

Kol Sholom

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SAVE THESE DATES

Golden Group It's Not Just Books Nov. 20th

Night of Learning & Fun Nov. 23rd

Movie Goers On the Basis of Sex Dec. 8th

Chanukah Dec. 22- Dec. 29th



THAPPY Chanukah!

The

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

of

Peace

Voice

חג אורים שמח ללללל אורים שמח

THERE ARE TWO WAYS OF SPREADING LIGHT: Be the CANDLE or the MIRROR that reflects it. – Edith Warton





Dear friends,

I write this message just moments before heading down to Washington, DC, where, tomorrow, I am scheduled to deliver the opening blessing on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. As a student of American History, and as someone with a longstanding appreciation for the work of government, this is a special moment for me.

The House Chaplain, Patrick J. Conroy, at the behest of House members, formally issues invitations for clergymen of all faiths to serve as guest chaplain. In my case, David Tantleff made the request to Congressman Elliot Engel, who quite expeditiously was able to secure an invitation for me.

There are fairly strict rules governing the opening blessing. Obviously, it must not be partisan or overtly political. It must be recited entirely in the English language; no use of liturgical Hebrew or Latin is permitted. The prayer may not make reference to the national observances of other nations. It is preferred that the prayer not be exceedingly denominational in character, but that it have a more universal flavor and applicability. The blessing must be short; it may not exceed 150 words and is expected to take no more than two minutes to recite.

With these constraints in mind, and given the current political climate, there are several elements I feel that I must incorporate. Firstly, I want to offer mussar (ethical rebuke) to those in the political class who have abandoned their decency and scruples in pursuit of partisan gain. Secondly, I want to remind House members on both sides of the aisle of our common patriotism and national destiny. Thirdly, I want to remind the House members of their primary responsibility; to legislate within a constitutional framework and pursue the national interest. Lastly, I want to pray for national stability at a time when matters seem to be descending into chaos.

In crafting the blessing, I tried to avoid boilerplate language or platitudes. It is important to me that the wording represent my true inner yearnings for America and the work of Congress. The House welcomes a clergyman onto the floor because the members want a sincere prayer uttered by a person of the cloth – it is not a moment to offer a secular political statement. For those who did not have the opportunity to watch the proceedings on CSPAN, you can read the text below.

Best wishes, Rabbi Evan Hoffman

Almighty God, bless the work of the United States House of Representatives. Fortify our legislators' constitutional commitments and grant them the wisdom to draft laws that serve the best interests of the American people. O Lord, in a time of polarization and rancorous dispute, we beseech Thee to help our elected officials maintain decorum, civility, commonality of purpose, and a sense of shared American destiny. Heavenly Father, guide our representatives so that they might serve, in the eyes of the citizenry, as role models of reconciliation and cooperation. We pray that in a future time the prophet's words might be said in reference to this Congress: "Restore Your judges as in days of old, Your counselors as at the beginning." Bless our nation with peace and prosperity, our citizens with health and happiness, and our national institutions with strength and stability. May this be Your will. Let us say: Amen!

 Delivered on October 29, 2019 on the floor of the United States House of Representatives by Rabbi Evan Hoffman.



We Welcome Sponsorships for the Rabbi's Weekly **Thoughts on the Parashah** in honor or in memory of a loved one.



Dear Members and Friends,

I hope the spirit of the High Holidays and Sukkot remain with you as we enter the winter season. I want to thank those of you who worked to make the Holidays special — from the Chazonim, especially Nati Schreiber, to Rabbi Kracko, the Sisterhood, the Board, the Rabbi and members who pitched in for various tasks. Anshe Sholom works because we all work for it.

This year our community in South New Rochelle will be participating in the O.U. Community Fair which will take place on the Thursday before Thanksgiving in NYC. This is an opportunity for communities that are less well known and/or looking to grow to "exhibit" and highlight what they have to offer. Hundreds of people looking for a place to relocate or start a family will attend the fair. I want to thank Alan Penn and Sarah Schreiber for their hard work in preparing for this event.

Thanksgiving is coming up and I would like to share my gratitude to our wonderful community here at Anshe Sholom. One of the special things about our community is how everyone is needed and appreciated. The shul needs every one of you. We need volunteers: for the office, to help run events, to recruit new members. This year's Chanukah party has not yet been planned or scheduled. Please let us know how you can help.

