

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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11 TAMMUZ 5760

❖ PARSHAT CHUKAT - BALAK

The first of this week's two Torah portions, Chukat, begins: "This is the statute (chok) of the Torah." As we immediately learn, "this" refers to the commandment of the red heifer. The mitzva of the red heifer falls into the category of chukim -- mitzvot for which there is no rational explanation. There are many such super-rational mitzvot, i.e., the prohibition against eating non-kosher food, or wearing shaatnez (linen and wool in the same garment). Yet the mitzva of the red heifer is the foremost example of this type of commandment, as it completely transcends human understanding.

"Chok" comes from the root word meaning "engraved." There are two ways in which letters may be written: with ink on parchment or paper, or by inscribing them on stone. When letters are written with ink, they remain separate entities from the parchment or paper; when they are inscribed, they become an integral part of the stone itself. And yet, upon examination, we see that there are two levels of "engraving": The first level is when the letters are engraved on only one side of the stone. This type of inscription bears a superficial resemblance to the written word on parchment. A second, higher level of inscription is that which was found on the Tablets of the Law which contained the Ten Commandments. In a miraculous manner, these letters were equally visible from both sides, seeming to float in the stone without relation to the stone itself.

These two types of inscriptions allude to the two levels of chukim. The first category contains those super-rational mitzvot which, although we do not understand the reason behind them, the human mind may begin to comprehend them on some level. The higher category of super-rational mitzvot, however, is completely beyond the human ken, above and beyond our ability to understand G-d's Divine wisdom.

A Jew, by nature, desires to fulfill G-d's will. It is the natural consequence of his possessing a G-dly soul, which exists on a plane which is higher than the intellect. This nature finds its fullest expression in the performance of super-rational commandments. When a Jew observes a mitzva that has a rational explanation, the fact that he is doing so simply to fulfill the will of G-d is not so apparent, for his own thoughts and understanding may obscure, however slightly, his pure motivation. Thus it is precisely in the observance of chukim, "letters which are inscribed from both sides," that the Jew's innate desire to obey G-d's command is most obviously expressed. (From L'Chaim 5756, #424, Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. 8)

"Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring to you a red heifer (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 Moshiah, may he speedily be revealed, Amen, may it so be the will of G-d. (Mishneh Torah)

The Mishneh Torah is a purely legal work. As he explains in his introduction, Maimonides included only the final rulings of Torah law, leaving out the reasoning and deliberations behind them, in order to make it a readily accessible guide to daily life for all. Also in those rare cases in which Maimonides appears to "digress" and interject a philosophical insight or some background information, upon closer examination these always prove to be a statement of law and a practical instruction on daily living.

The same is true of the above quoted passage. At first glance, it appears to be a brief piece of history concerning the Red Heifer, followed

by a prayerful appeal to the Almighty to send Moshiah. But Maimonides is demonstrating to us the true definition of "belief in Moshiah." To believe in Moshiah is not just to believe that he will someday come, but to expect his on a daily, hourly, and momentary basis. It means that no matter what you are discussing, the subject turns to Moshiah at the slightest provocation. It means that in the midst of arranging the laws of the Red Heifer, a spontaneous plea erupts from the depths of your heart: "May he speedily be revealed, Amen, may it so be the will of G-d!" (The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Chabad online.com)

"And Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his ass." (22:21) From here we see how hatred causes a person to break from convention. Balaam had many servants at his disposal; yet in his eagerness to go curse Israel, he saddled his ass himself. Said the Almighty: "Evil one! Their father, Abraham, has already preempted you when, to fulfill My will, he 'rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey' (Genesis 22:3)." (Rashi)

In order to offer man the "free choice" that is essential to his mission in life, G-d so ordered His world that every positive force has its negative counterpart. Were there to exist a good element which cannot be put to corrupt use, then man's potential for evil would be disadvantaged and would not present the equal challenge which makes for the choice factor in life. In the words of King Solomon (Ecclesiastes 7:14), "One corresponding to the other, G-d created." But this "equality" between good and evil extends only to the most superficial level of reality. When a person learns to look beyond the surface of things to their inherent purpose, he will see that only the good in the world is real and substantial. Good is an existence in its own right, while evil exists merely to provide the tension which imbues the positive acts of man with meaning and significance.

