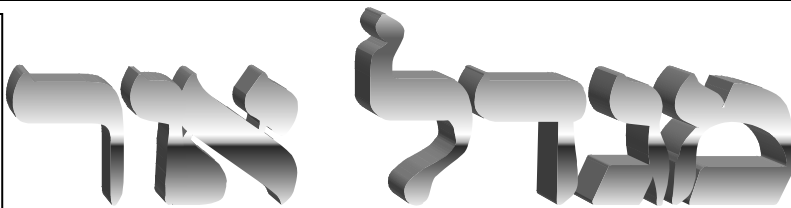


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Mazel Tov to
Rabbi and Mrs. Dov Klahr
Wesley Hills, NY on
Yossi's Bar Mitzvah.
May you have much Yiddishe
nachas from your entire family!
The Anshei Amsterdam
Shabbos Daf Yomi Chabura

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for **צבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:15 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:33 - שקיעה
- 8:55 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:38 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:44 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:35 - שקיעה
- 8:17* - צאת הכוכבים
- 8:47 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars
Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

Lessons of the Fathers

(and the Mothers, and Everyone Else)

During the weeks between Pesach and Shavuos, we have the custom to learn Pirkei Avos, often called Ethics of the Father, each Shabbos. These six chapters contain numerous insights and opinions of how one ought to live and behave. This seeming focus on good middos, treating others nicely, is one reason given for their study at this time.

This is the period of Sefiras HaOmer, the seven weeks we count between Pesach and Shavuos, when the students of R' Akiva died in an epidemic. Chazal say the reason for this was that they did not conduct themselves with honor to each other. Therefore, since we learn how to treat people from these chapters, we study and review them at this time.

If we analyze this more, however, we realize that it is not so much a book about how to treat others, as a book about how we should live ourselves, and how we should relate to HaShem. So what makes this appropriate for this time of the year?

Perhaps the fact that so many different people, all beginning from the same starting point with Moshe Rabbeinu, were able to develop their own unique perspectives and ways of serving HaShem teaches us to contemplate the greatness in others and what they have to offer.

Being able to see the wisdom of others and appreciate them is indeed an integral part of Torah and can help us see others as deserving of our respect and honor.

Thought of the week:

I'm a self-made man. If I had it to do over, I'd ask for help.

”אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו... צרעת והובא אל אהרן הכהן או אל אחד מבניו הכהנים.” (ויקרא יגב)

”When a person will have in the skin of his flesh a spot...[like] the plague of tzora'as, he shall be brought to Aharon, the kohain, or to one of his sons, the kohanim.”

One who experienced a skin eruption that might be tzora'as, a spiritual affliction mistranslated as leprosy, was brought to the Kohain so he might examine it and rule on it. It doesn't say that he "went" to the Kohain, but rather that he was brought to him. The Ibn Ezra comments that the person was brought to the Kohain whether he wanted to go or not.

We would imagine that a person with the disease would want to be healed, but it's possible that something prevents him from doing it. For instance, he may be too proud to admit that he did wrong, and as long as the Kohain hasn't pronounced him impure, it's not definite that he sinned.

Alternatively, he may not wish to humble himself before the Kohain. We find that Yiftach, who was a Shofet, a Judge who acted as national leader before the Jews had a king, made a vow that if he won the battle he was fighting, he would sacrifice to HaShem the first thing that emerged from his door. This was improper, and the first thing that came out to greet him was his daughter. The Midrash Rabbah in Parshas Chayei Sarah (as brought by Rashi in Taanis 4a) says that Yiftach should have gone to Pinchas the Kohain to annul his vow but he refused to go because he was arrogant. He said, "I am the Shofet; I am the leader. He should come to me."

Perhaps the biggest reason one might not want to go to the Kohain with his tzora'as is because some people don't like to be told anything by anyone. They believe their own minds and intellect can tell them everything they need to know. They don't want to hear from others, and they don't realize the folly of being closed to other perspectives.

The seven sins for which one may get tzora'as are (in descending order of stricture) Lashon Hara, murder, swearing in vain, illicit relationships, arrogance, theft, and stinginess. A common theme in all of these is that the person doing the act puts himself first over anyone else, including G-d, and he does not care what others think about it.

It may be that for this very reason, he is forced to submit to the Kohain's decision and may NOT decide for himself whether he wishes to become pure. In a sense, this is a great kindness, for pride will often cause us to hurt ourselves even more than if we would simply acknowledge that we were wrong and move forward.

It is noteworthy that the Torah says one must come either to Aharon or to one of his sons. The message is that we don't get to decide, "Well, this Kohain is righteous and knowledgeable, so I will listen to him, but that one is not worthy of telling me what to do." Once again, the Metzora is forced to reckon with the fact that he does not have the final word.

The hope, then, is that he will take this message to heart and change his ways. We want him to recognize that by choosing to think he is always right and does not need any advice, he has only sentenced himself to impurity, loneliness, and disgrace. When he changes his ways, however, he is welcomed back with open arms by the very same Kohain who sent him away. By looking at himself through the Kohain's eyes, the former sinner's eyes are opened as well.

When King Shaul failed to wipe out Amalek, Shmuel HaNavi informed him that he was no longer going to be king. He asked Shmuel to forgive him and come back to the camp with him where he would bow before G-d and offer a sacrifice. Shmuel refused. Shaul asked again, and this time, Shmuel agreed to accompany him. What changed?

The first time Shaul said he would rectify his mistake by bowing down and offering a sacrifice to HaShem. The second time he changed it and said, "Come back with me and bow me down before HaShem, Your G-d."

Once he realized that he did not know everything and was willing to be guided by Shmuel, Shaul was deserving of that opportunity to learn.