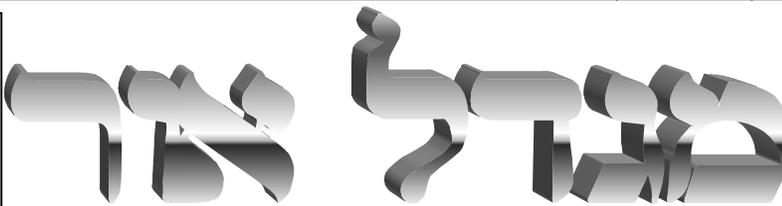


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:52 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:10 - שקיעה
- 8:37 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:13 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:26 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:12 - שקיעה
- 9:01* - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:24 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

מולד סיון - Sunday 11:01:04 PM

Rosh Chodesh is Tuesday

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Did You Know?

The Baal Shem Tov says in Parshas Behar: One is to be praised for studying the Mishna "Hamachlif Parah B'Chamor," 'One who trades a cow for a mule,' (Bava Metzia 100a) because he is involved in studying the holy Torah.

How much more so, continues the Baal Shem Tov, is one who ACTUALLY trades a cow for a mule, and conducts his business affairs in accordance with the Torah, deserving of praise!

Rashi famously asks why the Torah tells us Shmitta was given on Har Sinai. He answers that this teaches us that just like Shmita, which was not mentioned in the Aseres HaDibros, was given on Sinai, so too were all the other mitzvos. But why is this lesson taught specifically by Shmita?

The Ben Ish Chai answers that Sinai and Shmita both symbolize that "less is more." Har Sinai was chosen to host Matan Torah because it was the lowest and humblest of mountains. Its lack of greatness enabled it to be the site of the greatest event in history.

Similarly, Shmita is a year that we allow the field to remain barren. We do not help it produce any fruit. Yet Hashem promises that this sparks an abundant crop sufficient for three years.

Humility is the key to greatness.

Thought of the week:

A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.

"דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת להם איש כי יפלא נדר בערך נפשת לה'." (ויקרא כ"ב)

"Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them, if a man shall articulate a vow in the valuation of people to G-d."

The word 'yafli,' used here as "articulate," also appears in Parshas Naso (Bamidbar 6:2) in relation to a vow to become a Nazir. There, however, while it does have to be spoken aloud, the commentaries focus on other aspects of the word. While Rashi here says it means to "separate with the mouth," literally to parse or pronounce the words, in Bamidbar Rashi simply says it means "to separate," and then goes on to describe how one who saw the downfall of the wayward wife, the Sotah, would separate himself from wine, which is often a key factor in sin.

In addition, the commentaries discuss the root word of 'yafli,' which is 'peleh,' or something of wonder. The point made by the Torah's use of this word is that the Nazir has done something unusual in taking the Nazirite vow. As the Ibn Ezra says, this is a unique act because most people simply follow their passions and desires [yet this one fights against them with his vow.]

As to why the concept of doing something of wonder doesn't apply in our parsha, when one is committing to donate a certain sum of money to the Bais HaMikdash, we may find an answer in the Kli Yakar.

He says that this section of the Torah follows the portion relating the curses to tell us that when a Jew is in trouble, he makes pledges and promises to G-d of what he will do if saved from the problem, like Yaakov who said he would tithe his belongings if HaShem delivered him from Esav and brought him safely home.

However, the Kli Yakar continues, most people are NOT like Yaakov who did this consistently. Though they make promises in the heat of their despair, and may indeed donate money, once the moment passes they go back to the way they were before and are tight-fisted.

He mentions a case of a person who loaned a poor man money "in a time of sorrow." He concludes that it was "a time of sorrow" for the lender, or else he never would have made the loan. It was not his generosity that caused him to help the pauper, but his need to get "on G-d's good side." Once things settle down for him, he once again refuses to lend money to the poor. In short, when people are pressed and in pain, they will give. When things are good, they are less inclined to act nobly.

"But," says the Kli Yakar, "the person who gives of his own desire, and does good because he wants to, such a person will find favor in the eyes of G-d!" Perhaps that is why the word 'yafli' is used here as well; because a person who chooses on his own to give to tzedaka and do what HaShem wants is doing something unusually special and wonderful.

In the weeks before Shavuos, a rabbi spoke to his congregation about the importance of decorum in the Shul. It is HaShem's house, and there are many curses and dire consequences for those who speak inappropriately therein, or during the tefilos when one may not interrupt with idle speech. The tzibur agreed that in honor of the upcoming holiday they would accept upon themselves to be very diligent in not speaking idle chatter in shul nor to speak during davening, even when it might technically be permitted.

After Shavuos, they read Parshas Naso and the portion of the Nazir. The Rabbi asked, "When the Nazir completes his term of Nezirus, he must bring sacrifices. One of them is a chatas, a sin-offering. But he did an amazing thing, a 'peleh.' What sin does he have to atone for?"

"The answer," said the Rav, "is that he had reached a very high level of sanctity and now he would no longer maintain it. That is tantamount to a sin."

"We have been so careful the past few weeks," he concluded with a smile, "about how we treat the Bais HaKnesses. It would be a terrible sin to slide back to our old habits."