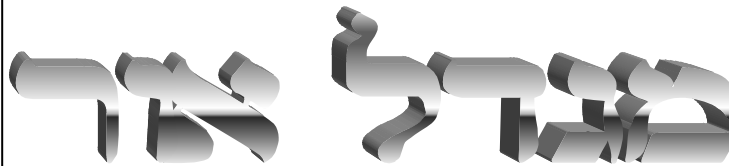


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Please learn the Torah in this sheet
as a zechus for Refuah Shelaima
for a good friend to many,
**Mordechai Tzvi ben
Rus Chana**
Amongst all the ill of Klal Yisrael.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

4:11 - הדלקת נרות
4:29 - שקיעה
8:38 - זק"ש מ"א
9:22 - זק"ש גר"א
10:09 - סוף זמן תפילה
4:28 - שקיעה
5:14* - צאת הכוכבים
5:41 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Now You Know!

The Torah tells us that Hashem saw Leah was "despised," so He opened her womb while Rachel remained barren. What exactly is meant by the word despised is the subject of much discussion.

Whether she was despised for going along with her father's plan and didn't reveal her identity to Yaakov, or whether she actually despised the actions of Esav and therefore truly desired to marry the tzaddik, Yaakov, there was some distance in the relationship.

Hashem saw her pain and opened her womb, while Rachel remained barren. Certainly, Yaakov and Rachel must have prayed mightily for Rachel to conceive, as did Yitzchak and Rivka. And yet, for Leah, it happened, but not for Rachel.

We see from here that though a person might pray and hope and believe in Hashem, sometimes their salvation comes through other means.

The suffering a person goes through, not just because of their actual situation, but because of the treatment they receive from others, can be more powerful than the prayers.

Though Leah felt unloved, she didn't speak of her pain. Instead, she swallowed it and continued with her life. This is why Hashem "saw" her pain, and didn't "hear" it.

This was a great merit for her and she was blessed with children.

When we go through difficult circumstances and sorrow, we should be comforted in the knowledge that this may well be the key to ending our pain.

Thought of the week:

People want to become a
"Vilna Gaon" overnight; but
they also want to sleep that
night.

"וַיִּקַּץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֵן יֵשׁ ה' בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי." (בראשית כח:טז)

"And Yaakov awoke from his slumber and said, 'Truly, Hashem is in this place and I didn't know!'" (Beraishis 28:16)

It seems strange for Yaakov to use the expression that "Hashem is in this place," as if it were a complete surprise. We know that Hashem is everywhere and His glory fills the Universe. What was Yaakov actually saying here?

The commentaries take two basic approaches to his statement. On the one hand, it refers to the holiness of the place itself. This was to be the site of the Bais HaMikdash, the location where all prayers in the world pass through to rise to the One above, and the location itself was deserving of respect. Had he realized where he was, he would not have slept there.

On the other hand, Yaakov was lamenting his not making proper preparations for receiving prophecy there. Either he would not have slept, so he could work and "earn" the nevuah, or he would have prepared himself spiritually in some other way to be ready for the revelation he had. However, because he didn't realize the great specialness of the location, he did not do so.

According to the first understanding, not only the place of the Bais HaMikdash is holy and conducive to Hashem's revelation, but there are many places where Hashem will choose to show Himself through miracles and other occurrences. For example, Har Sinai was a place Hashem chose to speak to Klal Yisrael and give the Torah, and where He also appeared to Moshe in the burning bush. There are many more examples, where Hashem's presence is revealed more than in others, though, like in this case, we may not know it ahead of time.

Yaakov bemoaned the fact that this was a holy place; a place where Hashem was more accessible, so to speak, but he was unaware and therefore didn't prepare himself to maximize the experience. Though he did receive a tremendous prophecy, it was not through his own efforts, and he was merely a passive recipient.

The lesson we should take from this expression of our sainted forefather, is that in life, we never know where Hashem will choose to reveal Himself. It could be a place, a situation or circumstance, or a specific time. These moments can spring up on us without our knowledge, just as he arrived at the sacred spot of the future Temple unbeknownst to him.

Therefore, we would be wise to constantly prepare ourselves for the connections to Hashem that may arise. By working on our spiritual selves on a regular basis; a constant basis, we will be prepared for those moments and opportunities and be able to make the most of them.

The Gemara in Brachos (61b) recounts the story of R' Akiva, who was jailed for teaching Torah to the masses. When it came time to execute him, and they took him from his cell, it was time to recite the Shema, which he did. As they scraped his flesh with iron combs, he accepted upon himself the Kingship of Heaven. His students were astounded that he could do this.

"My whole life," he explained, "I have been pained over the verse, 'with all your soul,' [which I explain to mean even if they take your life,] wondering when I might fulfill it. Now that I am able to, should I not do so?" R' Akiva prepared himself every day to sanctify Hashem's name, and he was ready when the moment arrived.

The Ben Yehoyada posits that this conversation actually took place before R' Akiva was killed on Yom Kippur, for he could not have answered them during the verse of Shema. Rather, for 40 days prior, he had been taken out and his flesh scraped while he said Shema. They asked on one of those days.