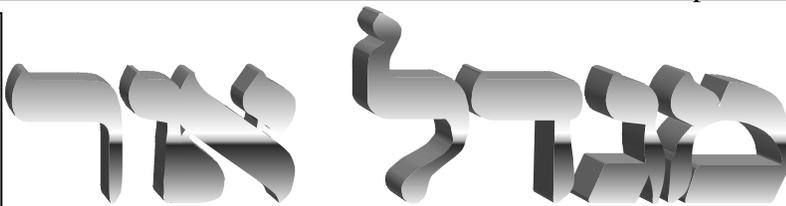


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:45 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:03 - שקיעה
- 8:58 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:41 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:30 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:05 - שקיעה
- 5:49* - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:17 - צאת 72

Friday 2:26:07 AM - מולד אדר א'

Rosh Chodesh is Friday and Shabbos

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com and

EzrasTorah.org

Did You Know?

The True Value of Man

Parshas Mishpatim teaches us many of the laws of damages and property. One of them is that if a man steals an ox and slaughters it, he must pay five times the value. If he steals a sheep, he only pays four times the value.

Many people are familiar with the phrase in the Gemara (Bava Kama 79b), "How great is the honor of Man, that because an ox walks by itself but he had to carry the sheep on his shoulder, his repayment is less."

HaShem is concerned with even the honor of a thief -- an indication to us of how concerned and careful we should be with the honor of our fellow man.

There is another part to that Gemara. Just before this it says, "How great is the value of work, that because the thief caused the owner of the ox to be unable to work he pays more."

What is so great about that? It's just dollars and sense. He cost him money by not letting him work so it logically gets included in the punishment.

Clearly then, R' Meir is not speaking about that, but rather the fact that he made the owner unable to be productive.

Man is here on earth to accomplish, and for him to sit idly is more costly than for him to simply not be making money.

Thought of the week:

Success is only another form of failure if we forget what our priorities should be.

"ואם אמר העבד אהבתי את אדני את אשתי ואת בני לא אצא חפשי." (שמות כא:5)

"And if the slave shall say, "I love my Master, my wife, and my children, I shall not go out free." (Exodus 21:5)

The Torah's way of criminal rehabilitation is quite different from that of modern society's. Today, we take a thief and place him in jail, in the company of thieves, murderers, and more, where he learns to expand his horizons and commit worse crimes more effectively.

Not so the Jewish slave spoken about in our parsha. This man stole and because he had no money to pay for it, he was sold into slavery. However, the Eved Ivri, the Jewish slave, is more a slavery for the master than for the servant.

The person who buys this slave must provide for him better than for himself. If the man is married, the master must support his family. If there is only one pillow in the home, the eved gets it. The master may not give him demeaning or purposeless work, and the list goes on and on.

The idea here is that the Jewish criminal sees what levels of saintliness and caring for another may be reached, and in that atmosphere, the hope is that he will be affected to the point of rehabilitation and be able to rejoin society as a valuable, contributory member.

However, if he says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free," then we are to take him to the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. He then remains in servitude forever (until the Yovel-Jubilee year.) The ear is pierced to point out that that he didn't get the message. It was there, but he wasn't listening.

But could it not be that he truly came to care for and appreciate his master? Perhaps he developed a strong emotional bond with the Canaanite maid he was given for a wife and the children he bore with her. Why should this be such an unexpected and denigrated response?

The key can be found in the order in which he states his reason for staying. Of the three items, the normal, natural, and proper approach is to love our children more than anyone else. (One reason is because giving causes love and parents primarily give to children, especially when they are young.) After that comes our spouse, and a distant third is our job. This servant, though, has his priorities mixed up.

First, he says, "I like my job." It's easy, comfortable, and he's got a nice boss. Then he says, "I like my wife." She makes him feel good; looks up to him perhaps. Lastly he mentions his kids. Perhaps they are cute. Either way, he is still thinking about himself. He has not learned the lesson of thinking about others and putting their needs before your own as his master did in taking him in.

Such a man must remain a slave because the rehabilitation failed. He didn't learn to think of others and as such he might as well remain in a position where someone else makes his decisions for him. His own decisions are flawed, because he doesn't understand the gravity of that which he chooses, nor the value of that which he gives up.

After delivering a shiur at Yeshivas Kol Torah, R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l went to visit a child in the hospital. On the way, he asked the driver to stop at a kiosk, where he wanted to buy a candy bar for the boy.

Picking one up, the sage turned the snack this way and that, scanning the label. Seeing this, the driver commented, "I know that candy bar. It has a very good hechsher (Kosher certification.)"

"Thank you, but I wasn't looking for the hechsher," said the Rav with a smile, "I want the boy to enjoy it, so I was looking to see if it tastes good."