

# Kol Sholom

BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN OF CONGREGATION ANSHE SHOLOM



**TU B'SHEVAT IS COMING!** 

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025

## VOICE OF PEACE - JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2

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# SAVE THESE DATES

Tu B'Shevat Happening ...... Feb. 8th Shabbat Across America ..... Mar. 7th-8th Erev Purim ...... Mar. 13th-14th Pesach ...... Apr. 12th-19th







Dear friends,

One of the challenges of being an observant Jew is making it home in time for Shabbat in the winter. In New Rochelle, December candle lighting can be as early as 4:09PM. Arriving promptly at the synagogue for Friday evening services is another great challenge. But having made it to shul, there is no rush to get home. There is no great urgency to start dinner at 5:15PM, and often the family is not yet ready to sit down for its Sabbath repast at such an early hour. These factors, combined with an unfortunate circumstance in which the heat was not working in the Main Sanctuary on a recent Friday night, have led me to institute the following changes to Friday night services:

(1) Mincha-Maariv will be held downstairs. Aside from the more reliable physical warmth of the Librett Chapel, it is an intimate environment that (for me, at least) fosters spiritual connectivity. The sound of prayer reverberates more noticeably in the smaller venue. And, given our usual attendance, the size of the room is certainly adequate.

(2) There will be a Dvar Torah delivered by a congregant each Friday night between Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv. I want to thank Ariel Sheleg for leading this initiative. I encourage people to sign up for an upcoming Parashah. The Dvar Torah can be given in English or Hebrew, whatever one's preference.

(3) There will be an increase in congregational singing during the Friday night service. The davening will take on a more leisurely pace and everyone in the room is strongly encouraged to add their voice to the sweet sound of prayer.

(4) Private conversation will be strictly forbidden. We need to improve on this point, and I believe that a change in venue and a focus on singing will steer us away from the bad habits of the past.

With the start of the new calendar year, some of you might have made a New Year's resolution to advance your Judaic knowledge (a resolution I annually encourage people to make on Simchat Torah, at the beginning of the Torah reading cycle). To the extent that I can be helpful in selecting books or plotting a course of study for you, please feel free to solicit my advice. I encourage you to join my classes. The daily Daf Yomi class is now studying Sanhedrin, having recently concluded Bava Batra. On Shabbat afternoon we learn Sefer Melachim (Book of Kings). Our biweekly Jewish History class focuses on the History of the Peace Process. The next lecture (January 7<sup>th</sup>) will cover the Camp David Accords.

Please help us maintain our morning minyan. We daven on Sundays at 8:00AM, and on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 7:00AM. Breakfast is served in the library on Fridays after the minyan. We have lost several of our regular attendees and are in need of reinforcements. People from outside the Anshe Sholom community have been kind enough to help us, but we need greater participation from our own congregants. Especially on Torah readings days, we need to achieve our goal of a consistent minyan. I thank those who have come through in the clutch.

## Best wishes, Rabbi Evan Hoffman



One of the highlights at Anshe Sholom is spending time together at the kiddush following Shabbat and holiday services. Our kiddush luncheons help us build the connections that make Anshe Sholom a warm and inviting congregation. In order to enhance our Shabbat joy and to maximize our schmoozing opportunities, we would like to provide enhanced kiddushes as frequently as possible, but this can only be done with your help.

By sponsoring a kiddush, you participate in supporting and fostering our sense of community. You may sponsor a kiddush in honor of someone, to remember someone, to celebrate a simcha – or, sponsor a kiddush together with a group of friends or family. You may choose to sponsor the entire kiddush for the shul, or you may help defray the kiddush costs by sponsoring part of a kiddush, or by simply making a donation. No amount is too small.

