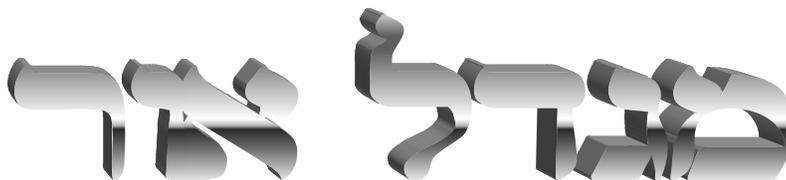


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This week's issue sponsored I'zchus Refuah Shelaima for **Bracha Elisheva bas Kayla**, a young mother recently diagnosed with a severe form of cancer. As a merit, her friends are raising \$5000 to marry off an orphan kallah in Israel. For information on donating, e-mail leffund@msn.com.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

שבת Zmanim for

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:16 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:34 - שקיעה
- 9:03 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:39 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:25 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:35 - שקיעה
- 5:17 - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:47 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

This year Shabbos Chanukah is on Rosh Chodesh Teves. Three times on this day, we will IY"H recite the longest possible bentsching, containing "Al Hanissim" "Retzai" and "Ya'ale Veyavo".

During this hard economic downturn, we should try to remember the words of the Chinuch (P' Aikev) that whoever recites bentsching with gratitude and concentration will not be lacking parnassa (livelihood).

If we "storm the Heavens" with our bentsching and the special additions on this 3-level holy day it will be a great merit to help us with good parnassa. It takes preparation to make sure that one knows the simple basic translation of this large bentsching. It also requires gearing oneself up to actually feel the thanks that he verbalizes, and truly wish that his requests be fulfilled.

Source: R' Boruch Hirschfeld, in Torah Tavlin

Yosef had the brothers' money returned to their sacks. R' Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik comments that although Yosef could not be sure that the brothers would return because of the famine, he knew they would not be able to keep someone else's money in their possession and would have to return to Egypt to pay it back!

R' Moshe Shternbuch in Taam V'daas wonders why, since the money was technically permissible (see C.M. 348), they would be allowed to leave Israel for this, especially since they could have returned the money through a messenger. One might also wonder why rescuing Shimon would not have been sufficient reason. Something to discuss at your Chanuka party!

Thought of the week:

I may not undersnad G-d's reasons for doing things, but I know He's got plenty.

"ויצו יוסף וימלאו את כליהם בר ולהשיב כספיהם איש אל שקו ולתת להם צדה לדרך..." (מב:כה)

"Yosef gave orders and their vessels were filled with grain, and each one's money was replaced in his sack; and they were given provisions for the journey. This is what he did for them."

Yosef was in the business of selling grain, thus it is unusual that he would give them food for the trip for free, especially when their sacks were full. The Ramban explains that this was done on purpose. While the servants filled the sacks for the brothers, Yosef had food for the trip given directly into their hands so they would not have to reach into the grain they had bought and could arrive at their destination with full bags. He did this as a show of kindness, to reassure them that he was not out to harm them, and would release Shimon if their words proved true.

His thoughtfulness must have seemed wonderful at the time, when they thought they were getting something extra. However, when Levi opened his satchel on the journey and found his money, they were terrified that HaShem had caused this occurrence which could spell accusations and calamity for them. The Ramban notes that the other brothers did not open their bags until they arrived home and it was then that they found their money, too, had been returned and they paled at the news.

So, was Yosef's provision of food for the trip actually a sign of kindness? Perhaps, if the brothers had opened their bags right away, they could have returned more quickly which would have looked less incriminating. We will never know, and the Ramban's verbiage is ambiguous to that point.

However, what we do know is that things are rarely as they seem at first glance. At first, the brothers thought the provision of food was a good thing. When it caused them to delay opening their bags, it must have seemed like a bad thing. However, because they had to return to Egypt later, they were forced to bring Binyamin and Yosef was able to reveal himself to them, so it was a good thing.

When the Maccabees won the war, they must have felt the hand of Providence upon them. However, when they could not find any pure oil, they may have felt some sense of abandonment. Here they had won a miraculous war, yet G-d was not showing them His satisfaction by helping them to fulfill their desire to rekindle the Menorah in purity. Finding but a small jug, enough for only one day might even have seemed like a slap in the face, indicating that HaShem did not want their service, and even if they got their way today, it would be short-lived.

Despite that, they lit the oil and a miracle occurred. It burned for eight days, showing beyond a doubt that HaShem loved his people and was there to help them serve Him. Had they found enough oil to begin with, they would have believed that HaShem was happy with them, but would have had no proof. Now that they only had enough for one day, the ensuing miracle was proof to all that they found favor with the Ribono Shel Olam. In other words, what seemed like a terrible thing was merely the preparation for something better.

This is the message of our parsha and it's nearly constant companion, Chanuka. We dwell in darkness, seeing only bits and pieces of G-d's Divine plan. While it is easy to lose hope, and feel that He is punishing us, the occasional miracles that occur are the flames that push away the gloom, reminding us that there is a purpose to suffering, and a light at the end of the tunnel.

R' Shimon of Yaroslav lived to a ripe old age. When he was asked the secret of his longevity he replied: "Everything that HaShem does is good. However, when things happen to people that they consider bad, they question Him and say that it was unfair, or should not have happened. He therefore has to take them to the Olam HaEmes, the World of Truth of the next world, to show them why what He did was not only just, but necessary and good.

I, on the other hand, am content with whatever HaShem does to me, because I know that all He does is for good. Since He has nothing to prove to me, He has no need to bring me to the next world just yet."

Jelly Donuts or "Sufganiyot" are customarily eaten on Chanukah. Why? Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z'l quotes the gemara (Avodah Zara 52b) which says that when the Chashmonaim were victorious they entered the Bais HaMikdash, cleaned it up and purified it from the Tumah. However they had no viable solution to salvage the stones of the Mizbei'ach and had to bury them. After eating Donuts we make an "Al HaMichya," in which we ask Hashem to rebuild Yerushalayim and the Bais HaMikdash, and specifically ask for rachamim "Al Mizabachecha" on the Mizbei'ach unlike in Birkas HaMazon where we don't find specific mention of the Mizbei'ach. What about the Jelly? The gemara in Sotah says that since the Bais HaMikdash was destroyed the taste of fruits have never been the same. Fruit is thus associated with the Mizbei'ach and the Bais HaMikdash. Therefore we add fruit jelly to our donuts. (Shalmei Moed)