



# Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS  
NEWSLETTER  
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Parshat Chukat

Volume: 19, Issue: 50 | July 12-13, 2019

Tamuz 9-10

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Assistant Rabbi David Schlusberg

Shabbat day: 90°, Sunny

## Shabbat Times

<b>Friday, July 12</b>	
Mincha/Maariv:	7:15 PM
Candle Lighting:	8:10 PM
<b>Shabbat, July 13</b>	
Shacharit:	9:00 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:18 AM
Mincha /Shalosh Seudot:	8:00 PM
Shkiya:	8:28 PM
Maariv:	9:12 PM
Havdalah:	9:17 PM
<b>Next Friday, July 19</b>	
Mincha/Maariv:	7:15 PM
Candle Lighting:	8:06 PM



**Weather Report:** Friday night 73°, Partly Cloudy

**Welcome!** to **Sam & Benjamin Klein** who recently moved into Westgate!  
to **Rachel & Josh Krantz** who recently moved into Terrace Circle!  
to **Dalia & Israel Romand** who recently moved into Terrace Circle!

**Mazal Tov!** to **Arielle & Dani Secemski** on the birth of a baby girl!

**Mazal Tov!** to **Shira & Netanel Behanian** and big sister **Jannette** on the birth of a baby boy!

**2019-2020 CAS Board Elections** - Voting for the 2019-2020 CAS Board is open! All members, please exercise your civic duty and fill out the ballot at <https://forms.gle/voc2f9g7mY6vbtJ38>. Please note that there are a number of very important referendum items to be voted upon in addition to the Board positions. **Voting closes on Wednesday, July 17, 2019 @ 11:59 PM!**

**Gemara Chabura** - Throughout the summer, Rabbi Schlusberg will be giving a summer mini-series entitled: "The Halachot of Traveling."

**Chesed and Education Opportunity** - Our very own Dina Shaw, a Registered Nurse, has graciously offered to teach Lamaze classes for anyone who cannot afford childbirth classes. For information or assistance, reach out to Dina at (845) 826-5295 or [dina5295@gmail.com](mailto:dina5295@gmail.com).

**First Time Home Buying Mastermind** - Make sure you stop by Ahavat Shalom's Home Buying Mastermind where you will learn how to prepare for purchasing a home and how to avoid the common pitfalls of the Home Buying process! Featuring Malkie Benson, David Joyandeh and our very own Yishai Kadry! The event will take place on Sunday, July 28 at 10:00 AM at 206 The Plaza. Breakfast will be served and babysitting available upon request.

**Amud Yomi** - Finding time to learn during the day can be difficult, especially for those who are working. Amudyomi.com is on a schedule to complete Shas in 15 years (half Daf Yomi). This program is doable, even for those without a lot of time in their day, and is a great opportunity to incorporate learning into your daily life! If you are interested in doing this alongside like-minded individuals within our community, please reach out to Ami Kirschner for more details at [amikirschner@gmail.com](mailto:amikirschner@gmail.com) or 347-233-1180.

**Congregation Bnai Yeshurun's Adult Education Committee presents** - Current Trends and Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism: The Fascinating Personal and Professional Background of Elan Carr, Special U.S. Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, Tuesday, July 23, 2019, 8:15 pm. As Special Envoy, Elan S. Carr advises the Secretary of State and is responsible for directing U.S. policies and projects aimed at countering anti-Semitism throughout the world. Prior to his appointment, Special Envoy Carr served as a Deputy District Attorney for Los Angeles County, where he prosecuted violent crimes for more than a decade. Special Envoy Carr is an officer in the United States Army Reserve, and has received multiple awards and commendations for his nearly two decades of military service. He is the son of Iraqi Jewish refugees who fled persecution in Iraq and has been a recognized leader in the fight against anti-Semitism on U.S. college campuses and around the world.

**Chesed Opportunity** - The 8th Annual Teaneck Children's Clothing Drive! Children's CLOTHING DROP OFF Dates: Sunday, July 21 from 9am- 1 pm & Monday, July 22, 9 am- 4 pm. We accept current style children's clothing, as well as children's and adults coats and shoes- all in great condition only please. We are also looking for VOLUNTEERS to help us sort anytime July 21-23. Everyone is invited to come shop for free once the clothing has been sorted. To shop, email us for a volunteer or shopping sign up. Shopping days are July 24-30. For more info and sign up sheets, please contact [childrensclothingdrive@gmail.com](mailto:childrensclothingdrive@gmail.com)

## Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here: 7/13. He can be reached via email at [RabbiYehudaHalpert@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:daveschluss@gmail.com)

## Yeshivat Noam Youth Groups

There will be no Yeshivat Noam groups until after the summer. Have a wonderful Shabbat!

