

Parshas Chukas in a Nutshell

(Numbers 19:1–22:1)

Moses is taught the laws of the red heifer, whose ashes purify a person who has been contaminated by contact with a dead body.

After forty years of journeying through the desert, the people of Israel arrive in the wilderness of Zin. Miriam dies, and the people thirst for water. G-d tells Moses to speak to a rock and command it to give water. Moses gets angry at the rebellious Israelites and strikes the stone. Water issues forth, but Moses is told by G-d that neither he nor Aaron will enter the Promised Land.

Aaron dies at Hor Hahar and is succeeded in the high priesthood by his son Elazar. Venomous snakes attack the Israelite camp after yet another eruption of discontent in which the people “speak against G-d and Moses”; G-d tells Moses to place a brass serpent upon a high pole, and all who will gaze heavenward will be healed. The people sing a song in honor of the miraculous well that provided them water in the desert.

(continued next column)



On the subject of altruism in study the Gemara rules that one should study Torah even if he has ulterior motives, for even if his study is not now solely for the sake of Heaven, nevertheless, (metoch) ‘out of’ the “not altruistic” study he will reach true study for the sake of Heaven. Learning Torah, observing mitzvos, practicing good customs, beyond the letter of the law and with greater piety — may all this be done with joy and gladness of heart.

– The Rebbe

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Moses leads the people in battles against the Emorite kings Sichon and Og (who seek to prevent Israel's passage through their territory) and conquers their lands, which lie east of the Jordan. ❖

We see some people who have a special joy in fulfilling chukim. Why? Because chukim relate to a point in the soul that is above our own will and our understanding. In the observance of these mitzvos, a person identifies with G-d on His terms.

The Rebbe

Join us each weekday morning Mon-Fri as we delve into the mysteries of Chassidic concepts. 5:55 am, followed immediately by Shacharis.

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Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, July 9, 2022
Daylight Savings Time

Earliest Tallis 4:23 AM
Latest Morning Shema..... 9:15 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) . 1:40 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 7:01 PM
Earliest Evening Shema.... 9:03 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – July 8 / Tammuz 9

Candle Lighting 8:12 pm

Mincha 7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – July 9 / Tammuz 10

Shacharis10:00 am*

Torah Reading..... 11:00 am

Kiddush..... 12:00 pm

Mincha 8:20 pm

Rabbi's Drasha 8:40 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 9:20 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:15 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs)..... 1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) 9:15 pm

Bulletin

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Chassidic Masters

Life Without Bumps

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
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There can be no order, no program, no achievement, without priorities. Life, as we envision and try to live it, consists of important and less important things, primary and secondary goals, severe and less severe setbacks. Reason, our compass in our journey through life, is the capacity to make these distinctions, to determine what must give way before what, and what should be reciprocated with what.

Priorities and gradations also exist among the divinely mandated laws of the Torah. The Torah commands “You shall not kill,” but it also differentiates between premeditated murder (punishable by death), murder resulting from negligent behavior (punishable by exile), no-fault murder (which carries no penalty), and killing in self-defense (permissible and a duty). It commands to aid a fellow in need, but it also delineates eight levels of charity; advises to whom one should give, and in what order; and sets the mandatory, ideal and maximum percentages of one’s income to be contributed. It commands the Jew to rest on Shabbat, but it also differentiates between various categories of work and the severity of their violation of the day of rest. It distinguishes between civil and moral laws, between active and non-active transgressions, between laws that apply to a specific time and place and laws

that have no such prerequisites, and so on.

There is, however, a certain category of mitzvot that defies such rational structuring. Generally speaking, the 613 mitzvot of the Torah fall into three categories: a) mishpatim (“judgments” or “laws”), which the Talmud defines as laws that the human mind would have conceived on its own, even if the Torah had not commanded them (e.g., the prohibitions against murder and robbery); b) eidot (“testimonials”), laws whose function and utility are understandable, although we might not have formulated them ourselves (e.g., Shabbat, the festivals, tefillin, etc.); c) supra-rational mitzvot, called chukim (“decrees”).

Prime examples of a chok are the laws of tum’ah v’taharah, ritual purity and impurity. It is not only that these laws cannot be explained by human reason, but that they defy the organization and priority structure which characterize the logical mishpat and the rational eid. If a person touches an impure object, he is rendered ritually impure; it makes no difference whether this contact was deliberate, unintentional, or even against his will. Nor is the type of contact consequential—the same degree of impurity is effected whether he grazed it with his fingernail or he picked it up and ate it.

In other words, the chok introduces an element of absoluteness into our lives, an area in which there are no major and minor things, no primary and secondary levels of involvement.