If you would like to contribute towards these special kiddushes, please contact: ASKIDDUSH@gmail.com





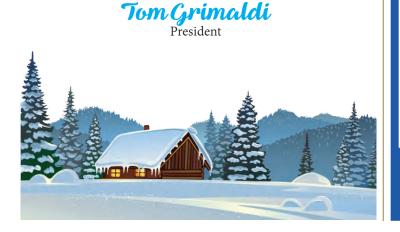
Dear Friends,

Another year has passed, and another year is at hand. I hope Chanukah was wonderful for all—The message of joy and celebration of our religious freedom is certainly worthy of acknowledgement. It is indeed a miracle that we have been able to perpetuate our tradition despite the existential challenges.

A very hearty 'Thank You' goes out to all who participated in our end-of-year fundraising. The response was excellent, and our goals were met. I would also like to thank those who have graciously sponsored our Kiddush luncheons at Shul, and there are always opportunities to do this in the months to come. Please contact Honey Neier or one of the Board members if you would like to sponsor a Kiddush luncheon. I have tremendous gratitude for all who contribute to the Congregation both financially and otherwise. When considering New Year's resolutions for 2025, it would be appropriate to include service to the Shul, such as minyan attendance, helping with one of our Shul functions, and/ or, of course, financial donations.

Coming up in February are several Shul activities. Superbowl LIX is Sunday, February 9. We are considering a Superbowl Party at Shul. February 13, 2025, is Tu B'Shvat—The New Year for trees. In early March, we are planning a Klezmer music event. Purim will be Thursday March 13 (fast of Esther followed by Megillah), and all-day Friday, March 14. Please, check the weekly announcements as the dates approach for additional details.

Finally, bundle up for the coldest months of the year, and warm up at Shul with some great Davening, Fellowship and Torah learning. See you there!





# SAVE THE DATE!

"More than Jews have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews." — Ahad Ha'am



# March 7th-8th, 2025

On one special night, tens of thousands of North American Jews will come together in spiritual unison with Jews across the continent and with thousands of years of tradition. This effort encourages Jews of all backgrounds to come together and celebrate what unifies us all: The Shabbat.

Join us in shul in support of this admirable annual outreach effort

A MESSAGE FROM SISTERHOOD



Hello dear friends,

It is a week before Hanukah, and I am composing my message to you using the microphone on my cell phone. I hope it finds you all well. Although winter is not my favorite season—to say the least— I'm looking forward to getting back home for more treatments. Thank God, I've been feeling well, and am grateful for everyone's calls, prayers, and good wishes.

With the darkness of the season and these times, I am particularly eager for Hanukah and the light it brings. We can use all the light we can get. Your calls, prayers, and visits mean so much to me, and I plan to stay right here, on the subject of bikkur cholim, visiting and extending aid to the sick. I now truly understand and appreciate why bikkur cholim is considered such an important mitzvah, especially while a person awaits a positive, hopeful change. The Rabbis in the Talmud teach that one who visits the sick removes a sixtieth of their suffering (Nedarim 40a). Words cannot capture my immense gratitude for the support and kindness I receive from our extraordinary Anshe Sholom community.

As we celebrate the Festival of Lights, may this Holiday be the harbinger of the sparks of joy that our world so dearly needs.

With wishes for a 2025 filled with besorot tovot, (good tidings),

Joanne Wiesner-Steiner Sisterhood Co-President







• Gap & Old Navy ... and many, many more! No extra charge to you! Great gift idea! Anshe Sholom gets the dividend!

Call Ruth Grayson, 914-632-4555, or the office, 914-632-9220.

# **ANSHE SHOLOM COMMUNAL SHABBAT DINNER**

On Thursday evening, December 12th, Meitav Feldman led a team that included Honey Neier, Tova Ovits, Yasmine Shabtai, Hadas Dadon, Danit Moran, and a few of their daughters. Together, they prepared a delicious Israeli dinner for the Community Shabbat Dinner scheduled for the following evening. The event brimmed with tremendous spirit and a sumptuous meal, both of which were thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.





