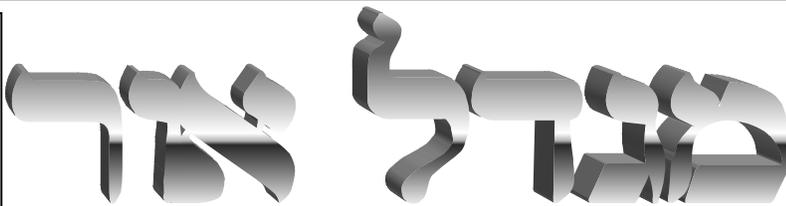


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:44 - הדלקת נרות
- 6:02 - שקיעה
- 9:18 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:59 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:53 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 6:01 - שקיעה
- 6:43* - צאת הכוכבים
- 7:13 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars
Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

The Gemara (Pesachim 3a) says in the name of R' Yehoshua ben Levi: "Always, a person should not allow a vulgar word to pass his lips, for the Torah [in Parshas Noach] goes out of its way eight letters to avoid saying something "not nice." It says the animals which were "pure" and the animals "which were not pure."

Instead of using the word impure, which, while a proper word, isn't the nicest way of expressing it, the Torah used a longer expression to teach us this lesson. While it does use the word impure when necessary, it is not the ideal behavior for us to say things that are inappropriate.

In Beraishis, when the Torah says HaShem breathed life into Adam and made him a living being, the Targum Onkelos renders it as, "a speaking spirit." Speech is what separates us from the animals and it must be used wisely and with respect.

With the Shabbos Project this week, it behooves us to mention "v'daber davar," the fact that on Shabbos one's speech must be even more different and above reproach than usual.

We do not speak of business matters, or things which upset us, and we are especially careful to avoid Lashon Hara and gossip, or even speaking about others which inevitably leads to sin.

As we learn from this week's parsha, speech is sacred, and so are we.

Thought of the week:
Dignity does not consist of possessing honors, but deserving them.

"מכל הבהמה הטהורה תקח לך שבעה שבעה ואשתו ואשתו..." (בראשית ז:ב)

"From every pure animal take for you seven each, male and female..." (Gen. 7:2)

As the flood approached, HaShem told Noach to save a pair of each species so the world might be repopulated after the devastation. Regarding the pure animals, ones that would be Kosher and permitted to the Jews, Noach was commanded to take seven male and female. Some say this means four male and three female, but most understand this to mean seven males and seven females.

Elsewhere, it refers to male and female as "zachar" and "nekaiva," the Hebrew terms that literally mean male and female. Here, however, it refers to the male and female in terms of man and wife, connoting something more.

Later, when the Torah says that HaShem 'remembered' Noach and the animals on the ark (8:1), Rashi asks what merit HaShem recalled in their favor. He says that it was the fact that these animals had not deviated to mate outside their species. Mankind at that time had become a cesspool of promiscuity to such an extent that even animals were influenced and became deviant. Those creatures were not allowed on the ark. The ones that were allowed to enter were ones that had not strayed.

In that light, we can understand why the term "man and wife" was used. It is to convey this loyalty and faithfulness. These animals, the pure ones who had been faithful, were the ones fit to be sacrificed, brought close to G-d.

Despite the fact that these animals were identified as pure, the Torah taught us this extra lesson about their behavior to remind us that though Jews are special because we are the "chosen People," the ones HaShem saw fit to give additional responsibilities, we are not automatically "pure." Rather, our behavior must be exemplary and not deteriorate to mimic the moral decay of those around us. Only then are we worthy of being remembered and coming close to G-d.

The posuk continues, however, and adds this phrase of "man and wife" to the animals who were "not pure." Why would it matter? The additional lesson we can learn is that appropriate behavior is not for "special" people. It's not just for tzaddikim and sages to act properly, but each and every one of us, even if we don't consider ourselves so holy, must do so. Not only Rabbis need to be holy, but each of us must be a light unto the nations.

Often people sell themselves short and excuse their behavior by saying they are simply not that good. This is a tool of the Yetzer Hara, the evil inclination, to rationalize less-than-perfect behavior. By determining that we are a certain type of person we hold ourselves to a lower standard. This parsha teaches us that even animals know better than that.

R' Chatzkel Abramsky, z"l, was once riding in an Israeli cab and the driver told him a story.

"After our IDF military service was over," said the cabbie, "some friends and I went on a hiking and camping trip. In the middle of the night, we heard shouts and awoke to find a large snake wrapped around one of my friends. It was squeezing him so hard he could not breathe."

"We didn't know what to do, as it slowly killed him, and one of my friends said, "You're going to die, say 'Shema Yisrael!'" As he did, the snake uncoiled and slithered away. He was so moved that he became a baal Teshuva, studied Torah, and is completely religious today."

R' Chatzkel asked him, "And what about you? Did you become more religious too?"

"Me?" replied the taxi driver, "Why should I have become more religious? The snake wasn't wrapped around me!"