



Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS NEWSLETTER
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

Davening: TABC, 1600 Queen Anne Rd.
Mailing: PO Box 595, Teaneck, NJ 07666-0595

Parshat Acharei Mot

Volume: 19, Issue: 40 | May 3-4, 2019

Nissan 28-29

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Assistant Rabbi David Schlusberg

Shabbat Times



Friday, May 3	
Mincha/Maariv:	7:15 PM
Candle Lighting:	7:36 PM
Shabbat, May 4	
Shacharit:	9:00 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:21 AM
Mincha /Shalosh Seudot:	7:30 PM
Shkiya:	7:55 PM
Maariv:	8:36 PM
Havdalah:	8:41 PM
Next Friday, May 10	
Mincha/Maariv:	7:15 AM
Candle Lighting:	7:44 PM

Weather Report: Friday night 54°, Rain

Important Community Security Announcement - "The conversation used to be about whether or not security is needed. There is still a debate about how security should best be provided, but the question about why security is needed has gone away." Only months removed from the tragic shooting at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue our community is once again reeling from the deadly attack at Chabad of Poway this past Shabbat. What do these acts of violence mean for the Jewish community? What does it mean for faith communities across the U.S.? Finally, what do these heinous acts say about the state of our republic?

As גרים ותושבים both strangers and citizens of this great country we have a moral, ethical and civic obligation to think deeply about these issues and to proactively address these concerns. We are enjoined to reach out across divides, respond to anger with compassion, respond to baseless hate with loving kindness and finally to educate those who are ignorant of the damage and danger prejudice and hate cause. These are aspirational objectives, lofty goals for which we as a community and as individual s can aspire to, but even the most basic of these goals can only be achieved if we have a Shul, a Beit Knesset a makom torah in which we can gather to learn, to daven, to communicate with the almighty. But, the sad reality is, in 2019, in order to have a Shul, a Beit Knesset and makom torah within which our community can gather you need to have an armed guard to ensure that the individuals who gather together are safe and protected. This is my personal opinion, this is the opinion of many individuals within the security establishment but most importantly, for our purposes today, this is the mandate of the Torah Army of Bergen County our host and landlord for many years. To date, many religious institutions have avoided employing armed guards, in part due to the off putting appearance of lethal weapons in a house of worship but also due to the material, monetary cost of employing armed security guards. But this is no longer an option, guards need to be employed, the safety of our congregants needs to be ensured and the cost of these heightened security measures need to be incurred. Who should bear the cost of the additional security assessment? Although a portion of the security costs can be subsidized with federal and state grants, these generous gifts of the US government will not suffice. Who should bear the excess cost? Only Full members? Only Affiliate members? Only those individuals who attend on a regular basis? NO! EVERY INDIVIDUAL WHO LIVES IN THE "TEANECK APARTMENT COMMUNITY" AND WHO ENTERS THE DOORS OF CONGREGATION AHAVAT SHALOM, WHETHER ITS EVERY WEEK, EVERY OTHER WEEK, ONCE A MONTH OR ONLY ONCE A YEAR HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO SHOULDER A PORTION OF THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF ENSURING THAT OUR BUILDING HAS ADEQUATE SECURITY. (The halachik sources for this conclusion are too extensive to list here but if one is interested refer to R. Yisrael Isserlein (Terumas Ha-Desheh, 345) who addresses a city whose Jews were asked to contribute to reinforce the city's defenses.) I believe every resident of the Teaneck Apartments should be a member of Congregation Ahavat Shalom. However, I see other sides of the argument; "not my primary place of tefillah", "I just moved in" "I am moving out soon", "I don't like the Kiddush" ect. However, when it comes to funding the shul's basic security needs I don't see any other side of the argument, because if we, as individuals, fail to fund the cost of security for even one Shabbat our shul will close. We cannot open our doors if those doors are not guarded by armed security guards. Years from now historians, anthropologists and sociologist will judge our society harshly. We will be characterized as a barbaric civilization that needed to use lethal weapons to protect individuals who wanted to engage in the peaceful and eternal act of prayer. But, only by enabling good people to come together in a safe and secure religious environment can we bring about the spiritual growth and change which will enable us to witness the nevuah of yeshayahu hanavi,

