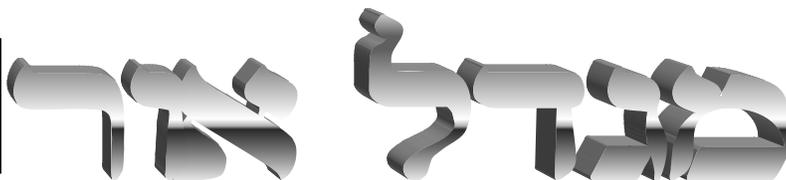


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:09 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:27 - שקיעה
- 8:54 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:30 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:16 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:28- שקיעה
- 5:14* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:40 - 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.

I Told You So

We've said that in regard to performing mitzvos, one is not to rely on HaShem to place in his heart the desire to do what the Torah tells us.

The difference between service of HaShem and other pursuits as they relate to Bitachon is that in all other areas of life, it is not revealed to us which means of achieving a goal is best or most efficacious for us. Neither are we told which avenues are detrimental to us, for we do not know which pursuit will be the best for us, or which will help us attain our livelihood, good health, and benefit. We do not know when, where, or how to best proceed.

We therefore ask G-d to guide us in our decisions so that we make the most appropriate and fitting choices for us and our benefit and that He help them come to fruition.

However, in service of HaShem, when He has already told us the proper path to follow, and He has already commanded us to choose it ourselves AND He has promised us reward for it and given us the ability to do it. [Ed. Note: Though some mitzvos may be easier for some and harder for others, we all have the ability to perform them, though it may not be easy.] Therefore, praying that G-d guide us is a foolish mistake because HaShem has already told us what is best for us and will bring us the most returns in this world and the next.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

When science discovers the center of the universe, a lot of people will be disappointed to find they are not it.

”ויהי כי עלינו עבדך אבי ונגד לו את דברי אדני.” (ויגש מד:כד)

“And it was, when we went up to your servant, my father, and we told him my lord’s words.”

For many of us, hearing these words makes us shudder. Yaakov is called Yosef’s servant, something that is clearly a disgrace to Yaakov’s honor. Not only that, we are aware of the famous Pirkei D’Rebi Eliezer which states that Yosef died at 110 years of age because his life was reduced by ten years, once for each time Yaakov was referred to as Yosef’s servant. Hearing that word is terrifying because it shows us how powerful each word is. In this case, Yosef’s life really depended on it!

Not only that, if you look in the posuk, it only calls Yaakov Yosef’s servant five times. The other five times were when the interpreter translated what was said, so Yosef heard it ten times altogether. Hearing it translated was just as bad as it being said the first time. For each time, he lost a year of his life.

The question is: this ruse was necessary for Yosef to enable his brothers to do proper Teshuva, repentance. He could not protest them calling Yaakov his servant for fear of revealing his identity. He clearly had no choice, and yet, he was punished for what he did. Why should he suffer for something he couldn’t help? Don’t we say ‘*onais rachmana patrei*,’ G-d excuses one for circumstances beyond his control?

Another question is the fact that the Gemara (Sotah 13b) gives a different reason for Yosef’s diminished lifespan. It says that he only lived 110 years because he conducted himself with ‘*rabbanus*,’ or superiority, acting as a lord over his brothers over the years, either intentionally or not. If this is so, how could the Pirkei D’Rebi Eliezer give an entirely different reason?

If you would like to answer that R’ Eliezer was a Tanna and had his own view, note that the gemara in Sotah, immediately preceding the statement about *rabbanus*, says that Yosef was called, “bones” in his lifetime because he didn’t protest in his father’s honor when Yaakov was called his servant. Chazal noted both reasons, and the disagreement seems to revolve around what exactly was the cause of his early demise. But that may not be so.

R’ Eliezer says Yosef died early because he did not protest. However, Yosef could not protest because it would have ruined his chance to help the brothers repent. He was a victim of circumstance and normally should be pardoned for this act. Why then was he punished?

For that we turn to the Gemara in Sota. Yosef conducted himself with superiority, and that led to his downfall. When Yosef heard Yehuda refer to Yaakov as “your servant,” Yosef had to think, “How can I let him call my father “my servant”? Alas, I have no choice.” But that may be because he was used to being right. Had he been more humble, he might have realized that there was a way out. He could have protested that Yaakov was known to be a great man, and they need not call him Yosef’s servant. He could have made some other excuse. However, because he acted superior, he failed to protest. True, his life was shortened a year for each word, but had he not conducted himself with ‘*rabbanus*,’ he might have found another way out.

The Bostoner Rebbe was famous for helping Baalei Teshuva stay grounded even as they soared to spiritual heights. It is told that once a Baal Teshuva told the Rebbe that he doesn't eat steak unless he has bread so he can wash. He explained that a good, juicy, steak deserves more than a 'mere' shehakol before and borei nefashos afterward. He wanted to make sure that after eating steak he could amply thank HaShem with a full Birchah HaMazon.

Expecting the Bostoner Rebbe to be pleased with his logic and tzidkus, he was taken aback by the Rebbe's negative response to this practice. The Rebbe explained that when instituting brachos, Chazal knew good and well the meaning of a nice piece of meat. Despite this, they instituted the brachos of shehakol and borei nefashos. One must trust Chazal and not veer from their words based on his own personal feelings and findings.

- Source: Revach.net