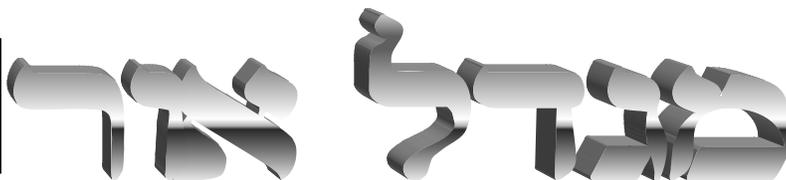


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

**Zmanim for שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:11 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:29 - שקיעה
- 8:58 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:34 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:20 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:30 - שקיעה
- 5:16\* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:42 - 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.*

**Nothing To Sneeze At**

We'll return to the classic text of Rabbeinu Bachya next week, but this time, we'll discuss the words of the Chizkuni.

On the posuk related to Yaakov becoming ill, he quotes the famous Pirkei D'R' Elazar which teaches that before Yaakov's time, no one would get sick before he died.

Instead, he would sneeze and his life would end. No matter where he was, in the market or at home or at work, he would sneeze and die. (And you thought that was an Old Wives' tale!)

Yaakov prayed that he be given time to instruct his children before his death and his request was granted. He became ill to signal that his end was approaching and it was time to issue his final words.

The Chizkuni continues by saying that because of this change in nature, when one sneezes, he should pause and thank G-d for having turned death into life, and allowing him to live.

Ironically, when people say, "Bless you," it is not we who deserve blessing, but G-d! (Islamic practice teaches that the sneezer should bless G-d and his companion should bless his friend with good health.) Perhaps, then, the origin of "G-d bless you," is actually "G-d, *bless ye*," or "You shall bless G-d."

Either way, when one sneezes, it is the perfect opportunity to strengthen our Bitachon and remember that our lives are in the hands of the Al-mighty every day.

- To be continued

**Thought of the week:**  
**Having children makes one no more a parent than having a piano makes you a pianist.**

"ויאמר ליוסף הנה אביך חלה ויקח את שני בניו עמו את מנשה ואת אפרים." (ויחי מח:א)

**"And it was told to Yosef, "Behold, your father is sick," and he took his two sons with him, Menashe and Ephraim."**

Who told Yosef that Yaakov was ill? Rashi mentions an opinion that it was Ephraim. This is based in the Midrash Tanchuma. Ephraim used to learn with Yaakov and it was he who brought the news back to Yosef. If so, the language used here is vey telling.

Normally, when someone spends a lot of time with someone, especially an important personage, they become somewhat possessive of them. It would not have been unusual for Ephraim to have developed such a relationship with his saintly grandfather and mentor. The posuk, however, shows us his enormous restraint.

"And it was told to Yosef," Ephraim came solely out of concern for Yosef, with complete detachment from his own emotional distress. "Your father is ill," again, the focus is on Yosef and not on Ephraim's feelings. Then Yosef "took his two sons with him," Ephraim did not lead the way, but waited for his father to take him, even though Yaakov's home in Goshen was more familiar to Ephraim than anyone else. Not only that, his brother Menashe went first.

Despite the fact that Ephraim spent more time with Yaakov than his father or brother, (Yosef actually stayed away, lest Yaakov question him about how he ended up in Egypt.) he understood the importance of Kibud Av, honoring his father. He didn't allow his own relationship with the Patriarch of the family to diminish his father's stature in his eyes.

Also, he happily followed behind his brother Menashe, who did not have as much Torah as he did. As Chazal teach us, honoring one's parents includes honoring an older brother, especially a bechor. Ephraim's attention to this mitzvah was exhibited in his behavior when summoning Yosef to Yaakov's bedside.

Yosef, too, was keenly aware of Kibud Av. When he met Yaakov for the first time after so many years, Rashi says, "He appeared before his father." Yosef's intentions were not to see his beloved father, but rather that his honored father have the pleasure of seeing his long-lost son. In another example, the Targum Yonason says that when Yaakov asked Yosef to place his hand on Yaakov's Bris Mila (chosen because the Bris Mila was a symbol of holiness, one of the few mitzvos that had already been given and the only one unique to the Jewish People,) to swear that he would bury him in Canaan, Yosef refused to do so. If a child is forbidden to go to the bathhouse with his father, how much more so this? Therefore, he instead swore an oath to take his father's body out of Egypt.

The one mitzvah that Yaakov feared Esav's performance of was Kibud Av. Yaakov felt his own fulfillment of it was lacking, yet his awareness of this seminal mitzvah was so strong that he was able to instill this midda in his children and grandchildren. When a person firmly believes in something, others can perceive it. It impresses people, and inspires them to recognize the value of it. This is what Yaakov did, and it is because of his convictions that his son and grandson were able to put aside their own feelings in order to honor and revere their fathers.

*The Bluzhover Rebbe z"l retold the miraculous story of a terrible game the Nazis ימ"ר enjoyed. They forced the Jewish concentration camp inmates to dig a pit twenty feet across. They then had to jump to the other side. If any of them made it, they could live for another day. The ones that fell into the pit were shot and buried there.*

*Many took running jumps; a futile effort. The Bluzhover Rebbe walked up to the edge of the pit with a few of his Chasidim, closed his eyes and proclaimed, "We are jumping!" When he opened his eyes, he found himself on the other side of the pit. Next to him, he saw one of his closest Chasidim. Amazed, the Rebbe said to him, "I know how I made it across. I was holding onto the kapoteh (cloak) of my saintly father and grandfathers. Their holy merit carried me. But how did you make it across?" The disciple replied with simple faith – "Rebbe, I held on to YOUR kapoteh!"*