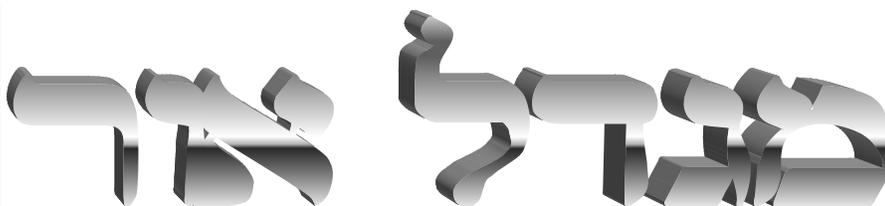


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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:42 - הדלקת נרות
- 6:00 - שקיעה
- 9:24 - זק"ש מ"א
- 10:00 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:53 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:59 - שקיעה
- 6:41 - צאת הכוכבים
- 7:11 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

אוטען שבת!

Did You Know?

Avraham famously refers to himself humbly as dust and ashes, and for that he is rewarded with two mitzvos - the dust of the Sotah water and the ashes of the Para Aduma. The Daas Zekainim Mi'Baalei haTosfos explains how Avraham arrived at those descriptions of himself. He could have become dust in the battle with the four kings and ashes in the fiery furnace in Ur Kasdim - were it not for the mercy of HaShem which saved him. By recognizing what would have become of him without G-d's help, and appreciating it, he merited even more of HaShem's chesed.

Avraham's request that HaShem spare Sodom was predicated on there being ten Tzaddikim there. While not a Biblical commandment, there is a rabbinic mitzvah to daven with a minyan and one should endeavor to always pray with ten.

Among the reasons and advantages given for davening with ten men are:

1. HaShem does not despise the prayers of a tzibbur, unlike an individual's prayers which are screened for kavana.
2. Only in a minyan can kaddish be said and answering Yeei Shmei Rabba can tear up a bad decree.
3. By davening together, we can focus on "Love your neighbor as yourself."
4. The Gemara relates the tale of a woman whose unusually long life is ascribed to the merit of her praying with a minyan each day (although she wasn't obligated to.)

Thought of the week:
 How a man plays a game shows something of his character, how he loses shows all of it.

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"אולי יחסרון חמישים הצדיקים התשחית בחמשה את כל העיר ויאמר לא אנשחית אם אמצא

שם ארבעים וחמשה" (בראית יחנה)

"But suppose they lack five of the fifty righteous? Will You destroy all the city because of five?" [HaShem] said, "I will not destroy if I find forty-five there."

Avraham Avinu here famously pleaded for the people of Sodom by negotiating with HaShem on their behalf. As Chazal tell us, there were five cities, and fifty people would be a minyan in each. He then proceeded to work his way down as the meforshim explain.

There is a noticeable change in Avraham's bargaining, preceded by this posuk. Here he asks G-d if He would destroy the cities because five were missing from the fifty. Surely HaShem would not destroy a city simply because five of them got lost? His response is very telling.

Instead of saying, "No, I will not destroy the city if five are missing," HaShem says, "I will spare it if I find forty-five." He doesn't directly answer Avraham's question with the same words. After that point, we don't find Avraham using that argument anymore, and he limits himself to asking, "What if you find so-and-so many?"

From this we can see two things. First of all, HaShem doesn't consider anything small or valueless. Avraham said, "Big deal, so if five are missing, you can still have nine in each city and You can be the tenth. Is five so important?"

HaShem's response was, "Yes, the five are important. However, if I find forty-five, I will spare the cities for them." It was not that the five didn't matter, but that HaShem was willing to save Sodom for less than the fifty Avraham asked originally. His response shows us that He does care about "the little things," as Chazal say, "Be careful with the small mitzvos like the big ones."

Secondly, we see that we should not focus on what's missing, in this case the five Tzaddikim out of fifty, but rather on what we have, in this case the forty-five. Avraham referred to what was lacking; HaShem responded by referring to what was present. From then on, Avraham only referred to finding a smaller group of people, but not to what was missing.

If we were to concentrate on what we have in our lives, we would find that, like HaShem, we could be satisfied with less, as HaShem was with the forty-five Tzaddikim. Focusing on the negative is not following the way of HaShem, and can ultimately lead to destruction.

One morning in Yeshiva, a bochur came up with a novel interpretation on a posuk. Lot told the angels, "Sleep here tonight, and wash your feet." The Midrash discusses whether this was a praise or criticism of Lot. On the one hand, he was willing to allow the dust on their feet (worshiped as an avoda zara) to remain in his house overnight. On the positive side, however, it may be that Lot wanted the visitors to appear as if they had just arrived, given Sodom's feelings about guests.

This young man said, "Maybe it's neither. There is a famous Midrash that in Sodom they had special beds. If a guest was too short he was stretched, and if he was too tall, his feet were cut off to make him fit. Likely the angels were tall, and Lot was telling them that he was not like the other residents of Sodom. He was saying, "Sleep here tonight, and you'll still have feet to wash in the morning!"

This "brilliant insight" quickly worked its way around the Yeshiva as the boys got a good chuckle over it and passed it on. However, by lunchtime, one irate Kollel fellow approached the creator of this idea and could barely contain his anger. Red-faced, he sputtered to the boy, "I - I - heard what you said. You... you... you can't say that's pshat! (the simple meaning)"

Taken aback at this fellow's angry condemnation of what had previously been a joke, the bochur responded calmly, "But you can't say it's not."