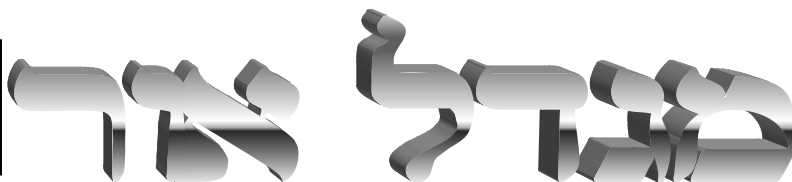


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:25 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:43 - שקיעה
- 9:06 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:42 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:29 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:45 - שקיעה
- 5:30* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:57 - צאת 72

* Based on the emergence of 3 stars

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

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

Pay Scale

Rabbeinu Bachya now begins to explain the reward given for the mitzvos one does here on earth.

Reward for mitzvos comes in two possible scenarios: either the person gets reward only in this world or only in the next world, or it is possible that he will benefit both in this world and the next.

However, the Torah doesn't specifically explain to us what reward is given for each mitzvah. Rather, HaShem promises us in a general fashion that if we keep His mitzvos He will reward us for it.

This is different than how punishments for certain sins are indeed spelled out. We clearly know which actions will subject us to stoning, burning, decapitation, strangulation, kareis, lashes, fines, etc.

Of course, that is only in this world. The reward and punishment in the next world was not handed down to us by Moshe Rabbeinu, for several reasons.

One reason we don't have an indication of reward and punishment in the next world is because we can't comprehend the existence that we will have in that world, where there is no body, but merely a light, spiritual existence.

If we can't comprehend that existence, surely we cannot fathom what will cause us joy or anguish in that state when we will be holy and radiant, having separated from our material bodies.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

Sometimes, perhaps, we are allowed to get lost so that we may find the right person to ask for directions.

”ויאמר משה בנערינו ובזקנינו נלך בבננו ובבנותנו בצאננו ובקרנו נלך כי חגה' לנו.” (שמות י"ט)

“And Moshe said, with our youngsters and our elders shall we go; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our cattle, for it is a festival of HaShem for us.”

Moshe responded to Pharaoh's question by saying that every person in Klal Yisrael would go. Young or old, male or female, all have a share in the Torah and responsibilities to carry it out. Unlike other religions in which only some people participate or are considered holy, the entire Jewish nation is necessary and obligated to properly serve G-d.

Perhaps, Moshe's response could have been less specific, saying simply that everyone would go and this would have implied as well that everyone has an equal responsibility to serve HaShem. Worded as it is, however, it gives us the opportunity to appreciate another aspect to the “festival of HaShem” to which Moshe referred.

Last week, HaShem told Moshe that He had appeared to the Patriarchs with the name which conveyed placing limitations on the world, “the One who told the world ‘dai,’ it is enough,” but not with the name HaShem. HaShem contains the letters of ‘haya,’ ‘hoveh,’ and ‘yihyeh,’ past, present, and future, and this name connotes that G-d exists throughout all time, and also that He takes into account all past, present, and future actions and effects when running the world. It is pronounced differently than written, to convey G-d's mastery over the world, and the fact that we don't understand all His calculations and rationales for what He does.

This name, which was new to the Jews' experiences, conveyed that everything that occurred in their lives was interconnected with every other moment of existence in the world and the impact each event would have on each person was taken into account when determining what would happen to every other person. That said, the more experiences a person has, the more he is able, and obliged, to recognize HaShem's handiwork in his life. That is why everyone had to go.

What the young people experienced, both suffering and salvation, was different than what the elders experienced. What the elders experienced in their youth was different than what that generation's youth lived through. What the boys went through was not the same as what the girls had gone through. The possessions each had and lost, symbolized by sheep and cattle, two very different kinds of wealth, were unique and to be appreciated individually.

This was the celebration of G-d's name of HaShem, which is in control of all things and ensures that one person's mistake or failing doesn't affect another negatively unless he deserves it. It also symbolizes the meaning and plan behind each difficulty. For that, they had to have every different experience and feeling represented, to fully extol the wondrous nature of the Al-mighty.

Charged with re-opening an old shul in Brooklyn, the young Rabbi eagerly watched as renovations were done in preparation for Purim, the first big function. Two days before Purim, a huge storm caused a large piece of plaster on the front wall to fall off. With nothing to do about it, the Rabbi headed home. On the way, he saw a flea market going on and noticed a large hand-made tablecloth with a Magen Dovid on it. It was the perfect size to cover the hole. Heading back to shul, he met an old woman who had missed her bus and invited her to wait for the next one in the warm shul. As he hung the tablecloth, the woman wordlessly began walking towards him, mouth agape. She asked him to see if the initials EBG were in the corner. They were.

“Thirty-five years ago, before the war, in Poland, I made that tablecloth. When we fled, my husband was supposed to follow me but he was caught. I never saw him or the tablecloth again.” She insisted the Rabbi keep it for the shul, and he reciprocated by driving her home to Staten Island. She had only been in Brooklyn that day for a cleaning job she had once a week.

On Purim, they had a wonderful Megilla-reading, and many of the people told the Rabbi they would be back. One older gentleman from the neighborhood remained in his seat, staring at “the tablecloth.” He told the Rabbi that 35 years ago his wife had made one just like it, and how could there be two so similar?

The Rabbi asked the man to take a little ride with him. He helped the man up the three flights of stairs to the apartment in Staten Island where he had been just a few days earlier, and knocked on the door. That most joyous of reunions would not have been possible if not for the masterful hand of G-d, Who weaves the fabric of our lives into a beautiful, intricate tapestry.

- Based on a true story – (“coincidentally” e-mailed to me this week.)