The fatal attacks last year on two shuls in the US brought the need for security improvements into focus. We just passed the one-year mark after the Pittsburgh attack which led us to install coded locks on the front and back doors, upgrade the alarm system and install bulletproof glass on vulnerable openings to improve security for our congregants. While we hope to have no further bad news, I hope the steps we have taken have improved your sense of safety.

The past year we have seen people approach us to learn about the community. With the exposure from the community fair, the network of all our new members as well as increase in nearby housing, we look forward to continued growth. Several local new residents unexpectedly came to Shul for Yom Kippur after moving in nearby. Please bring us any ideas you have or connections that may allow us to keep getting the word out about our warm and growing community.

> Wishing everyone a year of health and happiness. Sincerely, Marc Bessler



Did you know that your very own Rabbi Evan Hoffman (along with 29 other Rabbis) will be teaching a class at the upcoming **Night of Jewish Learning** & Celebration?

The event will be held on Saturday Night, **November 23rd** at Beth El Synagogue Center in New Rochelle. **Registration will start at 7p.m. Classes begin at 7:15pm**

This event is an opportunity for the Jewish community of Westchester to gather together for a little learning and a lot of fun. **The Night of Jewish Learning and Celebration** will offer 30 courses with diverse topics sure to interest everyone. After two sessions of teaching, we will join as a community for a bonus third session of learning.

You can register in advance by going to the Westchester Jewish Council website: **www.wjcouncil.org.** The price will go from \$20 to \$25 after November 8th.

> We hope you can join us! Donna Bartell, Program Director





Dear Friends,

We were thrilled to once again host the Sukkot Dinner in the Myerson Sukkah with over forty people!

I want to thank everyone who helped make this celebration in our beautifully decorated Sukkah possible:

Honey Neier, AnnBeth Cohen and Joel Givertz, David Bernfeld, Ellen and Elliot Kracko, Lee Katz, Laurie Kracko, Flori and Artie Kajtazi, and all the families who made Sukkah decorations: the Berkowitzs, the Grimaldis, the Levys, the Leidermans and the Panitch family. The children's handiwork added a lovely sparkle. See photos of them hard at work on page 5. We must thank Bryan Herstic for his famously fabulous potato kugels. And most importantly, we thank Flori for her incredibly hard work on our dinner, and over the entire nine days of festivities. We should always thank Flori by busing our tables, disposing of our plates and utensils before we leave a Kiddush or seudah shleesheet.

We are now looking forward to Chanukah, and later on, Purim. Sisterhood will be working on more fun and engaging events in the next few months, and invite your suggestions.

Our next scheduled meeting will be Thursday, November 7, at 1:30pm in the library. Hope to see you there!



SUNSHINE CARDS

To Amichai Levy, Thank you for setting up the computer for our program of September 15th. We couldn't have done it without you! from: The Anshe Sholom Sisterhood

To Sara Schreiber, Many thanks for your help, from: Edite Vieira.

To the Levy Family, Mazal Tov on your beautiful new baby girl, Dahlia Blanche! from: The Anshe Sholom Sisterhood and Joanne Wiesner-Steiner

To Joel Givertz, Wishing you a Refuah Shleimah on your recent surgery, from: The Anshe Sholom Sisterhood and Joanne Wiesner-Steiner To Sue Merims, Glad to hear you're on the road to recovery, from: Honey & Sol Neier To Tom Grimaldi, Thank you for visiting me with your shofar on Rosh HaShana, from: Gnesha Ozick

To Tatyana Tchaikovskaya & Eugeny Rubashevsky, Mazel Tov on becoming grandparents for the sixth time! from: Gnesha Ozick

MEMORIAL CARDS

In memory of Evelyn Breslaw, May her memory be for a blessing, from: Janet and Gary Waller In Memory of Laura Rothman, from: Sisterhood In Memory of Simi Applebaum, from: Sisterhood In Memory of Vivian Mittleman, from: Gnesha Ozick In Memory of Laura Rothman, from: Gnesha Ozick



I would like to thank Rabbi Hoffman, and all my Anshe Sholom family, for your kindness and sympathy to me, during my mourning for my sister. Your chesed was greatly appreciated and comforting. Thank you. — **Joanne Wiesner-Steiner**



Anshe Sholom gets the dividend!

