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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:57 - פלג המנחה
- 8:13 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:31 - שקיעה
- 8:39 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:15 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:30 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:32 - שקיעה
- 9:14 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:44 - צאת 72

אגוטען שבת!

Did You Know?

Some brief laws of the Three Weeks:

HAIRCUTS AND SHAVING: It is permitted to trim a mustache that interferes with eating, as well as to cut nails, eyebrows, or eyelashes. The prohibition of haircutting applies even to small children under the age of chinuch. It is permitted to shave if otherwise one will not be allowed to come to work or will lose his job. But if he would be permitted to work, it is prohibited to shave even though he may be ridiculed. Some poskim support the custom of those who shave on erev Shabbos, but this is not the custom in most communities today.

WEDDINGS: Engagements are permitted and may be celebrated with a party or a meal.

MUSIC: A professional musician, or one who is learning to play professionally, may play music during the Three Weeks. Programs or other circumstances where the musical entertainment is incidental to the main event may be attended or viewed. Children who have reached the age that they understand about the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash may not listen to music.

SHEHECHYANU: It is permitted to recite shehecheyanu on Shabbos, at a pidyon haben, and at the birth of one's daughter.

Since it is prohibited to recite shehecheyanu, it is also prohibited to buy or wear clothing that normally would require a shehecheyanu to be recited. If the clothing needs alterations, it may be bought during the Three Weeks and altered after the Three Weeks are over.

Source: Weekly Halacha by R' D. Neustadt

Thought of the week:

When any calamity has been suffered, the first thing to be remembered is how much has been escaped.

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"ויהי אחרי המגפה פ' ויאמר ה' אל משה... שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל" (במדבר נו:א)

"And it was after the plague - HaShem spoke to Moshe and Elazar, son of Aharon the kohain, saying: "Count the whole community of B'nai Yisroel..."

Rashi explains the impetus for counting the Jews at this point, after the plague. He compares it to a shepherd whose flock was attacked by wolves. Once the attack subsides, he counts his flock to see how many are left.

Interestingly, this new parsha about counting them begins in the middle of the posuk. Why not leave it as one line or make "And it was after the plague" its own verse?

(Ed. note: This refers to the "פ" in the verse, which signifies a paragraph break. The chapter and verse numberings (e.g. Num. 26:1) are not part of the Torah tradition, but were added later.)

The Ohr HaChaim offers several explanations for this phenomenon. A basic point he makes is that this way, the words regarding the plague are connected to the preceding topic, but also integrally connected to the future topic, that of counting the B'nai Yisrael.

We can learn a valuable lesson from this, as well as from an exacting look at Rashi's commentary. Following Rashi's analogy, what would we, as shepherds look for? Most of us would first look to see how many were lost, then try to figure out how and why the wolves were able to get to the sheep, and finally, who was at fault for not protecting them better. But that is not what the Torah teaches.

Rashi says that after the attack, the shepherd looks to see how many are left. He isn't focusing on what he had before, but what he has now, for the future. Instead of harping on the past and getting upset and recounting what is gone, the proper behavior is to move on.

Does that mean we forget the past entirely? Not at all. Rashi offers us a second explanation, that just as the Jews were counted when they were given over to Moshe's care, they are counted as he returns the reins of power. There is a completion to his mission and a reckoning must be made.

As the Ohr HaChaim points out, the plague is connected to both what preceded it and what followed. It is necessary to look back to see what caused the tragedy, but then to take that knowledge and use it for the future. As we move ahead, we remain aware that someday we will have to answer for what we were given and how we used it.

Someday, but not today. Today is for us to keep moving, keep striving, and to keep building the future with whatever we have.

A Baal Teshuva once came to R' Avrohom Gurwitz of Yeshivas Ner Moshe. "Rabbi," he said, "I can't go on. When I think of my past and all the things I did wrong, I can't imagine being able to consider myself an observant Jew."

"You know," replied R' Gurwitz, "Human beings have eyes in the front of our heads, not in the back. If we stretch our necks and turn, we can look behind us, but the angle is skewed and it's uncomfortable to do it for any length of time."

G-d made it this way to teach us that the important thing is to always look ahead, and look forward to what you can do and where you can go. You should look behind you to see where you've been by all means, but if you focus on it too long you won't be able to get anywhere, and you'll wind up hurting yourself."