



Congregation Ahavat Shalom

The ACHDUS
NEWSLETTER
www.ahavatshalomteaneck.com

Davening: TABC, 1600 Queen
Anne Rd.
Mailing: PO Box 595, Teaneck,
NJ 07666-0595

Parshat Mishpatim

Volume: 18, Issue: 28 | February 9-10, 2018

Shevat 25, 5778
Rabbi Yehuda Halpert

Shabbat Times



Friday, February 9	
Candle Lighting:	5:05 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	5:10 PM
Shabbat, February 10	
Shacharit:	8:45 AM
Kriyat Shema:	9:34 AM
Mincha / Shalosh	
Seudot:	4:55 PM
Shkiya:	5:24 PM
Maariv:	6:01 PM
Shabbat Ends:	6:06 PM
Next Friday, February 16	
Candle Lighting:	5:14 PM
Mincha/Maariv:	5:15 PM

Rabbi Halpert's Availability

Rabbi Yehuda Halpert will be here on: 2,9, 216, 223.
He can be reached via email at RabbiYehudaHalpert@gmail.com, 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 2-4 will be located in Room 3 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.

Chesed Committees

If you or anyone you know has moved in recently or knows somebody moving in, let Moty Raven or Yael Stromer know! Check out ahavatshalomteaneck.com/movingin for more information.



Weather Report: Friday night: 33°, Cloudy Shabbat day: 50°, Cloudy with showers in the p.m.

Mazel Tov to Danielle and Adam Blank on the birth of a baby girl, Leah!

Ahavat Shalom Shabbat Gemara Chabura - Ahavat Shalom's men's Gemara Chabura will continue on Shabbat morning at 8:15 AM in the shul led this week - specially - by Rabbi Halpert! There is no required level of Gemara knowledge. For more information, please contact Ariel Kirshenbaum at akirshenbaum3@gmail.com.

Women's Shiur - There will be a women's shiur this Shabbat, February 10th at 3:30 PM, given by our very own Sarit Anstandig! The shiur will take place at the home of Danna and Benji Berg, 122 Ayers Court, Apartment 2A!

Purim Shiur - There will be a Purim-themed co-ed shiur on February 12th, hosted by Deena and Henry Bernstein. The shiur will be given by Rabbi Reuven Lebovitz, Director of Education at NJ NCSY. If anyone would like to sponsor, please reach out to Ariel Kirshenbaum.

Ahavat Shalom's Cholent Competition! Round Four will be after davening on Shabbat, February 24th. All community members are invited to attend the event (even if you missed Rounds 1, 2 and/or 3), taste test the cholents, and vote for your favourite! Who will join the Ferber's, Bernstein's, Baum's and Secemski's in the finals in March? May the best cholent win!

Mommy & Me - Coming soon, we will be opening up a Mommy & Me program at shul for all kids aged 0-2! As we hammer out the details, please reach out to Eliana Baum for more information!

ReMembership Your Dues ... The new membership year began on September 1st. To join our growing community, the cost is \$165/person and \$330/household. Kiddushim for the year can be sponsored for an additional \$15/person or \$30/household. **NEW THIS YEAR.** Welcome Baskets for all new community members can be sponsored *for the whole year* for just \$10!

Chesed Opportunity - Deena and Henry Bernstein are looking for volunteers to help bring PackIts to the city every Thursday morning. Additionally, PackIts can be sponsored for \$10 each.

Womens shiur - This Shabbas afternoon - at the home of Benji and Dana Berg @ 3:30. The shiur will be given by Sarit Anstandig on the topic of "Na'aseh Venishma: Our Blueprint for Belief".

Congregation Bnai Yeshurun - "Preparing for the Inevitable - a free community-wide halachic program about end of life matters presented by Rabbi Elchonon Zohn, President of the National Association of Chevra Kadisha. Topics will include halachic wills, hospice/palliative care, caring for elderly parents, purchasing plots, pre-need vs. at-need, and more. Program starts at 9:00AM, Sunday February 11, at Congregation Bnai Yeshurun, 641 W. Englewood Ave. Register at www.ckofbc.org"

Gala Book Signing - Wednesday, Feb. 14th at 7:30 PM. Signing and reception in honor of Rabbi Hayyim Angel and his latest book: *Keys to the Palace: Essays Exploring the Religious Value of Reading the Bible*. The event will be co-hosted by Ben Porat Yosef and the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, and will be held at Ben Porat Yosef (E. [243 Frisch Court, Paramus, NJ](http://www.243FrischCourtParamusNJ.com)). Reception with light refreshments at 7:30 PM and a mini-shiur given by Rabbi Angel. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

You're invited to -The Moriah School's 53rd Annual Dinner. Honoring: Abby & Scott Herschmann - Guests of Honor, Dana Septimus & Joseph Feldman - Young Leadership Award, Morah Nini Berger and Morah Shoshi Hason - Rabbi J. Shelley Applbaum Z'L Service Award. March 3rd 2018, 17 Adar 5778 at Metlife Stadium, 8PM. Register online at www.themoriahdinner.org

Congregation Bnai Yeshurun - presents a new shiur series for women taught by Rabbi Ari Zahtz: "Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh - Developing our Spiritual Personalities". Tuesday mornings, at 10:15 am in the CBY Beis Medresh. All women are invited to join and learn!

