



The sorts of tidbits

my father, Rav Meir Zlotowitz zt"l, made sure his family was up to date on from the mundane, to the profound, to the 'thanks for reminding me!'



In Memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz zt"l

Parashas Chukas - Balak 5783
June 30th • 11 Tamuz

Shivah Asar B'Tamuz

The fast of Shiva Asar B'Tamuz is next Thursday, July 6th. Five tragedies occurred on Shiva Asar B'Tamuz: 1) The first Luchos were broken, 2) In the waning days of the First Bais Hamikdash, the daily tamid offering ceased being brought, 3) In the waning days of the Second Bais Hamikdash, the walls of Yerushalayim were breached, ultimately leading to its destruction, 4) Apostimos burned a Sefer Torah, and 5) An avodah zarah was placed in the Bais Hamikdash.

During chazaras hashatz of Shacharis, the sheliach tzibbur adds Aneinu as a stand-alone berachah (between Go'el Yisrael and Refa'einu). Selichos, Avinu Malkeinu, Tachanun, and Kerias haTorah follow chazaras hashatz. Tefillas Minchah includes Kerias haTorah with the haftarah of Dirshu Hashem. Those fasting add Aneinu (as part of Shema Koleinu). Bircas Kohanim is recited in chazaras hashatz. Even Nusach Ashkenaz says Sim Shalom (instead of Shalom Rav). Chazaras hashatz is followed by Avinu Malkeinu.

3 The Three Weeks

The Y'mei Bein Hametzarim, the Three Weeks, begin at shekiya (sunset) on Wednesday evening, July 5th. The Three Weeks between the 17th of Tamuz and the 9th of Av, is a national period of mourning over the Churban of both Batei Mikdash. One should give focus to the churban and galus during this period. Activities restricted during this period include:

Music and Dancing: Children of chinuch age are included. Many poskim are lenient when the music is secondary in nature (e.g. background music on a story CD) or when the listening is not for enjoyment (e.g. to help one stay awake while driving). Many poskim are stringent regarding acappella "sefirah music". Playing and practicing music are permitted for the purpose of earning a livelihood (e.g. professional musician). Playing music to develop one's skill is a matter of dispute amongst the poskim.

Haircuts and Shaving: Men, women and children are included in the prohibition. In cases of discomfort many permit women to tweeze and remove hair from areas other than the head. One should consult with a Rav in regards to a father, sandek and mohel at a bris, and in regard to an avel who finishes the sheloshim mourning period during this time.

Weddings: Weddings are not held during this period. An engagement may be celebrated, although without dancing or music. A Sheva Berachos may be held without music, although dancing (and singing) is permitted.

Shehecheyanu: We avoid situations that would necessitate reciting the berachah of shehecheyanu (e.g. eating new fruits, etc.).

Miscellaneous: One should consult with a Rav regarding signing a contract on a new home, moving into a new home, house decorating and elective surgery.

Reminders

Eretz Yisrael will lein only Parashas Balak this week, having previously leined Parashas Chukas last week. From this point onward, Eretz Yisrael and Chutz La'aretz will be on the same schedule.

The final opportunity for Kiddush Levana is late Sunday night, July 2nd at 3:37 AM EDT (Monday morning).

Pirkei Avos: Chapter 5.

Daf Yomi - Friday: Bavli: Gittin 45 • Yerushalmi: Demai 62 • Mishnah Yomis: Succah 2:2-3.

Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to connect with them as well!

Next on the Calendar

The fast of Shiva Asar B'Tamuz is this Thursday, July 6th and marks the beginning of the Y'mei Bein Hametzarim, the Three Weeks. Tisha B'av is on Thursday, July 27th.

Parshah in a Paragraph

Chukas: Laws of the Parah Adumah • Miriam dies, the be'er (well) stops producing water, and the people complain • Moshe and Aharon are told to bring water by speaking to the rock; Moshe eventually hits the rock instead • Moshe and Aharon are told of the punishment for their sin • Bnei Yisrael ask for passage through Edom and are rebuffed • Aharon passes away at Har Hahar • The Canaanites (really Amaleik) attack and are defeated at Chorma • The people complain about the Mon and are attacked by snakes • The 'healing' copper snake • The great miracle of Nachal Arnon • Shiras Habe'er • The defeats of Sichon and Og

Balak: Balak sends messengers to Bilaam • Bilaam refuses to come • Balak sends more distinguished messengers, Bilaam again refuses • Hashem appears to Bilaam and 'permits' him to go • An angel deters his donkey three times • After striking his donkey, the donkey speaks and Bilaam is forced to admit that he wronged her • Bilaam tells Balak that he will speak only that which Hashem will put in his mouth • Bilaam and Balak prepare sacrifices three times • Bilaam blesses the Bnei Yisrael three times • An angry Balak sends Bilaam on his way • Bilaam predicts future events • Bnei Yisrael sin with the daughters of Moav • 24,000 perish in a plague • The plague ceases when Pinchas kills Zimri and Kozbi

Haftarah: The haftarah of Parashas Balak is leined. Michah (5:6-6:8) encourages Klal Yisrael to remember Hashem's many great chasadim, among them that He prevented Bilaam from cursing them.

613 Taryag Weekly

Chukas: 87 Pesukim • 3 Obligations

1) Kohanim should oversee the preparation of the ashes of the parah adumah. 2) Observe the laws of tumas meis. 3) A Kohen shall purify someone who is tamei using the ashes of the parah adumah.

Mitzvah Highlight: Zos Chukas HaTorah - Parah adumah is the prime example of a mitzvah (chok) that we perform solely to fulfill Hashem's command, even though we do not understand it.

For the Shabbos Table

וְיָרְדוּ אֶת־הַסֵּלַע בְּמִטְהוֹ... יַעֲן לֹא־הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהִקְדִּישֵׁנִי
"Record the children of Levi...all males from the age of one month and above you shall record" (Bamidbar 3:15)

Moshe Rabbeinu performed a great miracle of bringing forth water from the rock. However, Moshe was punished and barred from entering Eretz Yisrael because he hit the rock instead of speaking to it. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l states that this was a neis no matter what means was used to bring forth this supernatural occurrence. What was lacking by Moshe's failure to speak to the rock?

Rav Moshe explains that this event was intended to demonstrate the importance of delivering words of instruction even to one who may not be able to fully grasp the concept. For example, a young child who appears to a parent as not quite ready to understand a certain message. Hashem demonstrated that just as a Divine message can penetrate even a rock and compel it to serve Hashem, we must speak to and be mechaneich even someone with limited understanding, as eventually the lessons will penetrate.

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