



Parashat CHUKAT

Shabbat Begins 21:08

Shabbat Ends 22:28

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COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET



Rabbi Jonathan Tawil
Director TAL

DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

Enter a synagogue during the week and take a look around.

How are people's facial expressions? Tired, overworked, stressed?

When it comes to Shabbat morning, however, it would seem that you were entering a different place with completely different people.

Everyone seems to be happy, excited, well rested.

Why is that?

Perhaps it's the long Friday night 'shluf' or the fact that a delicious Kiddush is around the corner, but I would like to share with you an amazing thought.

First, a fascinating story from June 2014.

Hundreds of cinema goers in Hong Kong gathered for a short film.

During the interval, they were shown an advert from Volkswagen.

The advert shows a point-of-view account of a person getting into their car and setting off on a drive. The scenery is lush and there is classical music in the background.

The idea seems to be that this car is smooth and great to drive - very relaxing!

What the people didn't know was that the cinema was equipped with a location-based broadcaster that could send a mass text to everyone in the room at once.

Shortly into this advert, operators sent a simultaneous text to everyone in the cinema.

Imagine! Everyone's phone pinged and went off in message mode.

There were hidden cameras catching peoples' reactions. The room was full of people looking

into their phones, intrigued as to who was sending them a message.

Just at that split second, the advert turns sour and a large crash is heard, as the ad comes to an end.

The audience is taken completely by surprise and shocked faces appear around the room.

The message was piercingly clear. Do not text whilst driving as the effects could be deadly.

We live in a society that is run on technology.

It's difficult if not impossible to get by nowadays without the mobile phone, emails, internet shopping, sat nav etc.

We have become very reliable on this, perhaps too reliable.

Yet there is a repercussion from such a connection, the more we connect, the more we really disconnect. The more we engage in our phones, the less time we have to speak directly with other people.

OUR RABBIS ARE
TEACHING US THAT IN
ORDER TO BECOME
ACCOMPLISHED IN
TORAH LEARNING, A
PERSON MUST MAKE
SACRIFICES FOR
TORAH. YOU MUST BE
WILLING TO GIVE UP OF
YOUR TIME, AND EXERT
EXTRA EFFORT IN
TORAH STUDY.

When we are at dinner with loved ones and our phones ping as a message is delivered, how many of us really concentrate on what our dinner partner is saying? We are too busy thinking: "Who is contacting me now? Perhaps it's more important."

There are times at work where we receive a phone call, trying to multi task, so as not to waste time we type away at the desk, losing real concentration on the person to whom we are speaking.

Shabbat is different!

It's a time of blessing, a time when we rid ourselves of our technological connection, in order to increase our communal and G-dly connection.

It is a time we disconnect, in order to reconnect!

Perhaps that is why people seem so happy on Shabbat. We are actually getting to sit down and understand others without interruptions. We are able to concentrate on our prayer and Torah learning much more without momentary distractions.

In this week's Parsha we are told: "This is the law (Torah), when a person dies in a tent..." [Bamidbar 19:14]. There is a famous teaching of our Sages regarding this verse: "Torah does not become established within a person, unless he is prepared to die for the Torah" [Berachot 63b].

THINK, THINK, THINK!

What miracles in Parshas Chukas obligate us to say a brocho, blessing, over the saving of the Jews?

The Gemora (Brochos 54a-b) tells the story of a miracle in Parshas Chukas.

Two mountains moved together and killed the enemy hiding in caves waiting to ambush the Jews. The Aron went ahead of the Jewish people in the wilderness, flattening mountains and moving aside all obstacles. Thus this great miracle was only discovered afterwards. Two people afflicted with tzara'as who were therefore following the Jews outside the encampment saw blood from the enemy gushing into a river. When a person sees this place, Nachalai Arnon, he is obligated to say a brocho, blessing, over this miracle.

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I'm confused?! Suicide is forbidden! How can a dead man study Torah?
The simple answer is that here our Rabbis are teaching us that in order to become accomplished in Torah learning, a person must make sacrifices for Torah. You must be willing to give up of your time, and exert extra effort in Torah study.

There is a further explanation. Often when people sit down to study, they permit various factors to interrupt them, such as a telephone call or the arrival of visitors. There is no way, however, of disturbing a dead person with a



R' David Garson

CHANNELING POTENTIAL

"Chukim" are Mitzvot with no known rationale. The archetype to this category of Mitzvot, is the Mitsva of Para Adumah (red heifer), as it says "This is the decree of the *Torah*." This Mitsva has two primary functions: 1. To purify those that came in contact with a corpse, 2. To atone for the sin of the Golden Calf. Although the Mitsva of Para Adumah (red heifer) is considered a "chok" i.e. a Mitsva with no evident logical reason to it, Rashi cites Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan, who explains that Para Adumah serves as an atonement for the sin of the Eigel Hazahav – the Golden Calf. He offers an analogy to bring out this point, "If a maidservant's son dirties a palace, let his mother come and clean up after him - so too let the cow come and atone for the sin of its calf."

