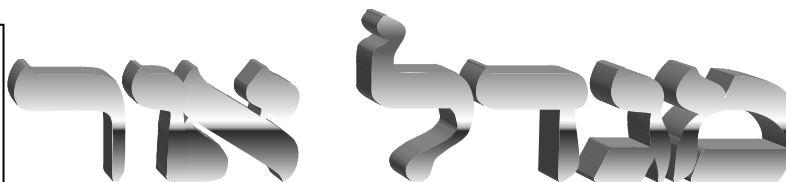


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

7:41 - הדלקת נרות
7:59 - שקיעה
8:43 - זק"ש מ"א
9:19 - זק"ש גר"א
10:30 - סוף זמן תפילה
8:01 - שקיעה
8:43 - צאת הכוכבים
9:13 - צאת 72

Thursdays 4:39:15 PM - מולד סיון

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com and
EzrasTorah.org

A Bit of Bitachon

*A weekly infusion of security from Chovos
HaLevavos written by R' Bachya ibn
Pakuda nearly a thousand years ago.*

Who Can You Trust?

The seven factors which enable someone to put his trust in another are:

1. Knowledge that the one he trusts loves him and will do anything for him no matter how much he asks for.
2. Knowledge that this person does not take his mind off caring for him for even a second.
3. That he has the power to do what he wishes and no one can stop him from fulfilling his word.
4. The one he trusts must know with certainty what is truly best for him.
5. The one he trusts must be there for him always, from the time he is a child until the day of his death.
6. No one must be able to help or harm him unless his protector says so. The one in whom he trusts must have final say in what happens.
7. He must know that the one he trusts will be kind and generous both to those who deserve it and those who don't deserve it.

It is clear that the only One who fits these descriptions is HaShem Yisbarach himself.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

What men usually ask for when they pray to G-d, is that two and two may not make four.

ואם בחקתי תמאסו ואם את משפתי תגעל נפשכם ... (ויקרא כ"ו:טו)

"If you despise My statutes and your souls loathe My laws so as not to fulfill all My commandments, thereby breaking My covenant."

This posuk is intended to be the inverse of what the parsha began with: "going with HaShem's statutes." However, the opposite of following HaShem's laws would be "not following them," not despising them. Why then does the Torah make use of such a violent word when it could simply mean that he doesn't care one way or the other about the mitzvos, he just chooses not to do them?

It is clear from the commentaries that "going in HaShem's ways" does not mean simply fulfilling the commandments. What it refers to is an active immersion in the study of the laws and how to observe them. It is called 'amailus,' toiling in Torah.

For one to truly devote himself to something, he must recognize its value. A scientist searching for the cure to a deadly disease will be more idealistic and (hopefully) more dedicated than one searching for the next low-calorie sweetener.

One who fails to study the laws, with all their nuances and intricacies, never gains an appreciation for the Torah. But it doesn't stop there. The laws are beyond his comprehension and he begins to rationalize. "Does G-d really care if I wear such clothing?" "What's the big deal if I say something negative about someone? It's not like I laid a hand on him."

The problem escalates. The abandonment of the Torah will lead to a certain level of guilt. To assuage it, one must become actively against the mitzvos on psychological and philosophical grounds. He comes to despise the mitzvos and the sages who teach them. He may begin to attribute mitzvos not to HaShem but to fallible humans, and thus absolve himself of following them. This sort of spiritual bulimia takes the form of total rejection of much of the Torah.

So what is one to do if he has fallen into this trap already? For that, we go back to a posuk in Parshas Behar (25:8.) "These seven Sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years." Obviously seven times seven is forty-nine, so what is the point of this posuk? Rashi explains, "Even if you did not fulfill the shemita years, you shall establish the jubilee year at the end of forty-nine years." Despite so many years of failure and indifference, you can make it all up at the end. This is similar to the verse said regarding Shavuot, that "Until the day after the seventh week, you shall count fifty days." That means even if the entire seven weeks you failed to utilize the opportunity to prepare for accepting the Torah, you can do it with sufficient acceptance even on the last day. You can cast your guilt aside and not look back for if you decide today to make a change, you have already turned your life around.

The Sefira is closely tied to Rabbi Akiva who said about himself that he used to hate Torah scholars (one of the sins brought about by not studying.) Yet, despite his having lived up (or down) to the levels described which will bring about HaShem's wrath, he turned his life around and became one of the greatest scholars of all time and it is through him that Torah was perpetuated. The message is that it's never too late to sincerely learn and appreciate Torah, and through this we can turn our lives around, and with us, the lives of the entire world.

In 1962, Adolph Eichman (yemach shemo v'zichro) was executed by the Israeli government. The identity of the executioner remained secret for thirty years, until the man retired. He was an Orthodox Jew of Yemenite descent. A German television station tracked him down and asked to interview him. He agreed on the condition that the interview take place in the kollel where he studied.

"Why do you insist on doing it there with all the noise and hubbub in the background," asked the producer. "Why can't we do it in the comfort and quiet of our studio?"

"Because," the executioner-cum-kollel youngster responded, "I want the German people to see why we survived. I want the German people to see Jews alive and studying Torah."

From: It's Never Too Little, It's Never Too Late, It's Never
Enough by R' Yissocher Frand - Artscroll/Mesorah