



This issue sponsored in honor of
the birth of
Rachel Menucha Kramer תחיל
*Tizku l' gadla l'Torah, l'ben Torah,
l' chupa u'l' maasim tovim.*
May she bring much nachas to
her entire family and to
HaKadosh Boruch Hu.

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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

6:52 -	פלג המנחה
8:07 -	הדלקת נרות
8:25 -	שקיעה
8:45 -	זק"ש מ"א
9:21 -	זק"ש גר"א
10:35 -	סוף זמן תפילה
8:25 -	שקיעה
9:12 -	צאת הכוכבים
9:25 -	צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

The Ohr HaChaim gives us some deep insights into the commandment to harass Midian. He comments on the fact that the language is doubled, that we have an obligation to harass them and to attack them. Chazal even understand that when it comes to Midian, the prohibition against destroying useful trees is suspended, and those are to be destroyed as well.

It is not purely motivated by revenge, explains the Ohr HaChaim, as it would be a greater victory to eat and enjoy the spoils. Rather, there was a different purpose to eradicating Midian and instilling an abiding hatred and disdain for them into the Jews. The Midianites had introduced the Jews to the physical sweetness of sin, lessening their fear of it. This caused tremendous suffering, and those who succumbed were assaulted by a Heavenly plague.

The reason that Midian was to be so loathed and despised, as well as hunted and pained, was to reinforce in our minds and hearts that no good can come from wickedness and even that which seems good must be avoided. This is why we destroy their fruit trees, to affirm that they can offer us nothing good.

It is said that one's greatest friends on this world, with whom he has "fun," will be the ones to cause him the greatest pain in Shomayim when they testify to all they did together in this life, while those who made life "difficult," by giving mussar or "depriving" him of enjoyment, will be the source of his overwhelming gratitude when he stands before the Heavenly Court.

Thought of the week:

A fool learns from his mistakes; the wise man learns from the mistakes of others.

Get Migdal Ohr via e-mail to share with others by writing to:
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"הוא דתן אבירים קרואי העדה אשר הצועל משה ועל אהרן בעדת קרח... ובני קרח לא מתו"

"They are Dasan and Aviram, communal leaders, who incited against Moshe and Aharon in the assembly of Korach... But the sons of Korach did not die."

Thirty-nine years earlier, Moshe and Aharon had been commanded to take a census of the Jewish people. Now, before entering Eretz Yisrael, HaShem required them to count the Jews again. Rashi explains that just as a shepherd whose flocks have been attacked by a wolf counts them to see how many are left, so was Moshe to count the Jews after the plague and deaths that had befallen the Jews.

Other commentaries say that the number of people was necessary to prepare the armies for the conquest of Canaan, or to accurately divide up the Promised Land. According to all these explanations it is the final, bottom line number which is important. It is therefore curious that the Torah would go on seeming tangents to mention people who died along the way or did not affect the final count.

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Dasan and Aviram were mentioned here to teach us that the deaths of all the people involved in the rebellion of Korach, including the two hundred and fifty who offered the ketores and Korach himself, came about because of them and their hatred of Moshe Rabbeinu. These two alone were responsible for inciting this tragedy.

The children of Korach are singled out for the opposite reason. They managed to restore some peace by remaining faithful to their teacher Moshe. Though they were initially involved in the insurrection, they chose to remain out of the fight and survived. Their descendent, Shmuel, is equated to Moshe and Aharon and is testimony to their Teshuva.

Er and Onan, the sons of Yehuda, are mentioned, as are the sins for which they died. The Ohr HaChaim says they represent the two holy Temples which were destroyed, and their sins are similar to the sins of Klal Yisrael which brought about the destruction of the first and second Bais HaMikdash.

Serach the daughter of Asher is mentioned, she who brought the good tidings of Yoseph's discovery to Yaakov, as are the daughters of Tzelophchod, who embodied a deep love for Eretz Yisrael and merited a halacha to be taught because of it. Finally, the Torah includes Nadav and Avihu, the holy sons of Aharon HaKohain, who died for bringing a fire that was not commanded.

If the point was just to know how many people were left, none of this would be necessary. Instead, perhaps, just as important as knowing how many were left is knowing the stuff of which these Jews were made. The incidents alluded to or mentioned throughout the census were meaningful because they taught us things about how to behave and about what people are capable of, both for bad and for good. When the wolf entered the flock, the sheep had to learn his tricks, or they would be the next casualties. In essence, the wolf didn't just harm a few lambs; it taught the other sheep how to survive.

Two men were watching an old western and saw a cowboy riding his horse down a steep canyon. "I bet you five dollars," said one to his companion, "that the horse steps in a hole and tumbles down." "You're on," replied his friend. Sure enough, a few moments later it happened.

The second fellow began to pull the money out of his pocket but his friend stopped him. "Forget it," he said. "I saw this movie before and I knew it would happen."

"That's OK," said the second as he handed over the money. "I saw it before too; I just didn't think the cowboy would be dumb enough to go the same way again."