



Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS NEWSLETTER
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

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Parshat Kedoshim

Volume: 19, Issue: 41 | May 10-11, 2019

Iyar 6

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Assistant Rabbi David Schlusberg

Shabbat day: 66', Partially Cloudy

Shabbat Times

Friday, May 10	
Mincha/Maariv:	7:15 PM
Candle Lighting:	7:44 PM
Shabbat, May 11	
Shacharit:	9:00 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:17 AM
Mincha /Shalosh Seudot:	7:35 PM
Shkiya:	8:03 PM
Maariv:	8:44 PM
Havdalah:	8:49 PM
Next Friday, May 17	
Mincha/Maariv:	7:15 PM
Candle Lighting:	7:50 PM



Weather Report: Friday night 53', Early Rain

Welcome -Estie and Mark Kamenetsky who recently moved into Teaneck Square!

Tzeitchem L'/Shalom to Erica, Tzvi and Matthew Solomon who are moving to New Milford. Thank you for all you have done (and continue to do) for our community!

CAS Community Security Campaign - As you know, Congregation Ahavat Shalom is facing a new financial reality - the need for security presence at our shul. This added expense cannot be sustained without raising additional funds. While we are in the process of pursuing federal and state funding for a portion of the cost, we are kicking off a campaign to raise \$10,000 towards our congregation's security needs. Any and all donations will help us reach our goal and will be tax -deductible! To be a part of ensuring our doors stay open and protected, please donate online at

<https://donate.thechesedfund.com/cause/congregation-ahavat-shalom-security>. **Tizku l'Mitzvot!**

To get the ball rolling, Erica and Tzvi Solomon have graciously agreed to match the next \$1,000 raised by Monday, May 13!!!

Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here: 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 daveschluss@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.



WHERE: CONGREGATION AHAVAT SHALOM
WHEN: SHABBAT AFTERNOON, MAY 11 @ 3:30PM*

*Event open to women only



interest in doing this alongside like-minded individuals within our community, please reach out to Ami Kirschner for more details. He can be reached via email: amikirschner@gmail.com or on his cell: (347) 233-1180.

Origami Workshop - Just in time for Shavuot, come join Yaacov Metzger as he continues his free Origami workshop series with "Tulips in a Flowerpot!" You will have two chances to catch this workshop at Congregation Beth Aaron. The first one will be on Sunday, May 19, at 5:00 p.m. The workshop will be repeated on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, at 10:00 a.m. Both adults and children are welcome; children aged 8 or under require parental participation. Register at www.bethaaron.org/event/TulipOrigami.

Torah Opportunity - Rabbi Daniel Feldman is leading this week's Shivti seder limud at Congregation Beth Aaron. This week marks the start of a new series on laws pertaining to business and commerce; the topic for this week will be "The Difference between Geneva and Gezeila." This week's program begins at 9:15 a.m., Sunday, May 12, in the Beit Midrash, preceded by a light breakfast at 8:45 a.m. Each Sunday morning program typically will be independent from the previous and subsequent program. For information about the program, please contact Mordy Ungar, 201-741-3920, m_ungar2@yahoo.com.



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

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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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- Waive of all bank fees (\$1490 value)
- A dedicated mortgage professional assisting you through the entire process
- 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.





Reaching Old Age: Victory or Defeat?

There are things that we don't like to talk about, and there are things we don't even want to think about. The situation of the elderly belongs to the latter category. What we owe the old is reverence, but all they ask for is consideration, not to be discarded and forgotten. There is a Yiddish aphorism: "One father can take care of ten children, but ten children cannot take care of one father."

Don't get me wrong. There are children whose *kibbud av vo'em*, caring and respecting their elderly parents is exemplary, and in full compliance with the demands of Torah, but there are also many cases where children turn their backs on their elderly parents, and if they do care for them, they consider it an act of charity rather than a privilege.

The problem is twofold: the attitude of society toward the elderly and the attitude of the elderly to being old. We pray for old age, but once we attain it, it is sometimes considered a defeat instead of a victory.

More money is spent in the U.S. on concealing the signs of old age than on dealing with heart disease and cancer!

The U.S. is a culture that worships at the cult of productivity. A 55 year old person has great difficulty competing for a job for which there are 25 year old applicants that are equally qualified. The employer considers not only how many years of work he can get from the applicant, but also that the health care costs that he must bear for an older employee are likely to be much greater than for a younger person. We are generally in denial of becoming old. I was invited to participate in a series of lecture for people in the 35-45 age group. The series included lectures on financial planning, preservation of health, retirement planning, and psychological adjustment. The series was widely publicized, and a hall accommodating 300 people was rented. 18 people showed up! "Other people may need to plan for their retirement, but not me. I'm going to be healthy and productive at least until 85. I'm immune to the wear-and-tear diseases of aging: emphysema, arthritis, Parkinsonism, they're not in my future." I only hope you're right.

Let's face the inevitable. Regardless of what you hear, Social Security and Medicare are headed for bankruptcy, the only difference of opinion is in what year. When I paid my first social security tax, I shared the support of one elderly recipient with 17 other taxpayers. Today, the cost of caring for one elderly social security-Medicare recipient is borne by 2.6 people. Not only is this a massive chunk out of one's paycheck, but the person who is paying in so heavily cannot help but wonder whether he/she will ever get any benefits. When one no longer works, one becomes a social liability, a drain on resources. Who is at fault for this burden and the bleak future? Why, those people who stubbornly hang on to life past 66! And what is medicine doing? Continually prolonging life! In 1980, it is estimated that there were about 15,000 centenarians in the U.S. That figure more than doubled by 1990 and is progressively rising.

