



# Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS  
NEWSLETTER  
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

Davening: TABC, 1600 Queen  
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Mailing: PO Box 595, Teaneck,  
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Parshat Vaera

Volume: 19, Issue: 23 | January 4-5, 2019

Tevet 28

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Shabbat day: 44, Rain

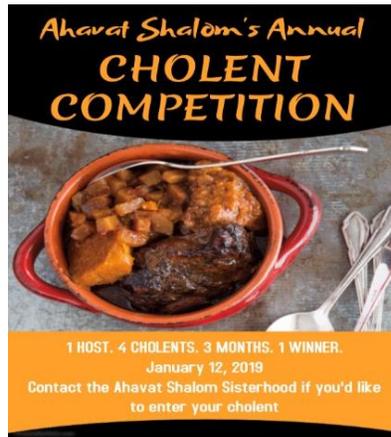
## Shabbat Times



<b>Friday, January 4</b>	
Candle Lighting:	4:23 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:25 PM
<b>Shabbat, January 5</b>	
Shacharit:	9:00 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:41 AM
Mincha / Shalosh	
Seudot:	4:15 PM
Shkiya:	4:42 PM
Maariv:	5:23 PM
Havdalah:	5:28 PM
<b>Next Friday, January 11</b>	
Candle Lighting:	4:29 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:30 PM

**Weather Report:** Friday night 47, Cloudy

**Shabbat Mevarchim Donut Kiddush!** Stick around this week for an awesome Donut Kiddush after davening in honor of Shabbat Mevarchim. Donations are always appreciated!



**2019 Ahavat Shalom Calendar** - Move over family photos on the fridge! Ahavat Shalom will be rolling out a calendar to every member household for the second year in a row! Your Vice President will be in touch with you this coming week with pickup details!

**NEXT WEEK: Ahavat Shalom's Annual Cholent Competition!** Round Two will be after davening on Shabbat, January 13th at the Moallem residence. We are looking for four fresh competitors to enter the ring and compete for Champion of the World (well, Ahavat Shalom)! All community members are invited to attend the event, taste test the cholents, and vote for your favorite. May the best cholent win!

**ALSO NEXT WEEK: Raising Awareness Seminar:**

**Relationships with Parents and In-Laws** - Dr. Howard Forman, psychiatrist in Montefiore Medical Center will address the touchy topic on how to deal with parent / parent-in-law relationships. It will take place in TABC on Friday Night, January 11th, @ 8:30pm. Refreshments will be served.

## Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here: 1/5, 1/12.  
He can be reached via email at RabbiYehudaHalpert@gmail.com, 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 2-4 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.



**Torah Opportunity:** Shani Taragin will speak at Congregation Beth Aaron this Sunday, January 6, at 7:30 p.m. Her topic will be "Moshe, Miriam & Aharon - Dynamic Duo & Triumvirate."

**Torah Opportunity:** The topic for this week's Shviti seder limud on Sunday, January 6, at Congregation Beth Aaron, is "Is There an Obligation to Drink the Kiddush Wine?" This week's shiur will be given by Rabbi Rothwachs. The program is held on Sunday mornings in the Beit Midrash, following the 8:00 a.m. minyan. A light breakfast is served at 8:45 a.m. Each Sunday morning program typically will be independent from the previous and subsequent programs. For more information, please contact Mordy Ungar, 201-741-3920, m\_ungar2@yahoo.com.

**Torah Opportunity:** Nitzanei Noam, Teaneck will host a meet and greet with the new Assistant Director, Morah Elana Kessler, on Monday night, January 7th at 8pm at Congregation Bnai Yeshurun. Questions or for more information, contact Morah Joyce Buckman, Director, at 201-836-6871 or email jrbuckman@yeshivatnoam.org.

**Toiletry Collection Drive** - Ongoing collection of full size shampoo, conditioner, body wash and bar soap that is distributed on a regular basis to community members in need. This is a year-round collection and very much needed. Drop off at the Stone residence - 578 Grenville Avenue, Teaneck - purple collection box located at the right side door. Questions? Please contact Gila - gr5thkid@msn.com.

### RAISING AWARENESS SEMINAR

A Lecture Series hosted by Congregation Ahavat Shalom aiming to raise awareness for and reduce stigma around important issues in the Jewish community

**2nd Topic:**  
**Relationships with Parents and In-laws**

When: Friday Night January 11, 2019  
8:30PM - 9:30PM  
Where: Ahavat Shalom\*

Guest Lecturer: Howard Forman, MD  
Psychiatrist at Montefiore Medical Center

Refreshments will be served.  
ALL are welcome!

\*Please use side entrance

## 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

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**Chosenness and Unity**

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 (Rabag). 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.

II

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 *Parush* 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*.

Rabbi Mordechai Willig

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