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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:59 - פלג המנחה
- 7:01 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:19 - שקיעה
- 9:05 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:41 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:45 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:18 - שקיעה
- 8:00 - צאת הכוכבים
- 8:30 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

אוטען שבת!

Did You Know?

Beginning with the Sunday before Rosh HaShana, we say Selichos early each morning. The Levush explains that this is because each night, HaShem moves through eighteen worlds, and the last three hours of the night He dwells in this world. We begin at least four days before Rosh HaShana (according to Sefardic tradition Selichos are said the entire month of Elul) because there is a custom to fast for ten days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur and one may not fast on the two days of Rosh HaShana, Shabbos Shuva, nor Erev Yom Kippur. The days of selichos can take the place of those four days. Additionally, in the time of the Bais HaMikdash, an animal set aside for a korban had to be inspected for four days to ensure it was free of blemishes. We who are approaching Rosh HaShana are directed to consider ourselves as sacrifices and ensure we are free of the blemishes of our sins and repent from them. The Shliach Tzibbur dons a talis even though it may be before the time of Tzitzis because it is said that HaShem wraps himself in a talis like a Shliach Tzibbur and conducts Himself with the 13 Midos of mercy. From this we learn that when reciting the 13 midos, a talis should be worn.

Thought of the week:

The roads we take are more important than the goals we announce. Decisions determine destiny.

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"והיה כי יבאו עליך כל הדברים האלה הברכה והקללה... ושבת עד ה' אלקיך" (דברים לא-ב)

"And when there come upon you all these things, the blessing and the curse... and you will return to HaShem your G-d"

At the time of the blessings and curses at Har Grizim and Har Eival, the Torah stated: "These will stand to bless the nation, and these will stand upon the curse." It is explained there that the purpose was not to curse the people, but to witness the testimony that curses could come if the Torah was not heeded.

Here, however, it seems that both the blessings and curses had to come to fruition in order for there to be a return to HaShem. In truth, this may not be the case.

The Ohr HaChaim asks why it was necessary to say "all these things," and then specify the blessings and curses, instead of just saying, "the blessing and the curse." He answers that the Torah meant to imply that these two should be grouped as one, as the Mishna in Brachos (54a) says, "One must praise [G-d] for the bad just as he does for the good." The word "v'haya" always implies happiness, and this word is referring to both the blessings and the curse. This would seem to mean that one should be just as happy with a blessing as with a curse.

The question is, how can one truly be as happy with a curse as he is with a blessing, and why would he be? If we are to simply accept G-d's will, then what difference does it make if we are happy about it?

Perhaps the answer is clear from the next posuk. When all these things occur, the blessing and curse, and we reflect on what has transpired throughout history and in our own lives, through all our exiles, in times of prosperity and times of difficulty, we will come to the conclusion that HaKadosh Boruch Hu is one, and that His way is the right way. At that point we will return to HaShem and follow His mitzvos and everything He has commanded us to do. Not only that, but we will do it completely and whole-heartedly because we recognize it to be the truth.

How do we recognize that? By reviewing the blessing and curse, the bitter and the sweet, in our lives and our nation's history. It all ultimately brings us back to HaShem, and thus the blessing and the curse provide the same end result. Now we can understand why there is happiness from the curses that may befall us, and why it is the same happiness as the blessings bring.

There are but two roads that we can choose in life, yet they have many names: life and death, right and wrong, good and evil, blessing and curse. One leads us to G-d, and one leads us away from Him. However, there is a shortcut. Even if one were on the wrong path for a long time, but now chooses to be close to G-d, and realizes that his old ways have been distancing him from that relationship, he can repent and use the regret for his past misdeeds as a springboard to reach levels higher than he ever thought possible, and he can return all the way up to HaShem, our G-d.

Two boys were best friends and did everything together. As they grew older, however, one remained immersed in his studies, while the other became involved in worldly pursuits. The first grew into a Talmid Chacham, while the other, though still observant, was ignorant for the most part. He was, though, very wealthy.

One day, the rich man met his childhood friend and commented that G-d had indeed blessed him, and by looking at the poverty in which his friend lived, it was clear that he had made the wise choice in his career path. The Rabbi asked him a question.

"There are two trains. One is rickety, dirty, and cold, and has hard wooden seats in it. The other train is the last word in luxury. It is super-fast, has plush seats and a dining car. Which train do you take?" "That's easy," replied the wealthy man, "I would take the comfortable train. Wouldn't that be the train to choose?"

"It all depends," replied his wise friend, "on what direction you wish to go."