וְכִתְּבוּ חֶרְבוֹתָם לְאֵתִים וְחַיְתוֹתֵיהֶם לְמִזְמֵרוֹת לֹא יִשָּׂא גֹי אֶל-גֹּי חֶרֶב וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruninghooks Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. We should be zocheh to witness the arrival of mashiach tzidkeinu, bimherah veyameinu. - Rabbi Halpert

In order to keep our doors open, it will cost us approximately \$ 500.00 each week in security fees. We are calling on all individuals in the community, members and non-members, to help. G-d Willing we will receive our government grants soon, but until then, the shul cannot continue to eat the cost. Please consider a donation of any amount so we can keep our doors open.

Raising Awareness Seminar - Continuing with our destigmatizing project, the Chesed Committee is proud to announce their next Seminar which will be for women only. The topic will be Postpartum: Instagram VS. Reality; this will be lead by our very own Tali Wigod, PsyD Graduate, who will be giving a clinical overview of postpartum depression and anxiety. We will also have two people speak about their personal experiences. This lecture will take place NEXT Shabbat Afternoon, May 11th @ 3:30pm.



WHERE: CONGREGATION AHAVAT SHALOM

WHEN: SHABBAT AFTERNOON, MAY 11 @ 3:30PM*

*Event open to women only

Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here: 5/4, 5/11, 5/18, 6/1.

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 Schlusberg's Contact Info

Rabbi Schlusberg can be reached at (201) 543-9308 or daveschlus@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.



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 | rabbivyehudahalpert@gmail.com

ZEEVYAH BENOFF, JD
Sales Associate, REALTOR®
C: 201.956.0208
O: 201.992.3600
Zeevyah@LinksNJ.com

Citizens Bank
50 TREE BLVD, SUITE 340 • WOODCLIFF LAKE NJ
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Loan Officer
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MORTGAGE ADVANTAGE PROGRAM

Jordan Kadry
Vice President
FM Home Loans, LLC
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PROGRAM BENEFITS:
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- Waive of all bank fees (\$1490 value)
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- Competitive rates

*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.



A Fence Around the Torah - The Key to *Yiras Shomayim*

"*Asu syag laTorah* - make a fence as a safeguard around the Torah laws" is the instruction given to us by the *Anshei Keneset Hagedolah* (Avos 1:1). *Chazal* (Yevamos 21a) derive this obligation to protect the *mitzvos* by enacting rabbinic decrees from the last *passuk* in *Parshas Achrei Mos* (Vayikra 18:30), "*ushmartem es mishmarti*". While *gezeiros d'rabanan* are found in all areas of *halacha*, a unique status was assigned to the safeguards protecting prohibitions of *gilui arayos* (prohibited relationships). We are taught (Avos D'rabbi Nosson 2:1) that the Torah itself enacted safeguards to protect us from violating the prohibitions of *arayos*. All physical contact is prohibited by the Torah itself. These prohibitions are to be a fence to protect us from committing actual *gilui arayos*.

Chazal extol the value of *sayagim* around *mitzvos*. Shlomo *Hamelech* is praised by Hashem for instituting *gezeiros* in the realm of carrying on Shabbos. *Chazal* (Eruvin 21b) consider this to be one of the greatest achievements of Shlomo *Hamelech*. Why are *gezeiros drabanan* so critical? Why is Shlomo *Hamelech* praised so lavishly for this *gezeira* that it even overshadows his other accomplishments, such as building the *beis hamikdash*?

The Ramban (*Shemos* 20:8) comments that all the negative commandments of the Torah are rooted in *yiras Hashem*. In contrast to the positive commandments which serve to express our *ahavas Hashem*, one expresses one's fear and awe of Hashem by refraining from what He prohibits.

