



Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS NEWSLETTER
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

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Parshat Vayishlach

Volume: 17, Issue: 18 | December 16-17, 2016

Kislev 17, 5777

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Shabbat Times



Friday, December 16	
Candle Lighting:	4:12 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:15 PM
Shabbat, December 17	
Shacharit:	8:45 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:34 AM
Mincha / Shalosh Seudot:	3:50 PM
Shkiya:	4:30 PM
Maariv:	5:11 PM
Shabbat Ends:	5:16 PM
Next Friday, December 23	
Candle Lighting:	4:15 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	4:20 PM

- ❖ All are invited to a shiur given by Leora Weitzen after musaf. 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! The shiur will take place in the room across from the lunchroom.
- ❖ **Welcome** to Steven Lowinger and Dov Winston to the Gabbai team! If you would like to volunteer for the shul, do not hesitate to reach out to the board!

2016-2017 Membership

Membership for the 2016-2017 year is **still** open. For more information (including how to sign up and dues), visit www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com/membership.html. If you have already paid but don't receive emails, please reach out to the board.

Weather Report

Friday night: Snow Showers, 24° Shabbos day: Rain/Snow, 43°/42°

Men's Shiur - Men's shiur is ON. Rabbi Jay Schwartz will be giving the shiur on December 21st from 9:00pm - 9:45pm at the home of the Joyandeh's. If you have any questions don't ask me, ask Shua Joseph.

Welcoming Committee - If you would like to be part of the Welcoming Committee, please reach out to the board. If you are not interested, look into your heart with a positive mind, leave the bad things behind.

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? Moty, if you are reading this, you do not have to include this portion in your announcements.

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.

Put on your yarmulke, Here comes Chanukah! Join Congregation Ahavat Achim on the first night of Chanuka, Motzei Shabbat, December 24th @ 7:30pm for a Chanuka concert featuring YU's acappella group, the Ystuds- makes a great date night or family outing. Special pricing for the Teaneck apartments \$5/adult and \$3/child. www.ahavatachim.org/event/yapts or email rabbishestack@gmail.com

Yeshivat Noam invites the community to a shiur for adults THIS Tuesday morning - December 20, at 9:15 am in the YN Middle School Beit Knesset. Dr. Michelle Sarna, school psychologist, will speak about Staging a Spiritual Life: How to Embrace Change and Stay Inspired. This shiur is free of charge and is open to the entire community, so bring your friends! Brought to you by the Yeshivat Noam Parent Education Committee. For questions or more information, please email psp@yeshivatnoam.org

Join **RYNJ** for magical "Mommy and Me" classes with Morah Mali and Morah Deena. You and your children, ages 0-3, are invited for exciting music and movement classes, free of charge. Bring friends, meet new ones and share a wonderful hour with your child on January 8th and 15th and February 5th and 12th from 9:30 to 10:30 at the RYNJ ECD. Please visit RYNJ.org to register or contact Tamar Kahn, Director of Admissions, at

Congregation Ahavat Shalom Board Members 2016-2017

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

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

Welcome to Ahavat Shalom

Households: 87
(Adults: 171, Kids: 51)



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On the Torah's Attitude Toward War and Justified Self-Defense

Rabbi Yakov Haber

"Vayira Yaakov m'od vayeitzer lo - And Yaakov was intensely afraid and was distressed" (VaYishlach 32:7). Commenting on the seeming redundancy of the verse, Rashi quotes from the Midrash: "vayira" - lest he be killed; "vayeitzer lo" - lest he kill others. At first glance, the second concern is difficult. Since Eisav and his men were presumably coming to kill Yaakov, he would be allowed and even required to defend himself even using deadly force. Why would this "distress him"? Many commentaries on Rashi deal with this question. Mizrahi explains that concerning Eisav, Yaakov's was worried that if he killed him, Yitzchak, having been deceived as to Eisav's true nature, would curse Yaakov thinking that Yaakov had killed an innocent man. Regarding Eisav's men, Mizrahi suggests that Yaakov was concerned that he would be required to use non-deadly force (echad mei'eivarav) to defend his family if possible as mandated by the Torah and, in the heat of battle, would kill them instead.[1]

