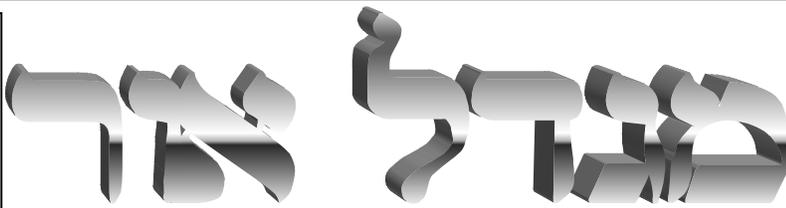


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

**Zmanim for שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:44 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:11 - שקיעה
- 8:44 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:31 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:41 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:02 - שקיעה
- 8:47\* - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:14 - צאת 72

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

**Did You Know?**

Parshas Shoftim discusses establishing judges and a system of law. We are not to bend the law to suit our needs, even if we think we are being altruistic and kind to a pauper.

This reaffirms our recognition that we cannot understand the ways of G-d; the age-old question of "tzaddik v'ra lo," the suffering of the righteous. There is a purpose to all, even if we don't see it.

There is a notable word used in connection both with judges and with those come to seek the law from judges. The word is "v'darashta," and you shall delve and inquire.

It is used regarding judges who hear that someone sinned. They must inquire diligently before rendering judgment.

It is also used regarding one who has a situation for which he needs guidance. He is to seek out the ruling from the leaders in his day and follow their direction.

The important lesson here is that we cannot assume our beliefs or impressions are correct, nor rely on stock rulings and pat answers.

In order to live according to the Torah, one must truly wish to seek the answers and put effort into understanding.

Whether leaders or followers, the need to delve, reflect and inquire never ceases. We never get to a point where we don't need to ask.

**Thought of the week:**

**Why can we empathize with characters in books or movies, yet we find it hard to do so with real people?**

**"...מקרב אחיך תשים עליך מלך לא תוכל לתת עליך איש נכרי אשר לא אחיך הוא."** (דברים יז:טו)

**"...from among your brethren shall you set over yourself a king; you cannot place over yourself a foreign man, who is not your brother."** (Deut. 17:15)

While elsewhere in this Torah portion other Jews are referred to as, "rayaihu," one's fellow man, regarding the appointment of a king, the Torah says he must be "achicha," a "brother." It uses the term brother regarding a prophet too, but referring to a king, not only does it say it once, but the Torah repeats it to say you cannot appoint one who is NOT your brother as king.

The Gemara in Sota (41a) relates the story of King Agrippa, grandson of Hordus (Herod) who was a Roman slave who killed his masters and took the throne, who read from the Torah and when he got to the verse, "You cannot place over yourself a foreign man," his eyes filled with tears. The sages comforted him by saying, "Don't worry, you are our brother." For flattering him this way, they were condemned.

Rashi there says his mother was Jewish, but others question this because if that were true, he would have been considered "from your brethren." One opinion of Tosfos says that though that works for a leadership position, to be the king of Israel, one's father and mother must both be Jewish. This is not the final ruling on the matter, but it gives us some insight.

Why, when speaking about another Jew does it not refer to him as "your brother," but when it comes to a king it says "brother" twice? In Mishlei (Proverbs 21:1), it states, "Like the watercourse, is the heart of a king in G-d's hand." In other words, just as one adjusts the flow of water into a field to where it is needed most, so does G-d influence the decisions of the king who is necessary to the entire population. He no longer has free will as that position is too important to allow him to harm others on a whim.

Therefore, the king must not be a stranger, but one who associates and empathizes with his Jewish subjects. He came from the same unbroken line stretching back to Sinai and beyond as did the rest of the Jews, and he must have no reason to disassociate himself.

It has been said that the words of Dovid HaMelech, the Tehilim/Psalms, are so poignant because Dovid's heart was the heart of Klal Yisrael, the Jewish People as a whole. He was able to capture all of our feelings and emotions in his words because he was connected to all of our souls.

We are called the "children of kings," and the Jewish People is the royalty of the nations. We must therefore act like kings do, in being caring and concerned for our fellow Jews, feeling their pain, sharing their joy, and being connected to each other through it all.

*Late one night, there was a knock on the door of R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l. A chasan and kalla entered, both of whom were baalei teshuvah, with a difficult question. Their wedding was a week away, and it had suddenly been revealed that the kalla was pasul for marriage, and it was forbidden for them to marry. They implored R' Shlomo Zalman, "What should we do?"*

*He sadly gestured that there was nothing he could do. Then he said, "You're asking me what to do, but I know that there's nothing to be done; can I provide a heter for someone forbidden to marry? However, there is one thing in my power to do for you -- I can cry." He then burst out in heart-rending weeping.*

*Not twenty-four hours passed and the couple returned to the sage's house. They told him that a man had suddenly arrived from Argentina who knew the kalla's family well and testified that she was not forbidden. The information they had received previously was false.*

*R' Yitzchak Zilberstein, who retold this story, commented that, in his opinion, the tears of R' Shlomo Zalman were the very cause of the almost miraculous happy ending to the story.*