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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:26 - פלג המנחה
- 7:34 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:52 - שקיעה
- 8:58 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:34 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:42 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:52 - שקיעה
- 8:34 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:04 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

אונטען שבת!

Did You Know?

Rabbi Jonathan Rietti, Shlit"a gives a beautiful analogy to explain the concept of Emunas Chachomim. He relates that as a boy in England, he used to visit estates that featured hedge mazes, a popular pastime in his country.

These tall bushes were cultivated and trimmed into a labyrinth of paths. Some were dead ends, while others led out of the maze. The ultimate goal was to make it to the center of the hedge maze. In that place, there was a raised platform from where one could look around and see all the paths and where they led. They would then have the privilege of telling other maze-goers whether they were on a path that would lead them to success, or simply to a dead end.

Our Chachomim, he explains, are given a heightened level of insight that allows them to see things the rest of us can't. This Divine inspiration enables them to tell us whether we're going down the right road or not. Just as one wouldn't question the directions of the person in the maze who was on the platform, but would take their advice because it was clear they could see something the others still in the maze could not, so too must we realize that our Rabbis and teachers of Torah, who really have that special awareness, should be followed and trusted to take us safely through the labyrinth of life.

For more Rabbi Rietti, visit JewishInspiration.com

Thought of the week:

A leader is a person you will follow to a place you wouldn't go by yourself.

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"לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לך ימין או שמאל"
(דברים י"א)

"..do not deviate from the word they tell you, neither right or left."

Rashi here quotes the Sifrei, which says that this posuk tells us to heed the halachic decisions of our leaders even if they tell us right is left. In other words, when they render a decision stating that something which appears to us to be right is left, or which we feel is wrong, we must still obey. He continues by saying that surely one should listen when they tell him right is right and left is left.

We can understand the first part of the directive. Even though I think they are wrong, I will obey because the Torah tells me to listen. The second part needs explanation, however, because if I agree, surely I will obey.

The Ramban explains that we listen to them when they tell us right is left, despite any clear understanding we have that they are wrong. Even if we feel they will cause us to punish an innocent man, we must not disagree, but carry out their orders. Again, when we agree, of course we will listen to their words. What does the Sifrei mean?

The Kli Yakar explains that every question in halacha has bases for both opposite rulings. In a question of something being permitted or forbidden, for example, there will be a number of factors that say it is forbidden, and a number to say it is permitted. Whichever side has more factors will be the decision of the judges and will be the halacha. In essence, the judges are not just clarifying the halacha, but establishing it.

Which brings us back to Rashi and the Sifrei. We now understand that even if they tell us right is left, they have the power to make that true, and therefore our previous perceptions are irrelevant. But what about when they tell us that right is right? What point is there in stating that we "surely" have to listen to them?

The answer is that just as we put our faith in our Chachomim and trust them to tell us the halacha when it's not what we expected, how much more so must we remind ourselves that when they tell us right is right, we believe it NOT because it matches our reasoning, but because it is what they have told us.

We do not view it that right and left exist and the Rabbis come up with the "correct" answer, but rather that we have no view or opinion on something unless it has a basis in Torah and a tradition regarding it. Until we have a way of looking at it through the eyes of the Chachomim, we make no pronouncement to its status. Thus, the reason we believe right is right is not because of what our eyes tell us, but because our Chachomim, with the insight granted them by HaShem's Torah, have told us it is so.

The Gemara in Bava Basra (75a) tells of the student who heard R' Yochanan darshan that when Moshiach comes, HaShem will put diamonds at the gates of Yerushalayim which are cut from stones 30 by 30 amos (45-60') in size. The incredulous talmid scoffed that it was hard enough to find a diamond the size of an egg, how much more impossible to find them the size his Rebbe claimed.

R' Yochanan said nothing, but a short time later the student was on a boat and saw angels carving huge diamonds. He asked what they were for and was told exactly what his Master had said. He returned with a huge grin and said "Rebbe, continue to preach for you have done well. What you said is true! I saw it with my own eyes."

R' Yochanan seethed with anger. "And had you not seen it would you not have believed me?!" With that, he cast his gaze upon the talmid and turned him into a pile of bones.

How great this student must have been to converse with angels, yet his lack of faith in his teacher made him deserving of death.