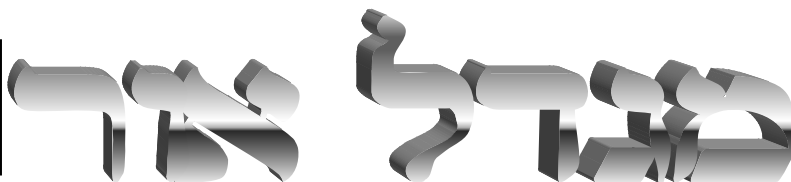


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נפטר ר"ח כסלו תשנ"א
By his children and grandchildren,
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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

5:29 - הדלקת נרות
5:47 - שקיעה
9:30 - זק"ש מ"א
10:06 - זק"ש גר"א
10:57 - סוף זמן תפילה
5:47 - שקיעה
6:29 - צאת הכוכבים
7:09 - צאת 72

מולד כסלו - 9:04:03 PM Mots"K

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A Bit of Bitachon - A weekly infusion of security from Chovos HaLevavos by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda.

Mediums at Large

Moving on to the next category, things that deal with others, R' Bachya tells us that the proper way to deal with others, both those whose station in life is above his, and those whose station in life are below his, is as follows:

When one needs something from another, and has to come on to his friend for help, he should keep in mind that it is HaShem Who will give him what he needs, and this person is merely a medium through which HaShem will bring this to fruition.

It is much like one who works the land and seeds it for his livelihood. If G-d chooses to provide for him in this manner, the earth will sprout and produce abundant food. The ground deserves no thanks for this. The thanks goes to the Creator alone. And, if HaShem chooses NOT to provide for him through the bounty of the earth, then it will NOT sprout and grow, or the produce will spoil, and there is no reason to be angry at the ground for this.

So it is with asking help from others. One should not think that because he asks a more powerful person for help, he has a better chance of success than asking someone less powerful. Rather, he should remember that either of them can equally be the source of his assistance, since they are only mediums through which the Creator gives things, and he should trust in HaShem to bring the thing to fruition.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

The best way to get people to do something is to convince them it was their idea in the first place.

”וירא אליו ה' ויאמר אל תרד מצרימה שכן בארץ אשר אמר אליך.” (תולדות נוב)

“And G-d appeared to [Yitzchak] and said, ‘Don’t go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land that I will tell you.’”

When a famine occurred in Yitzchak’s times, as it did in his father’s, he believed he should follow his father’s example and go to Egypt to find food. HaShem told him he should not leave Canaan because, as Rashi quotes from the Midrash, “You are an ‘olah temima,’ a completely pure offering; the land outside Canaan is not worthy of you.”

In contrast, when Eliezer went to seek a bride for Yitzchak, he asked Avraham about bringing Yitzchak to another land if they were unwilling to release the girl without Yitzchak’s presence. Avraham was adamant in his statement that under no circumstances was Yitzchak to leave for another land, and used the word ‘hishamer,’ which Chazal say always refers to a prohibition. In fact, the commentaries point out that because Yitzchak was sacrificed to G-d at the Akeida, there was an actual prohibition for him to leave Eretz Canaan. This was conveyed to Avraham at that time by the angel who appeared saying, “I see you have not withheld your son from Me.”

Further, as R' Moshe Feinstein z"l says, it was imperative that Yitzchak did not go to get Rivka because the people there would have a negative influence on him. It was worthwhile for him to find a wife of lesser stature than Rivka, rather than be subjected to the influence of Besuel, Lavan, and their neighbors.

If this was the case, why, when Yitzchak wanted to go to Egypt, did HaShem not tell him, “You may not leave the land as you became sanctified to Me on Har HaMoriah,” or “It is dangerous for your spiritual self to go there”? If there was a lo sa'aseh, a negative commandment or prohibition, HaShem could have told Yitzchak that and he would have followed it unquestioningly. If there was a risk to his ruchnius, he would not have taken it. Why make a statement about *chutz la'aretz* not being good enough for him, which could open it up for more argument or questioning?

The answer, it would seem, is that HaShem is teaching all of us an important lesson in chinuch. When you want to get someone to avoid something forbidden, it is not always effective to say, “Don’t,” “You can’t,” or “Thou shalt not.” They may have a desire to rebel against that, or they may question the logic of such prohibitions.

If you tell them they will be affected negatively, they will have a natural desire to test this out and prove that they are strong enough to overcome the challenges.

Instead, the way to get through to them is to build them up and help them realize that the sinful action is beneath them, or the risk of contamination of a person at their level is so much worse than a regular person. They will see that you are concerned for their benefit, and they will protect themselves from the pitfalls that lie ahead.

True, perhaps Yitzchak was on a high enough level that he would have listened even to the stricter way, but now we have a lesson for the ages. Love can be a greater motivator than fear, and it is how we should approach every Jew – by recognizing his inherent holiness and capitalizing on it.

Someone once asked R' Moshe Feinstein z"l why so many people in America became secular and did not keep Shabbos, when their parents expressed such mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice for Shabbos, even losing their jobs and suffering in order not to desecrate it.

R' Moshe sighed and said, “It is precisely because they had mesiras nefesh.” When questioned, R' Moshe explained: “Self-sacrifice is fine for one’s self, but it cannot be transmitted to the next generation. In order for the next generation to develop its own self-sacrifice, the love of Shabbos must be conveyed with joy and happiness; realizing its tranquility, beauty, and pleasure. Then the Shabbos will become a part of them. But, if one looks at Shabbos merely as a day when one cannot do things, why would the next generation want anything to do with it?”