



Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS
NEWSLETTER
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

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Parshat Vayetztei

Volume: 17, Issue: 17 | December 9-10, 2016

Kislev 10, 5777

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Shabbat Times



Friday, December 9	
Candle Lighting:	4:10 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:15 PM
Shabbat, December 10	
Shacharit:	8:45 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:30 AM
Mincha /	
Shalosh Seudot:	3:50 PM
Shkiya:	4:28 PM
Maariv:	5:09 PM
Shabbat Ends:	5:14 PM
Next Friday, December 16	
Candle Lighting:	4:12 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:15 PM

❖ Mazel tov to no one because nothing exciting happened!

2016-2017 Membership

Membership for the 2016-2017 year is now open. Thank you to all the members who have already signed up! For more information (including how to sign up and dues), visit www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com/membership.html.

Weather Report

Friday night: Clear, 26°  Shabbos day: Partly Cloudy, 38°/27° 

Women's Brunch & Shiur - THIS SUNDAY! - All women in the community are invited to a special brunch and shiur with Yoetzet Halacha Shoshana Samuels! The shiur will be on **למה ללול ולהלל** What Are We Singing About? A Closer Look at Ma'oz Tzur. This Sunday, December 11th at 9:45 am at the home of Sarit and Jared Anstandig (1390 Hill Street apt 3B). There will be time for Q & A after the shiur.

Men's Shiur - Wednesday 12/14 - Men's shiur with Rabbi Chaim Marcus at Rena and Dov Winston.

After Davening Shiur - Dec. 17 - All are invited to a shiur given by Leora Weitzen after musaf next week, Dec. 17th. Leora received her Masters at Azrieli Graduate School for Jewish Education and is currently working at Yeshivat Noam as a third grade judaic Studies teacher. More details to follow.

Welcoming Committee - If you would like to be part of the Welcoming Committee, please reach out to the board. If you are not interested, surprise yourself and become interested.

Mystery Shabbos 2017 will be happening in January! We are looking for a few volunteers to help us put it together. If you are interested, please reach out to the board. If you are not interested, look inward, find yourself, and ask why not?

Chanukah Toy Drive Ahavat Shalom is once again participating in **The 24th Annual Bergen County Chanukah Toy Drive**. We are collecting new and unwrapped toys and gifts for children and young adults going through trying times. Please drop off your donations at the following locations from now until **Dec. 17th**:

- The Blooms - 17 Westgate Road Apt E
- The Daitchs - 1504 Terrace Circle Apt 5
- The Ravens - 33 West Englewood Flr 1
- The Steinigs - 78 Walraven Drive Apt 2A

The Bergen County Toy Drive is a great collaborative effort across many Bergen County Jewish Schools, Synagogues and Temples and donates to 18 different charity organizations. Your donations will help us share the excitement of Chanukah with thousands of children and young adults.

PARTNERS IN SHIDDUCHIM INVITES SINGLES 25+ TO HELP PACK AND ORGANIZE TO BENEFIT TOMCHEI SHABBOS OF BERGEN COUNTY. HELP 200 NEEDY CHILDREN. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 7-9 PM. RESERVATIONS TO JOIN REQUIRED. RSVP by Tuesday, December 13th @ INFO@PARTNERSINSHIDDUCHIM.COM OR CONTACT BAILA YANIV AT [845.304.1207](tel:845.304.1207)

Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here for Shabbos on: 12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31. He can be reached via email at rabbihalpert@verizon.net, or phone in the evenings at 201-836-3828. In the event of an emergency, Rabbi Halpert can also be reached at 212-909-6951.

Yeshivat Noam Youth Groups

Groups for children ages 2-3 are located in the room across the Shul from 9:30am - 10:45am. 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.

Welcoming Committee

If you or anyone you know has moved in recently, let us know! Check out ahavatshalomteaneck.com/movingin for more information.