2024/5785 DDD LOOKING BACK ... A TASTE OF CHANKAH AT ANSHE SHOLOM



















t the burning bush God commands Moses to return to Egypt and lead the redemption of the Israelites. Moses is not eager to undertake this heavy responsibility. He protests: "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 3:11)?" God is not dissuaded by this. Moses must offer specific reasons why he should be disqualified for the task. He then claims that he is unfit: "I am not a man of words, neither heretofore, nor since Thou has spoken unto Thy servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue (4:10)."

owever, the Torah had not previously indicated that Moses was in any way physically impaired. One could understand his comment, therefore, as a feeble attempt by Moses to evade undertaking the divine mission, and not one based on any real disability.

he Midrash says that this is how Moses developed his speech defect: As a young boy, growing up in Pharaoh's palace, Moses would regularly sit on Pharaoh's lap and place the royal crown on his own head. Instead of viewing this as innocent child's play, the royal advisors saw this as an ominous sign that Moses would, one day, try to wrest the monarchy from Pharaoh. Jethro suggested that Moses be tested. A bar of gold and a glowing coal would be brought before the lad. If he grabbed the gold it would be clear that the child knew what he was doing, and should be executed. If he grabbed the coal it would be clear that his intentions were harmless. Moses indeed reached for the gold -- but the angel Gabriel moved his hand to the coals. Moses then placed the coal in his mouth, burning himself, and causing a permanent speech defect (Exodus Rabbah 1).

nable to convince God that he is unsuited for the mission, Moses says, "Oh Lord, send, I beseech Thee, by the hand whom Thou will send (4:13)." Typically this verse is understood to mean, "Send anyone but me." he Midrash says that the encounter at the burning bush was not a short conversation. It lasted a week (Tanhuma Leviticus 4). God reacted angrily to Moses' continued obstinacy and, in effect, insubordination. As punishment for that stubbornness, Moses lost the opportunity to serve as high priest. Aaron, his brother and, of course, a Levite, will be the Kohen Gadol and don the priestly vestments (Zevahim 102a).

nsubordination, stubbornness, obstinacy — well, most often those words are replaced by "humility." In extolling Moses' virtues, the Bible says, in a very famous verse: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth (Numbers 12: 3)." Rabbinic philosophy values humility above all other character traits (Avodah Zarah 20b). Someone who has achieved perfection in all other facets of his character, but lacks humility, is considered sorely lacking (Kallah Rabbati 3).

ut the Bible shows us that being a reluctant prophet is not a virtue. Moses was not the only such example. The prophet Jonah attempted to evade undertaking the divine mission that he had been told -- not asked -- to do. He attempted to escape to Tashish, but learned soon enough that God was everywhere, including the high seas (Jonah 1:3). Isaiah was initially hesitant about assuming the prophet's mantle because he was a man of impure lips שפתיים. Only after purification through fire in the angelic court did he consent to do the job (Isaiah 6:5). Jeremiah, too, initially declined the prophetic calling, telling God that he was too young and inexperienced in public speaking down too keen on being the bearer of bad tidings (1:8).

ne may consider the act of resisting God's call to public service as demonstrating a lack of arrogance and the absence of any lust for power. But it also can be viewed as cowardice and the failure to follow orders (given not by a mere drill sergeant, but by the Supreme Commander). he Bible lauds Moses for his humility when he is slandered by his sister, Miriam. Moses not only abstained from seeking revenge, but he prayed for Miriam's speedy recovery after God punished her for that slander. (Number 12:13). As the Talmud puts it: Great are those who suffer insults but do not insult in response, or who hear their disgrace but do not reply (Shabbat 88b).

ut it is in another respect that Moses stands out when compared to other reluctant Jewish prophets.

hough one may, initially, be hesitant to assume power, one's natural tendency thereafter is firmly to hold onto it – even if doing so means abandoning all moral scruples and committing heinous atrocities. A mild formulation of this concept is attributed to Judah ben Tabbai, one of the two Pharisaic leaders in the early decades of the first century BCE: "If someone had told me before I achieved greatness that I would succeed, I would have become his enemy for life. Now that I have attained greatness, if someone were to tell me that I might lose it, I would be prepared to pour boiling water on him (Avot d'Rabbi Natan 10)." Judah's firm grip on power is understandable; during his tenure, the Pharisees went from being a persecuted minority faction to respected members of the Judean government and judiciary.

