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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:44 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:02 - שקיעה
- 8:41 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:17 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:29 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:03 - שקיעה
- 8:45 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:15 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

אומטען שבת!

Did You Know?

The fact that a blemished Kohain was unfit is not because HaShem despises it. In fact, G-d prefers a broken heart and often one with physical difficulties will be humble. (Of course, one who is unfit yet insists that he is so great that it overrides his handicap suffers from arrogance, which is even worse than a physical disability.)

Rather, one reason, explains R' Moshe Feinstein z"l, is because we should feel that to offer anything less than the best to HaShem would be disrespectful, as the posuk states, "bring this please to your Governor," (which you would not do out of respect, yet you offer it to HaShem.)

R' Moshe continues that we learn two important lessons from this.

First, that just because such a person is disqualified does not mean we must not try to appease him and explain it to him. We should be considerate while maintaining the halacha.

Secondly, says R' Moshe, we cannot say, "G-d wouldn't really care about this." [How many times have we heard people say, "Do you think G-d really cares if...?"]

It is not for us to determine, rather we must follow His laws and assume that He DOES care.

Thought of the week:

Jews do not have rights; we have responsibilities.

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"דבר אל אהרן לאמר איש מזרעך לדרתם אשר יהיה בו מום... וידבר משה אל אהרן ואל בניו

ואל כל בני ישראל" (ויקרא כא:כד)

"Speak to Aharon saying; anyone of your offspring, through [all] their generations who will have a blemish, shall not approach to offer the bread of his G-d... Moshe spoke [these words] to Aharon, and to his sons and to all of B'nai Yisrael."

Numerous commentaries discuss the fact that Moshe was commanded to instruct Aharon that no kohain who was deformed or had a blemish should serve in the Mishkan or Bais HaMikdash, yet he taught it not only to Aharon, but to his children and all of Klal Yisrael.

Why teach it to them as well? The primary reason given is that they would all ensure it was upheld and followed. The Ramban points out that the command was given to Aharon regarding his descendents only, because he was the "k'dosh HaShem," the holy one of G-d, and he had no blemish. Therefore, it would not really apply to Aharon directly, but to his children.

This is interesting because the Sifra says the following: Moshe spoke to Aharon's children to adjure them regarding Aharon, and to Klal Yisrael to adjure them about the Kohanim, in essence, to make sure it was enforced. How, then, could the Ramban say the parsha of blemishes did not apply to Aharon?

Perhaps the answer lies in an understanding of human nature as it applies to the deformed kohanim. While it is not for us to judge the decisions of HaKadosh Boruch Hu, our inclination is to feel a sense of pity for these people.

Perhaps some righteous indignation swells within us at the thought that they are being "punished" for something that was beyond their control. We might be tempted to let some blemishes slide. That would be wrong, and false mercy. We do not understand the workings of Creation and our perception of right or wrong is no match for the infinite wisdom of the Creator. If He says it would be a bad thing for these people to perform the service then it will be, no matter how fine, righteous or upstanding they are.

Perhaps Moshe knew that Aharon would be pressured by onlookers to permit his children to perform the Avoda out of a false sense of pity or fairness. While Aharon himself would never second-guess HaShem or give in to their pressuring, Moshe wished to avoid this situation. By appointing the Jewish people as guardians of this law, he implanted in them the attitude that they were elite members of the King's guard, sworn to uphold His law.

One of the first rules of any army is not to question the superiors but to act on their word. In Judaism, we permit asking, as long as it is to gain understanding. When it comes to performing the mitzvos, however, we can't refuse to do them because we don't understand them. We don't question why a Kohain with a blemish is unable to do the Avoda, nor why Levi'im and Yisraelim have different responsibilities, as do men and women.

Rather, the world is a complex machine and each part must meet the specifications of the Inventor. By living up to those specifications, we help the world run smoothly, and make G-d happy with what He has made.

The musician ties his bow tie, puts on his tuxedo jacket, then looks in the mirror to make sure everything is in place. Satisfied, he drives to the theater and takes his seat in the orchestra. His eyes glued to the conductor, he turns pages of music throughout the performance, while he plays nary a note. He waits.

One hour passes, then another. Finally, the last moments of the concert are upon them. Reaching into his case he lifts up his instrument. Excited and alert, he watches as the conductor approaches the final notes of the performance. As the last moment, he rises and claps together his cymbals a single time for the finale. The audience applauds. The musician smiles to himself, satisfied that he has played his part. Smaller than the others' perhaps, but no less important.