Call Ruth Grayson, 914-632-4555, or the office, 914-632-9220. MOADIM L'SIMCHA ... SOME

Octoone

CELEBRATION AT ANSHE SHOLOM





כל הכבוד ותודה רבה!

Kol HaKavod and Thank you to our Sisterhood for all its hard work and loving care to keep our shul's annual Sukkot Communal dinner such a heimishe and hearwarming tradition.

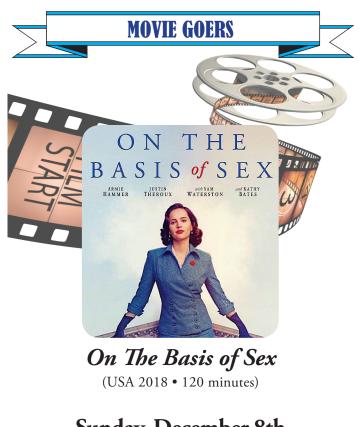
— Congregation Anshe Sholom



AND ... Another wonderful Sisterhood sponsored lecture:

"The Italian Moses and the Jews of San Nicandro"

(Left to right: Helen Siegel, Prof. Joseph Spedaliere, and Joanne Wiesner-Steiner)



Sunday, December 8th at 3:00 PM

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a struggling Harvard Law student and new mother who faced adversity and numerous obstacles in her fight for equal rights. When Ruth took on a groundbreaking tax case with her husband, attorney Martin Ginsburg, she knew it could change the direction of her career and the way the courts view gender discrimination. Her story made history.

Suggested donation: \$5.00. Light refreshments will be served.



NEW DATE... Wednesday, November 20th 2:00 PM

Come "Hear All About It!"

Tom Geoffino Director of the New Rochelle Public Library

will talk about things you probably don't realize are offered, <u>free</u>, for all age groups!

It's Not Just Books

Join us, you'll be very glad you did! You'll learn some fascinating information



Refreshments will be served <u>Please</u> call the office if you're coming (914) 632-9220

All are Welcome 🛹 \$5 Donation



Our Anshe Sholom office is looking for volunteers. Please call if you are able to help. 914-632-9220





In Memory Of ...

James Levi, from: Morris and Sandra Schoeneman. Evelyn Breslaw, from: Randi Weingarten

Mr. Rutt, from: Shoshana Fayon

Selma (Simi) Applebaum, beloved mother of Glen Applebaum, from: The Anshe Sholom Board of Directors, Herb & Marion Cohen, Ruth Grayson, Earl & Francine Kabnick, Constance Levi, Charlotte & Jerry Lovich, Cheryl & Jerry Millman, Honey & Sol Neier, and Janet & Gary Waller.

Arlene, sister of Martin Boxer, from: Charlotte & Jerry Lovich.

Laura Rothman, beloved mother of Ari and Rabbi Jonathan Rothman, from: Joan & Leon Ashner, Herb & Marion Cohen, Charlotte & Jerry Lovich, Cheryl & Jerry Millman, Bobby Mehler, Janet & Gary Waller.

Vivian Mittleman, beloved sister of Joanne Wiesner-Steiner, from: Joan & Leon Ashner, Gertrude Goldstein, and Janet & Gary Waller.

In Honor Of ...

To Frimet & Bryan Herstic, grandparents for the 4th time, from: Gnesha Ozick.

Brooke & Joshua Katz, Mazal Tov on your new baby girl! from: Gnesha Ozick.

Fany & Shlomo Dubi, in appreciation for all you do,from: Yosef & Chana Peysin.

Mazal Tov to Amichai Levy and Channa Gila Ovitz, and Zev Levy, on the birth of Dahlia Blanche, from: Fany & Shlomo Dubi.

Mazal Tov to Elihu Massel & Estelle Marshak on new granddaughter Madoline Isabel, from: Janet & Gary Waller.

