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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

6:02 -	פלג המנוחה
7:05 -	הדלקת נרות
7:23 -	שകיעה
9:04 -	א"ק"ש מ"א
9:40 -	א"ק"ש גור"א
10:45 -	סוף זמן תפילה
7:22 -	שקיעה
8:04 -	צאת הכוכבים
8:34 -	צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

You Should Know

The instructions for the special declaration made when bringing the Birkurim begin, "V'anisa v'amarta, you shall respond and say..." The pronunciation of these words in the Torah is pivotal, as placing the accent on the wrong syllable will change the meaning. It should be read, "V'amarTA," which means and you shall say. If it is read "V'aMARta," it means, 'and you said' – past tense, wrong meaning. There is another example of this important rule of pronunciation which is said incorrectly perhaps millions of times each day. In krias Shma, the first word of the second paragraph should be read, "v'ahavTA," meaning 'and you shall love [HaShem]'. If it is read 'V'aHAVta', as it is common to teach children in the sing-song Shma used around the world, it means, 'you used to love G-d,' quite a different meaning indeed! One should be careful with the pronunciation of the words. One tool to help you place emphasis on the proper syllable is to look at the trop marks over the words in the chumash. They highlight the proper stress of the word.

The first words of the Rem'a in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim are, "Shivisi HaShem l'negdi tamid," I place G-d before me always. He concludes his comments on Orach Chaim with the words, "v'tov lev mishteh tamid," the good of heart feast constantly. Both phrases use the word "tamid," always. Perhaps this reminds us that one who always sees the hand of G-d before him will find happiness in any situation. Such an outlook allows one to perform all of HaShem's laws, from beginning to end, with joy.

Thought of the week:
Ordinary people think merely of spending time. Great people think of using it.

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"וְהִי אֵם שָׁמֹעַ תִּשְׁמֹעַ בְּקוֹלְךָ אֱלֹקִיךְ לְשָׁמֹר לְעֹשֶׂת אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתָיו..." (דברים כה:א)

"It shall be that if you listen to the voice of HaShem, your G-d, to keep, to perform all of His commandments... HaShem will make you supreme over all the nations."

There is a subtle difference between this posuk, which describes the way to blessing, and its counterpart fifteen verses later which outlines what will cause calamity. Here, the blessing is promised to one who listens to HaShem's voice to do all His mitzvos, His commandments. The later posuk says that curses will descend on one who does not listen to HaShem's voice to guard and perform all His mitzvos and chukim, His commandments and statutes. It seems that to become cursed takes more steps than to become blessed.

The simple understanding of the difference between mitzvos and chukim is that a commandment is something for which some reason can be understood, while a statute is performed just because G-d "said so." That doesn't explain why statutes should only be mentioned on the side of not listening. If one does not heed G-d's word when it makes sense, surely he will not heed it when something seems illogical. Why then are 'statutes' added here?

R' Samson Rafael Hirsch gives a beautiful and insightful explanation. When one listens to HaShem's voice, says R' Hirsch, he does everything for the same reason: to fulfill the desire of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. If he puts on Tefillin or studies Torah, it's because that's what HaShem said. If he doesn't eat shellfish or drive a car on Shabbos, it's because that what HaShem said.

For such a person, heeding the word of HaShem is a single, joyous activity. It has a reason behind it; he is doing G-d's Will. Not so the person who doesn't listen to HaShem's voice. For him, each positive commandment is a strain, a burden. Each prohibition is a restriction, a barrier to his "happiness." Such a person will find depression and angst in the mitzvos of HaShem and in all aspects of life. Such a person is truly cursed.

In other words, if one seeks only to fulfill the desire of His creator, then no matter what happens in life, he will see it as a blessing, as an opportunity to fulfill HaShem's will. If G-d wishes to shower him with riches, he seeks to use them for good purposes and to help others. If G-d takes it away, then he is grateful to be spared the challenge of wealth.

In Mishlei (15:15) Shlomo HaMelech says, 'v'tov lev, mishteh tamid,' one who is good of heart feasts continuously. Rashi explains that when one's heart is good with his position in life, all his days appear to him as days of celebration and feasting. Such is the message of our posuk.

When you heed HaShem's voice, everything you do has the same singular purpose – to fulfill G-d's will. When you do that, nothing fazes you or upsets you because you know that it is His will that this be your portion and if you have difficulties, you accept them with appreciation because this too is how G-d wanted it to be. By lovingly accepting them, you are continuing to fulfill His word, still performing that one mitzvah of listening to HaShem.

One who approaches life that way will surely see each day as another chance to feast and celebrate his love of HaShem in a new way and constantly rejoice in the changing circumstances of his life. Such a person is elevated above all other peoples and will find blessing and joy in the city or field, whether coming or going. This is the ultimate blessing.

R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld z"l had a dream one night. He dreamed that if he bought a specific lottery number, it would win. When he awoke, he thought about buying the ticket.

"I have one lira to spend," he thought. "I can either use it to buy food for today, or I can buy the lottery ticket. HaShem gives me my parnasa every day. I must only use the money for today, and tomorrow He will provide again."

Of course, the number he dreamed of won. Someone asked him if he felt bad about not buying the ticket. "Of course not," he replied. "I did what the Torah tells me I was supposed to do with my money. I am happy I did the right thing and have no regrets."