



Happy Tu B'Shvat!  
 Daven for a good Esrog!

# בבדלח

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*A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah*

## שבת Zmanim for

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:56 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:14 - שקיעה
- 9:02 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:38 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:28 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:16 - שקיעה
- 5:58 - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:28 - צאת 72

## אגוטען שבת!

### Did you קטן?

This past Tuesday, Jews around the world read Parshas HaMon, the portion of the Torah that describes the heavenly sustenance we got in the desert. This was done as a "segula," a special merit, for abundant parnassah. There are other, somewhat less-practiced, segulos that should be noted as well:

**For long and healthy life** – "Honor your father and mother (this includes in-laws) so that your days be long." Stand up when they walk into the room, don't argue or get angry with them.

**For wealth** – Give Maaser. HaShem promises He will open the windows of Heaven and shower blessings upon you.

**For insight in Torah** – Keep your mouth shut when insulted or tempted to speak evil. The Vilna Gaon wrote that one who keeps his mouth shut on this world will merit the hidden light of Gan Eden.

**For children, (who will be wise, wealthy and honored)** – Give tzedaka regularly; run after opportunities to give tzedaka.

**For a shidduch for your daughter** – Honor Rabbonim and Chachomim. You will thereby merit a son-in-law who is a Talmid Chacham.

**For forgiveness of sins** – Get married; say Az Yashir each morning with simcha!

**To protect you from punishment** – Don't speak Lashon Hara. Just as you keep your mouth closed about the misdeeds of others, HaShem will force the Prosecuting Angel to keep his mouth closed too.

**Thought of the week:**  
 People see G-d every day;  
 they just don't recognize  
 Him.

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"ואני הנני מחזק את לב מצרים ויבאו אחריהם ואכבדה פרעה ובכל חילו ברכבו ובפרשיו" (שמות יד: יז)

**"I will harden the heart of the Egyptians and they will follow after them and I will be glorified through Pharaoh and his entire army, his chariots and his cavalry."**

We find the concept of hardening Pharaoh's heart throughout the makos, and each time, it prevented Pharaoh from letting the Jewish People go. The commentaries ask how HaShem could have taken away the ability of Pharaoh to do Teshuva, and why he deserved to be punished if it was HaShem who controlled his heart, as it says, "The heart of kings and princes is in the hand of G-d."

Here we find a new concept, that HaShem hardened the hearts of the entire nation, and because of that they followed the Jews into the sea, leading to the glorification of HaShem. What prompted this hardening of their hearts, and how can we understand what took place? Does HaShem take free will away from people just to make events happen the way He wants them too?

The Haamek Davar explains that HaShem wanted all of them to chase the Jews into the Yam Suf, so he hardened their hearts so they would not think too deeply into how the Jews managed to cross it, but rather they assumed the water had dried up somewhat, as happens occasionally.

In essence, HaShem did not cause them to do anything they didn't want to do of their own free will. They wanted to chase after the "escaping" slaves, and the only thing that would stop them was the realization that the Jews were being taken out of Egypt miraculously. When a person's heart is strong, he is courageous and feels invincible. When that happens, he does not think about G-d, but about his own strength. Thus, the Egyptians' minds could assume a scenario which ensured them victory, as ridiculous as it seemed.

Hardening their hearts merely meant that HaShem gave them the courage and audacity to pursue their inner agendas. Our question was that HaShem took away their free will, but actually, by enabling them to ignore the miracles they witnessed, HaShem gave them free will, allowing them to follow their true desires and ultimately be destroyed.

The same applies to Pharaoh. Each plague forced his hand further and further, because he could not take the suffering imposed upon him. HaShem responded by giving him the strength to resist any outside pressures and thus carry out his own free will, which kept him stubborn and deserving of further punishment.

How does this glorify HaKadosh Boruch Hu? Because we see that when left to their own devices, people often end up hurting themselves. It is only because of His intervention that we can find loftier goals and deeper understanding. With this willingness to contemplate His role in our lives, we recognize the great kindness he gives us every moment of every day by saving us from ourselves. When those who refused to acknowledge this were drowned in the sea, each death stood as a testament to the enduring love and care of our Heavenly Father.

*The end of the war was imminent. The Allies were approaching and the Nazis knew their days were numbered. That evening, they called all the prisoners to line up. They were to be given fresh rolls. "We want you to tell the Allies how well we treated you," said the guard with a sneer as baskets of fresh steaming white rolls appeared.*

*After years of moldy black bread, the fresh white ball of dough looked like Manna from Heaven. One prisoner managed to get in line twice and he hurried back to his barracks with two rolls. At the door, he was met by a burly Russian. "I saw what you did," said the bully. "Give me your extra roll." When the prisoner refused, the Russian punched him in the face and took both rolls. As he lay on the floor in his own blood, he lamented his fate. How close he was to having that scrumptious bread. He dropped onto a bunk sadly and fell asleep.*

*When he awoke, the sun was high in the sky and the guards were nowhere to be seen. The barracks were strangely quiet, and as he looked around, the man saw bodies lying dead in their bunks. He realized that the twisted Nazis had poisoned the bread to kill as many as they could before they fled the camp.*

*He also realized how close he had come to being killed himself. He glanced at the crumbs on the floor and it hit him. What he had thought was salvation was actually hidden death, and what he believed to be sure death by starvation turned out to be his deliverance.*