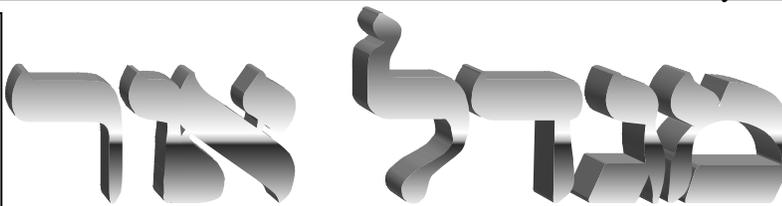


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

5:52 -	הדלקת נרות
6:10 -	שקיעה
9:15 -	זק"ש מ"א
9:56 -	זק"ש גר"א
10:51 -	סוף זמן תפילה
6:10 -	שקיעה
7:51* -	צאת הכוכבים
7:22 -	צאת 72

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

Did You Know?

There is an amazing Midrash in this Parsha which we all would do well to know. Not only because it is a part of Torah, but because it can help us in a practical way.

The Torah tells us of Hagar, cast out by Avraham, and her son Yishmael, who is feverish and ill. She wishes to give him water, but her flask is empty.

She leaves the boy so she should not witness his suffering. An angel comes and announces that her son will live.

Then the Torah tells us, "*Vayifkach Elokim es Aine'ha,*" And G-d opened up her eyes, "*va'taira b'air mayim,*" and she saw a well of water. The well had been there the whole time, but Hagar didn't see it until now. And this is where the Midrash starts.

"*Amar R' Binyamin,*" Says Rabbi Binyamin, "*Hakol b'chezkas sumin,*" everyone is categorized as blind, "*ad SheHaKadosh Baruch Hu mai'ir es aineihem,*" until the Holy One Blessed be He lightens up their eyes." The understanding is that things may be right in front of our noses, but if HaShem doesn't let us see them, we won't.

Reciting this Midrash has become a segula, an auspicious practice, for finding lost items.

As my friend Eliyahu told me when we were 14, "You say the Midrash three times, and then you duck." Duck? Why duck?

"'Cuz if you don't," he said with a chuckle, "it'll hit you in the head!"

I have had many occasions to use this phrase and it works. Try it out and you'll see that when you leave your vision to G-d, He shows you what you need to see.

Thought of the week:
Vision is the art of seeing things which are invisible.

"וירא אליו ה'... וישא עיניו וירא..." (בראשית יח:ב)

[Avraham]... And [Avraham] lifted his eyes and looked... (Gen. 18:1-2)

When Avraham was recuperating from his circumcision, G-d, Himself, came to visit him. As they were speaking, Avraham saw three men approach but keep their distance. He recognized them as travelers and asked HaShem to excuse him while he attended to the guests. He did not know that these were angels sent by HaShem.

The commentaries explain that the word used to say he saw the guests connotes a deeper understanding, that by looking at them, Avraham saw they did not wish to disturb him. Sensing their discomfort, he ran to serve them with enthusiasm so as to set their minds at ease. Instead of simply seeing with his eyes, Avraham thought about what he saw, and sought to gain a deeper understanding from his vision. In other words, Avraham was a seeker.

The root of the words "vayaira," meaning HaShem appeared, and "vaya'ar," meaning that Avraham saw, is 'yud,' 'raish,' 'aleph.' It is also the root of the word "yirah," or fear, and "yarei," one who fears. It was used later on in this Torah portion when Avraham is stopped from carrying out HaShem's command to sacrifice his son Yitzchak.

As he was about to slaughter his son, an angel called out to him and commanded him to stop. At that point, HaShem's message to Avraham was, "Now I see that you are a "yerai Elokim" (one who fears G-d) for you have not withheld your son, your only child, from Me." R' Avigdor Miller z"l used to explain the phrase "Yiras Shomayim," fear of Heaven, as one who "sees" G-d. When you recognize the Master of the World all around you, you simply cannot sin.

It was Avraham, our patriarch, who was the paradigmatic seeker. He looked at the world and was not content to accept it at face value. He realized that beneath the surface there was a reason why the things he saw were as they were. He discovered that there was a Creator because he *wanted* to see the truth.

When they went to Egypt, Avraham said Sarah was his sister. When the truth came out, Avimelech asked Avraham, "Ma Ra'isa," What did you see that made you mislead us? Avraham looked carefully at Egypt and knew what he had to do, and even Avimelech, King of Egypt, and selfish kidnaper understood this. Avraham sought out the truth and therefore he was able to find it. He saw things because he wished to see.

When the angel stopped him from sacrificing his son, Avraham looked around to see his options. He "saw" a ram tangled in the bushes by its horns. The Sipurno says Avraham knew it was miraculously created and therefore he would not be committing theft by stealing someone's ram. He knew because he did not see it before, and now he did see it. Because Avraham was always keeping his eyes open, he was able to know the difference now too.

That is why this Parsha says, "And HaShem *made Himself seen* by Avraham." Because Avraham wanted to see, he was able to see. When we wish to open our hearts and see G-d all around us, we, too, will be able to perceive His presence, because we truly want to.

R' Eliyahu Dessler z"l is known as a giant in mussar, self-improvement through the study of traditional Jewish ethics. His esteemed wife was no less involved in proper self-guidance and looked at the world through the prism of Torah and midos tovos, good character traits.

Once, she saw someone admiring something in the window of a pawn shop. When she asked what the person was doing, the woman replied that she did not intend to buy any of the luxury items she saw, but simply enjoyed looking at the beautiful merchandise in the store window.

Rebbetzin Dessler replied, "I simply cannot take any joy from looking at the items in a pawn shop window. It is there because someone came upon difficult times and had to part with a dear possession. How can we possibly be happy to see something which is the symbol of someone else's unhappiness?"