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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:09 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:27 - שקיעה
- 8:51 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:27 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:14 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:28 - שקיעה
- 5:10 - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:40 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

Yaakov said that whatever HaShem gave him, he would tithe off a tenth. This practice was followed by Avraham and Yitzchak as well. The poskim disagree about whether there giving Maaser is a Biblical or Rabbinic requirement, or even if it is just an ancient custom which should be adhered to. Maaser is one of the primary segulos for becoming wealthy, and one is even allowed to "test" HaShem by giving Maaser (based on Malachi 3:10.) To avoid certain problems, before one begins giving Maaser, he should initially declare that he is doing so "bli neder," to avoid a binding obligation to continue. If one began giving with the understanding that all poskim held it was an absolute requirement, and now wishes to do it bli neder, he does not need Hataras Nedarim as he would if he knew it was not required. One should also stipulate that he may use his Maaser money for any "mitzvah purpose." If he does not, he is limited and may only disburse his Maaser to poor people (and not a shul or similar mitzvah.) However, one may not use the Maaser money for a dvar mitzvah which he is otherwise required to do, such as machtzis hashkekel or matanos l'evyonim. Using Maaser for tuition is an involved shaila and a Rav should be consulted.

Source: Weekly Halacha by R' D. Neustadt

Thought of the week:

If you were busy being kind, Before you knew it, you would find; You'd soon forget to think 'twas true, that someone was unkind to you. If you were busy being glad, and cheering people who are sad, although your heart might ache a bit, you'd soon forget to notice it.

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"ויהי כאשר ראה יעקב את רחל בת לבן אחי אמו ויגש יעקב ויגל את האבן מעל פי הבאר וישק את צאן לבן אחי אמו." (בראשית כ"ט)

"When Yaakov saw Rachel, the daughter of Lavan, his mother's brother, with the sheep of Lavan, his mother's brother, he drew near and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well. He then watered the sheep of Lavan, his mother's brother."

Rabbeinu Bachya comments that Yaakov's exhibit of strength should not be confused with the normal physical response of a man toward seeing a woman he would like to marry. This was not the source of his power.

Rather, he notes the repetitive use of the phrase "his mother's brother" when referring to Lavan the Rasha. Rabbeinu Bachya explains that Yaakov Avinu did not do the things he did because of any regard for Lavan. Rather, he saw this as an opportunity to honor his mother by respecting her brother. His love for Rachel at this point, too, was not attraction, but an extension of the love he had for his mother. This was the daughter of the brother of his mother, and that is why she deserved to be cherished.

Further to this idea is the fact that the impetus for Yaakov's feat of strength was seeing not only Rachel, but the sheep she brought with her. The posuk specifically mentions that he saw the sheep of Lavan, his mother's brother, and then he rolled the boulder from the mouth of the well. What was it about the sheep that inspired him and imbued him with superhuman strength?

The answer is that Yaakov saw the sheep as a means to honor his mother. When he saw Rachel he was happy because she was his mother's niece. However, when he saw the sheep, he found an outlet to express his *Kibud Aim* by watering the sheep. The possibility of doing something for someone else, of doing this mitzvah, is what energized him.

The Torah offers us many chances to help people and specifically commands us to do so. When these opportunities arise, do we get excited that we are able to help a fellow Jew (and thereby honor our Heavenly Father) or do we grudgingly agree to do what the Torah commands us?

The parsha here teaches us that whether it is giving tzedaka, helping someone with a burden, or just listening to someone who needs it, we should feel energized and jump at the chance to express our love for HaKadosh Boruch Hu and His children. This is our source of life and from it we should draw much strength.

The story is told that R' Moshe Feinstein z"l was being given a ride home in the 1950's by a fellow whose life had recently been saved by wearing one of those new-fangled "seat belts" he'd had installed in his automobile. This man got in and fastened his seat belt, but when the Rosh Yeshiva got in he did not do so. (Seat belts were new and no law required it.)

"Perhaps, the Rosh Yeshiva would like to fasten his seat belt," offered the fellow hopefully. "No, no," replied R' Moshe. "It is OK." The driver was a firm believer in seat belts and began getting nervous. "Is the Rosh Yeshiva sure he doesn't want to put on the seat belt?" he asked, with a bit of anxiety. "No," replied the sage, "I am fine."

Unable to control himself the man blurted out, "Rebbi, PLEASE. Do me a favor and put on the seat belt!" Immediately, the expression on R' Moshe's face changed.

"A favor?" he repeated, "If it is a favor for a Jew I will gladly put on my seat belt!" and he quickly buckled himself in.