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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

**Zmanim for שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:38 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:36 - שקיעה
- 8:35 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:11 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:09 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:58 - שקיעה
- 6:40\* - צאת הכוכבים
- 7:10 - צאת 72

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

**Did You Know?**

When Eliyahu HaNavi complained to HaShem that the Jews had all abandoned the Torah and HaShem, HaShem responded by relieving him of duty. It would seem that a Jewish leader's responsibility is not to prosecute, but defend Jews.

When HaShem told Moshe about the sin of the Golden Calf, his immediate response was to beseech HaShem to forgive the Jews and explain why they had to be forgiven for HaShem's honor.

After that, however, when Moshe descended the mountain, he called Aharon to task for this sin of the Jews.

As a good leader should, Aharon, too, defended them, and said, "You know what this people has been through; that it is in a bad way."

Before any fingers were pointed, even though the charges were true and very dire, the first priority of these leaders was to seek the good in Klal Yisrael.

We must learn from here to always see the good in other Jews, no matter how deeply it may be hidden. We must defend before we condemn, or else we do not solve anything.

Chazal even hint this to us in the order of the Torah reading. The first two Aliyos are very long so the entire matter of the sin is completed during the portion of the Kohain and Levi who were not involved in the sin, so as to not cause anguish to those who were involved.

**Thought of the week:**

**We seldom lose our faith by a blow out; usually it is just a slow leak.**

**"ויאמר אלהם אהרן פרקו נזמי הזהב אשר באזני נשיכם בניכם ובנותיכם והביאו אלי." (שמות לב:ב)**

**"And Aharon said to them, "Remove the golden rings from the ears of your wives, sons, and daughters, and bring them to me."**

When the Jews miscounted and thought Moshe was up on Har Sinai too long, some despaired and demanded that Aharon create for them an idol as an intermediary with G-d. Aharon told them to take the jewelry from their wives and children and bring it to him. Rashi reveals that Aharon intended to stall, knowing that the women would not give up their jewelry so quickly. He hoped that in the interim Moshe would descend and put an end to the doubts.

The men responded by pulling the earrings from their own ears, and brought that gold to Aharon. From there came the Golden Calf which soiled the Jewish People and almost led to their destruction. Did the Torah need to tell us the men took the gold from their own ears? Could it not have just said, "The men brought Aharon gold and he made an idol"?

In fact, the Torah is highlighting the source of the grievous error that these men made. When Aharon told them what to do, they assumed he was giving them a helpful piece of advice. He needed gold, so he told them to take it from their wives and children, who presumably had plenty of it. They knew that it would be faster to give their own gold, so they ignored his advice and took the earrings from their own ears.

The problem was that they *didn't* understand Aharon's motives. He had reasons for telling them to do what he told them to do. It was part of his larger plan, a plan they were not privy to, nor would they have agreed to if they had known about it.

Had they paid attention, they would have realized he used the word 'parku,' meaning 'remove,' which Rashi explains is in the imperative tense. This was not a suggestion but a command. This is even hinted in the fact that the Rashis on this posuk are out of order. He first explains Aharon's intention, and then the use of the word 'parku,' which appeared earlier in the verse, to hint that this word should have clued them in to the fact that Aharon had deeper motivations.

The lack of Emunas Chachomim, complete trust that our elders are inspired by Heaven and have more profound insight than we do, is a recipe for disaster. In Shushan, the Jews ignored Mordechai's decree that they not attend Achashveirosh's party, to which the Jews were invited. They proclaimed that Mordechai didn't understand politics and the way of the world, that this had to be done to protect the Jews, but we know that because those Jews followed their own instincts and vision, our nation was condemned to death in Haman's plot.

It is this same ignorance that drives many to question the Mitzvos as taught by Chazal over the millennia, asking sarcastically, "Do you think G-d really cares if...?" The answer, as we learn here, is a resounding YES. He cares.

We should learn from this to accept that we don't have the vision to see everything and understand everything we come across. We must recognize that our Sages see things we don't, and seek their counsel instead of relying on our own.

*A man called R' Avigdor Miller z"l in a desperate situation. His daughter had left Judaism and become a Moonie. She was coming in for a short visit and he wanted to save her so she wouldn't go back. He insisted that R' Miller talk to her.*

*Said R' Miller, "I was willing, but he spoke to me in such a disrespectful tone. He called me up with such a curt voice and was insistent I should speak to her. He wanted me to drop everything to do him a favor and speak to his daughter. And he was disrespectful!"*

*I didn't say it, but I wanted to tell him: 'Mister, you know it's your fault! If that's your attitude towards rabbis, is it any wonder that your children run away from your faith -- or your lack of faith?' There are plenty of people to knock in this world; the evolutionists, the immoral people breaking down all the traditions of society in America, but don't knock the good ones, and above all, don't knock Hashem."*