Mazal Tov to Eugeny Rubashevsky & Tatyana Tchaikovskaya on new granddaughter Kayla Michal, from: Fany & Shlomo Dubi

Nati Schreiber on your beautiful Yom Tov davening, from: Fany & Shlomo Dubi.

Rabbi Evan & Sari Hoffman, for their kindness,from: Constance Levi.

Refuah Shlei'mah — Get Well

To Cheryl Millman, from: Charlotte & Jerry Lovich
To Sherman Pessin, from: Fany & Shlomo Dubi.
To Joel Givertz, from: Fany & Shlomo Dubi.
To Michael Reich, from: Fany & Shlomo Dubi.



Eyes wide open, on the path of Torah

There is a parable of a man who was walking down the road, when a blind man with a cane passed by. The man who was blessed with full health in all areas, wondered to himself what it would be like to be blind. He decided to try and find out by closing his eyes and walking down the street, to get the "experience".

He hadn't gone far when he walked straight into a wall, received a major blow to the head and lay sprawled out on the sidewalk. Can anyone feel pity for a person who does something so foolish?

We have been blessed by God with wisdom and understanding. We are all aware that we must walk in the path of the Torah. Despite this, we close our eyes and harm ourselves with our actions, even though we know that, in the end, we will come to regret it.

Surely, if we know that in the end we will regret it, it only makes sense that we keep our eyes open and walk in the safest Torah path.

Please let your family, friends and colleagues know about this important website. They can sign up to receive these daily messages at: http://www. atorahminute.com

> honor your loved ones by buying a plaque for a pew seat in the shul \$360 per seat



In the American Jewish community, the lighting of Hanukah candles is one of the most widely practiced religious rituals. Even among Jews who are thoroughly acculturated and nearly completely assimilated, Hanukah represents a last tenuous connection to their ethno-religious heritage. By lighting the number of candles corresponding to that particular night of Hanukah, the peripheral Jew observes the mitzvah in optimal fashion. A Jew whose life is nearly devoid of Judaic content rises to the level of מהדרין מן המהדרין מן

This sociological reality did not always obtain; it is a relatively recent phenomenon. The historical, legendary, and theological underpinnings of Hanukah all militate against the contemporary reality. How, then, did it evolve?

Scholars debate why Antiochus IV Epiphanes persecuted the Jews. The intellectual difficulty is that polytheistic kings were typically quite tolerant of the diverse religious sects existing within their borders. The overwhelming percentage of Persian, Macedonian, Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Roman overlords, even if they had political squabbles with the Jewish nation, were content to leave Judaism (the religion) untouched.

Elias Bickerman theorized that Antiochus, acting on the requests of Jewish Hellenizers, merely abrogated the Seleucid statute declaring Mosaic Law to be temporally binding in Judea. In this view, it was the renegade Jews who took matters much further by banning positive Judaic observances, coercing violations of Torah, destroying scrolls of the Law, and defiling the Holy Temple by introducing the worship of pagan deities. Bickerman adduced support for his view from a passage in Josephus concerning the fate of Menelaus, the Hellenistic Jew who bribed his way into the High Priesthood. "Lysias advised the king (Antiochus V) to slay Menelaus, if he would have the Jews be quiet, and cause him no further disturbance, for this man was the origin of all the mischief the Jews had done them, by persuading his father to compel the Jews to leave the religion of their fathers (Antiquities 12, 9, 7)." Additional support might be found in Scripture. "Having done his pleasure, he will then attend to those who forsake thy holy covenant (Daniel 11:30)." One can read the Al Ha-Nissim prayer, too, as depicting a clash between traditional and assimilated Jews, "You delivered the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the wanton into the hands of the diligent students of Your Torah." Interpreted thusly, Hanukah recalls a civil war between the orthodox and the heterodox, with the former triumphantly celebrating the demise of the latter. Such a holiday would seem to appeal only to fundamentalists and would be anathema to assimilated Jews.

Bickerman's theory has been largely debunked by more recent scholarship. The Jewish Hellenists were only superficially Hellenized. They wished to do away with the more "barbaric" elements of Judaism but not the entirety of the religion. Even the corrupt High Priests Jason and Menelaus had no desire thoroughly to eradicate Judaism. Quite the contrary. When the anti-Judaic decrees were rescinded, the government sent Menelaus to ease the fears of the people concerning the future practice of their faith (II Maccabees 11:32). This would make no sense if Menelaus himself had been an instigator of religious persecution. Even the Hellenized Jews were dealt a punishing blow by the Seleucids (II Maccabees 4:16), further indicating that the struggle was between Jews and heathens, not between pious and impious Jews. Most importantly, the received historical tradition has always ascribed the ban on Jewish practice to gentile overlords.

