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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:55 - פלג המנחה
- 8:11 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:29 - שקיעה
- 8:33 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:09 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:25 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:31 - שקיעה
- 9:21 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:42 - צאת

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

In Pirkei Avos we are adjured to be from the Talmidim of Aharon; lover of peace, pursuer of peace, lover of mankind who brought them closer to Torah. If one sees someone who has strayed, or perhaps was never introduced to the beauty of Torah and a Torah lifestyle, the worst thing he can do is to condemn him. Rather, by exhibiting care and concern for the individual, and loving him because he is created in the image of G-d, one can best bring them closer to the Torah.

In Mishlei (9:8) Shlomo HaMelech tells us, "Al tochach letz, pen yisna'eka. Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you; hoche'ach l'chacham v'ye'ehaveka, reprove the wise man and he will love you." It can be explained that this is an approach to give correction to all sorts of people, not only the righteous and wise.

When giving rebuke, do not tell someone, "you are a bad person, a scoffer and sinner," for he will live up to that designation. Instead, call him a wise person, and point out that such behavior is beneath a person of his stature and he will not only love you, but he will rise to the level of esteem in which you hold him and repent of his evil or misguided ways.

Thought of the week:

Whether you think you can,
or you think you can't — you
will always be exactly right.

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קח את הלויים מתוך בני ישראל וטהרת אתם" (במדבר תז:)

"Take the Levites from the midst of the Children of Israel and purify them."

Rashi's well-known explanation is that this was not a physical taking, but rather a reference to convincing the Levi'im to accept the responsibilities of the Mishkan and its service. The purpose of this separation, says the Ohr HaChaim, was so that they would be pure, and maintain a separate, pure existence within the Jewish community.

What is striking about Rashi's explanation is the message given to the Levi'im. Rashi doesn't say to tell them about the kedusha of the Mishkan, and he doesn't say to impress them with HaShem's holiness. He tells us that the way to motivate the Levi'im was to say: "Wow! You are so lucky to be picked to serve HaShem."

By focusing on the individual, and his fortune in being chosen, he is more likely to see the responsibility as something special and beneficial at the same time. More importantly, by phrasing it in this manner, the Levi himself is recognized for his special qualities and will feel that he is indeed distinguished and worthy. Because of this he begins to conduct himself in a manner befitting someone of his stature, and becomes purified and distinct.

This means of motivation is seen throughout the parsha. When people were impure and unable to bring the korban Pesach, they approached Moshe and said, "Why should we be any worse [than those who are pure]?" They felt close to G-d and wanted to perform His mitzvos. Therefore, the parsha in the Torah which states that there is a second chance on Pesach Shaini, was stated and brought about through them, as "merit is given to the meritorious."

Throughout Shas we find similar references to positive speech. When one gets married, his friends are to tell him the bride is "beautiful and kind," because to him, she is. When one buys an item, it is forbidden to tell him, "You got a bad deal," or "You could have gotten something better or cheaper" if it's too late to do anything about it. We are to focus on the positive points and uplift the people around us.

This is hinted to in the beginning of our parsha as well. Rashi explains that the word 'B'haaloscha,' which literally means "when you raise up," is used because Aharon had to hold the flame there until the flames were strong enough to rise on their own. This is a key lesson from our parsha. By giving support and encouragement, we can uplift others and bring the world purity and light.

An islander known to be the shrewdest trader in the region became the subject of mirth when he was "bested" by a simple farmer. You see, this fellow wished to marry the farmer's daughter and the custom on their islands was to provide the girl's father with a dowry. An average girl received three cows, an extraordinary one would bring her father four cows, and the most amazing young women were worth five cows. The trader asked for the farmer's daughter's hand in marriage and they settled on a dowry of eight cows!

She was rather plain, and walked with a slouch. She was also somewhat dull. That's why people were shocked that he paid the highest dowry ever heard of in the islands when he definitely could have paid less. A fellow who heard the story traveled to the trader's home on an outlying island to see this wonder for himself. As he sat talking with the trader, the wife walked in to place flowers on the table. She was beautiful and carried herself with confidence and dignity. She no longer slouched and was pleasant and charming. When she left, the visitor asked if this was the same woman the merchant had paid eight cows for. He answered "Yes, it is the same woman."

"I know I could have gotten her for three cows; maybe even two. But I wanted my wife to know how much she was worth to me, and I paid eight cows for her. She knows that of all the women in the islands, only she is an eight-cow wife and this has uplifted her greatly. She may have only been worth three cows when I married her, but today, even the eight cows I paid for her hand would be far too little."