The process as to how the Para Adumah atones for the Eigel Hazahav seems ironic upon examination. The creation of the Eigel Hazahav consisted of gold, an inanimate object, being cast into fire, causing a living creature to emerge. By contrast, the Para Adumah consists of taking a live creature and placing it into fire to produce an inanimate entity i.e. ashes. Both processes pass through fire with opposite results, one creates life and the other death - ashes.

How can we understand this contrast between the sin and its atonement?

The Gemara in Megilla (31b) teaches us a simple yet profound concept, "If Elders tell you to destroy, and youngsters say to build - destroy and do not build, because the

telephone call or the like. The Gemara is teaching that a person who wants to succeed in his learning must consider himself "dead". He cannot permit anything whatsoever to interrupt him.

Imagine that Google, Wikipedia, Facebook and Waze are all in the room together having a discussion of who's the best.

Wikipedia says "I know everything".

Google answers back "I have everything".

Waze says "I know the way to everywhere!"

Facebook says "I know everybody".

Just then, there is an interruption as the Internet replies, "Without me, you're all nothing!" Thinking all is over?

Then there is a blackout.

This time, Electricity opens its mouth and says "Now who is talking!"

building of youth is destructive and the destruction of Elders is constructive."

Decisions on how to conduct oneself and ideologies formed by the young and foolish, can prove to be harmful and destructive. Whereas decisions made by those who are wise and experienced, who may say to "tear down" or "destroy" an ideology, philosophy or way of conduct, prove to be the most productive of acts.

The creation and service of the Eigel Hazahav, was a "Building of Youth." When Aharon and Chur were the interim leaders of the Benei Yisrael until Moshe Rabenu returned from his 40 days in Heaven, they objected to the creation of the Eigel, i.e. they said "Destroy and don't build." Chur's outward objection led to his murder, while Aharon realised that another outward objection would lead to more

IF ONE'S PASSIONS ARE LEFT TO BE FREE WITH NO GUIDANCE OR BEING CHANNELLED CORRECTLY, THEN THEY RUN THE RISK OF BEING DESTRUCTIVE.

bloodshed, so he tried delaying the creation of the Eigel as much as possible. Ultimately, the most destructive, "Building of Youth," in history transpired, the Eigel Hazahav was created and served.

Prior to the Eigel's creation, the world was in a state like that of Adam Harishon before his sin i.e. the concept of death was annulled. As a result of the Eigel, the prospect of death was reinstituted into the world. This act could not have been more destructive.

During the week, we think we are our own bosses, we get carried away into the imaginary internet and mobile world. On Shabbat, we are able to lose that, and reconnect to our real selves. We are reminded that it is Hashem that is in charge! He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. We have been blessed with this special day accordingly and are able to reconnect to Him.

Wouldn't it be amazing if we tried that during the week?

It's difficult but perhaps for one Shiur or lesson a week, we can really turn off the phone and concentrate. Let us uphold the words of the Gemara, for it is only if a person is prepared to die and act dead to the outside world that he will be able to succeed in real Torah advancement.

Based on this idea, the Para Adumah's role in atoning for the Eigel in a contrary manner, can now be understood. In order to rectify the mindset of a "Building of Youth," which caused the Eigel, the mother of the Eigel, the Para Adumah counters this by insinuating that the destruction of elders is constructive and brings purity, as opposed to the constructions of the youth.

This process can also be understood on a deeper level. Both processes pass through fire, which in essence has two capabilities. Fire can be dangerous and destructive, it can burn down houses, harm people and cause death. However, it certainly also has constructive purposes, e.g. cooking, warming, welding metals together to construct objects, etc. The defining factor as to whether fire will be constructive or not, is when it is under control, but when fire is left to spread freely, then destruction is imminent.

A fire within a person is analogous to one's passions and desires. If one's passions are left to be free with no guidance or being correctly channelled, then they run the risk of being destructive. However, when properly disciplined, one's passions and potentiality can be directed to achieve productive goals.

By following the instructions of the Torah and the advice our great Sages and Rabbis give us, either by interacting with them or by learning and studying their written words, one's passions and potential will be able to be focused towards meaningful objectives. What is considered appropriate to act upon or to refrain from, when to "build" and when to "destroy," will become clearer through knowing how and when to direct one's inner strengths.

Para Adumah teaches us this lesson, creating can be destructive and destroying can be constructive but only with the guidance of Torah and our Chachamim can we truly succeed in our choices. Shabbat Shalom.



