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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

7:14 -	הדלקת נרות
7:32 -	שקיעה
9:03 -	זק"ש מ"א
9:39 -	זק"ש גר"א
10:45 -	סוף זמן תפילה
7:34 -	שקיעה
8:16 -	צאת הכוכבים
8:46 -	צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

אוטען שבת!

Did You Know?

Chazal tell us that HaShem says, "I created a Yetzer HaRa (Evil Inclination) and I created Torah to temper it."

The Noam Megadim, R' Eliezer HaLevi Horowitz, writes that there are two conditions which must be met in order for this to work.

1. The Torah must be learned in purity
2. It must be learned "l'shma," simply because HaShem commanded it.

He says this is alluded to by the posuk in our Parsha which states, "This is the law [Torah] of the Metzora on the day of his purification; and he shall be brought to the Kohain." He explains it as follows:

"This is the Torah which is "motsi ra," - which removes the Evil Inclination;

"On the day of purification" - it must be learned in a state of purity, without intrusive thoughts or sinful actions;

"and he shall be brought to the Kohain," - Just as the Kohain is a teacher and guide who gives forth and does not take, so must the Torah be learned because it is the will of the Al-mighty.

If one learns Torah in this fashion, he will be able to temper his Yetzer HaRa not only to overcome it, but to turn it around and use it as a source of drive for purity and mitzvos.

Thought of the week:

Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence, or learning.

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"וטבל הכהן את אצבעו הימנית מן השמן אשר על כפו השמאלית והזה מן השמן באצבעו..."

"The Kohain shall dip his right forefinger into the oil that is in his left palm; and he shall sprinkle from the oil with his finger seven times before HaShem."

As the previous posuk said that the Kohain poured the oil into his left palm, practically speaking, he can only use his right finger for the sprinkling, so stating that he must use his right finger is superfluous. Perhaps it is because of this that the Gemara uses this posuk to teach us that whenever the Kohain or his finger is mentioned he must use the right hand.

Even if that were the purpose of stating that the right finger was used, why reiterate that the oil was taken from his left palm? The last posuk just told us that's where he poured it so obviously that is where it's being taken from. In truth, however, we can learn a valuable lesson from the repeated mention of left and right in this purification ritual.

In Jewish tradition, the right side represents chesed, kindness and closeness, while the left represents gevura, strength and separateness. Often, we will do things to show that we wish the side of Chesed to be superior to the side of Gevura. This is why when we say "Oseh Shalom B'mromav," the One who makes peace in his high places, at the end of Shemona Esrai, we bow to our left. This corresponds to G-d's right, the source of Chesed. This is also the reason Chasidic men button their jackets right over left, so the Chesed will be superior to the Gevura. Normally, the right side is the dominant side, perhaps for this reason as well.

At this point, the Metzora has repented from his sins (or else the tzara'as wouldn't have healed) and he is about to rejoin Klal Yisrael. HaShem is teaching us how to treat such a person. The oil in the left palm represents the separateness he has been experiencing, which helped to achieve his repentance. The Kohain here is instructed that although it must be used, it should be tempered with kindness, as Chazal say, "Always, one should push away with the left, but draw near with the right."

Therefore, he uses his right finger to take some of the oil out of the left hand, and sprinkle it on him to purify him. The side of Chesed is dominant in this act, and we are not castigating or reprimanding the Metzora any longer.

Often in life, we come across people who have wronged us or caused us pain. At some point, however, they may wish to make amends. When that happens, we must help them and be understanding. Instead of allowing the Gevura to rule, and trying to make them pay and suffer for what they did to us, we must make sure we focus on Chesed, bringing the person close, and allowing them to retain their dignity.

This is an important final step in realizing purification. If one considers himself a sinner, he will never do right as he feels it won't make a difference. If the Metzora were treated harshly at this point, he would give up. By sweetening the final step, and allowing the repentant sinner to feel good about himself, we achieve a final, lasting purification, from whence the purified individual may rise and enter places of holiness once again, both physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

A man once came to R' Michel of Zlotchov because he had inadvertently transgressed Shabbos. R' Michel lectured him about the gravity of Shabbos and prescribed a regimen of fasting and other self-mortification. The man subsequently came before the Baal Shem Tov who told him the fasting was unnecessary, and that he need only donate candles to light the synagogue.

The man did so, but a dog immediately came and ate the tallow candles. He replaced them, but whenever they were lit the wind blew them out. He took this as a sign that his Teshuva was rejected. The Baal Shem Tov, however, knew it was because of R' Michel's opinion. He asked R' Michel to come to him for Shabbos but the trip was plagued by one mishap after another and by the time he arrived, the sun was setting. When he entered the house to see the Baal Shem Tov with goblet in hand, about to make Kiddush, he assumed he had transgressed Shabbos and fainted.

"Don't worry, R' Michel," the Baal Shem Tov said when he awoke, "the sun has not set and for you it is not yet Shabbos, while I accepted it early. But do you not see now that the regret one has for sinning is the essence of Teshuva and no more suffering is necessary?"