## 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](http://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!

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## Dying to Learn

The ritual impurity of a corpse is introduced with the words, "This is the Torah: when a man dies in a tent, anyone entering the tent and anything in the tent shall be unclean for seven days" (*Bamidbar* 19:14). The Gemara (*Berachos* 63b) infers from the unnecessary use of the word "Torah" in this context that matters of Torah can only be retained by a person who is willing to figuratively "kill" themselves in order to acquire it. The Chafetz Chaim suggests that a person has to metaphorically "kill" themselves in the sense that all extraneous disturbances and interruptions must be tuned out while learning Torah. In a similar manner in which the deceased are unable to participate in everyday activities, we must carve out times in our schedules which are free from avoidable disruptions. This is critical because generally the *mitzvah* to learn Torah is circumscribed to the hours of the day which are otherwise unoccupied by our daily responsibilities (see *Kovetz Shiurim* vol. 2 section 19 and *Birkas Shmuel, Kiddushin*, section 27 part 4.) Therefore, part of the obligation to learn Torah inevitably requires us to do our best to restrict our daily activities to specific parts of the day and cordon off other times to be dedicated solely to Torah study.

The reference to *talmud Torah* in this context also indicates that in order to learn Torah successfully we must be consumed with the learning of Torah even to the point of utter exhaustion. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 83b) derives from the word "Torah" in this *pasuk*, "One should never prevent himself from attending the *beis medrash* or from engaging in matters of Torah, even at the moment of death." How is it possible to learn Torah even at the moment of death? (Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro actually sees this as the source for the custom to recite *shema* prior to passing.) Rav Moshe Wolfson (*Emunas Itecha*) explains that the Gemara is instructing us to learn Torah even during those times in our life when we feel emotionally spent and physically drained, when we are empty of energy and void of desire. In fact, it is the learning that we do when we are fatigued that is arguably the most transformative. The *pasuk* states "In addition my wisdom remained with me" (*Koheles* 2:9.) The Hebrew word used here for "in addition" - "*af*" - also means "anger." This leads the *Yalkut Shimoni* (section 968) to conclude that it is specifically the Torah which is studied during times of "anger" or duress, when life is most challenging, that will leave an indelible impression upon us.

However, when we are tired and worn out our ability to retain information is usually dramatically impaired. How can we be productive when we are exhausted? Moreover, why should the Torah that we learn when we are depleted and depressed be the most formidable and memorable? Rav Shach (*Avi Ezri on Nashim*) answers that Torah is a supernatural discipline, an interaction with the Divine, which functions in its own dimension and by its own set of rules. When enormous effort is exhibited in an attempt to acquire Torah knowledge, Hashem gifts wisdom to the recipient even in a fashion that exceeds our normal human limitations. The Gemara (*Megillah* 6b) states, "If a person says to you: I have labored and I have found success, believe him." If a person has labored sufficiently then he has triumphed all on his own. Why does the Gemara insist on describing his accomplishment as something which is "found" or stumbled upon? The Chiddushei Harim explains that Torah knowledge is never attained naturally and independently but only through Divine benevolence triggered by a sincere and sustained effort.

It is for this reason that toiling in Torah is described as an inexplicable "statute", or "*chok*." The word "Torah" also appears in *Parshas Chukas* in connection with the purification process of the red heifer, the *parah adumah*, as the *pasuk* states, "This is the statute of the Torah which Hashem commanded" (*Bamidbar* 19:2.) *Parah adumah* is the classical enigmatic *chok*, for the very same ashes that purify the defiled also defile the pure. Learning Torah is mentioned in connection with the *chok* of *parah adumah*, because the act of learning Torah is itself a *chok* as well. *Parshas Bechukosai* begins, "You should follow My statutes" (*Vayikra* 26:3), which *Rashi* interprets as "you should study the Torah laboriously." What is so perplexing about the activity of learning Torah that it deserves to be labeled as a *chok*? The Chasam Sofer explains that laboring in Torah is classified as a *chok* because while there are exceptionally intelligent individuals who can master the natural disciplines quickly and with ease, it is absolutely axiomatic that Torah knowledge can only be attained through a demonstration of great determination and excessive toil, which then prompts a measure of Divine intervention.

In fact, all of the letters of the *aleph beis* are found in the blessings of *Parshas Bechukosai* with the exception of the letter *samech*, which has the numerical value of sixty. The Rokeach claims that this is an allusion to the sixty *masechtos* of *shas*, because as opposed to earthly pursuits and prosperity, Torah knowledge can only be attained through personal effort and exertion, and not by means of a great intellect, godsend, or benediction alone. The Steipler Gaon once responded to a student, "you must know that becoming great in Torah does not come from blessings. There is only one way to accomplish success in learning, and that is to distance yourself from wasting time and to dedicate every moment to Torah learning." While we should pray for assistance in retaining Torah knowledge, there is no substitute or shortcut for the hard work that is required. If we exert ourselves fully and allocate time for learning Torah properly, may Hashem bestow upon us a deep understanding of Torah, and may we enjoy the full spectrum of the blessings the Torah has to offer.

Rabbi Daniel Stein

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