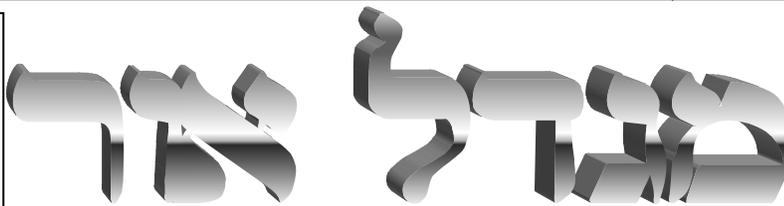


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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

8:09 - הדלקת נרות
8:27 - שקיעה
8:33 - זק"ש מ"א
9:09 - זק"ש גר"א
10:25 - סוף זמן תפילה
8:28 - שקיעה
9:19* - צאת הכוכבים
9:40 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

When the Jews complained about the difficult journey, not because it was really hard but because they wished to challenge HaShem, a fire burned at the edge of the camp to destroy those responsible.

Rashi offers two possibilities as to what the "edge" refers to. It could mean the stragglers of the Erev Rav, the "Mixed Multitude" – Egyptians who joined the Jews as ostensible converts but who were merely carpetbaggers who caused much strife in the desert. It could also refer to the leaders of the generation who did not do enough to calm the populace and help them strengthen their bitachon – their trust and security that HaShem would continue to provide for them.

What happened next sheds light on these two disparate opinions in Rashi.

The rabble, being the Erev Rav again, began to whine for meat and cry. The Jews joined them and also began to cry, thus beginning a downward spiral. The Torah points out very specifically that the Jews did not initiate the complaint, but were influenced by those around them who were complaining.

We now understand why the previous Rashi opines that the leaders were punished for not doing enough to guide the people. As humans, and especially as Jews, we are empathetic to the feelings of others. When someone is sad, it hurts us, when someone is happy, we feel their joy.

This means we have the power to influence others either positively or negatively. How we wield that power is very important.

Thought of the week:

I do not believe in G-d, for that implies an effort of the will - I see G-d everywhere!

"על פי ה' יסעו בני ישראל ועל פי ה' יחנו כל ימי אשר ישכן הענן על המשכן יחנו." (במדבר ט"ז)

"According to the word of HaShem would the Children of Israel journey, and according to the word of HaShem would they encamp; all the days that the cloud would rest upon the Mishkan would they encamp."

As children, we are taught then when the cloud moved, the Jewish People moved. When it stopped, they stopped. It seems pretty straightforward, and could be clearly understood, as the posuk writes, that they traveled and camped by G-d's command.

However, the Sifri says it was not that simple. When it was time to travel, the cloud would fold up over the tribe of Yehuda (the tribe which traveled at the head of the Jewish formation) in the shape of a beam. Then the Jews sounded trumpets, and the cloud remained in place until Moshe said, "Arise HaShem, and let your enemies be scattered." Only then did it move.

Similarly, when it was time to encamp, the cloud shifted and rose over the tribe of Yehuda. Yet, it did not spread out in the form of a shelter until Moshe said, "Reside tranquilly, HaShem, among the myriad thousands of Israel." Once again, the cloud, representative of HaShem's presence, waited for Moshe's intervention, yet is referred to as "the word of G-d." Rashi says this is a manifestation of the phrase, "by G-d's word, through Moshe's hand."

Why should that be? Why couldn't the cloud have just moved when it was time for us to move, and stopped when it was time for us to camp? We wouldn't need any special instruction, and we would all have been able to follow G-d's will directly. It would have been like a personal conversation where HaShem was clearly speaking to us. Wouldn't that have done much to strengthen our faith and trust in HaShem?

The message here is that G-d's signs and messages to us are not always clear, and we need to seek guidance from our Torah leaders, those sages who have plumbed the depths of HaShem's Torah, live according to it, and love us dearly, as did Moshe Rabbeinu.

Even when we think we understand the signs, as the Jews undoubtedly did when they saw the cloud changing formation, we cannot believe we have final say and complete insight. As Chazal say, "Listen to the Sages even when they tell you your right is your left." This means that though something may seem obvious to us, we may be wrong.

The Sipurno comments that sometimes the cloud would begin to move even when the Jews had not yet settled themselves in the place they had stopped. We may infer then that some people likely wondered why they were moving on so soon. Perhaps if left up to them, they might have decided to ignore the sign at that point, especially since the cloud waited for human intervention. That is why the final word went to Moshe, who would carry out HaShem's will.

In our lives, HaShem sends us signs and signals all the time. The test is how we interpret them. For example, we may find out about an opportunity to make a killing in business. Clearly HaShem sent it our way so we might benefit. Of course, He might also have sent it as a test to see if we will give up the deal to remain honest. When we see "signs" from HaShem, we must view them through the perspective of Torah and Torah leaders, just as they did in the desert.

Being chased by bandits, a man stops short at the edge of a deep ravine. The other side is at least twenty feet away. From the dust rising behind him, he knows that the outlaws will be there any moment. With no way out and nowhere else to go, he raises his eyes heavenward and says, "I don't know what to do. Oh L-rd, please give me a sign!"

At that moment, a fiery hand appears and with a fiery pen, scrawls the word "JUMP!" in large fiery letters over the ravine.

The man looks down into the deep ravine, then behind him at the cloud of dust growing ever-larger. Then he lifts his eyes again and cries, "Oh L-rd – give me ANOTHER sign!"