Welcome to Ahavat Shalom

Households: 86
(Adults: 169, Kids: 50)

Congregation Ahavat Shalom Board Members 2016-2017

President: Jason Shor **Vice Presidents:** Jason Bloom | Alex Daitch | Moty Raven | Binny Steinig **Secretary:** Liron Gamzesh **Treasurer:** Jason Felder

Sisterhood: Sarit Anstandig | Tali Wigod **Gabbaim:** Sam Lightstone | Ezra Blain | Shua Joseph | Dani Weinberger

We welcome your input! Please send your newsletter announcements by Wednesday.

board@teaneckapartments.com | president@teaneckapartments.com | rabbihalpert@verizon.net



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A Desire to Go Higher

Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg

"Vayifga bamakom...vayishkav bamakom hahu - and he encountered the place...and he slept in that place (Vayeitzei 28:11)" The word vayifga sounds like Yaakov Avinu unexpectedly arrived at the place. Chazal explain (Chullin 91a) that this indicates that the earth contracted for him - kaftza lo ha'aretz. When Yaakov arrived in Charan, he said to himself, "Could it be that I passed a place where my forefathers davened, and I didn't daven there?" He set his mind to return, and the earth contracted and brought Har Hamoriyah to him.

If Hashem wanted Yaakov to daven at the makom hamikdash, why didn't He stop him there on his way to Charan? Rashi answers that since Yaakov didn't have the desire in his heart to daven when he passed the makom hamikdash, Hashem didn't stop him. Only after he set his mind to return to the place, and he traveled to Beis Eil, did the earth contract on his behalf.

This shows the power of a heartfelt desire. When a person demonstrates a genuine desire for spiritual achievement, and he puts in effort to try to attain his goal, Hashem gives him the siyata dishmaya he needs to complete the task. And Hashem is even willing to "move mountains" - to give the person extra strength and resources - to be able to achieve his goal.

The Ramban takes Rashi's idea one step further. He points out that from the words of the Gemara (both in Chullin 91a and Sanhedrin 95a) it would seem that Yaakov did not even return to Beis Eil. But rather, the moment he felt a desire in his heart to return to Har Hamoriyah, the earth contracted and brought the mountain to him. This shows that just having the desire for spiritual growth can bring divine assistance even before a person actually invests any effort in the process.

The importance of desire and effort is alluded to in the end of the pasuk as well. Rashi quotes from the Midrash that the phrase "and he slept in that place" implies that Yaakov slept only there, but for the previous fourteen years he didn't sleep because he was busy learning Torah in the yeshiva of Sheim and Eiver.

This statement of Chazal cannot be taken literally because the Gemara (Shavuos 25a) says that if a person swears that he will not sleep for three days, we immediately give him malkus for taking a sh'vuas shav (an unnecessary oath) because it is impossible for a person to go for more than three days without sleeping. What Chazal probably meant is that Yaakov Avinu didn't sleep in a bed for fourteen years. He didn't have a good night's sleep. He simply dozed off when he felt tired. But that still seems like an incredible feat. How was Yaakov able to go for fourteen years without sleeping normally?

Reb Chaim Shmulevitz (Sichos Mussar #32) explains that this shows the importance of willpower. When a person has a desire to accomplish something, he sometimes can discover hidden strengths and abilities that he never thought he had. Yaakov Avinu knew that how he spent his years in yeshiva would determine the kind of person he would become. So he pushed himself to his limits, and he discovered wellsprings of energy that he never knew he had. That is why he was able to forge ahead, learning Torah for fourteen years without a deep, comfortable sleep.

But perhaps there might be another explanation for Yaakov Avinu's superhuman ability. Since Yaakov had a genuine desire to learn Torah and he invested effort in the process, Hashem gave him extra siyata dishmaya. He gave him additional strength, beyond his natural abilities, to enable him to accomplish his dream. Chazal say, "Haba l'taheir, m'sayin oso - one who comes to purify himself receives divine assistance. (Shabbos 104a)" Hashem is ready to help those who truly desire to accomplish spiritually. But the prerequisite for receiving that gift is that a person must be a ba l'taheir. He has to take the first step, like Yaakov Avinu, to show that he has the desire to achieve and that he is willing to put in effort to accomplish his goal.



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