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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:39 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:57 - שקיעה
- 8:56 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:32 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:41 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:57 - שקיעה
- 8:41* - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:09 - 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 by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda.

That's My Job

In regard to the second category of life, those things pertaining to one's possessions and his profession, whatever that may be, the proper method of practicing Bitachon is that one should pursue the work HaShem has prepared for him (as we discussed in previous lessons that HaShem gives each person an inclination and natural ability for the right type of work for him) only to the point of meeting his basic sustenance; what he needs to exist.

If HaShem has decreed that he will have more than this, this extra will come to him without any effort or bother on his part when he trusts in HaShem to give him this bounty and he doesn't search for other avenues to acquire it, and doesn't rely on other mediums in his heart, but knows that it all comes from the Ribono Shel Olam.

And, if G-d has decreed that he NOT have more than his basic sustenance, then even if every creature in Heaven and on Earth tried to increase his possessions, they would be unable to do it by any means.

When a person trusts in HaShem in this regard, he will have serenity and peace of mind, for what has been decreed for him will not pass to others, and it will not come to him any sooner nor any later than it was decreed to come to him.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

The function of prayer is not to influence G-d, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.

”לא תטה משפט לא תכיר פנים ולא תקח שחד כי השחד יעבר עיני חכמים...” (דברים טז:יט)

“Do not pervert judgment, do not take notice of [someone’s] presence, and do not take a bribe, for the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise and make righteous words crooked.”

The Torah warns judges not to manipulate the case to favor one side or the other. It then warns us about showing favoritism or taking a bribe in a court case. It would seem that these secondary prohibitions should be included in the blanket warning not to influence the verdict. Why are they mentioned separately?

A person might feel that since the ultimate point is that justice be fair, he can show favoritism, such as according honor to a wealthy person, and still judge according to halacha. He is warned not to do so. Even if he feels he will be impartial, his actions will cause him to think in accordance with how he behaves. This is because we are told, “Adam nif'al k'fi pe'ulosav,” a man becomes what he does. If you pretend to be something long enough, you will become that way for real. Therefore, if he appears to favor the rich man, or even if he appears to favor the poor man, on the grounds of trying to make it an even playing field, he will miscarry justice.

He might then feel that he can accept a bribe if he does not plan to judge differently OR show favoritism. The judge might believe he can take the bribe and not be affected. If he doesn't ACT like he will change the law, then he will not change it, right? The Torah tells us that this too is incorrect. If he benefits from either party, or even if he feels pity for one party, it will affect his judgment and it is prohibited.

Rashi explains that one may not accept a bribe even to judge correctly. Since he is already warned not to change the verdict, it is clear that bribes are forbidden in any event. Though the judge will not actively interfere with the halacha or sway the outcome, the Torah informs us that despite his best intentions, he will be affected. In other words, the fact that we think we are not influenced is a result of our being influenced!

One final point is that although these rules are given to all Klal Yisrael, as we are the ones who appoint judges. We should not think that they are held to a higher standard than we are. We are all responsible for proper behavior.

As we enter the month of Elul, we begin to enhance our behavior, becoming more introspective. As we enter the Aseres Yemei Teshuva we take on certain stringencies we don't practice the entire year. Why do we do this? Do we think we can “fool” G-d?

The answer is that the whole year we may think we can be good Jews by keeping our eyes on the “ultimate goal” and forgetting what may seem to us to be minutiae. We feel we can act like the rest of the world and still remain holy. We don't see that it drags us down and has an effect on our judgment of right and wrong. We believe we can take “bribes” in the form of pleasures in this world, without it detracting from our awareness of the World of Truth. This, too, is a mistake.

Therefore, like judges, we are enjoined to ensure that our vision of life is correct by acting in a way that will uplift us, and provide clarity by cutting away various bribes. Then we will not be swayed from the proper path, and we will enter the new year as better people, deserving of a better judgment from HaShem.

A man was sending his family on a journey and looked to hire a skilled driver for them. He had three candidates, and asked them the following question: “If you were driving along the edge of a cliff, how close could you get and still feel comfortable that you were in control?”

“I could be just a foot away from the edge and be confident,” replied the first. The second countered, “I would be fine just six inches from the edge.”

The third driver just shook his head. “I don't know about those two,” he said, “but I wouldn't trust myself to go anywhere NEAR the edge.” The third driver got the job.