Gur Aryeh presents the possibility that Yaakov was concerned that Eisav's men were forced to join Eisav and were not intent on harming Yaakov. However, since this was unknown to Yaakov, he would have to utilize deadly force against them to protect himself. In response as to why this was a cause of distress since Yaakov would have the right to assume they were attempting to kill him, Maharal compares it to an unknowing sin, a cheit beshogeg. This approach appears to be difficult since if Yaakov would have a right to assume that they came to harm him, he would be totally justified in eliminating the threat. Why should this be considered a cheit beshogeg? Rav Yehoshua Hartman in his footnotes to Gur Aryeh explains that concerning killing, the resultant taking of an innocent life even if done in accordance with halachic directives still requires kappara.[3]

Nachalas Yaakov offers a third approach. The Gemara (Berachos 7a) quotes the verse in Mishlei (17:26) "Gam anosh latzadik lo tov" which it interprets to mean that punishing is not ideal for a righteous one to do. Here too, Yaakov, even if justified in defending himself from Eisav, did not wish to have to do so.

Apparently Mizrahi and Gur Aryeh who do not offer Nachalas Yaakov's approach do not view the act of killing the wicked in self-defense as being in any way objectionable. Perhaps this debate is reflected in the debate between R' Eliezer and the Chachamim concerning whether weaponry is considered an ornament with respect to carrying on Shabbos (see Shabbos 63a). R' Eliezer, based on a verse in Tehillim, maintains that it is viewed as an ornament to which the Sages reply that it is a disgrace (genai), and this is why all forms of war and weaponry will be nullified in the Days of Mashiach. R' Eliezer seems to view killing the enemy in war time as something positive as any other mitzvah would be viewed. Those who would harm and destroy the Jewish people should be destroyed; this is a source of pride not shame.[4] Chachamim seem to hold otherwise. True, destroying the enemies of Israel is a mitzvah, but it is not a source of pride; we would rather not have to do so. My Rebbe, Rav Hershel Schachter shlit"l often taught, "War is a mitzvah, but like maror not matza".[5]

Perhaps we can offer an additional explanation to Yaakov's distress. The commentaries note that Shmuel HaKatan was the one chosen to author the blessing of VeLamanshinim in the Amida since he taught in Pirkei Avos (4:19), "Binfol oyivcha al tismach - When your enemy falls do not rejoice." Consequently, he would write this blessing not with a sense of personal vengeance against the wicked for harm caused to him but would concentrate on the destruction of the wicked as a means of eliminating those who were preventing Hashem's master-plan for the world from coming to fruition. In other words, he would write the blessing l'sheim shamayim and not for personal, vindictive reasons. Based on this idea, Rav A. Y. HaKohen Kook zt"l explained why once Shmuel HaKatan, as sh'liach tzbur, paused in reciting the blessing (Berachos 28b). Could the author himself have temporarily forgotten his own blessing?! Rather, he was then feeling personal anger toward the wicked; he therefore waited until he could recite the blessing with concentration totally for the sake of Heaven.

Rashi (32:22) quotes from the Midrash that the absence of Dina from the procession bowing to Eisav indicates that Yaakov placed her in a box and locked it so that Eisav should not see her and desire to marry her. Because of this, Yaakov was punished by having to undergo the anguish of her being attacked later by Shechem. Rav C. Y. Goldwicht zt"l, founding Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh, questioned why Yaakov was not justified in not wanting to risk his daughter marrying a rasha. Whereas she might have transformed him for the good, there was certainly a risk that he might transform her toward evil! Rav Goldwicht taught that the answer lies in the extra phrase, "and he locked it". By doing so and not sufficing with just closing the box, Yaakov Avinu acted reflecting a bit of personal enmity toward Eisav and was not acting totally l'sheim shamayim. Since HKB"H is very meticulous with tzaddikim, Yaakov was punished for this lapse.

Based on this idea, perhaps that is the reason for Yaakov's distress. He was afraid that even if he would kill Eisav in self defense, there would be some personal enmity injected into the act, and it would not be done solely l'sheim shamayim.

The Jewish people are commanded by the Nosein HaTorah to engage in a broad range of commandments in His service. Some are intuitive, even second nature; others challenge us to submit to the Divine will even against our nature. Following the directives of the Torah even if against popular societal notions or norms is always inherently morally correct. Nevertheless, the sensitivity that our Sages have expressed regarding the loss of any innocent life or even the need to take a life reflects a holistic, moral value system filled with nuance conveyed to us by our Creator.



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