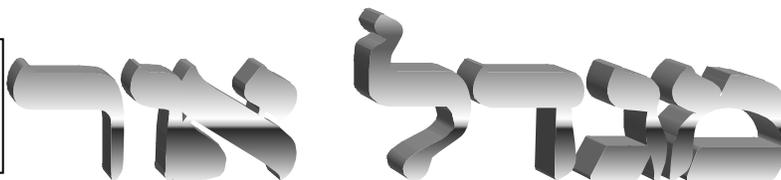


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**Mazel Tov to
 Meir Kramer and Aviva Lawson**
 on your upcoming wedding.
*May you build a Bayis Ne'eman
 B'Yisrael and bring Yiddishe Nachas
 to each other, your families, and
 HaShem Yisborach.- V'heyai bracha!*

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:57 - הדלקת נרות
- 6:15 - שקיעה
- 9:19 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:55 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:50 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 6:15 - שקיעה
- 6:57 - צאת הכוכבים
- 7:27 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

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

I Want to Be Alone

When it comes to the circumstances of one's family, friends, and station in life, everyone falls into one of two categories:

Either he is a stranger, alone on this world, or he is to be found in the bosom of his family.

If he is alone, he should believe in his heart that the reason he has no one around him with whom to fraternize is for his own good.

Because he feels himself alone, he will cleave more tightly to HaShem. Because he feels his estrangement from others deeply, he will rely on the Ribono Shel Olam alone.

His personal loneliness will bring him to realize how alone the soul is on this earthly plane, and that all men, even those with families, are like travelers and strangers here.

Further, he should reflect on the fact that even those with many close friends and family will be alone soon enough when they pass on, and neither friend nor child can help them or be with them.

He then should recognize that being alone leaves him free to pursue whatever goals he has without the burden of family and responsibility and this is one of HaShem's kindnesses to him.

If he wishes to seek closeness to G-d, he can do so with more peace of mind than one who must support a family. Be he inclined to pursue material things, then he is even more so free to pursue these things without anyone to hold him back.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:
G-d never made a promise that was too good to be true.

"וירא ה' אל אברם ויאמר לזרעך אתן את הארץ הזאת ויבן שם מזבח לה' הנראה אליו."

"G-d appeared to Avram and He said, "I will give this land to your children" and [Avram] built an altar to the G-d Who appeared to him."

Upon hearing the promise that his children would inherit the Land of Canaan, Rashi relates that Avram built an altar to sacrifice to HaShem and express his appreciation for this gift, and the news that he would have offspring.

In the next posuk, Avram has traveled a bit, and he built another altar. This time, there is a different reason. G-d revealed to him that in the future, Achan would take from the spoils of Jericho against the order of HaShem and Yehoshua. It was discovered when they went to Ai, and Jewish men were killed in battle. It was determined that someone had taken from the spoils and Achan was caught. He was stoned and burned for his action. Avram therefore built this second altar to pray for his children about that sin.

The Sifsei Chachomim explains that perhaps these two pesukim are connected because HaShem's promise to give Avram's children Eretz Yisrael was dependent on their following the laws and commandments of HaShem, unlike Achan. We can find another connection based on the words of other commentaries.

The Ramban explains that the first altar was used by Avram to thank HaShem for appearing to him in some tangible form. The Ohr HaChaim says that Avram's joy in this revelation was even greater than his joy over the news that he would have children who would inherit a great land.

Perhaps both the comments of Rashi and the Ramban mesh, and can explain the juxtaposition of the two altars Avram built. When HaShem promised him children who would inherit the Land of Canaan, Avram didn't hesitate, but immediately began thanking HaShem, even though nothing had occurred yet. This was a sign of his trust in HaShem, and his confidence that HaShem's word would be carried out. It is possible that he recognized the validity of the promise from the fact that HaShem appeared to him. G-d would not have made His presence known if He didn't intend to carry out His promises.

Then he saw what would happen later on. His descendants would win a miraculous battle at Jericho where HaShem's presence was clearly seen by all the Jews. Yet, one of them allowed himself to take from the spoils despite the prohibition, because he forgot that HaShem is the source of everything. He didn't feel G-d's Providence as strongly as Avram did, and so Avram prayed for him and his other children.

At three years old, Avram recognized that the world must have a Creator and set his sights on coming closer and learning more about Him. Being able to find G-d in a world of spiritual desolation is an attribute each Jew must have. Fortunately, it has been transmitted to us by Avraham Avinu in our spiritual DNA.

HaShem told Avraham, "Becha chosmin, with you I will seal." The first bracha of Shemona Esrai ends by stating that HaShem is the Shield of Avraham. At the end of days too, when Jews have strayed far away, and are forced to live in a spiritual wasteland, it will be this ability of Avraham to clearly see the seal of the Al-mighty -- the clear mark of G-d's involvement in the world -- which will bring them all back to the embrace of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

At an engagement celebration, the father of the Kallah was asked to put into writing the financial commitment that he promised to the young couple. He did not want to do so, saying they should take his word for it since he was a very dedicated father who always watched out for his children.

R' Elchonon Wasserman z"l was present at the time and noted that during the Aseres Yimei Teshuva we say, 'Remember us for Life, King who desires Life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life.' Hashem does not forget and is equally devoted to His dear children; nevertheless we ask to have it in writing. From here we see, said R' Elchonon, that as honorable a person may be... always get it in writing!