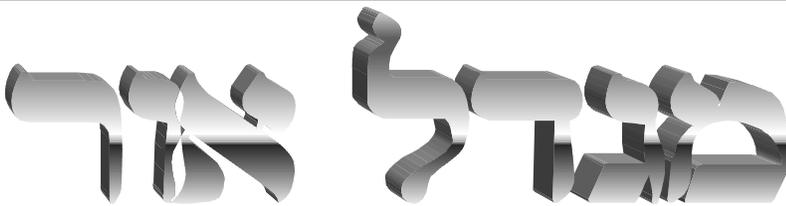


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This Issue dedicated in honor of
my wife whose constant
enthusiasm and support enable
me to produce this publication
week after week, year after year.

שלי ושלכם, שלה הוא

A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:58 - הדלקת נרות
8:16 - שקיעה
8:50 - זק"ש מ"א
9:26 - זק"ש גר"א
10:38 - סוף זמן תפילה
8:16 - שקיעה
9:02* - צאת הכוכבים
9:28 - צאת 72

*Based on Emergence of 3 stars

Shabbos 3:40:12 PM - מולד אב

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com/EzrsaATorah.org

From the Mailbag –

A Reader's question from a previous issue.

Q: In last week's story, a fellow mentioned that someone he had approached for tzedaka had righteously recognized that the downturn in his fortunes came from HaShem, and a listener commented that when the person was successful, he did not attribute that success to G-d.

How can we learn a lesson from this story if the person who made that remark violated Lashon Hara, forbidden speech, by speaking negatively about someone else? Doesn't the Chofetz Chaim say that it is more likely that the teller of the evil speech is lying since he is already sinning? At the very least, he was not judging the giver favorably!

A: Thank you for that thoughtful question. Indeed, the person who responded in that way may have violated Lashon Hara, but the story is an occurrence, not a parable.

Therefore, whether or not he was correct in making the remark, the message conveyed, that one must be effusive in his praise of HaShem when things go well for him, remains in effect.

It is no small thing to acknowledge that our losses come from HaShem, as the Chovos HaLevavos says that while our mitzvos are not sufficient to earn us rewards as we already owe so much to HaShem, any punishments we incur are the result of our own failures. For this recognition, the man was praiseworthy.

The lesson to be learned, though, is that we are capable of more, and should recognize the hand of G-d in everything, even the successes we call our own.

Thought of the week:

Coincidence is G-d's way of remaining anonymous.

Albert Einstein

”וייסעו ממתקה ויחנו בחשמנה.” (במדבר ל"ג:ט)

“And they traveled from Miska and camped in Chashmona.”

The 25th place the Jews arrived during their travels was called Chashmona. This hints to the Chashmona'im, heroes of the Chanuka story, who finally overcame the Greek army with a complete victory on the 25th of Kislev. But this is not the only Chanuka reference in the Torah.

The 25th word in the Torah is, 'ohr,' light, hinting to the light of Chanuka which would occur on the 25th of Kislev. In fact, there is yet another reference to Chanuka in the Torah. Parshas Mikeitz, which always falls out on Chanuka, has 2025 words. The 25 is again a reference to the date, the 25th of Kislev, while the 2000 equals the numerical value of the word 'ner,' meaning candle or light, which equals 250, times the 8 days the menorah miraculously burned.

The first thing to recognize is that the travels in the desert occurred centuries before the miracle of Chanuka. The fact that it is referenced in the travels of the Jews should serve to point out that HaShem has a Master Plan in which all events have their time and place. Things do not unfold by coincidence. Rather, they happen exactly as they are supposed to. Even more compelling is the fact that in the Torah, written 2000 generations before the world was created, the story of Creation already alluded to the salvation HaShem would bring millennia later.

Finally, Chazal tell us that when Yosef was taken to Egypt, Yaakov cried. HaShem disapproved, saying, "I am preparing the seeds of Israel's redemption and you are crying!" This lesson reminds us of the importance of recognizing HaShem's constant involvement and concern with our welfare. The third allusion to Chanuka therefore takes place in the parsha of Mikeitz, when Yosef's star begins to rise, to show us that this was the Divine plan all along.

If the point is to show us that G-d has a Divine plan, why do we need multiple references? Perhaps it is because the first reference, being the word "light" at the very beginning of Creation, hints to the miracles that G-d will do for us. The 25th destination, on the other hand, is a reference to the Chashmona'im, the people who fought valiantly for G-d's honor, teaching us that the determination of Man to do HaShem's will is also key, and that ability has been instilled in us well before it is actually needed.

Finally, from the hidden allusion in Parshas Mikeitz, including the minute detail about the specific miracle which would occur, we see that just because we don't see the plan unfolding, doesn't mean that it isn't moving along right on schedule. What we see as mishaps or obstacles may very well be the building blocks of salvation taking form. Therefore, all these allusions were given, so that we might have a fuller picture of how to view history and world events. Perhaps, this is why the travels of Klal Yisrael are read during the Three Weeks, just before Tisha B'Av, when so many tragedies have befallen our people. It reminds us that any bumps on the road of life are not accidents, but carefully positioned there by G-d.

R' Yonah K. was driving along one day, listening to a shiur from the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, R' Yehuda Zev Segal z"l. He was jarred from his spiritual reverie by the blaring of a car horn and instinctively slammed on his brakes.

As he did so, a pickup truck careened around the corner, and flew through the intersection without slowing down, just a few feet in front of our stunned driver.

Thanking G-d for saving him from a very dangerous collision, Yonah realized that there were no other cars on the road. "Then who blew the horn?" he wondered.

He had an idea, and rewound the tape. There, in the middle of a speech given fifteen years earlier and over 3,000 miles away, he heard a very insistent car horn honking.

At the time, the person recording the lecture may have been annoyed that his recording was "ruined." R' Yonah can attest, however, that the interruption in the shiur was just as G-d intended it to be, and that the horn was heard right on time.