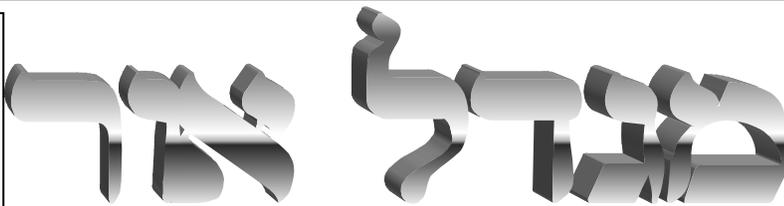


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for **שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:38 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:56 - שקיעה
- 8:59 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:42 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:30 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:58 - שקיעה
- 5:42* - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:10 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know? (and bonus story!)

While Hollywood would have you believe that the blood of the Korban Pesach was painted on the outside of the doors so the angel could see it and "pass over" the Jewish houses, Chazal say this isn't true.

The blood was a "sign for you, upon the houses." It was intended for the people INSIDE the house to remember that they were under HaShem's protection, and it was in THAT merit that they were saved.

An Egyptian in the house would not feel that way, so the Egyptian first-borns who took refuge in Jewish homes died anyway.

The same word for sign, "ohse" is used at the end of the Parsha regarding Tefillin. While the Tefillin worn on the head is a frontlet, intended to be seen, the box on the arm is a sign, intended for us, to be hidden from view, and close to our hearts.

Shabbos, too, is an 'ohse.' It is meant to remind us that everything we have from our efforts the whole week really come from HaShem, Who is the One who provides for us on Shabbos when we don't work. It reminds us that He does it all.

An Israeli Gadol (Chazon Ish?) was walking with a young man when a car drove past them on Shabbos. The boy began yelling after the car, "Shabbos! Shabbos!!"

"Why are you yelling?" he asked the boy. "The driver can't hear you and even if he could, it would likely not affect him. Instead, say, "Shabbos" quietly to yourself, so that you don't become jaded and indifferent to its desecration.

You won't be able to change him, but make sure you stay aware of how sacred and important the Shabbos is to you."

Thought of the week:

G-d brings us into deep water not to drown us, but to teach us how to swim.

"בא אל פרעה כן אני הכבדתי את לבו ואת לב עבדיו למען שתי אתי אלה בקרבו" (שמות י"א)

"...Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart, and those of his servants, so that I might place My signs in his midst." (Exodus 10:1)

Many, including the Rambam and other great thinkers, ask how HaShem could have taken away Pharaoh's free will and not allowed him to repent. Further, if G-d DID harden his heart, how could Pharaoh be punished for his stubbornness in not letting the Jews go?

The Rambam himself writes that the removal of free will, the inability to repent, was a punishment to Pharaoh, having reached a "point of no return" from his previous choices. The Chofetz Chaim writes that HaShem didn't really take away Pharaoh's free will, but rather removed the Divine assistance given to those who wish to repent, which made it harder to do, though not impossible.

The Sipurno comments that hardening Pharaoh's heart was actually preserving his free will, by not forcing him to bend to HaShem merely because of the pain he and his nation endured in the plagues. Had he repented then, it would not be because he recognized HaShem's sovereignty, but because he wished to end his own suffering. However, there may be a further understanding here, which explains why it was necessary to harden Pharaoh's heart.

The posuk says it was "to set My signs within him." In other words, G-d wanted to teach Pharaoh a lesson. That's why Pharaoh survived, even when his people were dying.

This concept is especially key according to the Midrash in Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer which states that Pharaoh didn't die at the Reed Sea, but survived, and later became the king of the great city of Ninveh. In Sefer Yonah, we learn of the Navi's futile attempts not to go warn the people of Ninveh that HaShem was displeased with their behavior. After being swallowed by a great fish, Yonah goes and delivers his message.

The people of Ninveh, spurred on by their king (none other than Pharaoh himself) repent fully and are spared. In other words, the signs and wonders that HaShem instilled in Pharaoh in Egypt may not have worked to save the Egyptians, but they did work to save the 120,000 inhabitants of Ninveh (or more, according to Rashi that the 120,000 were just the children.)

In actuality, then, hardening Pharaoh's heart was a great kindness in that HaShem allowed Pharaoh to "get the message" of what HaShem wanted. It enabled him to grow and evolve past his megalomania to recognize that he was subject to HaShem's Divine rule, and ultimately enabled him to repent fully and completely.

This is a very heartening lesson for all of us, then, to keep in mind when we experience difficulties. We may feel that G-d is punishing us, or even "having fun" with us. This couldn't be further from the truth. When HaShem sends us troubles, most often it is a learning experience, intended to teach us to recognize HaShem's mastery, and how to respond to future events.

The final piece of the puzzle is that HaShem not only gave Pharaoh more suffering, but He hardened his heart to enable him to withstand it. The saying goes that HaShem never gives us more problems than we can handle. This could be a source for that axiom. HaShem, here, let Moshe know that in order to teach Pharaoh a lesson, He gave him more strength to withstand the tests. This should teach us all a lesson as well.

The Avnei Neizer eulogized his father-in-law, the Kotzker Rebbe, by saying he was an "Adam Kasher," a "Kosher man." He compared it to the fact that in halacha, an animal is only considered kosher if it can live 12 months.

The reasoning behind that halacha is that the animal must be able to weather any season; not only the pleasantness of Spring or Fall, also but the cold of winter and heat of summer. The Kotzker was a man who was able to withstand whatever HaShem sent his way with equilibrium.

That is called truly living.