



Congregation Etz Chaim

74 Billings Street, Sharon, Massachusetts 02067
www.etzchaimsharon.com
(781) 784-7204

President: Joshua Maeir
Treasurer: George Monat
Secretary: Leonard Gerber, Ph.D.

Director: Susan Cable
Director: Esther Dell
Director: Tzila Pass

Synagogue
Member



Parasha Vayishlach

Genesis 32:4-36:43

16th of Kislev, 5782

Nov. 20, 2021

Friday Night

Lighting/mincha 4:01 PM

Shabbos Day

Shacharis 8:45AM

Latest shema 9:05AM

Latest tefilla 9:53AM

Mincha 12:00 PM

Maariv 5:45 PM

Erev Shabbos Nov. 26

Candle Lighting 3:58 PM

Davening Times

~ 11-/19 to 11/21 ~

****Before attending please review our COVID-19 policy and pre-register. The signup can be found on the shul website****

****Minyan Signup ****

Weekdays

***Monday-Thurs**

Mincha/Maariv will be at

Young Israel 3:58 PM

Shacharis Sunday 8:00 AM

M & Th Shacharis 6:05 AM

T, W, F 6:15 AM

Torah Learning

Women's Shamiras Halashon

Daily: 9:05 a.m. to 9:40 a.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/8709646716>

password: bjn6R3

Rabbi Hartman's Pirke Avot

class is this Sunday, Nov. 21 at

9:30 a.m.

Zoom ID: 903 917 1656

Password: 170smain



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MASKS REQUIRED

The Town of Sharon is requiring that face coverings be worn by all persons at all times when inside houses of worship, and among other public and private facilities open to the public.

The official letter from the Board of Health is posted on the window by the patio.

KIDDUSH SPONSORSHIP

A full kiddush may be sponsored for \$100.00 and a shabbos “shout-out” for \$18.00. Please contact Esther Dell for dates at edell53@hotmail.com and Janis Monat, jbmonat@aol.com for printed wording.

NEW TENANTS

We wish much hatzlacha to our new tenants Michael and Sabina Brik and their 3 sons (under bar mitzvah age)!

RABBI REISMAN

Motsei shabbos, November 20, the Torah Conferencing Network (TNC) hosts Rabbi Yisroel Reisman, **7:30 p.m.**, with his insightful talks on the Book of Ezra. The “live” watching is at Etz Chaim. All are welcome!

ROSH CHODESH

Please join Congregation Etz Chaim for our Rosh Chodesh Program on Zoom, “A Sip of Torah”, where you provide your beverage, and we provide the d’var Torah. For Rosh Chodesh Tevet we welcome Janis Monat.

If you are interested in sharing thoughts for Rosh Chodesh Shevat in January or in other future months, please contact Merilee at melmaeir@gmail.com

ETZ CHAIM’S BOOK CLUB

For our next book, we have chosen *An Officer and a Spy* by Robert Harris. Our meeting is scheduled for motzei Chanukah, Monday, December 6, at 7pm.

Summary of the book:

In Paris of 1895, Alfred Dreyfus is a young Jewish officer who has just been convicted of treason, sentenced to life imprisonment at Devil’s Island, and stripped of his rank in front of a baying crowd of 20,000.

Among the witnesses to his humiliation is Georges Picquart, the ambitious, intellectual, recently promoted head of the counter-espionage agency that “proved” Dreyfus had passed secrets to the Germans.

At first, Picquart firmly believes in Dreyfus’s guilt. But it is not long after Dreyfus is delivered to his desolate prison that Picquart stumbles on information that leads him to suspect that there is still a spy at large in the French military.

As evidence of the most malignant deceit mounts and spirals inexorably toward the uppermost levels of government, Picquart is compelled to question not only the case against Dreyfus but also his most deeply held beliefs about his country, and about himself.

Bringing to life the scandal that mesmerized the world at the turn of the twentieth century, Robert Harris tells a tale of uncanny timeliness—a witch hunt, secret tribunals, out-of-control intelligence agencies, the fate of a whistle-blower—richly dramatized with the singular storytelling mastery that has marked all of his internationally best-selling novels. [Goodreads blurb]

If you have questions or suggestions for future books, contact Merilee at melmaeir@gmail.com.

BOARD MEETING

November 29th, Monday, at 7:00 p.m. is our next board meeting. All are welcome. Please contact Josh Maier for the Zoom link: president@etzchaimsharon.com

RABBI BARRY HARTMAN'S Pirke Avot class continues 11-21-21 at 9:30 a.m. (See 1st page for Zoom number).

SHAMIRAS HALASHON CLASS continues Sunday, 11-21-21 at 9:05 a.m. (See 1st page for Zoom number).

REFUAH SHELAIMA

Please daven for Tzila Pass' brother, Avram Yeshayahu ben Rachel; and other friends and family who are going through life's changes and medical issues. May each person have their refuah shelaima with complete and speedy healing.

PARASHA NOTES for Vayishlach

By Janis Monat

Vayishlach, "Then {Yaakov} sent angels {messengers}....".

After 20 years of hard, honest work Yaakov left his Uncle Laban's home with his wives, children, and possessions and is about to reconcile with his twin brother, Esav, on route to his homeland.

It is a time of uncertainty of how this meeting will go as Esav's last words after learning of Yaakov taking the blessing of the first born were, "...I will kill my brother Jacob." (Bereishis 27:41).

As the brothers approach each other Yaakov learns that Esav has 400 armed men. Chapter 32:8 states Yaakov's response, "Jacob became very frightened, and it distressed him." He was frightened that he or his family might be killed while equally distressed that he might have to kill.

