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May the learning of this week's issue be a zechus for a *Refuah Shelaima* For Hind'l bas Leiba Basha. May HaShem grant her a speedy recovery amongst all the other ill members of Klal Yisrael.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 8:13 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:31 - שקיעה
- 8:34 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:10 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:26 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:32 - שקיעה
- 9:14 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:44 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

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

The Wages of Sin?

The Chovos HaLevavos explained that one who will be honest in business, and will not spend his free time in sin, need not work hard for his parnasa.

Why then, you ask, do we see so often that righteous people are quite poor, or must go to great efforts for their livelihoods? Conversely, many evil-doers find great wealth and an easy life to be their lot.

This, my friend, is an ancient question. Many prophets asked the same question in various ways. So why do they not give an answer to this age-old question?

They cannot give an answer because no two people have the same situations. Only HaShem knows why certain tzaddikim are being tested with poverty or suffering and similarly why each sinner may be enjoying prosperity in this world.

This is why all the nevi'im could not give an explanation, for they could not enumerate every reason for each individual case.

This is also why Moshe Rabbeinu a"h said about this question: "*HaNistaros laShem Elokeinu*, The hidden things are for HaShem, our G-d, *V'haNiglos, lanu u'lvaneinu*, and the revealed things are for us and our children."

In other words, we should not delve into this issue because the explanation is clear to G-d alone, and Man has not the ability to comprehend it. However, G-d's work is perfect, and all His ways are righteous.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:
I find it hard to believe that G-d put us on this earth to simply be ordinary.

"ויקהלו משה ואהרן... ויאמר להם שמעו נא המורים המן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים." (במדבר כ"ג)

"And Moshe and Aharon gathered all the congregation before the rock and he said to them, "Listen now, rebels, shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?""

It is well-known that Moshe was punished for getting angry and hitting the rock instead of speaking to it. Some say he was criticized for calling the Jewish People names, and some say he spoke to several rocks first to no avail, then he hit one and that was the one intended to bring forth water.

The reason he is punished, though, as related by G-d, is his failure to "believe in Me, to honor Me," before the Jews. What was the lack of faith? The commentaries explain that Moshe erred in thinking that he was to take the staff because the way you "spoke" to a stone was by hitting it. A mistake, perhaps, but a lack of faith? And what would the greater Kiddush HaShem be? Says Rashi, that they would have inferred that if a stone which cannot hear or speak and needs no sustenance heeds the word of the Al-mighty, how much more so should they. But could they not have inferred it from this miracle anyway?

Perhaps we can find a clue in Rashi's comment on our posuk. He says that the stone intended to give forth water had moved itself and mingled with a group of other stones. Moshe was unsure which rock was the one he had been commanded to speak to, and when the Jewish People asked what difference it made, Moshe asked them how he could bring forth water from a stone that HaShem had not designated. He knew that HaShem does not like to perform more obvious miracles than necessary and this rock had previously given water. Moshe did the right thing, and yet, he could have done better.

The Jews asked what difference it made which rock he hit. Moshe's response was that only a certain rock would produce water. This is a different response than that of R' Chanina ben Dosa, who, when his daughter accidentally filled the Shabbos lamp with vinegar, replied matter-of-factly, "He Who said oil should burn can say that vinegar should burn as well." He not only believed that everything came from HaShem, but lived each moment of his life that way. To him, it mattered not what was natural. HaShem can do *anything*, as He already does *everything*. Nature is just as miraculous as any miracle.

Had Moshe spoken to any rock, as the Jews suggested, and had faith that HaShem would just as easily give water from it as from the other one, the Jews would have inferred a tremendous lesson. To be great, one need not be predisposed to greatness, nor gifted with a lofty soul. It makes no difference to G-d where you start, as long as you wish to grow. If any stone among stones, with no abilities to speak of, could suddenly become the life-giving conduit of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, then how much more so could each of us, imbued with fantastic abilities and a spark of G-dliness, become mediums for HaShem's glory to come to earth?

Had that happened, we would all have been perfected and our sins washed away. Then there would have been no need for the Bais HaMikdash to be destroyed and it could, in fact, have been built by Moshe. But alas, he did not grasp this chance to sanctify HaShem's name and elevate the entire nation, so he was forbidden entry into Eretz Yisrael.

For years, the dream of running a mile in under four minutes taunted runners around the world. Though many came close, they never broke that record. It seemed like a brick wall. Scientific papers were even published that said it was physically impossible for a human to reach sufficient speed to run a mile in under four minutes. And so it was – until 1954.

That May, Roger Bannister, who didn't believe it was impossible, ran a mile in under four minutes. The world was astounded. A few weeks later, a runner, who had been trying for years, beat Bannister's time. Over the next two years, hundreds of runners beat the formerly "impossible" goal.

All they needed was to realize that there are truly no barriers if you have the will to succeed.