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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:10 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:28 - שקיעה
- 8:57 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:33 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:19 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:29 - שקיעה
- 5:11 - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:41 - צאת 72

אגוטען שבת!

Did you Know?

Shabbos Chanuka provides for some interesting halachic applications. In preparing the Menorah, one must ensure the candles or oil are sufficient to burn half an hour after the zman of hadlakos neiros, taking into account that one is lighting early. Lighting Chanuka neiros precedes lighting Shabbos candles, so one should allow enough time to light Menorah before normal candle-lighting time. A man who lights Shabbos candles (e.g. he is not married or his wife is away) should light the Menorah first then the Shabbos candles. If he accidentally lit the Shabbos candles first, he may light the Menorah, as long as he didn't accept Shabbos upon himself. A woman living alone would have to ask someone who had not yet accepted Shabbos to light Menorah for her since women generally accept Shabbos when they light the Shabbos candles. One should try to daven Mincha before lighting on Erev Shabbos because otherwise it seems contradictory since the Menorah belongs to Shabbos while the Mincha belongs to Friday. This year we have an unusual situation because Friday is not Chanuka but the Menorah has already been lit. R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l wrote that one who lit already must say Al HaNisim in Mincha, even though it is not yet 25 Kislev! If Al HaNisim is mistakenly omitted on Chanuka, the Shemoneh Esrei or Birkas HaMazon is not repeated.

Thought of the week:

If you do not understand a man you cannot crush him. And if you do understand him, very probably you will not.

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”ויבך אתו אביו... ויהי בעת ההוא וירד יהודה מאת אחיו.” (בראשית לז:לח-לחא)

“His father wept for him... And it was at that time, that Yehudah, descended from his brothers.”

Rashi says we learn from the placement of this parsha in between the sale and what happened to Yoseph that the brothers “demoted” Yehuda when they saw their father’s suffering. They said to him, “You told us to sell him. Had you said to return him we would have listened to you.” Therefore, he lost his stature of greatness amongst them.

Some commentaries ask on Rashi that this explanation accounts for the phrase of “Yehuda descended,” but not the entire story of Yehuda and Tamar. What is the connection between the story of the sale of Yoseph, the story of Yehuda and Tamar, and the ongoing story of Yoseph?

Perhaps we can understand if we look back an additional posuk. The Torah says, “his father wept for him.” Rashi explains that Yitzchak cried at the pain Yaakov experienced, but did not mourn Yoseph himself, since he knew with Ruach HaKodesh that Yoseph was alive.

When the brothers saw that someone could feel the pain of another so deeply that he could cry for him, even when he knows there is really nothing to cry for, they realized that they had been too hasty in their treatment of Yoseph. They didn’t take into account the pain they would cause Yaakov. They didn’t consider that Yoseph’s dreams and tale bearing were not malicious, but intended for the brothers’ own betterment. They accepted Yehuda’s advice without thinking about the pain they would cause. Now that they saw Yitzchak crying over the suffering of Yaakov, they realized their mistake.

So what is the connection to Yehuda?

In the story of his children, we see Yehuda continuing on with his past behavior, and keeping Tamar from marrying his youngest son. He ignores her pain and this leads to his ultimate test. When confronted with the evidence that he was the father of Tamar’s unborn children, he could have felt she was blackmailing him, or trying to hurt him. Instead, he admitted that she was more righteous than he. Why? Because she was concerned about Yehuda’s pain and embarrassment where he was not previously concerned about hers.

It was this awakening in Yehuda that connects to the previous parsha, and sets the stage for the story of Yoseph. Just as Yehuda was responsible for sending Yoseph to Egypt, and thus, ultimately responsible for the Redemption that arose upon Yetzias Mitzrayim, so did Yehuda merit to sow the seeds of Moshiach, and the ultimate redemption and the end to all golus. It was his realization of the need for awareness of the feelings and suffering of others that set in motion the events leading to the ultimate geula, and an end to all earthly suffering.

In the story of Chanuka, we know that the ruling Greek nation wished to outlaw things for which they saw no logical reason. It was precisely this inability or unwillingness to see the deeper message in things which separates the nations of the world from the Jewish people, who are called Yehudim, after Yehuda, precisely because of this episode and his elevated awareness.

During the beginning of the Iraq war (part II), as in many times throughout history, Jews around the world heeded the advice of their Rabbonim and Gedolim and began saying Tehillim after davening each day, sometimes after each Tefila.

A businessman traveling to a distant city davened at a shul where, after Mincha, the Rabbi announced: “As you know, we have been saying Tehillim for several months now, and it doesn’t really mean much to anyone anymore; we just do it by rote. Therefore, we will stop saying it.”

The visitor didn’t say anything at the time, but would note later, “That Rabbi had it all wrong. There was nothing wrong with the Tehillim. If it stopped having meaning, the problem was with the people in the Shul. Instead of stopping, he should have spoken about the meaning and efficacy of heartfelt Tefila. Who knows how much suffering he could have prevented?”