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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:13 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:31 - שקיעה
- 9:01 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:37 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:23 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:32 - שקיעה
- 5:14 - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:44 - צאת 72

אגוטען שבת!

Did you Know?

It is forbidden to derive benefit from the Chanukah lights, even for a Mitzvah. Rashi in Mes. Shabbos explains that since the miracle occurred with the Menorah in the Bais HaMikdash whose light was not permitted for other uses, Chazal established that the commemorative lighting should also be prohibited to use. Others, including the Levush, say the reason is to make it clear that these lights are not intended for personal use, but rather to spread the story of the miracle. The Arizal is quoted as saying that one may not use the light of the Chanukah menorah so that mundane things not latch on to the holiness existent in its light. For this reason it is customary to say Yosheiv B'Saiser Elyon, the chapter of Tehillim specifically related to protection, to protect the kedusha of the lights from being grabbed by external forces. The Kav HaYashar comments that the custom is to make the Shamash higher than the other flames, just as the Serafim "dwell above thirty-six," and there are thirty-six lights over Chanukah. In that case, he says, the Shamashim have an even greater holiness, and represent the Kohain who lit the Menorah in the Bais HaMikdash, therefore no mundane work should be done by their light either. He concludes by assuring that those who are careful in this, and do not move the Shamash from its place, will merit to see the Menorah kindled in the rebuilt Bais HaMikdash, b'm'heira b'yameinu.

Thought of the week:

We see things not as they are, but as we are when we look at them.

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"והנה מן היאר עלת שבע פרות יפות מראה ובריאת בשר ותרעינה באחו." (בראשית מא:ב)

"Behold, from the river emerged seven cows, fine looking and well-fleshed, and they were grazing in the reed grass."

While any schoolchild can tell you what Pharaoh's dreams meant, few will be able to explain the method of interpretation. At first glance, we would assume that the fat cows alluded to years of plenty because they themselves were well fed. However, Chazal do not say that.

Rashi explains that the well-fed cows symbolize prosperity because during a time of plenty, beings look better to each other, since none have a strained eye towards their counterparts. The phrase that he uses, "tzor ayin," literally means a narrow or squinting eye, often refers to viewing the negative in something, and also is associated with stinginess. Had times been difficult, the cows would not be perceived as fat and healthy.

From the fact that the cows were viewed as healthy, we could interpret the mindset of the one viewing them, and, from that, the prosperity of the times. This teaches us a tremendous lesson, over and above the simple interpretation of the dream.

Chazal say that a dream is normally a reflection of what a person thinks about by day. That means that dreams are affected by our perception of things we see. Two people might witness the same thing and experience vastly different dreams.

Now, we learn that even our vision during waking time is affected by our thoughts and perceptions. If I am prosperous, I tend to find the good in others. However, if I am having difficulty, or I am frustrated or experiencing stress, I might see others in a negative light.

Ultimately, what we see in the world as good and bad has been filtered through our psyches. If so, we must also filter our psyches to remove any external influences if we wish to see things as they truly are.

On Chanukah, we celebrate our victory over the Yevanim, who Chazal categorize as darkness. Though the Greeks claimed to be "enlightened" and cultured, they sought to tear us away from the Torah, which is the true source of light. This darkness dulls our vision and prevents us from seeing the truth as it exists. Instead, we take the notions of the world at large and use them as our guide.

The lesson of Mikeitz, which nearly always falls out on Chanukah, is that we must make sure we are seeing clearly, without bias, for when we see shortcomings or defects in others or G-d forbid, in the Torah, it is a result of our own lack of vision. By being aware of it, we can see past the blinders, and recognize the wonders of HaShem.

A peasant who had heard much about the famed art in the Louvre took a trip to Paris to see the works for himself. He hired a wagon to take him from his small hamlet through the countryside until he reached a city where he could hop on a train to Paris.

Upon his advent there, he mentioned to a museum guard that he had traveled all this way to see the beautiful masterpieces. Hearing this, the guard offered to give him a personal tour. The first work he showed the traveler was a Rembrandt.

"This is a masterpiece?" snickered the peasant. "It looks like smudges of mud!" The guard was taken aback but showed him to a work by Van Gogh. "Harumph!" snorted the visitor, "this also looks like smudges of mud."

When he heard that, the guard wheeled around to face the peasant. Instantly, he noticed that the man's face and glasses were streaked with mud from his trip! What he saw as a deficiency in the paintings was really just a problem with his own vision.