



CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL OF THE PALISADES

קהילה קדושה בית ישראל של הפליסיידס

*An egalitarian Conservative community
where 'welcome' is not just a word!*

PARSHAT CHUKAT

JUNE 19, 2021 - TAMMUZ 9, 5781



This is the statute of the teaching which the LORD has commanded, saying, Speak to the children of Israel that they bring you a completely red heifer, in which there is no blemish, on which never came yoke.

Numbers 19:2

חוקת

PARSHAT CHUKAT

Parshat Chukat begins with the classic "Chok" - the decree of the Torah that has no logical explanation. It talks about a Red Cow used to purify people. The animal was to be entirely red in color, perfect without blemish and one that never wore a yoke for doing work (Bamidbar 18:2).

We tend to classify the commandments into several categories. There are those that we understand, and naturally agree with, and can immediately recognize their benefits. We might have even thought of them ourselves. For instance: Refraining from murder or robbery, and honoring one's parents.

Another type of Mitzvah is one that we never would have imagined by ourselves until the Torah taught it to us. Once we learn about this Mitzvah, however, we recognize its benefits. Keeping the Shabbat as a Holy day with all its intricate laws is something that man, perhaps, would never have considered. Once he observes Shabbat, however, the benefits become apparent. Once again, these are Mitzvot that we can justify logically.

Then there is the "Chok." No reasons, no logic, no obvious benefits; just pure faith. Consider the yoke that is placed on an animal's back. These Mitzvot should not be regarded as a burden upon us rather the analogy suggests that the animal has no idea what is behind its master's will. It submits itself entirely to that will and the yoke ultimately enables it to fulfill its destiny. We accept the "yoke" of the Torah in pure faith and that enables us to fulfill our destiny.

In a sense, all Mitzvot are "Chukim" even though we THINK we know their reasons. A rationale may help us a bit, but it's hardly the basis of our relationship with Hashem. At its highest level,

faith requires us to come to Hashem purely out of love and without the incentive of the reward that comes along with doing a Mitzvah. As Pirkei Avot teaches (1:3): don't be like the laborer who's serving purely for the reward. There is only one reason to do any Mitzvah and that is, Hashem said so.

A great Rabbi once looked up to heaven during his davening and with great fervor cried, "Dear Hashem, I don't want your reward, I want you."

THOUGHT QUESTION OF THE WEEK

In this week's Parsha, we find Moshe Rabeinu being challenged once again. He had enough difficulty trying to get the people to obey logical laws. What do you suppose he must have thought when Hashem told him to teach the people about a Red Cow?

Chukat (חֻקַּת) — Hebrew for "decree," the ninth word, and the first distinctive word, in the parashah) is the 39th weekly Torah portion. It is the shortest weekly Torah portion in the Book of Numbers (although not the shortest in the Torah), and is made up of 4,670 Hebrew letters, 1,245 Hebrew words, 87 verses, and 159 lines in a Torah Scroll.

Chukat Aliyah Summary

General Overview: This week's Torah reading, *Chukat*, begins with a discussion regarding the laws of the red heifer. Miriam and Aaron die. When the Jews are in need of water, Moses strikes a rock – despite being commanded to talk to it. Waters stream forth, but Moses is banned from entering Israel. Amalek battles the Israelites and is defeated. Edom and Moab refuse the Israelites passageway to Israel. The Israelites battle Sichon and Og, and are victorious.

First Aliyah: The most severe of all ritual impurities is *tum'at met*, the impurity contracted through contact with a human corpse. This section details the purification process for an individual or object which has contracted this form of impurity. A red heifer is slaughtered and is burned together with a few added ingredients. Water from a stream is added to the ashes. On the third and seventh day after contracting *tum'at met*, this mixture is sprinkled upon the individual or object. After immersion in a *mikvah* (ritual pool), the person or object is freed of this impurity.

Second Aliyah: The abovementioned purification process is continued, along with an admonition that the impure individual not enter the Tabernacle or Temple until the purification process is completed. Miriam dies in the fortieth year of the Israelites' sojourn in the desert. With Miriam's death, the waters which flowed from the miraculous "Well of Miriam" dried up. The people complain bitterly about the lack of water.

Third Aliyah: G-d tells Moses and Aaron to take a staff and gather the people in front of a certain rock. They should speak to the rock, and it will give forth water. Moses and Aaron gather everybody, and Moses strikes the rock and it gives forth water. In the course of this episode they committed a grave error, the conventional explanation being that they struck the rock instead of speaking to it. This caused G-d to punish Moses and Aaron, barring them from leading the Jews into Israel.

Fourth Aliyah: Moses sends messengers to the King of Edom requesting permission to pass through his land (which is south of Canaan) on the way to the Promised Land. Despite Moses' promises not to cause any harm to the land whilst passing, Edom refuses the Jews passage. The Jews are therefore forced to circumvent the land of Edom, and approach Canaan from the east.

Fifth Aliyah: The Jews arrive at Mount Hor. At G-d's command, Moses, Aaron and Aaron's son, Elazar, go up the mountain. Aaron removes his high priest's vestments and Elazar dons them. Aaron then passes away. The entire nation mourns Aaron's death for thirty days. The Amalekites, disguised as Canaanites, attack the Jews. The Jews pray to G-d and are victorious in battle. The Jews complain about their food, claiming that they are "disgusted" by the manna. G-d dispatches serpents into the Israelite encampment, and many Jews die. Moses prays to G-d on the Jews' behalf. Following G-d's instructions, Moses fashions a copper serpent and places it atop a pole. The bitten Jews would look at this snake and be healed.