Nonetheless, it may be difficult for a nonobservant Jew to identify with the legendary tales of self-sacrifice associated with Hanukah. Can someone who pays no regard to the dietary laws appreciate the martyrdom of those who stubbornly refused to defile themselves by consuming swine flesh? Can someone who makes no place in his life for the Sabbath truly understand the ultimate spiritual commitment made by those pietists who gave up their lives rather than engage the enemy in battle on the sacred day of rest?

In the early modern period, those Jews animated by the Reformist trend (and certainly, also, lethargic and indifferent Jews) in large part ignored Hanukah. The Festival of Lights is either a celebration of 1) Jewish militarism and the restoration of national sovereignty in the homeland, or 2) the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple and the renewal of the sacrificial cult. Both concepts were distasteful to Jews striving for political emancipation and desperately trying to prove their loyalty to their respective European countries of residence. In divesting Judaism of its national and primitive features, progressive theologians rejected Jewish militarism, a restored national polity, and the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple as a place of animal sacrifice. Attacks on Judaism, especially in Protestant countries, emphasized the idea that rabbinic Judaism is a corruption of the religion described in the Hebrew Bible. One line of defense for accultured Jews who were sensitive to these criticisms was to distance themselves from Talmudism and stress the Mosaic character of their faith. In doing so, they left no room for post-Mosaic rituals — especially not Hanukah, which is entirely post-biblical. The Reformed Society of Israelites in Charleston, South Carolina — famously the first Reform congregation in America — had no liturgy for Hanukah.

The West London Synagogue of British Jews, the original Reform congregation in England, founded in 1841, was led by David Woolf Marks. His theology can be labeled neo-Karaite. Yet, curiously, he did not object entirely to the observance of Hanukah. He merely refused to accompany the lighting of the Hanukah candles with the recitation of "Blessed are You, the Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the Hanukah light." He rejected the blessing on the grounds that it states a falsehood. Lighting Hanukah candles may be a legitimate Judaic practice, but it was not commanded by God. Similarly, his prayer book omits the blessing over the reading of the Megillah on Purim and the blessing over the recitation of the Hallel, both post-Mosaic institutions. [The Talmud, too, questions the wording of the blessing on Hanukah candles and, implicitly, the blessings recited over all rabbinic enactments (Shabbat 23a). Rav Avya justified the blessing by citing the verse "You must not deviate from the verdict that they announce to you either to the right or to the left (Deuteronomy 17:11)." The obligation to adhere to the words of the sages effectively turns every rabbinic commandment into one indirectly commanded by God.]

While the early Reform theologians based their decisions to maintain or jettison Jewish holiday practices on the compatibility of those rituals with modern thinking and the zeitgeist, the lay leadership was less cerebral and more practical. At the 1871 Synod in Augsburg, a resolution was put forth encouraging the widespread observance of Hanukah as a bulwark against the then-popular syncretistic practice of Jews celebrating Christmas. In 1920s America, the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods sponsored Hanukah observances with the effect of revitalizing, for its denomination, what had been a largely forgotten holiday. The fact that Hanukah, in its true or original meaning, clashes with westernized, ritual-lite heterodoxy was of no concern to those who rehabilitated Hanukah. Either the holiday could be reinterpreted in a more palatable way or, more simply, not be interpreted at all. The ceremonials, stripped of any theological sophistication, could be retained as critically needed Jewish content to ward off the encroaching Christmas spirit.

It must be admitted that the widespread observance of lighting Hanukah candles, even if just, in effect, no more than an ethnic folkway, has value is keeping marginal Jews from straying even further. But that value is limited.

