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v'Higiyanu LaZman Haze!

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:10 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:28 - שקיעה
- 8:49 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:25 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:12 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:28- שקיעה
- 5:14* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:40 - צאת 72

מועד טבת - 9:48:04 AM

* Based on the emergence of 3 stars
Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com and
EzrasTorah.org

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

It's the Thought That Counts

Were one to "trust" in HaShem regarding his choices in serving G-d, and say, "I will not choose nor decide to do any action in service of HaShem until He puts into my heart to correctly choose which actions are good in His eyes," such a person would be veering from the correct path. G-d has already commanded us to choose for ourselves to do mitzvos and to seek to perform them by expending effort to do so. We are to do them for the sake of HaShem's great name and He has already told us that this is the best route for us in this world and the next.

If the opportunities present themselves and we have the ability to carry out mitzvos, then we will receive full reward: first, for the choice to do the mitzvah, second, for the determination that we wish to do it and the effort we put forth trying to achieve it, and third, for the completion of the action through use of our bodies.

And if we do not have the capability to complete the action, then we will still receive reward for the choice and the steps taken, as we have said before. [Since everything is revealed to HaShem, thoughts and actions are equal to Him. The measure of a man, then, can be made by looking at his motivations and intentions, and how he chooses to fulfill his needs, even if he never actually accomplishes the action.]

So it is, also, (being repaid based on intent) in regard to punishment for sins.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:
Failure is not the falling down, but the staying down.

...ויתן לו את אסנת בת פוטי פרע כהן אן לאשה ויצא יוסף על ארץ מצרים" (מקץ מא:מה)

"And he gave [Yosef] Osnas, daughter of Poti Fera, Priest of On, as a wife, and Yosef went out upon the land of Egypt."

Tradition has it that Osnas was the child of Dina and Shechem, making her the grandchild of Yaakov, and Yosef's neice. She was sent away from Yaakov's home out of fear for her safety, and wound up in Egypt where she was adopted by Poti Fera.

Rashi tells us that this was the same Potiphar for whom Yosef worked. However, because he had inappropriate thoughts about Yosef, he became naturally emasculated and was then called by the more feminine-sounding "Poti Fera."

Why did HaShem make Osnas end up in that home, the same one Yosef was in? We cannot say it was so they would meet and marry, for it is clear from the Midrash that she threw the amulet Yaakov had given her to Yosef, and he did not otherwise know of her. There must be a particular reason why, of all the people in Egypt who might have taken her in, it was the same Potiphar who did so.

We might suggest it was so she and Yosef would be accustomed to the same style of life, which might make married life more harmonious. That would be rather mundane, though. Perhaps it was because she would have had first-hand knowledge of Yosef's successful running of that household and would better respected him and his decisions. While that's a possibility, and it is important that a wife respect her husband, there may be a reason which has absolutely nothing to do with Osnas or Yosef at all. We could suggest instead that the only reason Potiphar took her into his house, raised her, and that she married Yosef, was to enable the Torah to tell us that his name was changed to Poti Fera!

The Ramban quotes Rashi and says that Rashi explains the phrase "Priest of On" as referring to a position of authority, but not as an actual priest. The Ramban disagrees. He, like Rashi, quotes the Midrash that Potiphar became emasculated. However, the Ramban continues by saying that as the effeminate changes overtook Potiphar, people began to call him the more feminine "Poti Fera," and in his embarrassment, he left his position on Pharaoh's staff and entered a house of idol worship where he became a priest for an Avoda Zara.

In other words, because he faced embarrassment, this high-ranking officer gave up everything and became a denier of G-d. Contrast that to Yosef, who was a respected son of Yaakov, and was sold into slavery. Instead of becoming depraved and sinking into sin, he rose above his surroundings and became noted as a man of G-d. Then Potiphar's wife accused him, and he was again cast down from a position of importance and became a prisoner. There, too, he achieved renown as a holy and righteous person, and now had become leader of all Egypt.

This is the message of our posuk: do not be like Potiphar, letting your tribulations get the best of you and cause you to question your faith or G-d's power *chas v'shalom*. Instead, be like Yosef and remember that you can always rise again and remain true to HaShem, for He is the one who brings you into troubles, in order to bring you out again.

The Chashmona'im understood this lesson. Though the Bais HaMikdash had been desecrated and the Jewish People degraded, they knew that by clinging to our faith, we can be victorious and rise above our enemies. May we do this again soon and rededicate the Bais HaMikdash as the dwelling place for G-d on Earth speedily and in our days.

Two men shared a courtyard. One day, a famous musician came to play in the courtyard and the music was enchanting. The two men argued about in whose honor the musician had come. They eventually brought their case to the Noda B'Yehuda, R' Yechezkel Landau z"l, and paid him handsomely to determine which of them was right.

R' Landau heard the sides, then said, "It is clear that the musician didn't come for the honor of either of you at all, but rather for my honor, so that you might pay me well to adjudicate this question!"