harisaic thinking was always opposed to lordliness שנא את harisaic thinking was always opposed to lordliness (Avot 1:10). The sages recognized that the rigors of holding a leadership position hasten one's death (Yoma 86b). Still, those who have tasted power and become intoxicated by it do not rush to give it up. [A modern analogue is the U.S. Presidency: It is transparent that holding that office ages the occupant, yet people seek to achieve the office and, having achieved it, to extend their tenure in it.]

vot d'Rabbi Natan refers to the first Israelite king, Saul. When Samuel wished to anoint him as king, Saul hid in the baggage compartment (I Samuel 10:22). Nevertheless, years later, when Saul felt threatened by David's immense popularity, he tried to kill him.

oses never became a dictator obsessed with his own political survival. Throughout his tenure, Moses cared only for the wellbeing of his people. He was willing to be erased from the Bible and forfeit any legacy if God would not forgive the Israelites for the sin of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32:32). When Joshua suggested that Eldad and Medad be arrested for seditious prophecies, Moses responded, "Would that all of the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them (Number 11:29)." Moses was not jealous of others, nor would he stoop to brutish tactics in order to preserve power. When God told him that it was his time to die, Moses' primary concern was the appointment of an able leader to succeed him (29:16).

oses, the "Man of the Lord," was a rarity. He ultimately accepted God's mission at the burning bush and faithfully carried out his responsibilities for the next forty years. Unfortunately, we are witness that too many of today's leaders, arrogant and full of bravado, identify the best interests of their people with the survival of their own regimes – when, much of the time, the opposite is true.

n Shemoneh Esrei, we pray, three times daily, for God to "Restore our judges as in earliest times and our counselors as at first." As is the case with all of the language of that magisterial tefillah, this is profound.



STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS

# JANUARY 2025 TEVET/SHEVAT 5785

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	Yochai 7:30PM	R. Hoffman 8:15 PM	R. Kracko 7:00PM	R. Hoffman 8:15PM	ASARA B'TEVET Fast Begins: 6:07 Am Fast Ends: 5:17 Pm	
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26   26 Tevet	27   27 Tevet	28   28 Tevet	29   29 Tevet	30   1 Shevat	31   2 Shevat	Ľ
	Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM		R. Kracko 7:00PM	ROSH CHODESH A Talmud Class W/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM	4:54 PM	Daily Services JANUARY Sundays 8:00 AM Mondays–Fridays 7:00 AM
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# FEBRUARY 2025 TEVET/SHEVAT 5785

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Mondays–Fridays 7:00 AM Saturdays 9:15 AM		DAF YOMI via ZOOM Sundays – Friday 10:30 AM				Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 4:50 PM Havdalah 5:58 PM
2   4 Shevat	3   5 Shevat	4   6 Shevat	5   7 Shevat	6   8 Shevat	7   9 Shevat	8   10 Shevat
	Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM	ræ History Class w∕ R. Hoffman 8:15 PM	Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM	₩ Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM	5:02 PM	BESHALLACH SHABBAT SHIRA Tu B'Shevat Celebration 7PM
Shacharit 8:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM Mincha 5:05 PM	Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 4:55 PM Havdalah 6:06 PM
9   11 Shevat	10   12 Shevat	$11\mid$ 13 Shevat	$12 \mid$ 14 Shevat	$13\mid$ 15 Shevat	14   16 Shevat	15  17 Shevat
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Shacharit 8:00 AM	Shacharit 8:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM Mincha 5:20 PM	Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 5:10 PM Havdalah 6:23 PM
23   25 Shevat	24   26 Shevat	25   27 Shevat	26   28 Shevat	27   29 Shevat	28   30 Shevat	
	Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM		Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM	Talmud Class w∕ R. Hoffman 8:15PM	5:27 PM Rosh Chodesh	
Shacharit 8:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM	Shacharit 7:00 AM Mincha 5:30 PM	

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