The Talmud questions why Hanukah was not abolished together with the other post-biblical half-holidays enumerated

in the Scroll of Fasts. Rav Yosef answered: Because Hanukah features a mitzvah act. Abaye then commented: Hanukah and its ritual act should both be abolished. Rav Yosef responded: Because the miracle is publicized (Rosh Hashanah 18b). In other words, religious commemorations only survive if they are embodied and given form by statutory ritual acts. But those ritual acts themselves do not deserve to become immutable unless they teach a valuable religious lesson. In the case of Hanukah, the candles remind us of the miraculous salvation wrought by God through the hands of pietists willing to sacrifice for faith.

As we light the candles together with our coreligionists of lesser Jewish attachment, let us do our best to elevate their experience from the level of ethnic folkway or non-Christmas to that of mitzvah.



The Sages taught: The basic mitzvah of Hanukah is each day to have a light kindled by a person, the head of the household, for himself and his household. And the *mehadrin*, i.e., those who are meticulous in the performance of mitzvot, kindle a light for each and every one in the household ... Beit Shammai say: On the first day one kindles eight lights and, from there on, gradually decreases the number of lights until, on the last day of Hanukah, he kindles one light. Beit Hillel say: On the first day one kindles one light, and from there on, gradually increases the number of lights until, on the last day, he kindles eight lights.

... (One *Amora* from *Eretz Yisrael* stated) the reason for Beit Shammai's opinion is that the number of lights corresponds to the bulls of the festival of *Sukkot*: Thirteen were sacrificed on the first day and each succeeding day one fewer was sacrificed (Numbers 29:12–31). And the reason for Beit Hillel's opinion is that the number of lights is based on the principle: "Ma'alin ba'kodesh, v'ayn moridim" (ONE ELEVATES TO A HIGHER LEVEL IN MATTERS OF SANCTITY AND ONE DOES NOT DOWNGRADE.) Therefore, if the objective is to have the number of lights correspond to the number of days, there is no alternative to increasing their number with the passing of each day.

(Talmud, Masechet Shabbat 21b/Sefaria.org)

NOVEMBER 2019 CHESHVAN/KISLEV 5780							
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
کی Daily Services NOVEMBER Sundays 8:00AM Mondays–Fridays 7:00AM Saturdays		NoTE: Daf Yomi class with Rabbi Hoffman takes place			1 3 Cheshvan	2 4 Cheshvan NOACH Shacharit 9:15 AM	
	5AM	לא ליגה שלי			Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 5:35 PM	Mincha 5:20 PM Havdalah 6:37 PM	
3 5 Cheshvan	4 6 Cheshvan Class W/R. Hoffman History 7:00PM Rabbinics 8:00PM	5 7 Cheshvan	6 8 Cheshvan Parshah Class W/R. Kracko 7:30PM	7 9 Cheshvan	8 10 Cheshvan	9 11 Cheshvan	
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17 19 Cheshvan	18 20 Cheshvan Class W/R. Hoffman History 7:00PM Rabbinics 8:00PM	19 21 Cheshvan	20 22 Cheshvan Parshah Class W/R. Kracko 7:30PM GOLDEN GROUP	21 23 Cheshvan	22 24 Cheshvan	23 25 Cheshvan CHAYEI SARAH NIGHT OF LEARNING & FUN 7 PM @ BETH EL	
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DECEMBER 2019 KISLEV/TEVET 5780							
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22 24 Kislev	23 25 Kislev	24 26 Kislev	25 27 Kislev	26 28 Kislev	27 29 Kislev 4:17 PM CHANUKAH	28 30 Tishrei	
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29 1 Tevet	30 2 Tevet Class W/R. Hoffman History 7:00PM Rabbinics 8:00PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	31 3 Tevet Shacharit 7:00 AM	מבת יאכל מהקנק מח שנת יאכל מהקנק מח שנורי ולג נאבן על מוק לש פיו השכה פניניה ול יותלה הש אורי את ולחרי לי	NOTE: Daf Yomi clas h Rabbi Hoff takes place und, Monday owing Shach	הלוכח יפיראי שמח שמח שמי של פיי החשר לא מצאי יאכ לא מצאי יאכ המעשרות מעוש Friday. של יפא שחורה מול שואל	ی Daily Services DECEMBER Sundays 8:00AM Mondays–Fridays 7:00AM Saturdays 9:15AM	

Congregation Anshe Sholom

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