Congregation Ahavat Shalom Board Members 2017-2018

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

board@teaneckapartments.com | president@teaneckapartments.com | rabbivehudahalpert@gmail.com



Zeevyah Benoff
Sales Associate
NJAR CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE
SALES AWARD - 2015
C: 201.956.0208
O: 201.992.3600
Zeevyah@LinksNJ.com



Stuart Greenbaum
Mortgage Banker NMLS# 279221
Mortgage Banking | Chase
170 The Plaza, Teaneck NJ 07666
C: 201.694.4677 | F: 844.232.5274
stuart.greenbaum@chase.com



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*Minimum loan amount \$300,000



JORDAN KADRY
Senior Loan Originator
NMLS #1206628
jordan@mrcapitalgroup.com
p: 973.910.2215 • c: 516.456.3842
www.mrcapitalgroup.com

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A Special Relationship

In *Parshas Mishpatim* the Torah presents a collection of various *halachos*. This in itself is noteworthy since we would imagine that after the dramatic description of *ma'amad Har Sinai* in *Parshas Yisro* the Torah would continue by discussing lofty principles, and yet the Torah seems to get "bogged down" with details. But what is even more puzzling is the fact that the *parsha* begins with the *halachos* of *eved ivri*, a Jewish slave. Why choose this topic as a starting point for the *parsha*?

The *halacha* is that if an *eved ivri* declares after six years of work that he loves his master and would like to remain his slave, then his ear is pierced and he works for the master until *yoveil*. Rashi (21:6) quotes the statement of Chazal (*Kiddushin* 22b), "Why is the ear pierced? The ear that heard on *Har Sinai*, 'For *Bnei Yisrael* are my slaves,' and he went and acquired another master for himself, let it be pierced."

If the slave's ear is pierced because he chose another master for himself, then why wait for six years until we pierce the ear? Why not pierce the ear when the person initially sells himself? After all, that is when he first acquires a new master. The *Sefer HaMiknah* (*Kiddushin* 22b) explains that someone who sells himself because he is unable to earn a livelihood is not held accountable for his actions. Since he sold himself under financial duress he is not viewed as one who chose to acquire a new master. But if after six years he refuses to start out again on his own, and instead he declares that he prefers to remain a slave to his master, then he is considered to have chosen a master for himself and he is punished for his decision. Why is the *eved ivri* criticized for wanting to remain with his master? The fact is the life of an *eved ivri* is not overly burdensome. He may not be forced to do any hard labor (*Vayikra*, 25:43). His master must give him time off to perform *mitzvos*. Even his food, drink and bedding must be equal to that of his master (*Kiddushin* 22a). Chazal go so far as to say, "Whoever acquires a slave has acquired a master for himself (ibid.)" In such circumstances, it probably is easier for the slave to observe *mitzvos*. Why does the Torah fault the *eved* for wanting to continue such an arrangement?

Perhaps the answer is that the longer the *eved* stays with his master, the less he feels dependent on *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. With all his needs provided for him, he is comfortable and at ease with his situation. He does not feel the need to reach out to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* for his livelihood. So even if he does continue to observe *mitzvos* as a slave, by staying with his master he will be missing that yearning for heavenly assistance that is so essential to a Jewish soul.

A Torah way of life is not just about *mitzvah* observance; it is about having a relationship with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* and feeling dependent on Him. Chazal comment, "Why were our forefathers barren? Because *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* desires the *tefillos* of *tzadikim*" (*Yevamos* 64a.) Rav Eliyahu Dessler explains that Hashem certainly does not need the *tefillos* of *tzadikim*. Rather, he places *tzadikim* in challenging situations for their own benefit so that they will call out to Him in *tefilla* and develop a closer connection to Him (see *Michtav M'Eliyahu*, vol. 4 p. 63). Similarly, the Gemara says (*Pesachim* 118a), "Providing sustenance for a person is as difficult as the splitting of the sea." The Rashbam explains that although, in reality, it is not difficult for Hashem to provide for each individual, He makes it seem challenging to earn a living so that people will reach out to Him in *tefilla* and ask for mercy.

Having all of one's needs provided for him is not always a blessing. Sometimes it might even be a curse. The Chiddushei HaRim (cited in *Pardes Yosef, Bereishis*) understands that this was the curse that Hashem gave the snake after he caused the sin of the *eitz hada'as*. Hashem tells the snake, "And you shall eat dust (of the earth) all the days of your life. (*Bereishis*, 3:14)" This seems like a blessing because dust is always readily available for the snake. But the Chiddushei HaRim explains that in fact this is the greatest curse. Hashem provided the snake's food up front not because He wanted to make it easier for the snake, but because He did not want to have any ongoing relationship with him. And there is no greater curse than losing one's connection with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*.

This can explain why the Torah criticizes the *eved ivri* for wanting to remain with his master after six years. The Torah understands that sometimes a person might feel the need to sell himself to ease his financial burdens. But that is not an appropriate long term solution because the slave's continued dependence on his master could undermine his relationship with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*, and that is something the Torah is not willing to risk. The lesson of the *eved ivri* is an appropriate sequel to *Parshas Yisro* because it highlights the deeper meaning of *kabbolas haTorah*. When *Klal Yisrael* received the Torah, they were not simply accepting to scrupulously observe all of the *mitzvos* of the Torah. They were agreeing to enter into a new relationship with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*, one that should not be taken for granted or traded for financial independence.

By: Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg

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