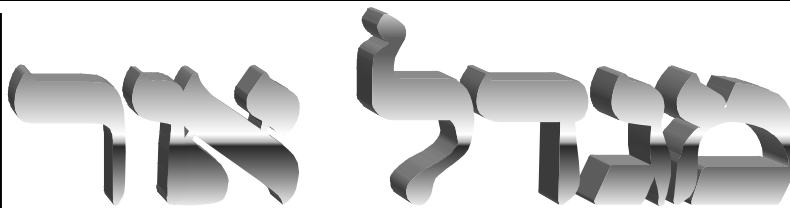


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 8:09 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:27 - שקיעה
- 8:43 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:19 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:33 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:27 - שקיעה
- 9:16* - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:39 - צאת 72

*Based on Emergence of 3 stars

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

A Bit of Bitachon - A weekly infusion of security from Chovos HaLevavos written by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda over a thousand years ago.

Payback is Tough

We conclude explaining the group who "seek collateral from G-d," by saying they first need to amass sufficient wealth to support themselves and their families in this world for the rest of their lives, and then they can calmly focus on serving G-d.

The seventh and final problem with asking HaShem to grant you enough money for your whole life before you begin to serve Him is that one who takes collateral from his friend does so only once he has established that he can give his friend the loan which is being securitized.

However, one who demands security from G-d by asking for His goodness to be bestowed first doesn't have the ability to even give back what he owes HaShem for previous kindnesses and good fortune.

How much more so can he not be sure he will be able to take on new obligations, for even if he is a Tzaddik, he cannot pay back the kindnesses that he has received unless HaShem aids him in doing so!

As one of the pious ones put it, "Even one of understanding who dwells on HaShem's greatness and goodness cannot be praised for his actions, but rather the praise belongs to HaShem who prepared his heart to feel this way and put such feelings inside him."

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny. But what we put into it is ours.

"ויהי אחרי המגפה ויאמר ה' אל משה... שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל" (במדבר כ"ו)

"And it was after the plague - HaShem spoke to Moshe and Elazar, son of Aharon the kohain, saying: "Count the whole community of B'nai Yisrael..."

Counting the Jewish people only took place when directed by HaShem, and for a purpose. In this case, after the plague which ravaged the camp in the wake of Zimri's sin with the Midianite princess, Rashi tells us there was a command to count the Jews much as a shepherd whose flock has been attacked by wolves will count them to see how many remain.

Rashi then offers a second rationale, which is that the Jews were counted at the beginning of the sojourn in the desert, when Moshe was given responsibility for G-d's flock, and now it must be counted again when he returns it. In either case, the pivotal number is that which remains.

This reasoning is undermined by the fact that several times the Torah mentions people who were NOT remaining. Dasan and Aviram and all Korach's camp are mentioned, but they neither remained nor were they returned by Moshe to HaShem's care. The sons of Korach did not die, but according to some they remained sequestered in a corner of Gehinnom, and not in the midst of Klal Yisrael. The sons of Yehuda, Er and Onan are mentioned, even though they died before the Jews even went down to Egypt! Clearly, these people do not fall into either category as explained by Rashi for which they would have been counted. Why, then, is it written this way?

Let's look at the analogy. When counting the remaining sheep, the shepherd knows what he had before, and his sense of loss will be greater depending on how many sheep he actually lost. If he has 50 sheep remaining, the attack will be more painful if he had started with 500 sheep than with 55 sheep. Not only will the quantity cause him pain, but the quality as well. If he lost a prize specimen, an animal which had produced as much wool or milk as three others, he will feel that loss more keenly. If he had nurtured one from birth and it was the one taken, he would be more shaken than if he lost an animal in which he had not invested so much.

By counting those lost, the Torah hints to what they could have achieved had they been on the straight path of serving HaShem. It highlights that it was a tremendous loss. Dasan and Aviram's wickedness influenced so many people; it was a tragedy that they did not use that influence for good. Er and Onan possessed such might, yet it was lost for petty reasons. The sons of Korach overcame their urges to side with their father in machlokes, yet were unable to share that strength with others.

This takes us to the second explanation of Rashi, that the Jews were counted when Moshe took over and were counted again when he returned them. The source of Klal Yisrael's greatness is our connection to the Torah and direct conversation with G-d. It is the relationship established at Sinai, when Moshe brought us the Torah. Moshe is called the father of prophets, those who came before him and after him. For this reason, even the losses outside his tenure are related to him. Had Moshe merited it, his influence would have averted the evil behavior and resulting destruction of those mentioned here who didn't make it.

Such is the power of Torah to transform people. No one is doomed to a certain fate, for he can rise above his nature and be holy. By remaining close to HaShem and studying and following the Torah, no one need be a "lost cause."

After delivering a shiur at Yeshivas Kol Torah, R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l went to visit a child in the hospital. On the way, he asked the driver to stop at a kiosk, where he bought a candy bar for the boy.

Back in the car, the sage was turning the bar this way and that, looking at the label. Seeing this, the driver commented, "I know that candy bar. It has a very good hechsher (Kosher certification)."

"I wasn't looking for the hechsher," said the Rav with a smile, "I was looking to see if it tastes good."

So many people have lost interest in Torah because they think it is all about regulations. They don't realize that the main gift of Torah and Mitzvos is that they make life sweet and delightful!