Yaakov prepared for this meeting.

He humbled himself by instructing his messengers when approaching Esav to refer to himself as "your servant Jacob", ch.32:19 and to refer to Esav as "my lord..." ch. 33:8.

He showed affection by offering generous gifts of cattle & sheep and bowed with deep respect. Leah and her children as well as Rachel came forward and bowed in front of Esav. "This is to gain my lord's favor", ch.33:8, Yaakov explained to his twin brother.

Yaakov wisely divided his family and possessions into two camps so that one could escape if they learned the other was being attacked.

Yaakov offered prayers to Hashem for his safety and that of his family.

So what did the brothers do upon seeing each other? They hugged, kissed, and cried. At last they parted, deciding to continue along their different spiritual and lifestyle paths, but with amends having been made.

Rabbi Yochanan who lived in the 2nd century during the bitter persecutions of Jews by Roman authorities, taught that “whoever wishes to deal with a king or powerful authority...should study this Torah portion about the reunion of Jacob and Esau (Genesis Rabbah 78:6).

Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, “the Prince”, who also lived during the Roman persecutions, once said to his secretary, Rabbi Aphen, “Write a letter to Emperor Antoninus.” So Aphen wrote the letter, addressing it, “From Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi to His Majesty the Emperor Antoninus.” Rabbi Yehudah took the letter, read it, and tore it up. Afterwards he said to Aphen, “Address it as “From your servant Yehudah to His Majesty the Emperor Antoninus.” Aphen asked, “Why do you humiliate yourself?” Yehudah replied, “Am I better than my forefather Jacob? Did he not say to Esau, “your servant, Jacob”?” (Genesis Rabbah Vayishlach, 78:6).

Ovadia Sforno, who lived in Italy, 1475-1550, pointed out that Jacob’s tactic of humility with Esau was successful. Yaakov’s life, family and possessions were saved because he was ready to appease Esau. Realizing that Esau had the power to destroy him, Jacob humbled himself like a “reed bending against the wind” rather than standing tall like a “cedar” and taking the chance of being overturned and destroyed.

The Rabbis of the Talmud commented that “the reed, a humble plant, grows in the water, replenishing its roots which are many. No matter how hard the wind blows, or from which direction, the reed is not blown from its place. It simply bends away from the wind”. By comparison, “the cedar, which is a high and prideful tree, stands tall against all the winds of the world except for the south wind. When that wind blows, it can uproot the cedar and turn it upside down.” (Ta’anit 20a).

Ramban, Nachmanides, argues that Yaakov acted with weakness instead of strength. Had the Jews during Roman persecutions not given in to the Romans and not fooled themselves into believing that they could make allies out of their enemies, the Temple and Jewish life in the Land of Israel would not have been destroyed.

In Genesis Rabbah, Vayishlach, 75:11, it is suggested the opposite: that Jacob did not humiliate himself before Esau but instead met him and said to him, “If you want peace, I am with you. If you want war, then I am ready for you. I have strong men for battle, and God answers my prayers.”

Not knowing how Esau would treat him after being angry enough to want to kill him 20 years earlier, Yaakov retained his pride and dignity. He took matters into his own hands. He divided his camp so that, if Esau came for a battle, half of his community might escape. Then he went out to meet Esau face to face. He did not appear afraid. He let Esau know that he was ready to make peace or to engage in battle. From a position of strength he offered to negotiate peace between them.

Through modern history Israel has had to show its strength though having a strong army. They did in 1948 Israel’s War of Independence, the 1956 Suez Canal war, the 1967 Six Day war, the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and the 1991 Scud Missile war.

But an instance still scarring some Israelis was when in October, 2004, the Jewish State decided to remove Jewish inhabitants from the Gaza Strip, Gush Katif in particular. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon thought this “withdrawal” would lead to peace. Instead Hamas was “elected” to “govern” the Arab people in 2007. Jobs were lost, the economy that Israel had successfully built by growing and exporting greenhouse fruits and vegetables was destroyed. The Arab people went into poverty and the expelled Israeli Jews faced months and years of trauma. Since Hamas’ takeover of Gaza in Israel has had to fend off missiles, rockets, mortar shells, burning tires, drones, and fiery balloons sent over by Hamas to destroy Jewish farmers’ crops and kill/injure Jewish people.

And seven years later, in the summer of 2014, Israel was engaged in a bitter struggle with Hamas in Gaza in which many people died. The State of Israel had no more desire to be engaged in this kind of warfare than did Yaakov with his feelings prior to his meeting with Esau: "Jacob was very afraid and distressed" (Gen. 32:8), about which the Sages said, "Afraid, lest he be killed, distressed lest he be forced to kill."

I recall shortly after this situation, in my Connecticut synagogue an Israeli man said to me, "The Arabs understand one thing and that is strength and power. Anything else they see as weakness."

What Israel thought was strength was perceived by Arab "neighboring" terrorists as weakness.

To this day we Jews continue considering how to treat powerful people, groups, and nations.

Each situation requires our faith in Hashem and a plan as Yaakov had in approaching his internal and external challenges and fears. He brought generous gifts to show brotherly love and respect. He prayed to Hashem for help. And the furthest thing from what he wanted to do but knew he had to, was prepare for war - separating his family and possessions into two groups in order to allow one to escape should the other group be attacked.

The way to feel grateful for all of our blessings and not forget all that Hashem has done for us is to remain humble, generous, prayerful, and physically ready to accept the gifts bestowed on us over and over again. Peace to our brethren in Israel and everywhere.

A shabbos of love and strength!