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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:07 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:25 - שקיעה
- 8:56 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:32 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:25 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:27 - שקיעה
- 6:09* - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:39 - 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 by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda.

Right Where You Stand

When Moshe Rabbeinu taught us the Torah, and related the promise of reward, he only discussed rewards in this world. That's because he was talking to people who live in this physical world.

In contrast, when the soul of Yehoshua ben Yehotzadok the Kohain Gadol ascended to the Heavens and stood in the realm of angels, HaShem told him, "And I will give you the ability to walk amongst all those who are standing here." (Zechariah 3:7)

This is because when one wishes to affect someone, and make an impression on him, by promise of reward or threat of punishment, he does so in the currency that the person will understand. He uses reward and punishment applicable to the time and place so that these things will make the proper impression. If you reflect on this, you will see that it is so.

Of course, the ultimate reward in Olam HaBa will be closeness to G-d, and that is only possible if G-d wishes to be close to us and wants us to be close to Him. This is the entire basis of Olam HaBa.

In several places HaShem says that if we fulfill the Torah, "My soul will not revile you," and "I will turn My face to you." If so, then the reward in the next world IS referenced in the Torah.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

Q: How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One. But the light bulb must be willing to change.

"וזה הדבר אשר תעשה להם לקדש אתם לכהן לי לקח פר אחד..." (שמות כט:א)

"And this thing shall you do to them to sanctify them to serve Me: take a bull..."

This parsha relates what was necessary to prepare the Kohanim to perform the Avoda for HaShem, and to establish within them a sanctity which would last for all time and generations. The Torah goes to great lengths in discussion of how the priestly garments were to be made and what they should look like. These were key to performing the service.

After all the clothing is described, HaShem conveyed the special sacrifice which would also be necessary to inaugurate Aharon and his sons as Kohanim and imbue them with the holiness they would need to perform the avoda in the Mishkan before G-d.

It would seem from this that, as stated earlier, the clothing were only for honor and glory, and the inaugural sacrifice was to sanctify them. However, at the very beginning of the parsha, (28:4) the Torah says, "And you shall make Aharon's clothing to sanctify him to serve Me." How can the Torah offer two conflicting explanations about the Priestly vestments? Were the clothing only to give honor to the Kohanim, or to effect a change in them and elevate them?

In truth, there is no conflict. The clothing of the Kohanim were intended for their honor, and the inaugural sacrifice was to sanctify them. By differentiating the purpose of the clothing from the taking of the animals as sacrifices, the Torah is teaching us that it is not enough to look holy merely by putting on the trappings of the Kohain.

Rather, action had to be taken, as our posuk tells us: "This is the thing you shall DO to them to sanctify them." Only by doing can one raise himself up. Otherwise he is just a man in a costume. There is no intrinsic holiness value in the garments. They merely magnify and enhance the greatness that already lies within the Kohain.

If so, what about the earlier verse which says that Aharon's clothes were to be made to sanctify him for the service? This is not a contradiction. The expression, "the clothes make the man," can be quite true. When one puts on a uniform and sees it as a sign of his duty, the fact that he is dressed in a special way strengthens his own commitment. He is no longer a man, but a soldier, police officer, or firefighter.

Merely by putting on the clothes of the Kohain, one does not become sanctified. However, when Aharon put them on, he did so with a sense of purpose and responsibility. His clothes, then, were indeed able to elevate him, but not because they had some mystical power. Instead, they magnified the greatness of the man who wore them. Because he chose to use them as a means to raise himself, they became so, and helped to sanctify him.

As Jews, we often appear different than others. We may dress differently, speak differently, and act differently. However, we must realize that all these things can be like the regular clothes of the Kohanim, merely outer trappings which do not affect us. Instead, we must actually be different, so that our behaviors set us apart, enhancing who we are and giving us a sense of responsibility to make a Kiddush HaShem, a sanctification of G-d's holy name.

A group of young ruffians started making mischief at a small synagogue in Vilna. They threw rocks at those who came to pray and called them all sorts of names. They became increasingly bold and began becoming physical.

Then a man arose and walked to the window. To the mischief-makers he was just another Jew. To the Jews, he was known as "The Vilna Gaon." He looked at the youths, then reached up and pulled back his talis, revealing his Tefillin. The boys were terrified and ran off, in fulfillment of the verse, "And all the nations shall see the Name of G-d upon you and fear you," which the Gemara (Brachos 6a) states refers to "Tefillin She'b'rosh," the Tefillin worn on the head.

One onlooker asked his friend. "They saw my Tefillin on my head; why weren't they afraid?" Said his friend, "The Gemara doesn't say the Tefillin ON your head, but rather IN your head. The Vilna Gaon embodies everything that the Tefillin stand for, and that is why they feared him."