



# Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS NEWSLETTER  
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

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Parshat Mishpatim

Volume: 19, Issue: 27 | February 1-2, 2019

Shevat 26

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Shabbat day: 38°, Mostly Cloudy

## Shabbat Times

<b>Friday, February 1</b>	
Candle Lighting:	4:55 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	5:00 PM
<b>Shabbat, February 2</b>	
Shacharit:	9:00 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:38 AM
Mincha /Shalosh Seudot:	4:45 PM
Shkiya:	5:14 PM
Maariv:	5:52 PM
Havdalah:	5:57 PM
<b>Next Friday, February 8</b>	
Candle Lighting:	5:01 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	5:05 PM



**Weather Report:** Friday night 13°, Clear

**Shabbat Mevarechim Means Donuts!** Just a reminder that we will be having our monthly donut kiddush this week in honor of Adar Alef!

**February Sisterhood Cookbook Club** - This time, the Sisterhood is doing something different and hosting an "Amen Party!" This is a wonderful opportunity to get in many brachot for anyone who could use them! Please fill out the poll to help the Sisterhood pick a date, and please reach out to Yael Wine or Deena Bernstein for more information! Poll can be found at: <https://goo.gl/forms/ttN7kXtU9kKiv5V0l>

**DISTRIBUTED: 2019 Ahavat Shalom Calendar** - Move over family photos on the fridge! The 2019 Ahavat Shalom is out to all member households! If you did not receive your copy, please contact your Vice President!

**Women's Tehillim** - There will be a women's community tehillim event on Wednesday, February 6th @ 8:30pm at the Kirshenbaum residence; 1485 East Terrace Circle, Apt. # 2.

**Trivia Night & Speed Dating** - There will be a singles' trivia night and speed dating event on February 9, 2019 at the Young Israel of the West Side from 8:00 - 11:00 PM. Register before February 3 at [www.teanecktrivia.eventbrite.com](http://www.teanecktrivia.eventbrite.com). Admission is \$36! For more information, contact [teaneckshabbaton@gmail.com](mailto:teaneckshabbaton@gmail.com)

## Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here: 2:2. He can be reached via email at [RabbiYehudaHalpert@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**Torah Opportunity:** This Sunday, February 3, Rav Mordechai Willig will offer the shiur at the Shviti learning program at Congregation Beth Aaron. The topic for this week's Shviti seder limud is "Examining the Mitzvah of Kiddush during Shabbat day and making Kiddush on Non-Wine Substances." 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.

**The Beth Aaron Men's Club** is pleased to welcome back award-winning baseball writer Bob Klapisch on Sunday, February 3, at 9:30 a.m. Bob will talk about the 2018 season, the off-season moves both local teams made (and didn't make) and what to expect of the 2019 baseball season, the Red Sox winning the World Series, the Hall of Fame voting results, and his upcoming book due for release in March. He also will take questions from the audience on all baseball topics. There is no cost to attend, and the program is open to the entire community. A light breakfast will be served. Contact [mensclub@bethaaron.org](mailto:mensclub@bethaaron.org) for more information.

**Torah Opportunity:** Devorah Kigel will offer a shiur at 8:00 p.m., on Tuesday, February 5, as part of the Beth Aaron Sisterhood's Rosh Chodesh Adar celebration. Her topic will be "How to Become a Queen in your Home: Lessons Learned from the Three Women in the Purim Story." Devorah Kigel is a well-known dating and marriage coach. She holds a B.A. from Hamilton College, where she majored in French and minored in women's studies, and an M.A. in French from Middlebury College.

**A Taste of Hope** - Bonei Olam, an organization dedicated to helping families struggling with fertility issues, is hosting a free event for men and women, featuring Naomi Nachman and her famous Chopped Competition! The event will take place on Motzei Shabbat, February 23, 2019 at 8:30 PM at Keter Torah! No RSVP required!

**Youth Directors Wanted** - Shaare Tefillah is looking for a new youth director. It's a great, part-time position for a young couple looking for additional income and it's walkable from the apartments!

## Yeshivat Noam Youth Groups

Groups for children ages 2-4 will be located in Room 3 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.

## Chessed 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](http://ahavatshalomteaneck.com/movingin) for more information.



## 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!

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\*Minimum loan amount \$300,000  
Loan must be originated with Jordan Kadry. Must be a member of Ahavat Shalom at time of application. Offer expires June 1, 2018.



