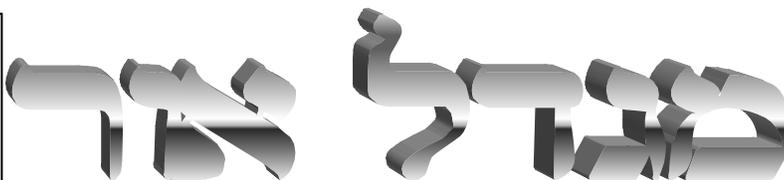


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Sponsored in Honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Shlomo Daniel "Doni" Lieber
May you bring nachas to your parents, Shragie and Raizy, your siblings, Yossi and Simi, your grandparents, Meyer and Malka Lieber and Shimmy and Pearl Hirsch, your great-grandparents Laitchu Hirsch & Ety Friedman, And, of course, the Ribono Shel Olam.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:30 - הדלקת נרות
- 6:48 - שקיעה
- 9:11 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:47 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:47 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 6:47 - שקיעה
- 7:29 - צאת הכוכבים
- 7:59 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

You Should Know

The Midrash Rabba in Beraishis (22:13) relates that Adam HaRishon met Kayin after his "court case" with G-d. "What happened in your case?" asked Adam.

"I did Teshuva and was pardoned," replied Kayin. (Rashi's explanation. Others say the sentence was reduced.)

Adam immediately slapped himself on the forehead and cried, "So great is the power of Teshuva and I didn't even know!" Thereupon he stood up and said, "Mizmor shir l'yom HaShabbos, tov l'hodos la'Shem, A song of the Shabbos, it is good to give thanks to HaShem."

The meforshim there give several reasons why he said this chapter of Tehillim. One is that the word Shabbos has as its root the word "shav," meaning to return. Shabbos is a time to reflect on our lives when we are not busy with the mundane world, and return to the G-dliness which is our birthright. Others say that the word l'hodos, translated as "to give thanks," can also be related to vidui, admission of guilt. It is good to admit our wrongdoings before G-d because He is ready to hear our confessions and pardon us.

The Midrash continues that after Adam said it, this chapter of Tehillim was forgotten, and Moshe Rabbeinu came and recreated it under his own name. (The first letters of it are Mem, Shin, Lamed, Hai: i.e. L'Moshe. Others say the lamed is because he taught the Torah to Klal Yisrael.) Perhaps this Midrash hints to this posuk, when Moshe assured us that the chance to do Teshuva is all around us, and it is good to thank HaShem for this constant reminder. (If you don't understand, read the main Dvar Torah - Ed.)

Thought of the week:

Look to the past with tears;
to the present with caution;
to the future with hope.

"האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי" (דברים לביא)

"Hearken, O heaven as I declare, let the earth hear my mouth's sayings."

Rashi explains that Moshe was calling on Heaven and Earth to bear witness that the Jewish People had accepted upon themselves the Torah, and been informed of the consequences for ignoring it and deviating from its direction. He further explains Moshe's rationale for this choice.

"I am flesh and blood," said Moshe, "and tomorrow I will die. If the Children of Israel will claim, "We did not accept this covenant upon ourselves," who will contradict them? Therefore let Heaven and Earth bear witness, for they will endure forever."

Also, says Rashi, if the Jews are meritorious, these witnesses will bring them their reward. The grapevines will bear their fruit, the earth will produce grain, and heavens will give forth dew. If they are unworthy, the witnesses will be the first to punish them: the heavens will withhold rain and the earth will not produce grain.

When Moshe chose the heavens and earth, he said that only they would be around long enough to testify that the Jews had accepted the covenant with HaShem. Normally, we assume that a witness gives testimony by speaking up, and accusing the one who did wrong. How can the heavens and earth testify if they cannot speak?

The answer to that question would be that they will testify by either giving forth their abundance or withholding it, to indicate whether we are living up to our part of the bargain. The problem is that Rashi views this as an additional explanation, not an elaboration on his first concept. Therefore, there must be another way for Moshe's chosen witnesses to fulfill their roles.

When a court looks at a case, it can only see the physical evidence, and take into account the testimony before it. It does not know the thoughts that lay deep within the heart of the defendant. The only one who knows that is the accused himself.

When we stand before HaShem, however, He also knows our thoughts and our feelings. He doesn't forget and needs no witnesses. Rather, the witnesses are for us, to remind us of the truth. Everywhere we go, we have a constant reminder to ourselves of our agreement with HaShem. You can't look away and not see the land or the sky. With the witnesses staring us in the face, no one can be brazen enough to lie to himself and say that he is not culpable.

That's where Teshuva comes in. When we choose to come back to HaShem and live up to our part of the bargain, He is waiting with open arms. This is even hinted to in Rashi. He says that if we follow the Torah, the grapevines will give forth their fruit, and the heavens and earth will produce as well. Why does he include grapes along with heaven and earth?

One opinion in the Gemara says that the forbidden fruit eaten by Adam and Chava was grapes. Perhaps Rashi is teaching us that when one commits to doing the right thing and living according to the Torah, and he repents and does Teshuva with love, even the worst sins can be eradicated and become a source of blessing.

When Czar Nikolai was ousted by the Bolsheviks in 1917, a period of lawlessness ensued. Any Jew who ventured out on the streets was taking his life in his hands. R' Meir Chodosh related that he had a pressing need and ventured out of Yeshiva. Sure enough he was grabbed by a Russian gangster and dragged off to be shot. On the way, he said Vidui five times.

The man placed him against the wall and decided he was not properly aligned with his gun. Inexplicably, the Russian refused to move. Instead, he commanded the Jewish lad to move over. Paralyzed with fear, R' Meir couldn't budge. The Russian shouted louder and louder for him to move. Suddenly, a small window in the wall opened and an officer said, "Stop yelling! Let him go." And he did.

In 1929, during the Chevron massacre, R' Meir was barricaded in a room with sixty others when the Arab murderers came in slashing left and right. As bodies piled up, his friend said, "Let's ask for a speedy death without torture." Remembering his experience 12 years earlier, R' Meir Chodosh replied, "Don't talk nonsense! Lie down and be quiet; hope to HaShem," and he lived to tell about it.