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 (And Happy Birthday!)
 E.T.G.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:24 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:42 - שקיעה
- 8:46 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:22 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:18 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:44 - שקיעה
- 6:26* - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:56 - 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, written nearly a thousand years ago.

Trivial Pursuits

The proper path in Bitachon that one should have in regard to the kindnesses HaShem does for his beloved, chosen ones in this world, which kindnesses cannot be counted due to their sheer number, is as follows:

A person should involve himself in mediums which bring him to the level of "chasidim," pious ones, who are worthy that HaShem should give them these gifts in His kindness.

These mediums are that one should follow the way of the righteous who separate themselves from this world, who are repulsed by it, and he should remove from his heart all love and passion for this temporal world.

In its place, he should implant in his heart love for his Creator, and he should give over guidance of his life to the Hand of the Al-mighty, and all his joy should be in G-d. He should meditate and distance himself from this world and those who are entrenched in its emptiness and follow the path of the prophets and pious ones of previous generations and through these acts he will merit reward in Olam HaBa like they did.

However, one who believes that G-d will reward him in the next world without good deeds is a fool, like those of whom it is said, "They do the act of Zimri and seek the reward of Pinchas."

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

A little learning is a dangerous thing, but a lot of ignorance is just as bad.

"ולהורת נתן בלבבו הוא ואהליאב בן אחיסמך למטה דן." (שמות לה:לד)

"And He put into [Betzael's] heart the ability to teach; he and Ohaliav, son of Achisamach, of the Tribe of Dan."

Not only was Betzael granted the wisdom and understanding to perform each skill of craftsmanship necessary for constructing the Mishkan, but he was given insight into people, to understand their intentions in their gifts. Further, he was given the ability to teach what he knew to others so they might participate in the construction of HaShem's earthly home.

The Rishonim comment that this was an important gift because there are many wise men who are knowledgeable yet do not have the skill to teach others. Teaching takes its own wisdom and Betzael and Ohaliav were blessed with this talent.

This raises an important question. Surely, Betzael and Ohaliav needed the ability to teach. But why was it important for the Jews to know that he had been divinely given this ability? Moshe was speaking to the Jewish people and saying, "See that Betzael has been chosen and given wisdom and the ability to teach." Why did it matter what he had been given?

The answer sheds light on the way human beings think. When someone is in charge, and seems to have all the answers, we tend to believe there must be a flaw somewhere. If we find ourselves unable to learn from and follow him, we blame him and his inability to teach.

Moshe told us: "Betzael has been instilled with every type of wisdom; he knows what to do." That told us not to question his knowledge. Then he told us, "He has been given the ability to teach." That means that if we cannot learn from him the fault is not his, but ours!

We must be willing to learn from others and not assume we know everything. We must realize that sometimes our own egos are the stumbling blocks and obstacles to knowledge. By recognizing that the fault may lie in us, we are closer to being able to learn from those we do not feel are perfect enough to teach us.

This is underscored by something very striking. Both Betzael and Ohaliav were granted Divine insight. The Torah could have told us this regarding their knowledge of craftsmanship or understanding of motives. Instead, it equated them here, in reference to teaching others.

Betzael was of spectacular lineage. He was the grandson of Chur who had died opposing the Golden Calf. He was the great-grandson of Miriam the Prophetess and Calev, the spy who stood up against those who defamed the land of Israel. But who was Ohaliav?

He was from the tribe of Dan, one of the lowliest tribes, son of a maidservant, as Rashi points out. The message is that when it comes to learning, we can and should be able to learn even from someone of low stature. We should not complain that we can only learn from someone who is a paragon of greatness; that if he has any faults he is not worthy of teaching us. On the contrary, if we cannot learn from someone, the fault lies not in him or his inability to teach, but in us and our ability to learn and be a willing student of all men.

As an 'eltereich bochur' in Telz, R' Elchonon Wasserman would ask boys in their first year of Yeshiva to learn with him. Barely Bar Mitzvah, these boys would sit and read the Gemara to the already wise and advanced learner.

When he was asked how he could condescend to do such a thing, he replied, "It is not beneath me to learn with these boys for they learn p'shat, the simple understanding, and their Torah is untainted. If it is truth I seek, I must seek it from them."