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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:10 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:28 - שקיעה
- 8:47 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:23 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:10 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:29 - שקיעה
- 5:11 - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:31 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

אוטען שבת!

Did You Know?

When Avraham was asked by Avimelech why he had lied to him, Avraham explained that he had seen there was a lack of Yiras Shomayim in that place and he feared for his life.

He then proceeded to explain that Sarah could be considered his sister since she was the granddaughter of his father, and grandchildren are like children, hence she could be looked at as his sister.

Why was it so important for him to rationalize the lie? If it was permissible to lie to save his life, who cares whether there was any element of truth to it?

We can learn the importance of truth from this. Even if one is required to lie, he should not do so openly, but should try to speak in an ambiguous fashion which technically is true, although the listener will interpret it differently.

Ambiguity can cause much harm, but used properly can be an invaluable tool, both in speech and judgment.

Thought of the week:

Do not condemn the judgment of another because it differs from your own.

You may both be wrong.

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"אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף בן שבע עשרה שנה היה רעה את אחיו ונער את בני

בלהה ואת בני זלפה נשי אביו ובא יוסף את דבתם רעה אל אביהם"
 (בראשית ל"ז)

"This is the history of Yaakov; Yosef at the age of seventeen years, would tend the sheep with his brothers, and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. Yosef brought back bad reports about them to their father."

This posuk would be difficult to understand without the explanation of Chazal and the meforshim. The word "את" can mean "with" as it is explained here, or it can mean that the next word is the recipient of the action. Thus, it could mean he shepherded sheep with his brothers, or it could mean he shepherded his brothers, as sheep. In fact, it almost seems that he did treat them as sheep and felt it was his job to teach them right and wrong.

The word "נער" would also be confusing without the proper explanation. Why is he called a youth? Is it because of his age? Perhaps because of his immature behavior? Maybe he was treated as a lackey by his brothers? Some say the sons of Leah degraded the sons of "the maidservants" and so Yosef specifically befriended them and spent the free time of his youth with them. The commentaries say all these things, again, not a straightforward use of verbiage.

"He brought back bad reports." Of whom? Leah's sons? The sons of Bilhah and Zilpah? Here too, we find various comments from meforshim with different possible meanings and interpretations. Why all the ambiguity surrounding Yosef and his brothers?

Perhaps we can find a meaningful lesson from it. Rashi says, "Whatever he was able to speak of them negatively, he related it." The Ohr HaChaim discusses at length the accusations Yosef leveled at the brothers, and how they were truly innocent of the sins he felt they committed. However, as the Ohr HaChaim notes, his thoughts were not their thoughts, and therefore he believed the worst about them and spoke ill of them. Yosef was repaid measure for measure, as all that befell him was representative of what he had accused his brothers of doing

Often, we are faced with things which can be interpreted in several ways. Human nature is to find fault with others and attribute their actions to evil motives. The Torah law, though, is to find the best possible explanation and assume that to be the correct one. Had Yosef done that, he might never have fought with his brothers. Who knows how much strife and bloodshed could have been avoided? By learning this lesson and practicing seeing the best in others, we, at least, can come closer to the unity that is necessary to end all exile.

After the land of Canaan was conquered by Klal Yisrael under Yehoshua's leadership, the tribes of Reuven, Gad, and half of Menashe began to return to their homes in Trans-Jordan, having fulfilled their promise to Moshe that they would fight for their brethren and help them to capture Eretz Yisrael.

As they marched home, they began to worry that they would be forgotten; that they would not be viewed as part of the Jewish People because they lived on the other side of the Jordan River. They therefore erected a monument on the near side of the Jordan as testimony of their solidarity, stating that they had come to fight with their brothers and were returning to their homes as proud members of Klal Yisrael.

Word spread among the other tribes that they had quickly degenerated and had erected a statue for idolatry. They began to form an army to go and fight Reuven, Gad and the half of Menashe on the other side of the river.

One man arose and exclaimed, "Wait! Do not fight with them. Let us first confirm the purpose of this monument. Let us speak to those tribes and learn the truth." After much cajoling, they agreed to listen to him and the true purpose of the monument came to light. War was avoided and no blood was shed.

That man, who kept peace by not jumping to conclusions, was none other than Pinchas, son of Elazar. According to one opinion in the Gemara, it was after this act of peace that he was bestowed the kehuna he had earned by being zealous for G-d's honor years before. He judged favorably and was rewarded eternally.