Tales Of Tzadikim The 'Seer' of Lublin

The great Chassidic Rebbe, Reb Dov Ber of Radoshitz, was traveling across the Polish countryside. Night fell, the roads would soon be unsafe, and so he directed his wagon driver to stop at the first Jewish inn that they could find.

In a short while, they had pulled up in front of a small Jewish tavern. The owner welcomed them in warmly, helped them with their bags, fed and watered their horse, and prepared for Reb Dov Ber a special room reserved for traveling rabbis and noblemen. After praying the evening prayer, Reb Dov Ber retired to his chambers and to bed, tired after the long day's journey.

Soon the house was quiet, the fields outside still. Only the occasional barking of a lone farm dog broke the silence of

the night. And yet . . . the clock on the wall -- it was ticking in the most amazing way; it wouldn't let Reb Dov Ber sleep. He tossed and turned in his bed. He got up and started pacing the room. Verses from the Books of the Prophets flooded his mind, songs of deliverance and hope. He tried to lie down again, but the clock kept ticking, until he was forced to rise from bed once more. Thus he spent the night, pacing the room in anxious anticipation.

In the morning, the tired but exhilarated rabbi approached the inn-keeper. "Where did you get that clock in the room?" he asked.

"That clock? Well, several years ago another rabbi stayed in the room, Reb Yosef of Turchin, the son of that *tzaddik*, the Seer of Lublin. He came for only one night, but the weather turned bad and he was forced to stay for several days. In the end, he found that he did not have enough money to pay the bill, so he covered the difference by giving me that clock. He said that he had inherited it from his father."

"Now I understand why I couldn't sleep," said Reb Dov Ber. "Most clocks in the world only cause depression, for they count the hours that have passed - another day lost, another opportunity gone by. But the clock of the holy Seer of Lublin counts the time that is coming - another minute closer to the final redemption, another second nearer the age of universal peace."

Dear Rabbi,

My son and I are trying to research the Biblical age of accountability and the Bar Mitzvah. We would appreciate any help. Thank You.

The age thirteen for a boy is derived from a verse about Yaakov's son Levi. Referring to Shimon and Levi, the Torah says "each man took his sword" "At that time Levi was thirteen years old. He is thus the youngest person the Torah calls a "man." The Torah specifically referred to him as a "man" in order to imply that thirteen is the age of male adulthood.

By age thirteen, it can be assumed that a boy has reached physical and mental maturity and is therefore responsible for his actions. For a girl this is at age 12. By Torah law, a 12 year-old girl or a 13 year-old boy can enter into legal contracts, incur legal obligations and must observe all the commandments, like keeping kosher and observing Shabbat.

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THINK, THINK, THINK!

How does the lack of Pora Aduma relate to us nowadays?

The ashes of the Pora Aduma, red heifer, purify us from the tuma, impurity, that comes from contact with dead bodies. Nowadays since we don't have ashes from the Pora Aduma, nor the means to sacrifice it according to the din, we cannot achieve purity from this tuma.

Aaron died a special death known as "Neshika". What do we know about the death?

Neshika means "kiss". It is the easiest out of all 903 deaths (Gemora Brochos 8a) and is compared to removing a hair from milk. It is the "kiss of death" where the Neshama is drawn and sucked out of the body by Hashem Himself, to rise and come close to Him. This exit is painless. However, usually the death of a person is a most painful experience for the soul and the screams should really be so loud to be heard all over the world (Gemora end of Yuma 20b)!

Pora Aduma, the red heifer, is a chok. What does a "chok" mean?

There are three types of mitzvos: eidos, mishpotim and chukim. Eidos means "testimonies". Eidos include the mitzvos of Tefillin, Sukka, Bris Mila which all come to testify that Hashem is the Creator of the world. Mishpotim means "judgments". Included are the mitzvos of stealing, murder, overcharging and other matters which one can understand intellectually even without the Torah - e.g. the need for a law system in society. Chukim are statutes, decrees for which we do not fathom a reason. The mitzva itself can be a chok, as can the details of how we do the mitzva for example we have the mitzvah of Korban Pesach which includes the prohibition to break any bone of the sacrifice. This prohibition is a chok. Another meaning of chok is "boundary" since where we are given a mitzva whose understanding is beyond us, we are required to set limits regarding how much we think into its meaning. (See Rabbeinu Bichai beginning of Parshas Chukas.)

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Mazal Tov

Yossi and Lea Teboul on the birth of their baby boy
Jonathan and Anna Amouyal on the birth of their baby girl
Mousy Salem and sheeren Lavi on their forthcoming wedding



Our boy's learning program continues to go from strength to strength each week>>>

<<<TAL together with Kinloss hosted an amazing Friday night last week with Mayor of London candidate David Lammy MP. He shares with us his inspiring story of how a few Jews tsadaka brought him to where he is in life.



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