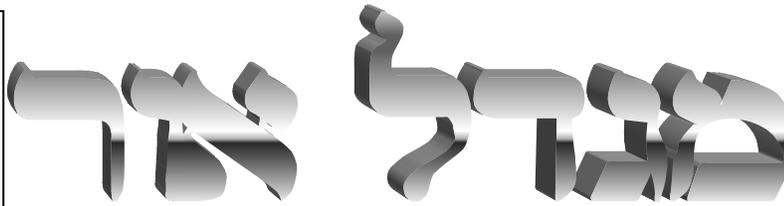


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In memory of
Rabbi Dr. Melvin Hyman z"l
הרב משולם בן יהודה הכהן ז"ל
on his 1st Yahrzeit - כ"ט תמוז
He will always be a part of us.
Steven & Deena Ginsberg
and family

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 8:13 - הדלקת נרות
8:31 - שקיעה
8:21 - זק"ש מ"א
9:15 - זק"ש גר"א
10:30 - סוף זמן תפילה
8:32 - שקיעה
9:22* - צאת הכוכבים
9:44 - צאת 72

מועד אב - Monday 9:18:00 AM

Rosh Chodesh is Monday

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com and
EzrasTorah.org

Did You Know?

This week's Torah reading begins with the importance of vows. We are told that if a man makes a vow, he must not let his words become empty. Rather, he must fulfill his promises.

The Gemara in Shabbos (32b) quotes R' Noson who says, "For the sin of (one not fulfilling his) vows, a man's wife dies." He learns this from a verse in Mishlei.

R' Chatzkel Abramsky z"l questions this. How can it be that just because her husband is a slouch who makes promises he never intends to keep that G-d would condemn her to death?

He says that of course we are discussing a woman who was destined to die at this time. However, in certain cases, even when it is someone's time, they may be able to live on.

We say that HaShem's ways are trustworthy and He does no injustice (Kail emunah, v'ain avel.) The commentaries explain that when HaShem makes a judgment, there is no injustice to ANYONE.

Therefore, if a person is needed, and his or her death would cause pain or suffering to others, his life is prolonged.

In this case, the woman whose time was up was able to claim that her husband needed her. However, once he made his word worthless, and broke his vows, he didn't deserve to have her, and her excuse for living is taken away.

We can learn two things: 1. Be careful with what you say, and 2. Be of service to others. It just may save your life.

Thought of the week:

It's amazing how "facts" can become opinions when you allow your perspective to be changed.

"וישלח אתם משה אלף למטה לצבא אתם ואת פנחס בן אלעזר הכהן לצבא..." (במדבר לא)

"And Moshe sent them, a thousand per tribe, they and Pinchas son of Elazar the Kohain for the army, and the holy vessels and trumpets were in his hand." (Numbers 31:6)

When the Jews went to fight Midian, Moshe asked for one thousand men from each tribe to be sent to battle. With them, he sent Pinchas, the newly-minted Kohain who had earned this honor for striking out at Zimri who sinned with a Midianite princess.

Pinchas's job was to be the Mashuach Milchama, the Kohain anointed specifically for battle. His job was to strengthen the hearts of those in battle by telling them that HaShem would protect them and fight for them. He gave dispensations for those who were afraid or newly married and told them to go home.

The question is, why give this job to Pinchas, who was "new" to the people? They were unsure of who he was. Was he a violent zealot? Was he a peaceful man who was overcome with rage and killed Zimri? True, the plague stopped after what he did, but especially since the tribe of Shimon would be uncomfortable with him, would it not have made sense to pick someone else?

The Midrash explains that in truth, Moshe requested TWO thousand men from each tribe. One thousand went into battle, and one thousand stayed with the vessels and weapons and prayed for the other soldiers. This one-to-one ratio was important to their success.

When heading out to battle, one must have weapons, one must use strategy, and one must fight hard. However, this is not the true reason for victory. Rather, victory comes from HaShem, as it says in Tehilim, "Some use chariots, some horses, but we recall the name of the L-rd, our G-d." The purpose of the Kohain sent with the army was to remind them of this, which is why a soldier who feared his sins would put him in jeopardy was excused.

He might be a great tactician, a mighty warrior, or a brilliant strategist, but since wars are won by G-d, if he doesn't measure up spiritually, he is not needed for the fight. On the other hand, one who was physically unimpressive, but whose heart and soul cleaved to HaShem, was the right person to go into battle.

Perhaps now we can explain why Pinchas was chosen. He knew what it meant to shed blood but he also knew that it is not to be done lightly. His act of seeming violence was actually creating peace in the world by achieving G-d's will.

The presence of Pinchas reminded the soldiers not to take things at face value - as humans see them - that strength wins wars and weapons cause death. Rather, we must see the world as HaShem sees it, and determine success and failure by His yardstick.

Pinchas was able to be the right man at the right time. Peaceful when needed, zealous when needed, and always guided by his deference to HaShem's will. This was the lesson to the soldiers going to fight Midian. Look at Pinchas and recognize that your eyes may deceive you. Think deeply into things, and don't be fooled by appearances.

A man came to R' Aryeh Leib, the Shpuler Zeide, and complained that he earned his living as an innkeeper, and spent his days pouring drinks to gruff, vulgar folk who used profanity and acted inappropriately. He was concerned that their behavior would affect him.

The Zeide responded, "It seems you would like to be given a sack full of gold coins, dressed in fine clothing, and sit in a comfortable chair, surrounded by holy volumes, so you might study and pray in peace. To serve G-d in this manner, with no obstacles, He has myriad angels. He doesn't need you for that.

The real delight G-d finds in the world is when one is surrounded by challenges and distractions, yet despite this, he still desires to cling to HaShem. So do not complain that you are in this position. Rather, give thanks to G-d that you are privileged to be surrounded by impurity, yet still strive to cleave to holiness."