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*A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah*

### **Zmanim for שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:10 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:28 - שקיעה
- 8:48 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:24 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:11 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:28 - שקיעה
- 5:10 - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:40 - צאת 72

### **!אוטען שבת!**

#### **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 hashekel 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:**

**No matter how brilliant an action, it should not be considered great unless it was the result of a great motive.**

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

**"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."**

At this time, Yaakov exhibited superhuman strength in rolling the stone off the well. It is easy to understand why Yaakov, having to run away from home and being directed to marry a woman from his mother's family, would be energized at the sight of Rachel, his cousin and future wife. However, the posuk seems to imply that his actions were affected by his seeing the sheep of Lavan. What is so significant about the sheep that the posuk had to mention them?

The Ohr HaChaim comments that the words, "his mother's brother" appear three times, seemingly for no reason. He gives two possible explanations. First of all, we may derive from here that all of Yaakov's actions in regard to Lavan were borne out of a deep respect and honor for his mother. It was with this intention of honoring his mother that he acted as he did.

Alternatively, the Ohr HaChaim suggests that Yaakov's actions might have been suspect had his relationship not been known. Thus, when he saw Rachel approaching, he said to the shepherds, "Look, here comes Rachel, the daughter of my mother's brother. And there are the sheep of my uncle Lavan." Again, when he watered the sheep he said, "I shall water these sheep for they belong to my mother's brother."

By explicitly stating his relationship to Lavan and Rachel he eliminated suspicion about himself, and thus, when Yaakov subsequently kissed Rachel, no one said a word.

We see two valuable lessons from our forefather Yaakov, based on the two explanations of the Ohr HaChaim. Firstly, when Yaakov acted, he did so out of respect for his mother. We can make our actions holy simply by the intention we have in doing them. The mundane task of watering sheep was elevated to a lofty mitzvah because, through it, Yaakov intended to fulfill the mitzvah of honoring his mother. When we engage in any activity -- eating, sleeping, working, shopping, or even playing -- we can have the intention that the activity itself should be considered our service of HaShem. Then, it will no longer be mundane, but rather, divine.

There is a second lesson as well. Yaakov was concerned that his actions not be questioned. Why? Was he afraid the other shepherds would think he did wrong? Who cares? If he knew that what he was doing was appropriate, why did he have to care what they thought?

The first paragraph of the Shema begins with, "V'ahavta es HaShem Elokecha, you shall love HaShem, your G-d." Chazal explain this to mean that you shall cause the name of Heaven to be loved through your actions.

Yaakov showed presence of mind when he was in that situation and ensured that the onlookers, regardless of who they were, had no reason to find fault or flaw with anything he did. It is important that all of our actions be above reproach and that we be aware that others are looking at us and judging our nation and our G-d by how we act. This is what Yaakov was teaching us.

*A woman who had recently recovered from a severe depression found out she was expecting. Fearing this might bring on a relapse, the couple approached R' Moshe Feinstein z"l for guidance. The woman's therapist received a call from R' Moshe asking if her health were indeed in danger, to which the doctor replied in the affirmative.*

*"If the family were millionaires," asked R' Moshe, "and they could hire people to offload her responsibilities allowing her adequate rest, would she still be at risk?" The doctor agreed that her stress would be lessened and the likelihood of depression would be greatly diminished.*

*"In that case," said R' Moshe, "it is not the pregnancy that is causing harm, but the lack of money. That places the burden on us to raise funds to assist her." He and the doctor did just that.*

*R' Moshe's clear vision saved the day as the woman received the help she needed, gave birth to a healthy baby, and did not suffer from a relapse of depression.*