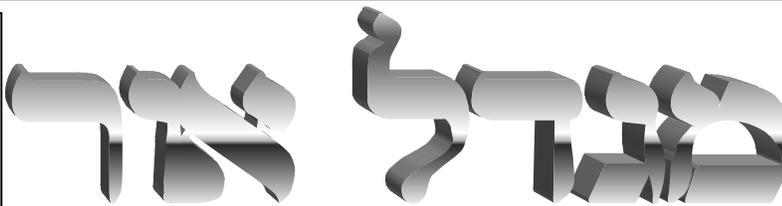


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Mazel Tov to  
**Mr. & Mrs. Nosson Spiegel**  
of Monsey, NY  
on **Eliyahu's Bar Mitzvah.**  
*May you have much Yiddishe Nachas  
from him and your entire family.*

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*A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah*

## Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

7:24 -	הדלקת נרות
7:42 -	שקיעה
8:52 -	זק"ש מ"א
9:36 -	זק"ש גר"א
10:43 -	סוף זמן תפילה
7:42 -	שקיעה
8:25* -	צאת הכוכבים
8:54 -	צאת 72

\* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

### Did You Know?

The curses in this Parsha are not simply punishments. They are intended to bring one back to HaShem, as evidenced by the change in the order of punishments versus blessings. The blessings start with greater ones, while the curses start with lesser ones.

In Michtav M'Eliezer, R' Dessler z"l writes about the purpose of yissurim, suffering. He says that there is actually no purpose to suffering in and of itself. Rather, it brings us to tefila, prayer.

Were we to daven without the suffering and pain, there would be no need to bring it upon us.

He quotes Chazal that the reason the Avos/Forefathers did not have children was so they would daven, because HaShem desires the tefilos of tzaddikim.

We have so much suffering in the world today, one can only assume that we don't daven enough, or with enough concentration.

If we strengthen ourselves in this avoda during the time of Elul and the Yomim Nora'im, we will undoubtedly be blessed with a sweet new year, with no additional suffering necessary.

### Thought of the week:

**While we are free to choose our actions, we are not free to choose the consequences of our actions.**

"ארור אתה בעיר וארור אתה בשדה." (דברים כח:טו)

**"Cursed are you in the city and cursed are you in the field."** (Deut. 28:16)

At this point, the entire Jewish People was split into groups. One group stood on a mountain to receive blessings, a second group stood on a different mountain to receive curses, and the Levi'im stood in the valley between them. It was not that one group was good and one bad, rather each group stood for itself and the other group in a holistic representation of the Jewish nation. Each person in Klal Yisrael was subject to both the promise of blessings and the threat of curses. They were announced in a loud voice and everyone answered Amen.

The question is why the curses had to be read. We know that one is not supposed to share evil tidings, so why mention these curses aloud? If they are just the opposite of the blessings, why not announce the blessing and say that if you don't keep the Torah the opposite will happen?

The Netziv in Haamek Davar says that the blessings begin with the greater benefit, the blessing of children, and then move down to the slightly less important financial blessings. The curses, though, began with financial curses before affecting family. This is a kindness of HaShem and the different order would require a separate announcement.

There is another reason as well. The opposite of blessing is not curse. The opposite of blessing is "no blessing." One might mistakenly assume that if he is good, lives the Torah, and seeks to be close to HaShem, then he will be blessed. If not, he will not be blessed. This is too simplistic a view. It assumes that a person is guaranteed to start at a baseline and move up if he performs the mitzvos and keeps away from sin.

In truth, there is no such guarantee and sinning will bring about a drop below that baseline. People must realize that there are consequences for their actions. HaShem does not reward good behavior and ignore bad behavior. In Bava Kama (50a) R' Chanina says, "Whoever says the Holy One Blessed Be He is a 'vatran' [one who 'lets things slide'], should view his life as something which may be [allowed to slide] away." Rather, G-d's operates in perfect judgment and nothing is forgotten nor goes unpaid.

Before the Jews went into Eretz Yisrael, the Promised Land, they had to know they were playing by HaShem's rules, not their own. If they didn't want to be cast out of it, they would follow the Torah. Sin would attract pain and suffering, and it had to be made clear that the filth of sin clings to a person, bringing suffering not only upon him, but upon his children for generations, unless it is cleaned away.

We stand at the threshold of Rosh HaShana, the new year which we believe G-d will grant us. We must know that receiving a new year is not a given, and even if we are granted one, the sins of this past year will bring calamity upon us in it unless we cleanse ourselves with Teshuva and a commitment to serve HaShem properly.

Some things go without saying. This isn't one of them.

*After many years, the carpenter was finally ready to retire. His boss, though, asked him to do one more job. The carpenter balked. "I'm old; I'm tired; I really don't want to build any more houses." But the boss insisted this job had to be done. He told him to spare no expense.*

*Grudgingly, the man agreed to do it, but his heart wasn't in it. He cut corners, used inferior materials, and didn't make the house as sound and well-made as he should have. He rationalized that he had told his boss he really didn't want to work anymore. He did the job sloppily, just wanting to be done.*

*When he finally finished, the boss threw him a goodbye party. "I value the dedication and hard work you have exhibited over the years and will miss you," he said. "As a gift, I am giving you the house you just built. You didn't know it but all along you were building your own home, where you can comfortably spend the rest of your life!"*

*The fellow nearly passed out. He had been given the chance to assure himself a secure future but because he gave less than his best, he would live in a run-down shack for the rest of his days.*