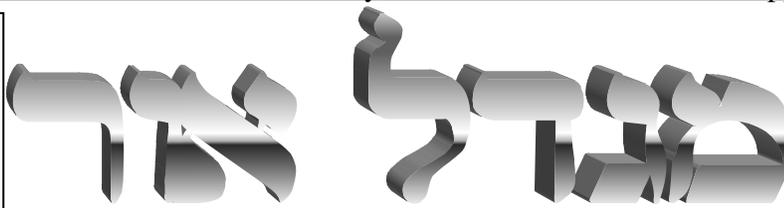


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This Yom Kippur, don't just focus on asking others for forgiveness. Make sure you **forgive** everyone as well, even if they don't ask you directly. This has been a public service announcement from **JewishSpeechWriter.com**
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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת ויו"כ

Wesley Hills, NY

6:36 -	הדלקת נרות שבת
6:54 -	שקיעה
9:10 -	זק"ש מ"א
9:46 -	זק"ש גר"א
10:47 -	סוף זמן תפילה
6:53 -	שקיעה
7:34* -	צאת הכוכבים
8:05 -	צאת 72
6:29 -	הדלקת נרות יו"כ
6:47 -	שקיעה
9:11 -	זק"ש מ"א
9:47 -	זק"ש גר"א
6:46 -	שקיעה
7:27* -	צאת הכוכבים
7:58 -	צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

On public fast days, we read from the navi Yeshaya, who says, "Seek out HaShem when He is to be found, call out to Him when He is near." This refers to the days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur when HaShem is considered close to us. Just as one crying for help is better heard by one who is near, so is the best time to cry out to G-d when He comes to us ready to hear our cries.

The Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva 3:3 describes the judgment of the Aseres Yemei Teshuva. On Rosh HaShana, he says, those who have more mitzvos than sins will immediately be sealed for life. Those with more sins than good deeds are immediately sealed for death. The decision for those whose actions are evenly balanced between good and evil is suspended until Yom Kippur. If he does Teshuva, he is sealed for life. If he does not, he is sealed for death.

Asks R' Yitzchak Blazer in Kochvei Ohr: If his mitzvos and sins are balanced, why must he repent? Let him simply perform more mitzvos to tip the scales?

He answers that during the rest of the year that might work, but now that we are given the opportunity to do Teshuva, the sin of failing to seize that opportunity would outweigh any mitzvos he could do.

Let's not miss the boat.

Thought of the week:

G-d only hides from us so that we might seek Him.

...ואמר ביום ההוא הלא על כי אין ה' בקרבי מצאוני הרעות האלה." (דברים לא:יז)

"And [the nation] will say on that day, is it not because G-d is not in my midst that these evils have encountered me?" (Deut. 29:9)

When, after Moshe's death, the Jews will sin repeatedly, warns the Torah, G-d will remove His divine providence from them and evil will befall them. They will respond by saying that this suffering is because G-d is not in their midst. It would seem that they are acknowledging their failing, and their repentance should be welcomed by HaShem with open arms. Instead, the posuk continues to say that G-d will hide His face doubly-so, for we have turned to other gods.

Some meforshim explain that when the Jews say, "HaShem is not in my midst," it is merely an excuse for them to serve other gods because it is pointless to serve HaShem if He is not with you and won't protect you. Therefore, this is not considered Teshuva, but rather grounds for further punishment, or at least a lack of Divine protection.

In truth, this expression was an error, for HaShem is always around us, and is intimately involved in every aspect of our lives. When we forget this, and say that He does not get involved with us, HaShem fulfills our word, as it were, and takes a backseat, allowing bad things to happen. But why should it be this way? Is it a further punishment?

Perhaps we can explain that G-d's hiding His countenance is not intended to punish us, but instead to enable us to recognize His face and His actions even when they are camouflaged.

By allowing us to reach out to empty gods, to the other means of salvation we think we will find, only to wind up in misery, HaShem is teaching us that there is nothing else but Him. In Avinu Malkeinu, we say, "Our father, our king, we have no king but you." R' Akiva Eiger adjusts that phrase to read, "Ain lanu, Melech - elah atah," so the meaning becomes, "We have nothing, O king - but you!"

Teshuva, repentance, depends on recognizing that the world and everything in it is G-d's doing. When we foolishly think that something can be done "in the absence of G-d," it is not only a sin, but harmful to us as well. Often, the troubles G-d sends are not punishments, but messages intended to alert us to our mistakes.

When someone touches a hot stove and gets burned, the pain he feels is not a punishment for touching the fire. Rather, it is a warning system, alerting us to move our hand quickly before more damage is caused, damage that may be much more permanent.

When we mistakenly feel that G-d isn't with us, He hides His face even more, allowing us to endure more suffering not because He wants to punish us, but because we didn't get the message the first time that we should become closer to Him and set the course of our lives by His compass.

Yom Kippur might be viewed as a day of suffering. We don't eat, we don't drink, and we don't wear leather shoes or engage in pleasurable activity. Why is G-d punishing us so much? Now that we understand the truth, however, we know that He isn't punishing us. Instead, HaShem is giving us the tools to renew our relationship with Him and see that He was there all along.

A young woman from Canada abandoned her Jewish roots and traditions, married a non-Jew, and moved to Switzerland. Eventually her marriage soured and the couple split. This happened at the beginning of Elul. Immediately after Yom Kippur, the woman died. The Rabbis in Switzerland refused to bury her in the Jewish cemetery as she had lived for many years as a non-Jew in all respects. Distraught, her father called Rebbetzin Elyashiv and asked that she ask her husband for advice.

R' Elyashiv asked what she did on that final Yom Kippur. The father made inquiries in the community and found out that she had attended a shul for half an hour.

R' Elyashiv then ruled that she could be buried in a Jewish cemetery. The fact that she was in shul on Yom Kippur proved that her neshama was connected to the Jewish nation, and identified with the yearning for teshuva which Yom Kippur represents.