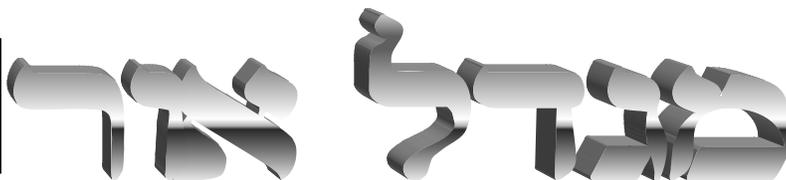


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:14 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:32 - שקיעה
- 9:02 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:38 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:24 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:34 - שקיעה
- 5:19* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:46 - צאת 72

* Based on the emergence of 3 stars

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

A Bit of Bitachon - A weekly infusion of security from Chovos HaLevavos.

Decisions, Decisions

The biggest difference between Avodas HaShem and all other aspects of life, as it relates to Bitachon is the fact that in most areas of life, G-d has not told us which job is ideal for his to make our livelihoods from, nor what will keep us healthiest, or which stock to buy. He didn't tell us which things will make us successful so we have no choice but to trust in Him that he will give us insight and wisdom to choose correctly and identify the appropriate paths for us to take in our worldly pursuits. However, service of HaShem is not like that. HaShem has already outlined what actions to take and what paths to follow and promised us reward for doing so. He has also given us the ability to do it.

The Torah is our guideline and should be followed, much as an instruction manual tells one how to operate a specific machine. Failure to follow the instructions may lead to injury or death. You can eat the green banana, but you will get sick. So it is with service of HaShem. Don't try to come up with your own rules, just follow the ones already given and you'll be fine.

Another key difference is that in worldly matters, what appears to be beneficial may actually be harmful, and what seems to be bad for us may be the best thing, so we never know what to do. Mitzvos and aveiros never change, though, and since we know that doing mitzvos is in our best interest, we don't rely on HaShem to make the obvious decision for us.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

Each of us can do things that no one else can. We are like violins. We can be used for doorstops, or we can make music. You know what to do.

”הבה נתחכמה לו פן ירבה... ונלחם בנו ועלה מן הארץ.” (שמות א:י)

“Let us deal wisely with him [Klal Yisrael] lest he multiply... and fight against us and drive us from the land.”

When Pharaoh speaks about the entire nation, he uses the pronoun, “him.” The Gemara in Sota (11a) comments that it should have said, “them.” It explains that Pharaoh was referring to the savior of the Jewish People, Moshe. He wanted to find a way to thwart his rise to power, thus ensuring that the Jews would remain in Egypt.

Seeing in the stars that Moshe's downfall would come about through water (it did, when he hit the rock, but not until many years after he had taken the Jews from Egypt,) Pharaoh enacted the rule that anyone seeing a Jewish child should throw him in the river. By making it a law enforced by the public, he was able to distance himself from blame.

He also was afraid the Jews would multiply. He therefore told the midwives to kill the children on the birthing table. In a further act of cowardice, he puts the responsibility for his nefarious schemes on the women whose job it was to care for these children.

But they didn't listen. They cared for the children, defied Pharaoh and were happy to do the will of HaShem. Because of this, they are given credit for giving life to the children. More than that, they are single-handedly credited with the population explosion the Jews experienced in Egypt, exactly what Pharaoh was afraid of.

We see this when the posuk tells us that HaShem was good to the midwives and “the population grew and increased greatly.” The entire credit for this growth comes from the fact that one woman feared HaShem more than she feared Pharaoh, and she and her daughter did what was right, not what was safe.

Moshe was an individual who was equated with the entire nation. Yocheved, his mother, the brave midwife, was an individual who caused the nation to be great. This is why Pharaoh could use the word, “him,” referring to Klal Yisrael, because the greatness of our people comes from the individuals. Conversely, Pharaoh was a single man who tried to wipe out the Jews without people realizing that he was the sole instigator. And he almost succeeded.

Each of us has the power to be great. Each of us can change the fate of our nation and of the world. What it takes is the willingness to stand alone, as Avraham the Ivri, who stood on one side (*aiver*) while the whole world stood on the other. If we choose to do evil, there is no limit to the harm we can cause. But if we choose to stand on the side of G-d, and do what is right, even if it isn't popular, then we can be the salvation of our people, and those who will bring the Redemption, speedily in our days.

When R' Aharon Kotler z"l was raising money for his Yeshiva in Lakewood, many people had a difficult time with the concept that people would be learning Torah for the sake of learning Torah, not as a means to become a Rabbi, and hence have a profession. Torah L'shema, for its own sake, was a foreign idea for the people looking to give their children the American Dream.

As he made his way from shul to shul, he would make appeals and ask people to call out amounts they pledged to donate to this new cause. In one shul, it was going slowly, with people giving a dollar or two. Then one fellow called out, “I will give fifty dollars (a huge sum in the 1930's) to Rabbi Kotler for his Yeshiva!” Hearing that, the other bidders increased their pledges and R' Aharon came away with a respectable amount from that shul.

Afterwards, someone told R' Aharon, do you know who gave that fifty dollar pledge? He is a simple grocer, and he gave you two weeks of his profits! R' Aharon was so impressed with the strength and conviction of this man that he blessed him to have a child who would learn Torah L'shema. Indeed, this man had a son who became a respected Rav and Posek, and all because he was willing to stand up for what was right.