In the realm of positive *mitzvos* one can express one's *ahavas Hashem* to different degrees. One who merely fulfills *mitzvos* in the basic form without embellishing on the beauty of their performance has only attained a certain level of *ahavas Hashem*. Performance of a *mitzvah* in the most beautiful way possible clearly demonstrates, and serves as a tool to enable us to grow in, our *ahavas Hashem*.

In the realm of *mitzvas lo taase* it is more difficult to differentiate between different levels of *yiras Hashem*. Isn't *yiras Hashem* exhausted by simply refraining from *issurim*? Where is there room for growth in abstaining from *aveiros*? Perhaps the key to growth in *yiras Hashem* can be found in the requirement of "*asu syag laTorah*". A person who not only refrains from prohibitions, but also creates safeguards that **distance** him from violating the word of Hashem demonstrates his appreciation for *yiras Hashem*. One who does not have such safeguards, even if he technically does not violate any prohibition, clearly is lacking in *yiras Hashem*.

There are two distinct aspects of *yiras Hashem*. The elementary level is *yiras haonesh* - fear of punishment. The Rambam in *Hilchos Teshuva* emphasizes that everyone must begin with this basic level of fear. Hopefully, one's *yiras Hashem* will mature and reach the level of *yiras haromemus* - awe for the majesty of Hashem. We allude to these two levels of *yiras Hashem* in the *tefillah* for *mevarchim hachodesh*. We ask Hashem for many things during this *tefillah*. The only request that we repeat is our desire for a life full of *yiras Hashem*. Why do we repeat? Apparently we are asking for two distinct types of *yiras Hashem*. First we request *yiras shomayim v'yiras cheit*. *Yiras cheit* is the basic fear that *cheit* carries with it a punishment. When we beseech Hashem for *yiras shomayim v'yiras cheit* we are requesting that we refrain from *cheit* because of *yiras haonesh*. We then progress to requesting *ahavas Torah v'yiras shomayim*. This is a very different type of *yiras shomayim*. This is a *yirah* that stems from an appreciation of the greatness of Hashem. Just as *ahavas Torah* emanates from an appreciation of the beauty of Torah, so too this *yiras shomayim* of *yiras haromemus* comes from a realization of the absolute awesome power of Hashem.

Asu syag laTorah is the mechanism to demonstrate our *yiras Hashem*. It serves to indicate both *yiras haonesh* as well as *yiras haromemus*. One who truly views *cheit* as a spiritual poison and understands the severity of *onesh* involved with violating the word of Hashem will not suffice to passively abstain from *aveiros*. He will actively search for ways to guard himself from coming anywhere near *cheit*. Just as one who has poison in his house will not leave it out in a way that it may inadvertently be eaten, one who views *cheit* as spiritual poison will make every effort to protect himself from any association with it.

Yiras haromemus is the corollary of *shivisi Hashem l'negdi tamid*. One who truly believes he is constantly in the presence of Hashem will be filled with the awe that is natural to be felt being in His presence. One who is in the king's palace is on his best behavior and scrutinizes his every action and word, lest he offend the king. If we are truly in the presence of *Melech Malchei Hamelachim*, how much more so are we obligated to guard ourselves not to violate the word of The King. We have to take extra precautions not to even come close to violating an actual *mitzvah*.

Shlomo *Hamelech* accomplished many great things during his lifetime. Part of his legacy to us is *Asu syag laTorah*. He taught us how to grow in our *yiras haonesh* and our *yiras haromemus*. It is through our dedication to *gezeiros drabanan* that we demonstrate to Hashem our desire for *yiras shomayim*. May we merit that Hashem grants all of us *chayim sheyesh bohem yiras shomayim v'yiras cheit*, *chayim sheyesh bohem ahavas Torah v'yiras shomayim*.

Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

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ZEEVYAH BENOFF, JD
Sales Associate, REALTOR®

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O: 201.992.3600
Zeevyah@LinksNJ.com



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