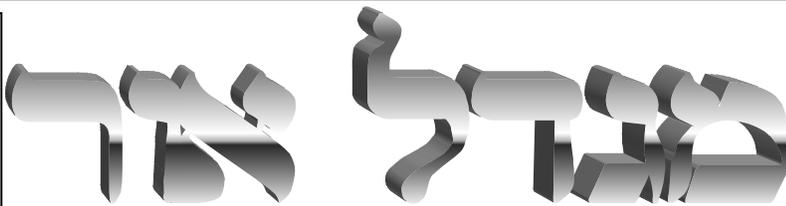


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 8:00 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:24 - שקיעה
- 8:34 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:25 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:37 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:18 - שקיעה
- 9:05* - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:30 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars
 Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

In Parshas Aikev, we are commanded to remember how we provoked G-d in the desert by making the Golden Calf.

One of Six Remembrances, this ranks up there with remembering the Exodus, what we witnessed at Sinai, What Amalek did to us and why they are to be destroyed, How Miriam was punished for speaking ill of Moshe, and to keep the Shabbos Holy.

Why would G-d insist that we remember a national sin like the Golden Calf every day? We've repented, we don't serve idols. Why can't HaShem let bygones be bygones?

I think the answer is that the reason we sinned and created an idol was because we felt we needed an intermediary between us and G-d. In other words, our mistake was thinking that we weren't good enough to relate to Him on our own!

At Sinai, G-d spoke the first two commandments to us directly. He would have continued but we felt it was too much for us and asked that Moshe be the intermediary. When we thought Moshe died, the calf was created in his stead.

By remembering this event, we recall that if we were willing, we could, and still can, have a direct relationship with our Heavenly Father (albeit with guidance and oversight from Torah authorities.)

To forget that would be a terrible sin.

Thought of the week:

The opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference.

- Elie Wiesel

"וַאֲתַנְפַּל לְפָנָי ה' כְּרַאשׁוֹנָה אַרְבַּעִים יוֹם וָאַרְבַּעִים לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹא אֲכַלְתִּי וּמַיִם לֹא שְׁתִּיתִי עַל

כָּל חַטָּאתְכֶם אֲשֶׁר חָטַאתֶם..." (דברים ט"ח)
"And I fell [in prayer] before HaShem as the first time – forty days and forty nights – bread I did not eat and water I did not drink, because of your entire sin that you committed..." (Deut. 9:18)

Rashi quotes the Seder Olam that Moshe actually spent 3 forty day periods with HaShem. The first, when he received the first set of luchos/tablets, began the day after the giving of the Torah and ended on the 17th of Tammuz. That was the day Moshe broke the luchos.

Upon seeing the Jews worshipping the Golden Calf, Moshe shattered the tablets, and the very next day went to appeal to G-d's mercy for another forty days, as referenced in this posuk. These forty ended on the 29th of Av, whereupon Moshe was commanded to ascend the mountain again to receive the second set of luchos. He ascended for another forty days and came down on Yom Kippur with a fresh beginning for the Jewish People.

There is a famous Midrash (Shemos Rabba 47:5) that says Moshe did not eat or drink the entire time he was in Heaven because he was with angels and angels do not eat. This teaches us to rise to the accepted standards of society when they are higher than our own personal standards. (*This should not be construed as a reason to permit sinning when one is surrounded by sinners. In fact, there is no permit to be in such a setting at all.*) If that is the case, why did Moshe have to mention that he fasted the second set of forty days? Would the same reasoning not apply?

The Chizkuni comments that during the second forty days Moshe did not go back to Har Sinai, but rather he retired to his tent outside the camp and it was there that he entreated HaShem to have mercy and forgive Klal Yisrael. If so, why did he have to fast?

Perhaps Moshe Rabbeinu was teaching us a fundamental lesson in Teshuva – repentance. The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 2:1) says that the ideal Teshuva is to come to the same situation and desist from the sin. If one sins when he is young but repents when he is old and no longer has the energy or desire to sin, it is valid, though not the best type of repentance. Therefore, it could be that Moshe was teaching the Jews that to achieve forgiveness, one must uproot the evil in the same way he perpetrated it.

Moshe didn't eat or drink because the Torah tells us after the Golden Calf that the Jews "sat to eat and drink." He fell before G-d because it says, "and they arose to make merry." He did the opposite actions to show that proper Teshuva involves rejecting the sin under the same circumstances. If the sin was done with enthusiasm, so must the Teshuva be.

This may be why he says he prayed because of their "entire sin." In any situation that someone sins, each aspect can intensify the wrongdoing and no part is isolated. Therefore, we must learn from Moshe to repent entirely for our sins and know that they have an impact on every part of our lives. We cannot repent in some areas and continue to sin in others. We must be whole, complete, and return to G-d with every fiber of our being.

A journalist in Israel was writing an article about Baalei Teshuva, people who chose to come closer to HaShem and learn about their Jewish heritage. After a class, he stopped one of the men who was leaving and posed this question: "Who do you think will get more reward, you, or someone who has been religious his entire life?" He thought the man would refer to the dictum of Chazal that "in the place where penitents stand, even the completely righteous cannot."

Without hesitation the man replied, "Definitely, one who has always been observant will get more reward." He explained. "They will be rewarded because they think there is something better out there, yet they don't pursue it. I know that the world without Torah and without G-d is empty. For me, coming here is the only logical response, so why do I deserve reward?"