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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:11 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:29 - שקיעה
- 8:51 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:35 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:21 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:31 - שקיעה
- 5:17* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:43 - צאת 72

מועד טבת - Sunday 10:31:00 PM

Rosh Chodesh is Monday and Tuesday

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com and EzrasTorah.org

Did You Know?

Shabbos Chanukah nearly always falls out on Parshas Mikeitz, and there are numerous connections between it and Chanukah. Here's one more:

When Pharaoh had his dreams, the second dream, the one that really woke him up, was about "seven ears of grain on one stalk." He first saw seven healthy and full ears of grain on one stalk, which were followed, and then swallowed up, by seven withered ears of grain.

Yosef would interpret this to reinforce the previous dream that seven years of bounty were coming, followed by seven years of famine. The Baal HaTurim points to the phrase, "on one stalk," and says that it occurs in three places in the Torah. Two are here by the full grain. The third, he says, is referring to the Menorah. (Ex. 25:33) This is because "bounty is a light unto the world," so says the Baal HaTurim. Let us elaborate: Bounty is like a light because everyone is happy when the economy is good. We are able to think and reflect, and recognize all the good we have. In times of hardship, however, one has trouble seeing anything but himself and his own problems.

On Chanuka, we are directed to use the light of the miracles to see all the good in our lives and praise HaShem for it. We take time to discuss our personal miracles. Though there may be difficulties, we cannot let them blot out the light of the overwhelming beneficence of our loving Creator Who constantly showers blessing and kindness upon us.

Thought of the week:

Talent is God-given. Be humble. Fame is man-given. Be grateful. Conceit is self-given. Be careful.

"אחרי הודיע אלוקים אותך את כל זאת, אין נבון וחכם כמוך." (בראשית מא:לט)

"As G-d has told you all this, there is none as perceptive and wise as you." (Ber. 41:39)

Many people tried to interpret Pharaoh's dream to his satisfaction but were unable. Yosef alone managed to offer an explanation that made sense and which was recognized as the truth. He then told Pharaoh to find a wise man to administer the storage and distribution of food.

Pharaoh said, "After HaShem has told you all this, there is no one as understanding and wise as you," and gave Yosef the job. But if Yosef was "told," what does it have to do with being understanding or wise? HaShem had appeared to Pharaoh and Avimelech, even to Lavan, and warned them not to harm His people, but it's not a revelation on their intellect or greatness. What was Pharaoh's rationale for praising Yosef and estimating him to be great based on his interpretations of the dream?

There was something else different about Yosef. From the beginning, when he was asked if he knew how to interpret dreams, Yosef demurred, saying that HaShem would interpret the dreams for Pharaoh, not him. While other people offered their own interpretations, Yosef offered G-d's.

The other interpreters felt the dream had some mystic importance, or was rooted in Pharaoh's thoughts, but Yosef understood that everything we see is a message from the Al-mighty. When he saw his brothers do something questionable, he felt he had to act and could not ignore it. When he saw the Wine Steward and Baker were sad, he had to ask them about it. When Pharaoh had a dream, it was because G-d was telling him something.

This is a level of understanding far beyond those who consider themselves wise. To realize that we are merely conduits for HaShem's influence in the world, His messenger and agents, is a level of greatness. Those who seek out the messages HaShem sends us and try to divine their meaning are more understanding than those who rely on their own minds and experiences.

The Ramban points out that when Yosef saw the fat cows swallowed by the thin ones, he got the idea that the bounty of the seven good years should be used as sustenance for the seven lean ones. HaShem didn't give Yosef a prophecy, but rather sent a coded message which Yosef was able to decrypt. That's what Pharaoh referred to as being told by HaShem, and only a person who recognizes that HaShem is running every detail of the world would have gotten the message. Clearly, then, since only Yosef had received that message, there was no one truly as understanding or wise as he in the land of Egypt.

The Maccabees are so called because they had the verse, "Mi Kamocha Ba'a'ilim HaShem, Who is like You among the mighty, O L-rd?" inscribed on their shields. Like Yosef, they understood that victory lay not in their hands, but in HaShem's. This realization of where the real power came from was the greatest praise we could give them, so they are known by the acronym of that posuk, MKBY, or Maccabee.

May the spirit of Chanukah enlighten each of us to see that we should all turn our eyes where the flames point with such intensity – to our Father in Heaven.

The Brisker Rov had some Baalei Batim who questioned his decisions and felt that they were more attuned to what HaKadosh Baruch Hu demands of us than he. They derided him saying, "Why should we listen to you? Who says that you know Da'as Torah?"

Rabbi Soloveitchik calmly responded, "I am confident in my decisions. Perhaps you are correct, and I do not know Da'as Torah. However, I do know Da'as Baalei Batim, so I just need to rule the opposite way."