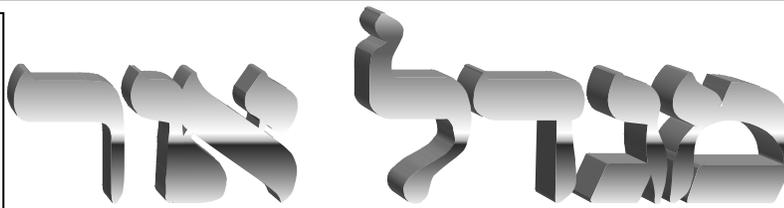


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

**Zmanim for שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:35 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:53 - שקיעה
- 9:21 - זק"ש מ"א
- 10:03 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:55 - סוף זמן תפילה
- :52 - שקיעה
- 6:35\* - צאת הכוכבים
- 7:04 - צאת 72

\* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

**Did You Know?**

Despite having given Hagar to Avraham, Sarah was not prepared for what would happen when he took her. Once Hagar became pregnant, she looked down upon Sarah. Basically, Hagar felt, "If Sarah was truly the righteous woman people think she is, then she would have had children. It must be that she has some sin."

This, of course, is preposterous, as HaShem has many reasons why things happen and we cannot look askance at anyone because of a problem they are having. We do not know His workings.

When it happened, Avraham should have jumped to his wife's defense, but for some reason he didn't, or at least not vehemently enough for Sarah. However, her next move was deadly.

She came to Avraham with a complaint, saying, "I am angry at you! Let G-d judge between us." This was a mistake.

The Gemara in Rosh HaShana (16b) says that whoever hands the judgment of his friend over to Heaven, meaning that he wants to see the party that wronged him get punished, he is punished first. We learn this, says R' Chanan, from the fact that Sarah said, "I am angry with you," and then the Torah later says, "And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah."

If a person wants someone to be punished, HaShem first looks to see if the plaintiff deserves any punishment.

If we remember that everything that happens is to teach us a lesson, we will see that a person who harms us is merely a messenger of G-d, and bear them no ill will, especially since if we try to kill the messenger, it just may kill us first.

**Thought of the week:**

**Life is a unique school because the lessons only come after the tests.**

**"ותאמר שרי אל אברם הנה נא עצרני ה' מלדת בא נא אל שפחתי אולי אבנה ממנה..."** (בראשית ט"ז)

**"And Sarai said to Avram, behold HaShem has held me back from children, please take my maid; perhaps I will be built up through her..."** (Gen. 7:2)

When HaShem promised Avram that he would bear children whose descendants would be as multitudinous as the stars, Sarai realized that her physical deficiency was the reason they did not have children. Seeking to remedy this situation, she urged Avram to take her maidservant and bear children with her. He listened and took Hagar.

Unlike Rachel, who said, "she will bear upon my knees," meaning that even if someone else bore the child she would raise it as her own, Sarai did not intend to raise Hagar's child. Rather, she believed that by giving Hagar to Avram, she herself would be changed and able to bear children. Somehow taking a rival into her home would effect this change.

The Sipurno says that the jealousy of seeing another woman with Avram's child would arouse the internal ability to procreate. Obviously this is not a standard physical response, but as we know that "nothing stands in the way of true desire," and the jealousy she would experience would be a holy envy, based in a strong desire to build generations of faithful followers of HaShem, we can understand that she felt this would enhance her desire. She would thereby be able to take her natural human instincts and channel them towards the mitzvah of filling the world with G-d-fearing people. This tool alone would be a great lesson for us, but there is more.

Sarai said, "Perhaps I will become built-up (with children) through the merit of bringing a rival into my home." Is there some merit in suffering? Simply by causing herself pain did she think she would encourage G-d to grant her children? Not at all.

What Sarai realized was that all pain and suffering are meant to teach us something. If it's a punishment, it teaches us what we did wrong through HaShem's method of punishing measure for measure. If it's not a punishment, then it is intended as a growth exercise for us, helping us to strengthen our character and evolve.

Sarai understood that the pain of being childless was to help her grow and teach her something. She had been childless for many years, yet nothing had changed. At a certain point, she had become resigned to not having children. Therefore, she thought that perhaps, by intensifying that pain through bringing another woman into Avram's life, she would jumpstart the growth process, develop beyond who she was at this point, and achieve whatever HaShem felt she needed to before she could have children.

This tremendous equilibrium, to be able to recognize that G-d is not vindictive, and that all He does is with a plan and purpose, is another fantastic tool for life. If one truly believes and understands that all HaShem does is for good, then he is able to tolerate the challenges he faces and use them as tools for growth. It's one more way that a close relationship with HaShem, and a strong faith in His kindness, enables us to live happier, more fulfilled lives.

*The Great Barrier Reef stretches some 1,800 miles from New Guinea to Australia. Tour guides regularly take visitors to view the reef. On one tour, the guide was asked an interesting question. "I notice that the lagoon side of the reef looks pale and lifeless, while the ocean side is vibrant and colorful," a traveler observed. "Why is this?"*

*The guide gave an interesting answer: "The coral around the lagoon side is in still water, with no challenge for its survival. It dies early. The coral on the ocean side is constantly being tested by wind, waves, storms -- surges of power. It has to fight for survival every day of its life.*

*As it is challenged and tested it changes and adapts. It grows healthy. It grows strong. And it reproduces." Then he added this telling note:*

*"That's the way it is with every living organism."*