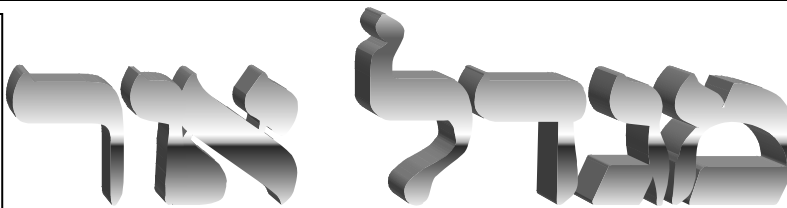


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Blanche Gewirtz
רבקה בריין בת הח' אליעזר ע"ה
Upon her first Yahrtzeit
By her loving family.
She is still a part of our lives every day.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:50 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:08 - שקיעה
- 8:24 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:14 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:27 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:10 - שקיעה
- 8:58 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:22 - צאת 72

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

Did You Know?

The *Tochacha*, the rebuke, contained in this Parsha begins, "And if you do not listen to Me..." and the next posuk begins, "And if you will be disgusted by My statutes."

The Parsha began by speaking about "going in My statutes," and didn't mention "listening." How then is this phrase the reverse of the proper behavior discussed at the outset? Shouldn't the Torah just talk about "not going in My statutes"?

Chazal explain that "going in My statutes" refers to studying Torah, not keeping the mitzvos. The Torah study is important on its own, but also because it helps us to perform the mitzvos by gaining insight into HaShem's mode of thinking and decision making so we trust in His guidance more.

One who does not study the Torah- in other words, he didn't listen to HaShem - will come to be lax in his mitzvah observance because it will not be meaningful to him.

More than that, he will come to despise the Torah and those who study it, and eventually cast off the mitzvos as well.

Were he to only study Torah, like R' Akiva, who said that before he studied Torah he hated Torah scholars, he would gain an appreciation for Torah, Judaism, and scholars, something he now lacks due to his own ignorance.

The *Tochacha* warns us that this destructive behavior stems from one thing – not listening to HaShem when He tells us what's good for us.

Thought of the week:

Don't search for the meaning of life. Start living and you'll discover it along the way.

"ונתתי משכני בתוכם ולא תגעל נפשי אתכם" (ויקרא כו:יא)

"I will place my Sanctuary in your midst and My spirit will not reject you." (Lev. 26:11)

In previous years, we discussed the fact that by placing the Bais HaMikdash, and with it, HaShem's Shechina, His Divine presence, in the midst of the Jewish camp, it would cause the Jews to be more aware of G-d, and therefore avoid sin. This is much as when the Chofetz Chaim wished to leave Europe for Israel and the gedolim asked him to stay because, "When the grandfather is at the table, the children behave."

This time, we will discuss another aspect of this proximity. While other religions require people to climb mountains in far off lands, or become hermits away from other people, HaShem places His home in the midst of a bustling metropolis, Jerusalem, our capital city.

By placing His Home squarely in the center of our home (Jerusalem was the capital city before the Bais HaMikdash was built,) G-d invites us to dwell WITH him, not to have to seek Him out in some distant land. By giving us a comfort level of being close to HaShem, we are able to connect with Him and serve Him more correctly. But there's more.

People have a natural affinity for their homelands. People wax nostalgic about their hometowns, and sports fans usually stick behind the hometown team even if they don't win. That's because where you come from is part of who you are. You love your home as part of yourself and ignore the things that are less than perfect.

Sancherev, king of Assyria, famously mixed up the nations, moving entire populations to other countries. One reason for this was that people who were not locals would not be as determined to fight for the land. An Ethiopian might fight for Ethiopia but he would not fight as hard for China. As this land was not their home, inhabitants were less connected to it.

In this posuk, HaShem says, "I will make YOU my home." In other words, HaShem will make the Jewish nation His dwelling place. By doing that, He will never come to being repulsed by us even when we don't live up to what we should. We are His hometown team and He won't give up on us.

This is a great lesson in how to love HaShem as well. By making Him OUR home, the place we come from, belong, and feel secure, we can accept things that seem unfair or bad and take them as part of the beauty and wonder of our own being. We know that there is a reason behind it and no other place, no other god, no other situation, could be better than staying close to HaShem; close to home.

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (3:20) says "V'Chol HaRotzeh Lilvos Yavo V'Yilveh," Whoever wants to borrow should come and borrow. Everything in the world belongs to HaShem. Whatever we take or use is taken on loan will need to be repaid. The more we indulge the more debt we incur. Over a lifetime we will accrue massive amounts of debt. How will we manage to repay it?

R' Mordechai Elefant z"l answered with a parable. When you go to a restaurant, everything you order is marked down and upon your departure you are hit with a bill. However, a waiter takes food when he is hungry and no one cares. For him it's all free since he is busy serving others.

Our homes, cars, clothing, and food are very expensive and one day we will need to pay dearly for them. However if our home is a place to be hospitable, if our car is made for giving others rides, if our clothing does not flout others and our food is always passed around to the less fortunate, then we will not be sent a bill for our use of HaShem's property.

In that case, we haven't taken anything as our own. Rather, it is HaShem's and we are merely taking a nibble in between our tasks of delivering His bounty to His children. These perks are included for us since we're not just visiting this world for our own pleasure - we're on the job.