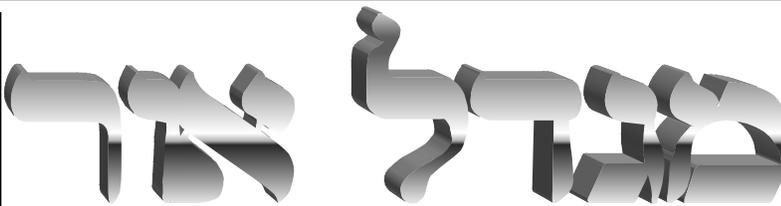


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:12 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:30 - שקיעה
- 8:51 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:36 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:22 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:31 - שקיעה
- 5:17* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:43 - צאת 72

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

Did You Know?

When Moshe cast down his staff, it turned into a snake which scared Moshe and he ran away from it.

HaShem told him to grasp it firmly and it turned back into a staff in his palm.

The snake is always representative of the Yetzer Hara, the evil Tempter. It was the snake in Gan Eden who tricked Chava into eating the forbidden fruit, bringing death to the world.

Moshe was rightly afraid of the Yetzer Hara and did the prudent thing by running away from it. In such a dangerous situation, one does not say, "G-d will protect me." Rather, it is wise to flee from sin. Here, however, HaShem taught Moshe a phenomenal trick that we can all use.

The posuk tells us when Moshe "held it firmly," the snake became a staff in his hand. A staff is used for giving one stability and aid in his journey, and that is the trick Moshe learned.

We all have various temptations but we can use them to help us avoid sin. For example, one might control his anger because he desires honor and knows he will be embarrassed if he loses his cool.

One can tell himself that if he holds back from a particular sin, G-d will in turn give him great wealth for having passed the test, thereby using his desire for money to aid him in fighting the very Yetzer Hara he was previously afraid of.

By properly taking control of sin, a person can harness it for good.

Thought of the week:

You don't climb a mountain because it is there. You climb it because YOU are there.

"ותלד בן ויקרא את שמו גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי בארץ נכריה" (שמות ב:22)

"And [Tzipora] bore a son and [Moshe] called his name Gershom, for he said, 'I was a stranger in a strange land.'" (Exodus 2:22)

Following the practice of naming a child for an important event or experience, Moshe uses his son's name to recall the fact that he was a stranger, not in his rightful place. To which land was Moshe referring and why?

The Sipurno says he was not in the land of his birth, Egypt, so the strange land referred to Midian. The Ohr HaChaim says it could refer even to Egypt. The language is in the past tense for when the Torah was written, he was no longer in the strange land. He continues by also suggesting that Tzadikim live on Earth as travelers and do not consider it home.

These explanations leave something to be desired. If it was a question of being a stranger on Earth, why was his son's birth a factor in that? If he was a stranger from a foreign land, living where he had not been born, the birth of his son doesn't change that either. Finally, if it was referring to Egypt as his birthplace, does the Torah not find fault with Moshe for allowing himself to be called "an Egyptian man" by Yisro's daughters?

Perhaps we can explain as follows: When one is living in his homeland, no one will question why he is there. When he emigrates to another country, though, they see him as an interloper. He has no reason to be there. Once a child is born in the new land, however, the father has a job to raise the boy there, in the child's proper birthplace. He belongs there because his son needs him there. He now fits in.

Likewise, when a tzadik is on Earth and feels out of place, that's because he has loftier goals in mind. He wants to be close to HaShem. When a child is born and the parent raises him to serve HaShem, he is actively involved in spiritual pursuits. No longer a stranger, but a guide, he has reason to be here on Earth.

How, then, can we reconcile the opinion that Moshe wanted to be in Egypt where he was born with the opinion that he wanted to be in Heaven? Easy.

When one realizes that his birthplace is ordained by G-d to give him precisely the environment and opportunities he needs to fulfill his purpose on earth, he can turn his physical birthplace into a spiritual stepping stone. He can find purpose because he understands his place of birth is not coincidence or luck, but part of the Divine plan for the universe. He is at home; he is wanted and needed.

Moshe named his son to say, "I felt like a stranger, but G-d showed me that I am exactly where I am supposed to be." Even for Moshe, that was something worth commemorating.

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.