it states, 'And you shall be guiltless before Hashem and before Yisrael' (*Bamidbar* 32:22)." Similarly, the *Gemara* (*Bava Basra* 13a) bars communal collectors of charitable funds from exchanging small coins with their own private monies, or collectors of food who have leftovers from purchasing it for themselves. These inherently innocent activities are proscribed because they can potentially be misconstrued by others. Rashi (*Avodah Zarah* 12a) claims that this concern is also one of the underlying motivations behind the general notion of *Maris Ayin*, which prohibits many otherwise permissible actions when they could be reasonably misinterpreted by an onlooker as inappropriate.

At the same time, the *Mishnah* (*Avos* 1:6) enjoins us to judge all people and situations favorably, and to refrain from looking askance at anyone. If every ambiguous act should be viewed positively when does *Maris Ayin* apply? Why would any onlooker ever be justified in presuming the worst? Rabbi Chaim Chizkiyah Medini (*Sdei Chemed*) explains based upon the rule of the *Mishnah* (*Avodah Zarah* 11b) which states that when a road is generally used exclusively for idol worshipers, it is prohibited to use the road for any reason, as onlookers will understandably assume that the traveler intends to join the idol worshipers. However, if the same path leads to a second destination as well, it is permitted to use the road, and onlookers would be obliged to judge the traveler favorably. Therefore, only when most reasonable and plausible assessments of the situation suggest that a sin was intended or performed, would the issue of *Maris Ayin* arise. However, if *Maris Ayin* only applies when the circumstances imply that an *aveirah* was likely performed, why must the treasurer of the *Beis Hamikdash* or the *gabbai tzedakah* be overly cautious when performing their regular duties, which give no indication whatsoever of nefarious intent?

The Chafetz Chaim resolves that while a private citizen can depend upon the presumption of innocence, a communal leader who is in the public sphere must take every possible precaution to avoid suspicion, because communal figures often can't assume that they will be afforded that same courtesy. For this reason, the *Medrash Tanchuma* states that Moshe voluntarily provided a complete accounting of all of the expenditures involved in the building of the *Mishkan*, in order to avoid any potential feelings of mistrust. In addition, Rav Pam records that while collecting *tzedakah*, Rav Yisrael Salanter would not even allow himself to remain secluded in a room together with someone else's money (see *Bava Basra* 165a). The Chasam Sofer once lamented that ironically it is often easier to be found virtuous before Hashem than in the eyes of Yisrael, however, the *chillul Hashem* created by failing to protect our reputation, can sometimes be the gravest sin of all. If we take the necessary steps to always conduct ourselves in a fashion that is beyond reproach, in our individual lives and when conducting activities on behalf of the community, may Hashem protect us from the potential scoffers of our time, and enable us to fulfill the mandate of being "guiltless before Hashem and before Yisrael."

By: Rabbi Daniel Stein

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