

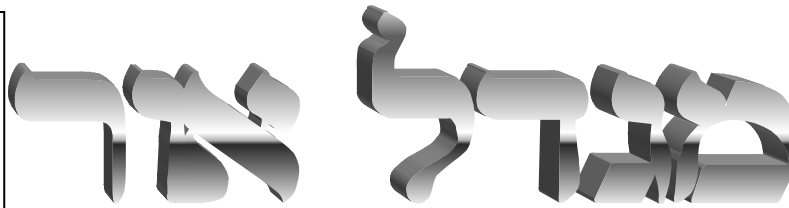
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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:52 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:10 - שקיעה
- 9:01 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:43 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:46 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:09 - שקיעה
- 7:51* - צאת הכוכבים
- 8:21 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars
Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

HaShem promises that if you keep the Torah and follow its rules, you will be blessed. In verse 28:2, the Torah says that if you listen to the voice of HaShem, your G-d, "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you."

This is quite an odd expression. How could blessing "overtake" you, as if you were running away from it?

The answer, of course, is that we don't always see blessing for what it is. What we think is good for us may be detrimental, and what we perceive as negative could be just the thing we need.

This week is the 13th anniversary of 9/11, when terrorists crashed planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and killed over 3,000 people.

There are many stories of people who were not killed because their alarm clocks didn't go off, they had a flat tire, missed the train, got stuck in traffic behind a car accident, or were sick in bed.

One fellow had even bought a new pair of shoes and after having made his way into Manhattan that morning he developed a blister while walking to his office. He stopped at a drugstore to buy a bandage and because of that he is alive today.

Sometimes the "obstacles" G-d places in our way are in reality blessings in disguise, overtaking us just as He promised.

Thought of the week:

**Nothing can drive you
succeed like an audience
waiting to see you fail.**

"ויצו משה וזקני ישראל את העם לאמר שמר את כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום."

"Moshe and the elders of Israel commanded the nation saying, "Guard all the commandments that I am commanding you today."" (Deut. 27:1)

This Parsha includes blessings and curses. It includes promises of great reward for keeping the Torah and discusses the horrific consequences of failing to heed it. It stresses the incredible benefits and incentives for one to follow the Torah but that is not enough.

This posuk tells us that the elders, the people to whom the nation looks for guidance, had to concur with Moshe and agree that it was paramount for the Jews to guard and keep the Torah. Despite the logical reasons for keeping the Torah, HaShem wanted the Jews to have another push to keep the Torah, that being the natural behavior of following the advice of those who have experience. Keeping in line with that thought, the next section gets a new understanding.

The next posuk contains an interesting command. Upon entering the land of Canaan, the Jews were to take large stones, cover them with lime, and write upon them all the Torah. The Ibn Ezra says this was a listing of all six hundred and thirteen mitzvos, and Chazal tell us the writing was translated into seventy languages.

The purpose of translating it was so that any person from any of the seventy nations would be able to read it. What's odd, though, is that if it was a listing of the mitzvos, those don't apply to anyone but the Jews. Of what purpose is it for them to read this list?

Further, the Torah says, "Erect these stones 'for you,' but if they are to be translated, clearly they were not for the Jews but for others?"

Using the lesson of the elders reinforcing Moshe's words, however, it makes perfect sense. Yes, it is logical for people to want to keep the Torah and get its benefits, and not to violate it and suffer the consequences. However, we always look for ways to strengthen our resolve because logic alone is not enough.

When the Jews had to publicly announce their intentions to keep these 613 mitzvos, it was an extra protection against defaulting. It's a matter of honor to keep one's word and by making it public, especially when even a non-Jew who does not know how to read from the Torah knows what is expected of us, it helps ensure that we follow through. That is why even though they were to be read by others, they were erected for US.

This is a valuable lesson for life. If we want to do something, it's not enough to want to do it. People *want* to lose weight, people *want* to be more thoughtful, and people *want* to give charity. But if that's where it ends, with a nebulous "want," then the desire is irrelevant.

Rather, we must endeavor to give our positive desires some concrete form. We must arrange circumstances so that we are pushed in the direction we want to go, even when our resolve wavers. That's the secret of these mysterious stones, and it is a secret to survival in a world that challenges our spiritual climbs.

A twelve-year old boy decided that he would grow long payos, sidelocks, which are a fulfillment of the mitzvah not to 'destroy' the hair of the head at the temples. Though he came from a Chasidic background, this was still highly unusual at the time he did it, back in the 1950's. It wasn't common for Jews to be so "noticeably" Jewish.

He explained his reasoning. He loved Westerns but felt that the movies were a distracting force in his studies. He knew that if he wore long payos he would be too embarrassed to go into a theater. At the end, this young man grew to be a great Talmid Chacham - because he knew how to force his own hand.