Hence, there cannot be anything "original" to evil, which is but a shallow, corrupted refraction of the good in the world. If Balaam was able to transcend the norm with the intensity of his hate, this was only because, centuries earlier, Abraham had done the same out of love of his Creator. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe, ibid)

❖ TWELFTH OF TAMMUZ

On the third of Tammuz, the Previous Rebbe was informed that his life sentence in Communist jail was commuted to three years of exile in the city of Kostrama. On the twelfth of Tammuz, the day of his birthday, the Previous Rebbe was informed of his total release. Concerning his personal redemption, the Previous Rebbe wrote: "The Holy One, blessed be He, did not redeem me alone... but all those who are referred to with the name 'Israel.' " The Previous Rebbe's redemption came about in stages. First, the Rebbe's life sentence was commuted to three years in exile. Afterward, the three years in exile was dismissed and the Rebbe was free to leave Russia -- even told to leave Russia -- and was assisted in his departure by the very same people who had initially imprisoned him.

A further stage in the Previous Rebbe's redemption was his coming to America, which brought about an increase in the work of spreading the teachings of Chasidut throughout the world. And this increase in the spreading of the teachings of Chasidut continues even to this day. It serves to hasten the Redemption, as exemplified by the famous quote of Moshiah to the Baal Shem Tov that Moshiah would come when "your [the Baal Shem Tov's] teachings are spread outward." The Rebbe

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teachings of Chasidut. Furthermore, the Rebbe related, "This will generate the potential of the transformation of the Three Weeks [of mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temple] into a positive period, with the coming of the ultimate Redemption. Even before that

Redemption comes, we will merit a succession of Divine miracles. When one Jew will ask another, "What was the last miracle that happened?" He will be unable to answer because the miracles are taking place in such rapid succession. And these miracles will lead to the ultimate miracles, those which accompany the Redemption from exile." May it happen immediately. (From L'Chaim 5756, #424,)

ON THIS DAY, IN 5687 (1927), HE RECEIVED THE GOOD TIDINGS THAT HE WAS FREED FROM THE EXILE IMPOSED UPON HIM AFTER HIS ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT FOR HIS EFFORTS IN STRENGTHENING TORAH AND JUDAISM. FROM A LETTER OF THE REBBE (R. YOSEF YITZCHAK):
 "DURING THE FORTHCOMING TWO DAYS OF LIBERATION 12 AND 13 TAMUZ, CHASSIDIM ARE TO FARBRENG, FOR MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL GOOD AND BLESSING, AS INSTITUTED BY OUR FIRST FATHER, THE ALTER REBBE (MAY THE MEMORY OF THIS HOLY TZADIK BE A BLESSING FOR LIFE IN THE HEREAFTER; HIS SOUL RESTS IN THE HIDDEN EXALTED HEIGHTS; MAY HIS MERIT PROTECT US). DURING THIS FARBRENGEN CHASSIDIM ARE TO TALK TO ONE ANOTHER IN A SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD ABOUT STRENGTHENING FIXED TIMES FOR TORAH STUDY. I SEND THEM MY BLESSING THAT G-D FAVOR THEM IN BODY AND SPIRIT. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM TAMMUZ 12)

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Berachot (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Sukkha (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chasiddus

K There will be no class on Monday and Tuesday, July 17 - 18.

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharit: Mon-Fri: 6:00 AM & 7:30 AM
Sunday: 9:00 AM
Mincha/Maariv: 8:00 PM

SHABBAT PARSHAT CHUKAT-BALAK

July 14, 2000

Candlelighting: 7:47 PM
Friday Mincha: 8:00 PM
Early Minyan 6:30 PM

HABBOS!

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:25 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- Tanya 8:45 AM
- Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush, Cholent & Farbrengen
- Pirkei Avos 6:45 PM
- Mincha 7:30 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- Shabbat ends 8:47 PM

Seuda Shlishit is being sponsored by Rabbi & Mrs. Illulian in honor of Danny's Bar Mitzvah

Yartzheits: Miriam Dafner - Tammuz 15, Avraham Shmuel Staub - Tammuz 18

Happy Birthday to Rabbi Yossi Mayberg, Jacob Graff, Meira Chava Graff, Jill Bekhor, Chaim Eliyahu Perles, Daniel Moshe Mishael, Shifra Rav - Noy.

Happy Anniversary to Rabbi & Mrs. Yosef Shusterman, Sol & Rita Lowi.

Mazal Tov to the Illulian family on Danny's Bar Mitzvah.

Mazal Tov to Dr. & Mrs. Bart Tanenbaum on the birth of a new granddaughter.

Yud Beis - the 12th of Tammuz - is the birthday of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe - Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok - in 5640 (1880). The same day in 5687 (1927) he was released from prison in which he was incarcerated for spreading Yidishkeit under the Stalin regime.

THURSDAY JULY 20 IS THE FAST OF THE 17TH OF TAMMUZ. THE FAST BEGINS AT 4:44 A.M. AND ENDS AT 8:45 P.M.

Good Shabbos

