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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:19 - פלג המנחה
- 7:26 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:44 - שקיעה
- 9:00 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:36 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:43 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:43 - שקיעה
- 8:26 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:05 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

In this parsha we are commanded that after we eat and are satisfied, we must bless HaShem. Birkas HaMazon consists of four brachos: three biblical and one of Rabbinic origin. The Meshech Chochmo in his commentary on the posuk "v'achalta v'savata" notes that the Birkas HaMazon contains a great deal more than thanks to Hashem for sustenance. He sees this prayer as a progression and demonstration of hashgacha pratis – G-d's Divine Guidance - throughout our history.

Moshe composed the first bracha when the *man* descended. Every aspect of this nourishment reflected Divine involvement and participation with the people of Israel. The second bracha, composed by Yehoshua, notes not only the Divine conquest of Eretz Yisrael, but also how the land harmoniously interfaces with the divine law and the Jewish nation. The third bracha, authored by Dovid and Shlomo, thanked HaShem for his hashgacha pratis in the Mikdash and Yerushalayim (Avos 5:7). Finally, lest one believe that with the destruction of the second Bais HaMikdash His hashgacha pratis over Klal Yisrael ceased, the miraculous preservation of the cadavers at Beitar demonstrated His continuous care and concern for His people even when they are in exile. Hence the bracha has been most inspirational and elevating to the oft crestfallen spirit of the Jewish people during the long Diaspora. Birkas HaMazon communicates a great deal more than "thank you HaShem for the food". It has nourished our souls with optimism for almost two thousand years.

Source: Rabbi B. Yudin
Torahweb.org

Thought of the week:

Seek not to change the world,
but to change your mind about
the world as it is.

Get Migdal Ohr via e-mail to share with
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והיה עקב תשמעון את המשפטים האלה... ושמר ה' אלקיך לך את הברית ואת החסד" (דברים ז"ב)

"As the reward when you hearken to these ordinances... HaShem your G-d will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that he swore to your fathers."

The posuk seems to say that if we keep the mitzvos HaShem will keep His promise to Avraham Avinu to give us the land of Israel. Could it be that HaShem would only keep His word if we live up to our part of the bargain? Surely not. HaShem's seal is truth and His promises are fulfilled.

The Rashbam says that HaKadosh Boruch Hu will fulfill his promise with a different generation, one that is deserving of it. The Sifsei Chachomim explains that it was the special promise made at the covenant with Avraham which was contingent on our actions.

As the Sipurno explains, this refers to the special direct relationship Klal Yisrael would have with HaShem, in which He showers blessing down upon us Himself, without any intermediaries. This relationship depends on whether we deserve it or not.

There is a deeper understanding of this concept which is brought to the fore by the wording of the posuk. It says that HaShem will "guard" this covenant. The word used here - ושמר - is similar to the language in Parshas Vayeishev, when Yosef told his dreams of kingship to his family. It says that his brothers were jealous but his father "guarded" [the message of the dream.] Rashi there says Yaakov was waiting and yearning for those dreams to come true.

Our posuk, therefore, is telling us that even though HaShem will always keep His word, when we fulfill His mitzvos, He yearns and desires all the more to be kind to us and have a loving relationship with us. What does this mean? What is the rationale? HaShem doesn't need our mitzvos; we aren't giving Him anything, so why all the fuss?

A further understanding is alluded to by the use of the word "עקב" which is similar to the word "heel." As Rashi explains, these are mitzvos which people trample underfoot and don't give much thought or respect to. When a person is careful to perform even these mitzvos, despite the fact that others might ridicule one who scrupulously follows them, it shows that he has more regard for HaShem than his own personal honor. That shows love for the Al-mighty.

The Sipurno, in fact, says that the way to earn this special kindness from HaShem is to serve Him with love, as a servant serving without thought to the reward he may get. By keeping the mitzvos even if others treat them lightly, we show that we act out of love for HaShem, not out of thought for ourselves. When we do that, HaShem reciprocates and so He waits and yearns to do whatever He can to lavish reward and blessing upon us. Because we cultivate this relationship not only of obedience to HaShem, but of love, He personally takes us under His wing and cares for us.

Love's power to change someone versus the futility of hatred is expressed in the following tale: R' Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, the Kopitchnitzer Rebbe, lived for a time on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. One Shabbos morning, he saw two freshly-shaved young men smoking near the entrance to the Mikveh. Known for his love of Jews, he calmly said, "You must have forgotten it is Shabbos and that's why you're smoking."

One the men snidely replied, "Not exactly. But in America there's an expression: 'Mind your own business!'" The Rebbe's companion was seething but the Rebbe replied lovingly: "This is a busy street. If you saw a car hit a pedestrian and he was lying in the street, all bloody, would you mind your own business? Of course not, because you can't stand idly by while someone bleeds to death. When I see you smoking on Shabbos, I see your neshama (soul) hemorrhaging. I can't mind my own business."

The two men were shocked and overcome by the love they felt and promised to observe the Shabbos. For weeks afterwards, the Rebbe would meet them on Shabbos morning outside the Mikveh and they would say, "Gut Shabbos, Rebbe. See? We are not smoking."