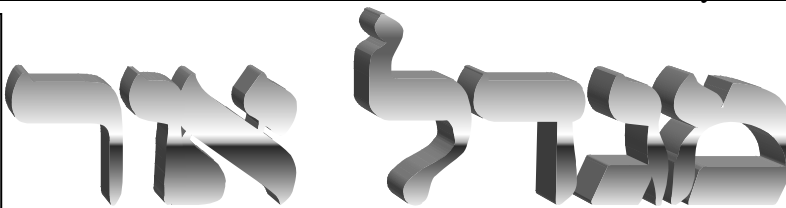


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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

**Today I am Bar Mitzvah,
I'm glad you could be here.
I'd say something eloquent,
If I wasn't gripped by fear.
Come on, just hire a professional, and
let that be one less thing you have to
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(You know you want to.)**

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:19 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:37 - שקיעה
- 8:30 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:13 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:02 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:37 - שקיעה
- 5:21* - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:49 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars
Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

We say Aleinu three times a day, and the Shulchan Aruch says one must have deep concentration on this lofty prayer.

In it, in the first section which was written by Yehoshua, Moshe's disciple and next leader of the Jewish People, we praise HaShem by saying, "Shelo sahm chelkeinu kahem, v'goraleinu k'chol hamonam."

We thank G-d that "He did not establish our portion like theirs, nor our lot [to be] like that of their multitudes."

Simply understood, we thank HaShem for giving us the understanding and truth of His Torah, and that we look to Him for aid, instead of to other sources which are powerless.

The word "sahm," meaning established, can also be translated as, "estimated or evaluated."

With that meaning, we are thanking G-d that we do not measure the greatness or success of our portion like others do, on a simply physical, monetary scale.

Rather, we look at our lot for the blessings we have been given of truth and fear of Heaven, as well as spiritual satisfaction and peace of mind.

We recognize that we are fortunate to see beyond dollars and cents to things that are much more valuable, such as loyalty, faith, and compassion to others.

This is a gift worth contemplating and good reason for thanking G-d multiple times each day.

Thought of the week:

Some people are so poor all they have is money.

— Albert Einstein

"ויהי לי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה ואשלחה להגיד לאדני למצא חן בעיניך." (בראשית לב:ו)

"I have oxen and donkeys, sheep, servants, and maids; and I have sent to tell my master, to find favor in your eyes." (Gen. 32:6)

As a general rule, even people who like you are not interested in hearing how successful you are. If it's someone who is jealous of you, your vast wealth will not be a source of joy to him. If anything, it will make him hate you more. That said, why would Yaakov send a message to Esav saying, "Look how rich I am! Doesn't it make you happy?"

In this case, though, Yaakov knew exactly who he was dealing with. Esav was angered that his younger brother "stole" the blessings he felt he should have gotten. The Midrash relates that Yaakov made a huge pile of gold and jewels, a fortune of all his worldly possessions, and gave Esav a choice. "Which do you prefer, the birthright or this pile of treasure?"

However, Esav later regretted his decision, especially since Yaakov secured the blessing of prosperity from Yitzchak by deception. Esav felt he had been tricked into giving up something more precious than money and it irritated him that Yaakov would come out ahead. He had no hope except for the loophole in Yitzchak's blessing.

That loophole said that when Yaakov neglected his holy pursuits, Esav would have mastery over him and it was the sole means of Esav attaining happiness and assuaging his resentment. Knowing this, Yaakov attempted to lead Esav to believe that he had changed.

"I went to live with Lavan. I have been there until now, and today I am wealthy and have so much!" The statement was meant to calm Esav, and lead him to believe that Yaakov was no longer a threat because he was now a materialistic person, unworthy of the blessings.

Esav didn't buy it, however, and was still coming to see for himself. This frightened Yaakov. Upon meeting him, Esav would recognize that the material prosperity had not diminished Yaakov's spiritual greatness. If anything, his wealth enhanced it by giving Yaakov a greater appreciation of HaShem's kindness and mastery of the world. He therefore set about finding other ways to defend himself, namely gifts, prayer, and fighting.

Often, people who are materialistic feel threatened by those who are spiritual-minded. They declare that the spiritual person looks down on them, or is a fool for not recognizing the greatness of material success. However they treat it, it is merely a defense mechanism to downplay their own feelings of inadequacy in the realm of spirituality.

To such people, as we see from Yaakov, one may give the impression that he is interested in material things, so as to limit their wrath or anger. However, no matter how much one might seek to win their favor, he must maintain his connection to G-d and never truly succumb to love of money or possessions. Were that to happen, he would truly be defenseless and defeated. Ideally, though, he should show those people how they can strengthen themselves spiritually and use their material blessings to serve HaShem.

Meir was a hotshot businessman. Young, brash, and with a devilish grin, he knew how to negotiate. One day, he told a friend, "I just made the greatest deal of my life." The previous day, Meir had signed a contract with R' Aharon Leib Shteinman Shlit"a. Meir would give a significant sum of money to support R' Shteinman's Kollel in exchange for a share in the Olam HaBa R' Shteinman would get from the merit of the Kollel. "I can die in peace now, because I am sure I have a share in Olam Haba."

His words were prophetic because soon afterwards, this young man was killed in a car accident. Upon his Shloshim, his friends and family made a Seudah, at which this contract was mentioned. Inspired, someone who wished to sign a similar deal met with the Kollel's gabbai as well as R' Shteinman, who related a story which sent shivers down the spines of all who heard it.

R' Shteinman said that after his death, Meir appeared in a dream, and revealed that this contract of partnership was the only thing which saved him from the Bais Din shel Maalah (Heavenly Tribunal.)

This is how one man turned material wealth into an eternal spiritual treasure. [Ed. Note: I knew Meir Volk a'h personally.]