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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:00 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:18 - שקיעה
- 9:00 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:36 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:27 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:20 - שקיעה
- 6:02 - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:32 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

⚡ Bit of Bitachon

A weekly infusion of security from Chovos HaLevavos, a classic Jewish work written by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda nearly a thousand years ago.

Continued from last week –

One of the benefits of Bitachon which empowers one to be better able to serve HaShem is that one who trusts in HaShem is able to take his mind off of mundane matters and to focus his thoughts towards loftier matters of serving HaShem.

He is similar in his peace of mind, and in his reduced worry about day-to-day things, to the alchemist who is able to transform silver into gold and lead into silver, through his skill and actions.

[A thousand years ago, when Chovos HaLevavos was written, changing base metals into precious ones through alchemy was believed to be an attainable goal, and it was the pursuit of many scholars and visionaries. That power would enable one to have limitless wealth.]

Moreover, one who has Bitachon has not one, but *ten* advantages over the alchemist.

First: In plying his craft, the alchemist must use specialized ingredients, without which he can do nothing. These are not readily available at all times in all places. The Baal Bitachon, though, is guaranteed a livelihood through anything found in this world, and any item in this world can be the conduit for his sustenance if HaShem wills it.

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell.

"וישמע יתרו... כל עשה אלקים למשה ולישראל עמו כי הוציא ה' את ישראל ממצרים" (שמות יח:א)

"And Yisro heard all that the L-rd had done to Moshe and Israel his nation; that HaShem had taken Israel out of Egypt."

What set Yisro apart was that he heard something and acted upon it. But what did he hear? More specifically, what intrigued or inspired him to recognize HaShem as the true G-d?

HaShem has many names and in this posuk, we find something unusual. In reference to what HaShem did for Moshe and the Jewish people, the name Elokim is used. Usually, this connotes strict judgment. At the end of the verse, when discussing the actual Exodus, the Torah uses the name HaShem, which symbolizes mercy. In fact, the name of HaShem is used seven pesukim later when Moshe tells Yisro all that "HaShem" did to the Egyptians. How could these attributes of the Ribono Shel Olam be used in what would seem to be contradictory situations?

The Kli Yakar offers a fascinating approach based on a common belief at the time that there were two entities, one which did good to all and one which did evil to all. When Yisro learned that the same G-d both saved the Jews and punished the Egyptians, he realized that this was the single, all-powerful G-d. But there may be another understanding of what impressed Yisro.

The Baal HaTurim says that when the posuk refers to what "Elokim" did to Moshe, it may refer to G-d's acting upon Moshe with the attribute of judgment, and sending the snake which almost killed him for failing to give his son a bris mila.

Here was Moshe Rabbeinu, the man who was to lead the Jews from Egypt and make HaShem's name known in the world, and yet, for an infraction of not circumcising his son, he might be put to death. This is counterintuitive. When you need someone, you generally overlook his flaws for the benefit of your ultimate purpose.

At the same time, when it came to dealing with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who had tortured the Jewish people for hundreds of years, G-d acted with compassion, even for those sinners, and the plagues were rather brief, though they were devastating. Normally, when someone defies a ruler's authority, he reacts with strict justice in order to keep the peace, yet here HaShem acted mercifully with the Egyptians.

What Yisro saw was that HaShem is far beyond human comprehension or behavior. Unlike us, His decisions are not based on His needs, for He is not threatened by Man, nor does He need him. HaShem is the sole, individual power, who relies on nothing and no one. This can be likened to a king in whose kingdom a rebellion begins. If he is a smaller king, he must quash it immediately. If he has a larger empire, and is comfortable in his dominion, he can let it go a little longer. The more HaShem lets us get away with, the greater we see he is.

In Bava Kama (50a) R' Chanina says, "Whoever says HaKadosh Baruch Hu is a 'vatran,' [that he lets people 'get away' with things,] may his life be treated with indifference. Yisro saw that HaShem punished and rewarded precisely, and nothing was missed or ignored, even if it would have "suited" HaShem's desires better. That was something so unique that it could only be the hallmark of the one, true, G-d.

A Rebbe, who was very hard to get in to see, once told his Gabbai that he would accept ten visitors that day. The fortunate ten men were ushered into the Rebbe's study and dutifully handed him their kvitlach [notes with their names and requests for blessings on them.]

However, an eleventh man bullied his way into the room. When he approached the Rebbe, his note was refused. "You need to learn," scolded the Rebbe, "that you can't always get your way!"

Taken aback by the harsh response, the man was crestfallen. As he slunk toward the door with head bowed, the Rebbe called him back. "Give me your kvitel," said the Rebbe soothingly. "I ALSO have to learn that I can't always get my way."