Sixth Aliyah: The Jews journey on, making their way towards the eastern bank of the Jordan River. Encrypted in this section is a great miracle which occurred when the Jews passed through the Arnon valley. Tall cliffs rose from both sides of this narrow valley, and in the clefts of these cliffs the Emorites, armed with arrows and rocks, were waiting to ambush the Jews. Miraculously, the mountains moved towards each other, crushing the Emorite guerrilla forces. This section ends with a song of praise for the well which sustained the Jews throughout their desert stay — and whose now-bloodied waters made the Jews aware of the great miracle which G-d wrought on their behalf.

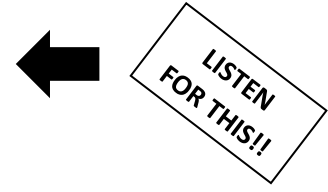
Seventh Aliyah: The Jews approach the land of the Emorites, which lies on the east bank of the Jordan River. They send a message to Sichon, king of the Emorites, asking permission to pass through his land en route to Canaan. Sichon refuses and instead masses his armies and attack the Jews. The Jews are victorious and occupy the Emorite lands. Og, king of Bashan, then attacks the Jews. The Jews are triumphant again; they kill Og and occupy his land too. Now the Jewish nation has reached the bank of the Jordan River, just across from the city of Jericho in the land of Israel.

LEARN!!!

DID YOU KNOW.....

Were you ever called for an Aliya? “YA-AMOD.....” Everyone is familiar with the call. BUT did you ever listen carefully to the FIRST call – the one for the Kohein to be honored with the first Aliya? It is different, and goes like this:

וַיַּעֲזֹר וַיִּגַּן וַיּוֹשִׁיעַ לְכָל־הַחוֹסִים בּוֹ, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן. הַכֹּל הָבִי
גְדֹל לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְתַנּוּ כְבוֹד לַתּוֹרָה. [בַּת כַּהֵן, קָרֵב. תַּעֲמֹד
בַּת _____ הַבַּת כַּהֵן.] בְּרוּךְ שָׁנְתָן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ.

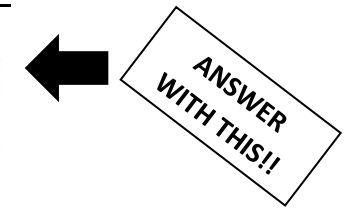


Now here is the point – after Gabbai 1 makes this call, WE ALL SHOULD ANSWER:

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, חַיִּים כְּלַכֶּם הַיּוֹם.

V-atem had-vaykeem badonai Elohaychem chayeem kul-chem hayom.

You who cling to God have been sustained to this day.



It will make Rabbi Stern *very* happy!!!!

COMPILED BY GABBAI FRED

WEEKLY YAHRZEITS

Yahrzeits for: Friday 6/4/2021

* Mrs. Lena Kleinman	No Observers	
Mr. Aubrey Kosson	Father of	Mr. Leonard Kosson
	also	Grandfather of
Mr. Harry Warner	Father of	Mr. Steven Kosson
		Mr. David Warner

Yahrzeits for: Saturday 6/5/2021

Mrs. Maxine Harriet Cooperman	Mother of	Ms. Nancy Epstein
Mrs. Miriam Gottfried	Aunt of	Mr. David Warner
* Mr. Charles Halpern	No Observers	
Mrs. Bella Keller	Grandmother of	Mr. Peter Savitt
Mr. Ze'ev Wolf Klein	Grandfather of	Rabbi Shammai Engelmayer

Yahrzeits for: Sunday 6/6/2021

* Mrs. Sophie Megibow	No Observers
* Mrs. Minnie Perl	No Observers

Yahrzeits for: Monday 6/7/2021

* Mr. Abraham Cohen	No Observers
Mr. Charles Kaplan	
	Kohen
* Mrs. Celia Wolpert	No Observers

Yahrzeits for: Tuesday 6/8/2021

* Mrs. Sarah Crown	No Observers
Mr. Abraham Levin	
Mrs. Itta bat Malka Zamkovskaya	No Observers

Yahrzeits for: Wednesday 6/9/2021

Celia Bechefskey	No Observers
Bechefskey Celia	No Observers
* Mr. Harry S Heller	No Observers

Yahrzeits for: Thursday 6/10/2021

Mrs. Eva Dworkin	No Observers	
* Mr. Harry Tzvi ben Aaron Smoler	Father of	Mrs. Marian Silverstein
Tzvi ben Aaron	Israel	

Yahrzeits for: Friday 6/11/2021

Mrs. Stella Aboaf Abram	Grandmother of	Ms. Esther Chalom
	also	Grandmother of
	also	Grandmother of
	also	Grandmother of
Esther Amron	No Observers	Ms. Lili Weitzen
* Mr. Louis Laikin	Grandfather of	Mrs. Janis Kronenberg
*	also	Father of
		Mrs. Fern Galant
* Mrs. Florence Levine	No Observers	

* Has a plaque