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### A Special Relationship

In *Parshas Mishpatim* the Torah presents a collection of various *halachos*. This in itself is noteworthy since we would imagine that after the dramatic description of *ma'amad Har Sinai* in *Parshas Yisro* the Torah would continue by discussing lofty principles, and yet the Torah seems to get "bogged down" with details. But what is even more puzzling is the fact that the *parsha* begins with the *halachos* of *eved ivri*, a Jewish slave. Why choose this topic as a starting point for the *parsha*?

The *halacha* is that if an *eved ivri* declares after six years of work that he loves his master and would like to remain his slave, then his ear is pierced and he works for the master until *yoveil*. Rashi (21:6) quotes the statement of Chazal (*Kiddushin* 22b), "Why is the ear pierced? The ear that heard on *Har Sinai*, 'For *Bnei Yisrael* are my slaves,' and he went and acquired another master for himself, let it be pierced."

If the slave's ear is pierced because he chose another master for himself, then why wait for six years until we pierce the ear? Why not pierce the ear when the person initially sells himself? After all, that is when he first acquires a new master. The *Sefer HaMiknah* (*Kiddushin* 22b) explains that someone who sells himself because he is unable to earn a livelihood is not held accountable for his actions. Since he sold himself under financial duress he is not viewed as one who chose to acquire a new master. But if after six years he refuses to start out again on his own, and instead he declares that he prefers to remain a slave to his master, then he is considered to have chosen a master for himself and he is punished for his decision.

Why is the *eved ivri* criticized for wanting to remain with his master? The fact is the life of an *eved ivri* is not overly burdensome. He may not be forced to do any hard labor (*Vayikra*, 25:43). His master must give him time off to perform *mitzvos*. Even his food, drink and bedding must be equal to that of his master (*Kiddushin* 22a). Chazal go so far as to say, "Whoever acquires a slave has acquired a master for himself (*ibid.*)" In such circumstances, it probably is easier for the slave to observe *mitzvos*. Why does the Torah fault the *eved* for wanting to continue such an arrangement?

Perhaps the answer is that the longer the *eved* stays with his master, the less he feels dependent on *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. With all his needs provided for him, he is comfortable and at ease with his situation. He does not feel the need to reach out to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* for his livelihood. So even if he does continue to observe *mitzvos* as a slave, by staying with his master he will be missing that yearning for heavenly assistance that is so essential to a Jewish soul.

A Torah way of life is not just about *mitzvah* observance; it is about having a relationship with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* and feeling dependent on Him. Chazal comment, "Why were our forefathers barren? Because *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* desires the *tefillos* of *tzadikim*" (*Yevamos* 64a.) Rav Eliyahu Dessler explains that Hashem certainly does not need the *tefillos* of *tzadikim*. Rather, he places *tzadikim* in challenging situations for their own benefit so that they will call out to Him in *tefilla* and develop a closer connection to Him (see *Michtav M'Eliyahu*, vol. 4 p. 63). Similarly, the Gemara says (*Pesachim* 118a), "Providing sustenance for a person is as difficult as the splitting of the sea." The Rashbam explains that although, in reality, it is not difficult for Hashem to provide for each individual, He makes it seem challenging to earn a living so that people will reach out to Him in *tefilla* and ask for mercy.

Having all of one's needs provided for him is not always a blessing. Sometimes it might even be a curse. The Chiddushei HaRim (cited in *Pardes Yosef, Bereishis*) understands that this was the curse that Hashem gave the snake after he caused the sin of the *eitz hada'as*. Hashem tells the snake, "And you shall eat dust (of the earth) all the days of your life. (*Bereishis*, 3:14)" This seems like a blessing because dust is always readily available for the snake. But the Chiddushei HaRim explains that in fact this is the greatest curse. Hashem provided the snake's food up front not because He wanted to make it easier for the snake, but because He did not want to have any ongoing relationship with him. And there is no greater curse than losing one's connection with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*.

This can explain why the Torah criticizes the *eved ivri* for wanting to remain with his master after six years. The Torah understands that sometimes a person might feel the need to sell himself to ease his financial burdens. But that is not an appropriate long term solution because the slave's continued dependence on his master could undermine his relationship with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*, and that is something the Torah is not willing to risk.

The lesson of the *eved ivri* is an appropriate sequel to *Parshas Yisro* because it highlights the deeper meaning of *kabbolas haTorah*. When *Klal Yisrael* received the Torah, they were not simply accepting to scrupulously observe all of the *mitzvos* of the Torah. They were agreeing to enter into a new relationship with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*, one that should not be taken for granted or traded for financial independence.

Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg

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