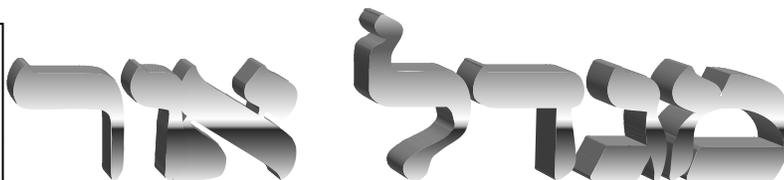


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:08 - הדלקת נרות
6:26 - שקיעה
9:16 - זק"ש מ"א
9:52 - זק"ש גר"א
10:49 - סוף זמן תפילה
6:26 - שקיעה
7:08 - צאת הכוכבים
7:38 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

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

G-d Only Knows II

Similarly, if one finds that his livelihood comes only through a job that he doesn't like, and not through other means, or only in a place where he is unhappy with it, and not in other places, or only through a person he doesn't like, and not through other people, he should say to himself:

HaShem Who created me with a specific form and specific attributes, and didn't create me in another form with different attributes because that is what is best for me, is the One who chose this specific means of livelihood for me because that is what is best for me. Just as He made me be born at a specific time in a specific place to the two people who are my parents, so did He choose this means of livelihood for me in this world. He chose the job, the place, and the people that are best for me, as it says, "HaShem is righteous in all His ways."

While R' Bachya doesn't say it directly, it should be noted that in Ashrei, the posuk of Poseach es Yadecha is immediately followed by Tzaddik HaShem b'chol d'rachav. This is to remind us that Yes, HaShem is opening His hand to sustain us, but it may NOT be exactly the way we think it should be. We must remember that only HaShem knows what's truly best for us.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

We can see a thousand miracles around us every day. What is more supernatural than an egg yolk turning into a chicken or a dry seed becoming a tree full of fruit?

"עשה לך תבת עצי גפר... וכפרת אתה מבית ומחוץ בכפר."

"Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; with rooms shall you make the ark, and coat it within and without with pitch."

Noach received very specific instructions on building the ark which would serve as his haven during the flood. It had to be made of a certain wood to withstand the scalding waters of the flood, covered with a protective coating, and made to a large size.

As the commentaries point out, however, there were many large animals on the ark such as elephants, and millions of different species. There is no way the ark could have contained them all without a miracle. Why, then, did Noach have to make it so big? If G-d was going to perform a miracle, why not let all the animals fit in a rowboat?

Further, the idea of using certain materials and coatings as a protection against the weather is preposterous as well, as the sulfuric waters melted even stones! Why was Noach instructed to take these actions if they were pointless anyway?

These instructions teach us about the nature of HaShem's interactions with Mankind. He does not like to do open miracles, so He minimizes the ones He performs. Open miracles erode our ability to exercise free will. If we saw that every time we did a mitzvah our income jumped and we felt great, but every time we committed a sin we became ill and lost our money, we would lose the ability to do anything BUT HaShem's will.

Therefore, HaShem commanded Noach to build an ark with some semblance of security. It was large, so a couple of elephants and bears could fit in it and if one didn't think too closely he could convince himself that all the animals fit naturally. The pitch was used for the same reason. True, all the buildings made with pitch melted away, but this *particular* pitch would be able to withstand the maelstrom. As always, HaShem was giving non-believers their chance to exercise free will, while one who is truthful and looks at the facts will come to the only possible conclusion – that G-d is running the world and it is He who determines what will survive the flood and what will not. His miracles don't cease, even when things seem to occur naturally.

Parshas Noach is always read in the month of Marcheshvan. The flood began and ended in this month as well. Some suggest we call Cheshvan, "Mar-Cheshvan" because *mar* means bitter, and this month has no holidays in it. Mar can also refer to rain, referring not only to the flood, but to the 7th of Cheshvan when we begin praying for rain in Eretz Yisrael. Continuing the previous parallel, we can view Marcheshvan as a month of "nature." Rain is natural, going to work each day is natural, and ordinary life is natural – isn't it?

On the surface, it would appear so. But as we begin the period where HaShem's presence and influence is not recalled on a daily basis like it is in Tishrei, we would do well to reflect that the daily occurrences of life are no less miraculous than dwelling in the clouds of glory and eating *mon*. It is still HaShem running the world, but making it appear that things could be happening without a miracle. It's time for us to be like Noach – the righteous man who walked with G-d. Even when it was his own feet moving him forward, he understood that without G-d, it would be impossible. For us, like it was for Noach, every day should seem miraculous.

The Netziv, R' Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin, never went to doctors. Once he went through a long illness and his family pressured him to see a physician. Finally he agreed to call a doctor.

After a thorough check-up, the doctor identified the problem and wrote a prescription. When the doctor left, the Netziv tore it up. His family was shocked. He finally saw the doctor, why not take the medicine?

He explained: Whenever he was ill, he examined which mitzvos were associated with the limb that was bothering him and did Teshuva for any laxness in them, thereby strengthening his body and getting well.

This time he couldn't identify precisely which part of his body was the cause of his illness. Now that the doctor had identified it, the Netziv could turn to the Healer of all Flesh and rectify the problem.