A domain in which life is not divisible into ends and means, but constitutes an integral, singular fulfillment of its Creator’s will.

In truth, every mitzvah is a chok, an unequivocal expression of divine will. It is only that many mitzvot come enclined in garments of varying rationality, for G-d desired that they be integrated into our rationally structured lives. But then there are those mitzvot that reach us unencumbered by finite garments, free of all that quantifies, qualifies and classifies their divine essence.

We need structure and priorities—it’s the only way we know to lead constructive lives. But we also need those moments and experiences that bring us in touch with the underlying integrity of life. Moments that impart to us the recognition that, in the final analysis, our every deed and endeavor is of equal, ultimate significance. ❖

Pirkei Avos

Pirkei Avos is a tractate of the Mishnah, devoted to moral and ethical rules and values. The Rebbe explained the Chabad custom of studying Pirkei Avos through the summer and explained that a Jew needs a continual preparation for further advances in Torah study and therefore Pirkei Avos should be studied all through the summer.

-- The Rebbe

From Our Sages – Chukas

This is the decree (chok) of the Torah . . . (Numbers 19:2)

This phrase can be understood in two ways. On one level it means that this—the law of the red heifer—is the ultimate “decree,” the most supra-rational of all the Torah’s precepts. A deeper meaning is that all of Torah is, in essence, a divine decree. It is only that with many of the mitzvot, the supra-rational divine will comes “clothed” in garments of reason.

(Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi)

Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring to you a red heifer (Numbers 19:2)

Nine red heifers were prepared from the time that the Jewish people were commanded this mitzvah until the Second Temple was destroyed. The first was prepared by Moses, the second by Ezra, and another seven were prepared from Ezra until the Temple’s destruction. The tenth heifer will be prepared by Moshiach, may he speedily be revealed, Amen, may it be the will of G-d.

(Mishneh Torah)

The clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean person . . . and he shall be clean at evening. . . . [But] he who sprinkles the water of sprinkling . . . shall be unclean (Numbers 19:19–21)

All who are involved in the preparation of the heifer, from beginning to the end, become impure, but the heifer itself purifies the impure! But G-d says: I have made a chok, decreed a decree, and you may not transgress My decrees.

(Midrash Tanchuma)

The fact that the ashes of the heifer “purify the contaminated and contaminate the pure” carries an important lesson to us in our daily lives: If your fellow has been infected by impurity and corruption, do not hesitate to get involved and do everything within your power to rehabilitate him. If you are concerned that you may become tainted by your contact with him, remember that the Torah commands the kohen to purify his fellow Jew, even though his own level of purity will be diminished in the process.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

The people spoke against G-d and against Moses (Numbers 21:5)

It is written: “They believed in G-d and in Moses His servant” (Exodus 14:31). If they believed even in Moses, they certainly believed in G-d! But this comes to teach us that whoever believes in the shepherd of Israel, it is as though he believes in G-d.

In the same vein, it says, “The people spoke against G-d and against Moses.” If they spoke even against G-d himself, than certainly they spoke against Moses! But this comes to teach us that whoever speaks against the shepherd of Israel, it is as though he spoke against G-d.

(Mechilta Beshalach; Talmud, Sanhedrin 110a)

It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, and he looked upon the brass serpent, he lived (Numbers 21:9)

Now, did the serpent kill or did the serpent restore to life? No. But when Israel looked upward and subjected their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were healed; but if they did not, they pined away.

(Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 29a) ❖

Haftorah for Parshas Chukas in a nutshell

Judges 11:1-33

This week's haftorah describes how the people of Israel were attacked by the nation of Ammon. The Israelites engaged Jephthah to lead them in battle against this military threat. Jephthah first sent a missive to Ammon, declaring his peaceful intentions. In his message, he also discussed the Israelites' conquest of the lands of Sichon and Og, victories which are related in this week's Torah reading.

Jephthah the Gileadite was the son of a harlot. He was sent away from his home by his half-siblings, and settled in the land of Tob where he became a great warrior. When the nation of Ammon attacked the people of Israel, Jephthah was called upon to lead the Israelites in battle. Jephthah agreed, on one condition: "If you bring me back to fight with the children of Ammon, and G-d delivers them before me, I will become your head." The Israelites accepted his terms.

Jephthah tried to bring a peaceful resolution to the conflict by sending messengers to reason with the king of Ammon; but the latter remained inflexible. Jephthah then successfully led his countrymen in battle, and they trounced and eliminated the Ammonite threat. ❖



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Good Shabbos to all!