An important statistic is that 80% of Medicare expenditures are during the last six months of life. In Oregon, certain medical procedures are not covered by Medicaid for people over 80. The current administration has set its sights on saving Medicare, and it should be quite obvious where the major cuts will be made.

Depression in the elderly is common. As one grows older, the chances of losing one's spouse increases, and the person is alone. Alone, and feeling quite useless. A 75 year old widow or widower has children that are in their forties, and they have young children for whom they must care. These latter are the "sandwich generation," caught between responsibilities to elderly parents on the one hand and young children on the other. Many of the elderly do not have financial resources to maintain their independent life style. The time, energy and finances of their children are limited. How should these be distributed?

When one can no longer live independently, what are the choices? Senior citizen apartments, assisted living, nursing homes or moving in with children. The latter may be very welcome, having a built-in baby sitter and someone to prepare meals when both husband and wife work. But it can also be an imposition. A child may have to give up her bedroom. Grandfather can't stand the loud music, and totally disapproves of how the kids dress.

For some people, life consisted of work, and periods in between work were to recharge the batteries for the workday. But now what? What is my life for? Every human being has a need to feel needed. In what way am I needed? There is no greater anguish than emptiness and boredom.

There are senior citizen centers that provide activities, but when we are younger, we live with a vision, and recreation is a poor substitute for vision. When we are younger, we live with dreams, but now all we have is memories. There are solutions, but these require a radical change of perspective. We must reject the prevalent cultural attitude toward the elderly. We must prepare ourselves for the golden years, and children must come to a Torah concept of relating to the elderly. There are men and women who, in their working years availed themselves of the wisdom of the Jewish heritage, the vast treasury of Torah, whether Talmud, history or ethics. They may have *shiurim* (lectures), study groups, or can learn on their own. There is now an abundant source of learning materials, on disc and on the internet. Work was to earn a living, but was not the primary goal in life. Shabbos prepared them for enjoying leisure, even without playing golf or fishing. They prayed and developed a relationship with G-d. Of them the psalmist said, "A righteous man will flourish like a date palm, like a cedar in the Lebanon he will grow tall. Planted in the house of G-d in the courtyards of our G-d they will flourish. They will be fruitful in old age, vigorous and fresh they will be" (Psalm 92:13-15).

Torah teaches that life has an intrinsic value, independent of one's actions. If someone is ordered, under the threat of death, to kill a person, he must accept martyrdom. "What makes you think that your blood is redder than the other person's?" (Pesachim 25b). In other words, why should you think your life is worth more than the other person's? Suppose that the person who is ordered to kill is a great scholar, a great scientist, a great benefactor to society, and he is ordered to kill a person who is a degenerate scoundrel, who has been a burden to the community. The *halacha* is the same. He must accept martyrdom. "What makes you think that your blood is redder than the other person's?" At any age and in any condition, one should not lose a sense of value. If one lives a life of being close to G-d one never feel alone.

As a medical intern, I was called to administer an intravenous antibiotic to a patient. The patient's nurse told me that the patient was very depressed. While undergoing orthopedic surgery, he had a cardiac arrest. The surgeon promptly opened his chest and massaged the heart, restoring its function. When the patient emerged from surgery, he learned what had transpired.

After I administered the antibiotic, the patient said, "Are you a rabbi?" When I told him that I was, he said, "I'm not Jewish, but will you say a prayer with me?" Assuming that he was familiar with Psalm 23, I said it with him. When we came to the verse, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me," the patient choked up. We finished the psalm and he thanked me.

I stopped to see him the next day, and the nurse told me he was a changed person, bright and vivacious. He greeted me with "Hi, doc!" then said, "When I found out that my heart had stopped, I thought, 'That can happen at any time, when no one is around to get it started again, and I was afraid of dying. But when we said 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me,' I knew that was said about me. When my heart stopped, I was in the valley of the shadow of death. I am now 72. I served on the police force for 38 years and I helped many people. I feel safe that G-d will be with me." As I left, he said, "That prayer beat the h--- out of the antibiotic." If one lives close to G-d, one need never fear of being alone. The Torah requires, "In the presence of an old person shall you rise and you shall honor the presence of an elderly person" (Leviticus 19:32). The verb on the latter phrase is *ve'hadarta*, which indeed means to honor, which is giving something to the older person. Rabbi Joseph Adler remarked that *ve'hadarta* also means "to return," i.e., to get something back from the older person. Old people are repositories of wisdom. The *Midrash* states that when the Israelites were about to leave Egypt, Moses took upon himself the task of taking the remains of Joseph with the, but he did not know where Joseph was buried. Moses asked Serach, the daughter of Asher, who was the sole survivor of Joseph's generation, and she told him where Joseph was buried.

But why did Moses have to consult Serach. After all, Moses could speak to G-d at any time. Why did he not just ask G-d? It is because Serach had knowledge which could not be equaled even by direct contact with G-d. Serach knew Joseph and the patriarch Yaakov. Contact with the great *tzaddikim* is irreplaceable. This is what the elderly can offer us.

The younger generation thinks it has all the answers. Sure, grandchildren can program the VCR for computer-illiterate grandparents, but there is no substitute for the wisdom gathered in years. The Talmud states that Reb Yochanan would rise to honor an elderly heathen. "How many experiences this man has survived." Rashi comments, "How much suffering he had, and how many wondrous things he witnessed." We have to show our children that we not only revere the elderly but also that we appreciate their wisdom. Yes, aging has its problems, but Torah provides some solutions.

Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski

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