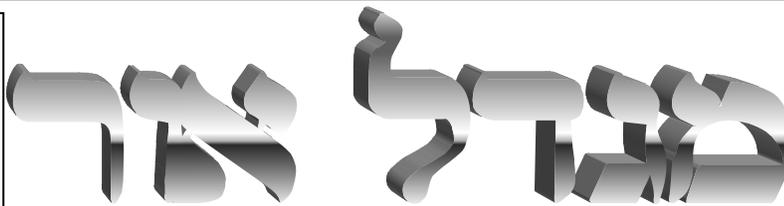


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

6:01 - הדלקת נרות
6:19 - שקיעה
9:18 - זק"ש מ"א
9:54 - זק"ש גר"א
10:50 - סוף זמן תפילה
6:18 - שקיעה
6:59* - צאת הכוכבים
7:30 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Monday 2:41:09 PM - מולד מרחשון

Rosh Chodesh is Tuesday and Wednesday

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com and
EzrasTorah.org

Did You Know?

**Biz hundred un tzvanzik, You should
live to be 120 years old!**

This common refrain and wish for longevity is based on a misunderstanding of a posuk in Parshas Beraishis.

When mankind began to slide into a demoralized state and sinned against G-d and Man through their actions, especially theft and lack of consideration for the property of others, HaShem decided it was time to destroy the world.

In His mercy, G-d gave an extension to the deadline and said, "The time of Man will be 120 years." This did not mean that until then people had been living hundreds of years and now they would be limited to a maximum of 120. Instead, it meant that HaShem would extend patience to Mankind for 120 years from that decree so they might repent. When they did not, He brought the flood in the time of Noah, and wiped everyone else out.

In truth, the normal lifespan is 70 years, less than 60% of the much-praised 120. Actual lifespans can be even less than that.

Why then do we use this blessing to wish people to live to 120? Because Moshe Rabbeinu, who reached the highest level of human achievement, lived 120 years and we wish each other that we make the most of our lives and accomplish great things before our number is up.

Thought of the week:

When HaShem gives you an ability, you have to respond by using it properly. That's called "responsibility."

"והנחש היה ערום מכל חית השדה אשר עשה ה'..." (בראשית ג:1)

"The snake was more cunning than all the animals HaShem created..."

The snake famously seduced Chava into eating from the Tree of Knowledge against the directive of HaShem. The snake was subtle, he was sly, and he led her into a trap by beginning with an innocuous comment, "Do you think G-d would have created the tree if you weren't meant to eat from it?" Of course, simple the answer was that the tree was created precisely so they wouldn't eat from it, thereby exercising free will and avoiding evil.

The snake was able to think ahead, like a Chess master, knowing what consequence each word or action would have and how Chava would respond and react. In the Mishna in Pirkei Avos, we ask, "Who is wise? One who is 'ro'eh es hanolad,' who can envision the future and think several steps ahead."

It would seem, therefore, that the snake should be called wise, not cunning. In addition, the word "arum" had previously been used to connote nakedness, as the posuk just before this one says, "And they were both naked, Adam and his wife, and they were not ashamed." Why, now, is this word used to convey craftiness when it was just used for a very different connotation?

The Targum Yonason Ben Uziel offers an enlightening translation of the word 'arum' regarding the snake. He says, "The snake was 'chakim l'bish,' wise for evil, more than any creature. He DOES call the snake wise, like the Mishna says, but adds the caveat that the wisdom was used for negative purposes. Because this was so, the snake was not given the dignified title of 'chacham,' a wise person, but the degrading moniker of 'arum,' a trickster.

R' Yonason ben Uziel's translation of the previous verse is even more unusual. While we normally translate it as "And they were both naked, Adam and his wife, and they were not ashamed," he renders it, "And they were both wise, Adam and his wife, but they did not recognize their greatness." Indeed, he explains the use of the word both times to refer to wisdom, but with a key difference.

The snake, which represents the Satan/tempter who tries to ensnare each of us and cause us to sin against G-d, understood evil, and therefore, his knowledge and wisdom was used for bad purposes and left him naked of merit.

By the same token, Adam and Chava, who were wise but did not realize their own greatness, failed the test HaShem sent them and were left naked of the merit they could have had by resisting temptation.

We should learn from this that while using one's abilities for evil is a terrible thing and must be avoided, we must be just as careful not to pass up the good we can do with what HaShem has bestowed upon us. We must recognize our strengths and use them to honor HaShem, as the posuk says, (Mishlei 3:9) Honor HaShem from your wealth, which Chazal say refers to anything He gives you. When we recognize our abilities and utilize them to serve HaShem, we shall never have reason to be embarrassed.

At shul one day, a fellow stopped mid-sentence to point out to his friend the wealthy man who had just entered.

"That's Yankeleh," he whispered reverently, as he gazed in awe. "I hear he's worth fifty million dollars!"

His companion, who knew that while the man was indeed rich, he was also an arrogant, miserly boor, replied, "He may have fifty million dollars, but he's not worth two cents."