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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:42 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:00 - שקיעה
- 9:05 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:41 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:30 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:02 - שקיעה
- 5:44 - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:14 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

⌘ Bit of Bitachon

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

Continued from last week –

It is impossible for one to become free of worry unless he feels secure in HaShem because if he does not trust in HaShem, he must be trusting in something else; either people, his wealth, his wisdom or abilities, or similar things. When one does this, HaShem steps back and leaves man to his own devices. This is like the Navi Yirmiyah said, "My nation did two wrongs: They abandoned Me, a constant spring of fresh water, to dig cisterns (which do not replenish themselves,) [and they were] broken cisterns."

If one relies on his wisdom, or his physical strengths and efforts, he will work for naught and his strength will wane, and he will not reach his goals, as Shlomo HaMelech said, "I have seen under the sun that the race is not always to the swiftest, nor the battle to the mighty, nor do wise men always have bread."

However, regarding those who trust in HaShem it says, "K'firim rashu v'ra'ayvu, v'dorshei HaShem lo yachseru kol tov," young lions are impoverished and starving, but those who seek HaShem will not lack all good things.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

If you don't change your beliefs, your life will be like this forever.

Is that good news?

"ולמען תספר באזני בנד ובן בנד את אשר התעללתי במצרים ואת אתי אשר שמתי במ

וידעתם כי אני ה'" (שמות י"ב) *"And so you may tell in the ears of your son and your son's son how I amused Myself with Egypt and the signs I placed in you and you will know that I am HaShem."*

One can easily understand G-d's strengthening Pharaoh's resolve in order to punish him further, bestowing upon him retribution to match all of his horrible actions. However, this verse, which says that HaShem's intention was so that we might regale our children with stories of His playing with the Egyptians is troubling. Does the Ribono Shel Olam find sport in making people suffer? That does not sound like the merciful King we know. Further, are we to train our children to laugh at the misfortunes of others? Clearly this is not the intention of our posuk.

Instead, it would seem that the message is more about how to reinforce our knowledge and understanding of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. The Ohr HaChaim explains that the second point teaches us that the first point, understandable as it might be, was not the primary focus of punishing Pharaoh. The main purpose of his punishment was not so that Pharaoh suffer for his own wrongdoing, but rather to cement in our hearts the fundamental principles of faith and establish a permanent reminder for the Jewish People of HaShem's miracles.

The best means for doing this is alluded to in our posuk. Start early: From an early age, we should speak to our children about the wonders of HaShem. Make it interesting: In order to keep our children (and ourselves) interested, we tell stories of how Pharaoh ran around in his pajamas looking for Moshe, how the frogs were in their homes and under their blankets, and how ridiculous it was when an Egyptian picked up a glass of water and got a mouthful of blood.

We use these details because they are memorable. HaShem tells us: Tell your children how I toyed with Pharaoh – because that will help them to think of Me, know Me and see Me in the world around them, as well as ensure that they don't forget Me.

For adults, we should find things around us in which we see the hand of G-d. That situation which was timed so perfectly, the myriad miracles which go on all the time that we take for granted. We need to remember how HaShem punished the Egyptians, spared the Jews, and, as it were, walked a fine line so that nothing overlapped.

But what if we don't tell the next generation about it? What if we try to hide the fact that we're different? The Kli Yakar notes that this posuk was said about the plague of arbeh, locusts. History has recorded several times when locust plagues invaded Eretz Yisrael and stopped short at the Egyptian border. The locusts never again entered Egypt. Why not?

The Ribono Shel Olam does this so our children will have a chance to ask us, "Why is this happening?" Then we will be forced to tell them of the miracles of the Exodus and they too will know HaShem. He wants us to know Him because He cares for us so much and wants us to feel that we're special. The main reason for the plagues was not to punish Pharaoh, but to ingrain in us how loved we are.

A fellow was walking down the street when a man he didn't recognize rushed up to him crying "Rebbi!" and gave him a huge hug. Shocked, he listened to the stranger's tale.

The pedestrian had been a Hebrew teacher in an "out-of-town" day school many years before. Many of the children came from irreligious homes yet he taught them what he would teach children from from homes, including brachos and morning prayers and routines.

"I was not religious," said the now-yarmulka'ed man, "and was going to marry a non-Jewish woman. As I got dressed for my wedding, I put on my right shoe, then my left, then tied my left shoe first. I wondered why I did something so strange and remembered it was something you had taught me when I was five. It made me realize I was different, but I didn't know enough about Judaism to understand why. I left town that day and went to a Yeshiva to study. Today I am fully observant and it's all because you taught me that a Jew does everything with a plan and purpose – even tying his shoes."