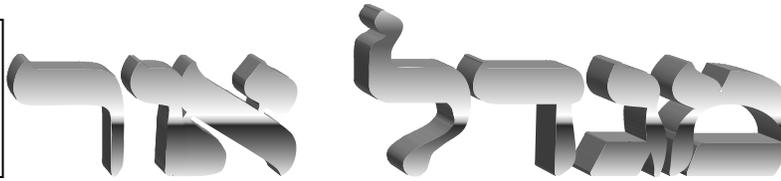


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:29 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:47 - שקיעה
- 8:59 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:35 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:43 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:47 - שקיעה
- 8:30* - צאת הכוכבים
- 8:59 - צאת 72

*Based on 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.

If I Were a Rich Man

In professional life, some people are the ones who give other people their livelihoods. The bosses, CEOs and employers of the world are given special challenges.

HaShem places them in these positions to see if they will serve G-d or rebel against Him and to place a great temptation before them. For example, a king must support his family, his servants, his ministers and advisors, as well as their families, servants and staff, plus his army and all those involved in his reign. With such a huge number of people to support, he may seek to amass wealth regardless of whether it is a proper method or not.

If such a man is foolish (and HaShem sometimes puts foolish people in charge, as was mentioned in an earlier lesson) he can be tripped up in three ways.

First, he must be careful that all the ways he goes about earning money are legitimate and honest. He will earn what HaShem decreed for him, no more and no less, no matter what he does. Therefore, he must be sure to choose mediums of earning money which allow him to fulfill his obligations to G-d and Man so it will be good for him in this world.

The second mistake is that he believes his wealth was given to him for his own consumption. This is incorrect. The wealth a person receives is divided into three categories of purpose, as we shall IY"YH discuss next week.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:
Action is the antidote for despair.

”כי תצא למלחמה על אויביך ונתנו ה' אלקיך בידך ושביית שבינו.” (דברים כא:)

“When you go out to war upon your enemy and HaShem, your G-d, gives him into your hand and you capture his captives.”

This opening verse describes an “optional” battle, not the conquering of the land of Israel. We know this because in that war no captives were allowed to be taken, rather the inhabitants had to be killed. In such a war, the famous case of the beautiful war bride can occur. Rashi, quoting the Sifri, says that the law permitting one to take such a woman was written purely as a defense against the Yetzer Hara, the Evil Inclination. Had the Torah not permitted the soldier to take her, he would have taken her in sin. If he marries her he will end up hating her and ultimately giving birth to a rebellious son. This is why these subjects are connected.

This parsha comes as we are making our way through the month of Elul leading up to Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. This is a time for introspection and self-improvement, and the Torah here gives us an important understanding for success in this undertaking.

“Lo Dibra Torah Elah K'neged Yetzer Hara,” the Torah is only speaking in order to counteract the Evil Inclination. This can apply not only to the actual taking of the war bride, but to this introductory verse as well. The Torah is clueing us in to a key tool in fighting the Yetzer Hara.

The posuk begins by saying you are “going out” to battle the enemy. It is important for us to realize that our Yetzer Hara is an external force, not part of our core essence. We are created in the image of G-d in Whom there is no evil. We are good at the root of our being. The Yetzer Hara brings sin upon us and we may feel it becomes part of us. When that happens, depression sets in and one surrenders to his desires. He feels worthless, or “bad,” and figures, “What’s the use?” He can then sink to the lowest levels of depravity. As Rashi says, marrying this woman leads to him hating her, which leads to a rebellious son. It’s a terrible downward spiral. So what is the answer?

You must “go out” to fight the battle. Don’t think that you are evil. Know that you are truly good, and the evil is only an outer appearance, a virus attacking your spiritual health. You can work to eradicate the sickness and save the healthy person underneath.

When you realize that you are good and worth saving, and that the sin is purely external to your being, then HaShem can deliver the enemy into your hand. Further, you will “capture his captives.” What does this mean?

We are the captives of the Yetzer Hara. He gets us to commit all sorts of sins and we may begin to despair. But, if we follow the approach we have just mentioned, to treat the Evil Inclination as an interloper trying to harm the good people we are, we will capture *his* captives – in other words – ourselves!

This is the lesson for Elul. We are good and beloved, and the sins are merely something stuck to us outside. By recognizing that, we are assured that we will be victorious, and will be able to enter the High Holy Days as the purified, holy Jews we are underneath it all.

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, “Who would like this \$20 bill?” Hands started going up. He proceeded to crumple up the \$20 dollar bill and asked, “Who still wants it?” There were still just as many takers.

“Well,” he replied, “What if I do this?” He dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty. “Now, who still wants it?” Still, hands went into the air.

“My friends,” he said, “we have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But, the truth is, no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value. Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless.”