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 ר' שרגא פייבל בן ישראל ניסן ע"ה  
**Phil Itzkowitz z"l**  
 יארצייט כ"ו אייר  
 By the Itzkowitz, Landa, and  
 Gewirtz Families.  
 It feels like two days...

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

**Zmanim for שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:33 - פלג המנחה
- 7:45 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:03 - שקיעה
- 8:41 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:17 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:32 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:05 - שקיעה
- 8:47 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:17 - צאת 72

Thursday 1:29:14 AM - מולד סיון

**אונטען שבת!**

**Did You Know?**

Bechukosai is sometimes read together with Behar and sometimes not. Several factors enter into this determination, among them Ezra Hasofer's ordinance that Bechukosai be read at least two weeks before Shavuot. The reason for the two-week hiatus is based on our tradition that Shavuot is considered a New Year, a Day of Judgment for the fruits of the tree. We are careful, therefore, to be finished with Parshas Bechukosai --in which the Tochachah, the Admonition and its curses, occupy a central role--before this Day of Judgment and New Year begin. For the same reason, we are careful to read Parashas Ki Savo, where the other portion of the Tochachah is written, at least two weeks before Rosh Hashanah, so that "the old year may be ushered out along with its curses". In the past, deciding whom to call to the Torah for the reading of the Tochachah was a serious point of contention. Many people felt that being called to the Torah for this portion was a bad omen that would result in tragedy and misfortune. It got to a point where people would actually fight in shul over who should take the aliyah. Consequently, it has become customary in many shuls for the Torah reader himself to be called upon to read the Tochachah, with varying opinions as to whether he is called by name or not.

Source: Weekly Halacha by R' D. Neustadt

**Thought of the week:**

**Which is worse, ignorance or apathy? I don't know and I don't care.**

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**"ואם תלכו עמי קרי ולא תאבו לשמע לי ויספתי עליכם מכה שבע כחטאתיכם"**  
 (ויקרא כו"ב)

**"If you behave casually with Me and refuse to heed Me, then I shall lay a further blow upon you – seven, like your sins."**

The word "keri" is subject to discussion as to its meaning. Rashi offers the two most common explanations. The first is that it means casually, by happenstance. A person acted without thinking what G-d wanted. The second explanation is that he hardened his heart, and held back from serving HaShem.

Both of these interpretations offer some difficulty. If we say that a person sinned by acting without thinking, not caring whether his actions were in line with HaShem's will, how can the posuk continue and say that the person refused to heed HaShem? He didn't refuse; he just did what he wanted.

If we take the other approach, that he held back from listening to HaShem, then what are the next words adding, that he "refused to heed Me?" We just said that.

We can reconcile the verbiage by understanding the end of the posuk. It refers to seven sins of which we might (G-d forbid) become guilty, and thus deserving of punishment. Rashi enumerates the sins earlier (26:15) as outlined in the opening verses of the Tochacha (rebuke.)

These sins are of a causative nature, and one leads to another. One who does not "listen" to HaShem, meaning he does not study the Torah (sin 1), will not perform the mitzvos (sin 2.) This will lead him to be disgusted by those who perform them (sin 3) and thus hate the Torah scholars [who teach others the mitzvos] (sin 4.) He will therefore work to prevent others from performing the mitzvos (sin 5) and renounce the commandments entirely (sin 6) before ultimately denying the "essential," G-d Himself (sin 7.)

We may now understand the posuk above as bearing a message of this same causality. If one behaves casually with HaShem, not caring what the Torah says or if his actions are appropriate, this indifference will lead him to come to a calculated refusal to heed HaKadosh Boruch Hu. In essence, therefore, both interpretations of the word 'keri' are correct. Acting casually leads to hardening of the heart and that leads to the next phase, refusing to listen.

The dangers underscored here, and the threats of punishment outlined, are a sobering message indeed. However, the encouraging part is that the reverse is also true, and rewarding to a much higher degree. One who is concerned to understand what his obligations are in this life has already taken the first step towards becoming the person he can and must become.

By using that concern to commit himself to studying HaShem's Torah, he will be able to perform the mitzvos. He will love those who perform them as well, love Torah scholars, and strive to help others serve G-d as he does. He will do so by praising the mitzvos and the Al-mighty and, step after step, move higher and closer to perfection.

The weeks of Sefira are counted day by day, week by week, to remind us that one day leads to the next and one mitzvah leads to another. If we give these thoughts the proper attention, then we will reach our goal and be richly rewarded.

*Dear Rabbi Online: Why is Judaism so nitpicky? Does G-d really care if I drink milk with a hamburger or if I take off my right shoe first? Aren't there more important things for Him to worry about? P.S. I e-mailed you this question last week. Could it be that I stumped you? – CasualJew*

*Dear CasualJew: I don't have all the answers all the time, but I did respond last week and the fact that you never got it is your answer. You see, I left out the dot in your e-mail address. Should it make a difference if I send it to gmailcom or gmail.com? It's just a dot, what's the big deal? Who cares?*

*The e-mail systems care - because that dot has meaning to them, even if I don't understand it. The same goes for Jewish practices. They contain tremendous meaning and symbolism and have great effect on the world and the universe even if we don't know how or why they work.*

*If you want to understand the significance of the dot, study I.T.*

*If you want to understand the significance of Judaism, study it.*

Based on an article by R' Aron Moss of Sydney, Australia. Produced by and for www.chabad.org