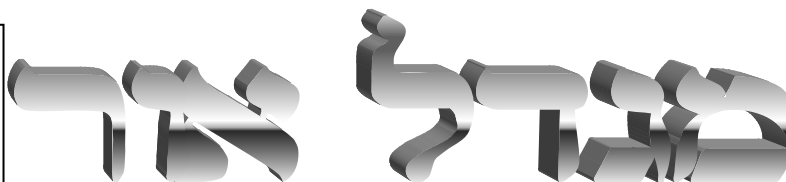


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Dedicated לע"נ
בריינדל בת ר' אליהו ע"ה
Mrs. Bertha Davids ob"m
Who taught Jewish children for over thirty years in the Breuer's community and elsewhere. Her legacy lives on in those whose lives she touched.
תננב"ה יארצייט ט"ז סיון

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:55 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:13 - שקיעה
- 8:21 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:12 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:26 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:15 - שקיעה
- 8:57 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:27 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

A Bit of Bitachon - A weekly infusion of security from Chovos HaLevavos by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda.

Rube Goldberg Was On to Something

We previously said that everything that happens is part of HaShem's decree. Either it is the desired result, or a close or distant cause to make that result occur. To explain these causes, Rabbeinu Bachya uses the example of drawing water from a deep well.

A man ties an animal to a wheel, which turns another wheel which is connected by a rope to the bucket. As the animal turns the wheel, the bucket is lifted from the well, bringing with it the water.

The bucket which completes the action is the "close" cause, while the man, who set the chain of events into motion, is the "distant" cause. All the actions in between are also causes for the water being drawn. Should one of them fail, the desired outcome cannot be achieved.

So it is with any other event in the world. It is not accomplished by man or any other cause, but by the decree of HaShem Yisbarach and the mediums He prepared to make it happen. Only through those are actions completed.

One can tangibly recognize that events are carefully orchestrated to lead to outcomes by noting that nothing can be achieved without steps. If one is hungry and food is placed before him, he is not satiated until he stretches out his hand and takes the food. Then he must put it into his mouth, chew, and swallow. That is if the food is ready. If not, there are many more steps, such as planting, watering, harvesting, grinding, baking, and so on. It is a key factor in Bitachon to remember that everything that happens is part of HaShem's plan, and that each occurrence may be key for the success of another.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

There is no finer investment for any community than putting milk into babies.

-Winston Churchill

"והקרבת את הלויים לפני ה' וסמכו בני ישראל את ידיהם על הלויים" (במדבר ח"י)

"You shall bring the Levites before HaShem, and the Children of Israel shall lean their hands upon the Levites."

Part of the inaugural service of the Levi'im was for the Jews to lean their hands upon them, much as they would lean upon a sacrifice. Semicha, leaning, is performed on a sacrifice to remind a person that this animal is a tangible replacement for his own body, which should rightfully have been sacrificed. Instead the animal takes his place. The Levi'im, too, took the place of the bechorim, the first-born Jews, in the service in the Mishkan.

The posuk doesn't tell us exactly who leaned their hands upon the Levi'im. The Netziv in Haamek Davar says that a select group of Jewish leaders were chosen by the people to represent the entire nation. The Chizkuni, on the other hand, writes that it was the first-born who did it, each bechor leaning on his corresponding Levi.

What was the point of leaning on them? We understand that by a sacrificial animal the person is supposed to reflect on the gravity of his sin, but the Torah doesn't tell us why exactly the firstborns lost the right to perform the avoda.

It tells us that Reuven overstepped his leadership role by moving Yaakov's bed, thereby losing his rights of bechora, but there is no clear sin outlined by the other firstborns. The Torah does say that when HaShem killed the Egyptian firstborns and spared the Jewish bechorim, He took the Levi'im in their place. It is likely that at least some of them were upset, and even jealous, of the Levites and their newly-found "transplanted" honor.

The act of semicha, leaning, on the Levi'im to inaugurate them may have been a possible solution to these hard feelings. Without this leaning, the Levites would not have been properly prepared for the Avoda. In essence, the Levi'im were only able to reach the heights they did through the efforts of those who leaned on them. Both the Chizkuni and the Haamek Davar make it clear that everyone who might have a reason to feel resentful had a share in the leaning, either directly or indirectly.

By playing a role in the elevation of the Levi'im, the bechorim were able to let go of their jealousy. Chazal tell us that a person is jealous of everyone but his child or his student. Why is he not jealous of them? Because to an extent, their success is his own. He can be proud of his child or student's achievements because he was instrumental in making them possible. Here, too, HaShem wanted the Jews to feel that the lofty levels reached by the Levi'im were their own levels, and to revel in, rather than be jealous of, the Levi'im's greatness.

Often people find it difficult to subjugate themselves to authority. They ridicule Rabbonim and even those who are more fastidious in Torah and Mitzvos than they are. One antidote for this is to recognize that we are all united and leaders are imbued with their authority as a result of our own merits and needs. Further, if we have any share in their growth, even merely by honoring and respecting them, we can take pride in those actions.

By looking at the achievements of others as extensions of our own efforts, we will be able to rid ourselves of jealousy and revel in their successes.

A philanthropist was a big donor to a particular Yeshiva. Actually, he was probably the main supporter of the Yeshiva who covered more than half its budget. He had some ideas about a certain aspect of chinuch which he wished to share with the Rosh Yeshiva.

He came to the Yeshiva one day and asked the Rosh Yeshiva if they could speak. Understanding that the man was about to share his opinions about how the Yeshiva should run, the Rosh Yeshiva said, "Mr. So-and-so, you are welcome to come visit me anytime to speak in learning or ask advice and you are welcome to come learn in the Bais Midrash whenever you want. But when it comes to ideas on chinuch, my door is closed." The words hit home and the man could not take this response sitting down.

From that point on, he increased his donations to the Yeshiva.