

מגדל אור

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:04 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:22 - שקיעה
- 8:58 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:34 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:26 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:24 - שקיעה
- 6:06 - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:36 - צאת 72

אנוטען שבת!

Did you קעגן?

The Taamei HaMinhagim quotes the Midrash Tanchuma that children begin learning Torah with Sefer Vayikra because HaKadosh Boruch Hu says, "Let the pure ones come and deal with matters of purity, and I will consider it as if you have offered korbanos before Me. He continues by saying that the children are accustomed to swaying their bodies when they learn (shukling) as the posuk in this week's Parsha says by Matan Torah, "Vayar ho'am vayanu'u, the nation saw [the sounds, the flames, the sound of the shofar, and the mountain emitting smoke] and they trembled." Similarly, in many kehilos, it is customary to stand for the reading of the Aseres HaDibros to feel as if we are reliving the standing at Har Sinai and receiving the Torah.

At one time, there were heretics who said that this and other differentiations of the Ten Commandments showed that they were true but the rest of the Torah was not. As such, there is a debate among poskim whether such a custom to stand should be abolished. The Rambam very strongly said it should be stopped, but others disagreed. Most Ashkenazim allow this custom to continue but R' Ovadya Yosef writes that in Sefardic communities, it should be abolished. However, if a Sefardi finds himself in a shul where the custom is to stand, he may not sit. He suggests that the person stand out of respect as the Rabbi given that aliya passes, and remain standing.

Thought of the week:
There is a huge difference between earning a great deal of money and being rich.

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”ואתה תחזה מכל העם אנשי חיל יראי אלקים אנשי אמת שנאי בצע...” (שמות יח:כא)

“You must seek out from among all the people mighty, G-d-fearing men, men of truth, who despise gain...”

In suggesting that Moshe appoint judges, Yisro describes the attributes that Moshe should look for in the people he will appoint. It is curious that anything should precede the fear of G-d, and yet, the attribute listed first is “anshei chayil,” people of might. What is so important that it precedes Yiras Shomayim?

Rashi tells us that these people were wealthy, and had no need for bribery. This is actually a machlokes in the Mechilta. One opinion says that anshei chayil were wealthy people and one says they were people who kept their word, who Rashi describes as anshei emes, men of truth.

Perhaps, being one who keeps his word would be understandable to come before Yiras Shomayim, as one who keeps his word will also fulfill his vow at Har Sinai to keep the Torah, and that inner drive to remain true to his word could sometimes be a stronger force than fear.

However, according to the opinion that these were wealthy, why would that come before fear of Heaven? Wouldn't the fear of HaShem prevent them from taking bribes? There are several answers we can give. The first is that bribery takes effect on people even against their will. When the Torah says a bribe will blind the wise, it is a statement of fact. Even one who knows it is wrong can be swayed by a bribe. Therefore, Yiras Shomayim alone would not be enough. They had to be rich on their own, and thus not susceptible to bribes.

There is another answer. The language of the Mechilta is that anshei chayil are “ashirim u'baalei mammon,” wealthy people and possessors of money. This language is odd. Surely, if one is wealthy he has money. What is the purpose of the double language?

The answer is that to be a judge, and not to be swayed by bribery, one must be both wealthy, and have money in his possession. In other words, he possesses money; it does NOT possess him. When a person is a slave to money and constantly seeks it out, even if he is G-d fearing, he might be led astray in the pursuit of wealth. Therefore, a prerequisite is that a person must not be overwhelmed by money, but rather he must be in control of it. This will enable him to remain objective and carry out the judgment correctly.

So how does one attain these traits? By learning Torah and training himself in Bitachon in HaShem. There are two ways to be wealthy. One is to have money; but the other, better way is to be Sameach B'chelkecha, happy with what you have, knowing that HaShem determines what you have, not any other creature in the Universe.

A number of years ago, many Jewish day schools came up with the idea of changing the curriculum of youngsters learning Gemara. The accepted practice was that boys began learning Ailu Metzios, a perek in Bava Metzia that discusses how to treat an object that is found, or Hamafkid, which discusses laws of guarding someone else's objects. The educators felt that these topics were perhaps not so relevant for the beginner students, and they should learn Brachos or Pesachim which dealt with the laws of Shema and Pesach instead, which the boys could relate to better.

The Rebbeim in Tiferes Yerushalaim thought the idea made sense, and they wished to follow suit, but would not without approval from the Rosh Yeshiva, R' Moshe Feinstein z'l. In response, he called every Rabbi in the school into his office; perhaps the only time he ever did so.

He said to them, “The choice of these sections of Gemara to begin a child's Talmud education is not a new thing, devised and decided upon in America. This has been accepted and passed down for generations. We will not change. “But I will explain to you why such is the custom,” continued the sage. “It is to teach young children that being a good Jew does not start in the synagogue, it starts in the street, dealing with your fellow man. When you understand how to take care of what belongs to another and respect it, and you become practiced in Bain Adam L'chaveiro, then you will succeed in Bain Adam L'Makom. There is a reason our sages of old established this custom.”