

Take My Advice...

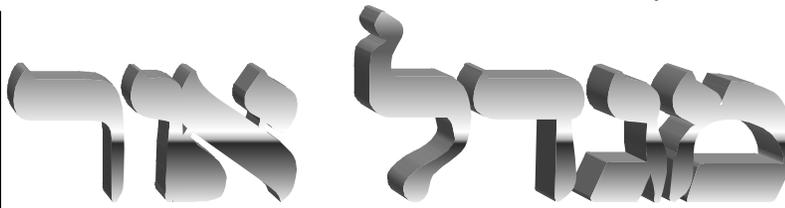
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This week's issue sponsored by Sara and Shmuel Loebenberg of Wesley Hills, NY In honor of the birth of their son Yakov.

A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:17 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:35 - שקיעה
- 8:38 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:14 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:03 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:35 - שקיעה
- 5:19* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:47 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did you Know?

Rashi tells us about the end of Sarah's life. He says Sarah's death was mentioned in juxtaposition to the binding of Yitzchak because when Yitzchak was bound as a sacrifice at the Akeida, the Satan appeared to Sara and showed her the image of her son being prepared for slaughter and he showed the scene just shy of Yitzchak's being slaughtered, her soul fluttered from her body and she died.

When Moshe went up to Har Sinai, the Satan pulled a similar trick. He opened the heavens and showed the Jews the image of Moshe's bier being carried aloft by angels. They thought Moshe died on the mountain and were lured into sin.

Nowhere does it say that Sara saw Yitzchak's dead body, nor that the Jews saw Moshe's corpse. It only tells us how far the Satan went in trying to fool them into sin – and how far he did NOT go.

Though we think of the Satan as being pure evil, he is in reality doing the job HaShem gave him, to tempt people and thus train them to build up a resistance and remain strong and faithful to HaShem.

Therefore, even though it is so key to creation that Man have an evil inclination that tries to drive him away, the Satan would not say a straight-out lie.

If the Evil Inclination, who is Satan and the Angel of Death, is careful not to lie for his work, even though he's definitely carrying out G-d's will, how much more careful must we, who are striving to be good people, and faithful servants of HaShem Yisbarach, yet don't know whether our perception is accurate, be dedicated to speaking the truth and not being deceitful, even if it's "just business."

Thought of the week:
If G-d is your co-pilot – switch seats.

"ויאמר ה' אלקי אדני אברהם הקרה נא לפני היום ועשה חסד עם אדני אברהם." (בראשית כד:יב)

"And [Eliezer] said, 'HaShem, L-rd of my master Avraham, may You arrange it so before me today, and do kindness with my master Avraham.'"

Avraham charged Eliezer with the daunting task of finding a suitable wife for Yitzchak. Knowing he could not do this on his own, Eliezer devised a sign which would highlight the young woman's kindness, and asked G-d to bless his efforts with success by making that woman appear before him and do as he suggested, if she was in that place.

Later, when he asked her for a drink and she said the phrase he was waiting for, that she would give him to drink and the camels as well, the Torah tells us that he waited for her to finish to see if G-d had, indeed, granted him success in his mission.

It seems that Eliezer was unsure whether HaShem was going to grant him success in this endeavor. This is strange, however, because when Eliezer recounted the story of his trip to Rivka's family, he stated (25:42), "I arrived today at the well." Rashi comments that he left and arrived on the same day. Despite the trip normally taking many days, Eliezer had kefitzas haderech, a "shortening of the path," and traveled the entire distance in one day.

Upon the outset of his trip, he experienced a tremendous miracle. G-d shortened his journey and got him to his destination almost immediately. Surely, that was a sufficient sign that G-d was with him and would make him successful! Why then did he offer this prayer?

The Gemara in Shabbos (32a) says, "One should always pray that he not become ill, for once he becomes ill, he must provide a merit [to be healed.]" Based on that, we may say that of course Eliezer recognized HaShem's influence in helping him in his mission, but he was not satisfied with relying that G-d's would keep helping him just because he had Divine assistance now. He therefore had to daven that HaShem continue to guide and be with him and that the plan should unfold as he had requested.

This is a very important lesson for us to learn. When things go wrong, we are quick to cry out to G-d and say that only He can save us. When our efforts go awry, we can more easily say they were "not meant to be" or they were not part of "G-d's plan." However, when things are going right, and we are experiencing success, we must recognize that this, too, comes only from HaShem and we must praise Him and continue to ask for His kindness.

We should not assume that our own wisdom, strength, acumen, or wealth can keep us going in the direction we are headed. Rather, we must turn to G-d and pray that He continue to go before us and make things unfold in a positive way.

If this was true for Eliezer, on a mission for the greatest man of his generation, to find a wife for the leader of the next generation, then clearly we, who are not as lofty or nobly-minded, cannot rely on current success for future results. HaShem wants us to pray to Him and beseech Him every step of the way and recognize that He is with us constantly. When we do that, we will be able to recognize His presence in our lives and understand that everything *does* unfold according to His master plan.

R' Yisrael Meir HaKohain of Radin z"l, known by the name of his sefer about Lashon Hara, Chofetz Chaim, also wrote a comprehensive halachic work found in nearly every Jewish home and synagogue. It is called the Mishna Berura and follows the section of Shulchan Aruch called Orach Chaim, which deals with everyday life, things revolving around prayer, Shabbos, and the Yomim Tovim.

When he completed this masterwork, someone asked the Chofetz Chaim whether he would start on the next section of Shulchan Aruch. R' Yisrael Meir replied that it had taken him thirty-six years to complete the Mishna Berura, and that he didn't know if HaShem would grant him another thirty-six years to write one for the next section.

He was right. He passed away thirty-five and a half years later.