

WEEK OF

June 25, 2017

1 Tamuz, 5777

WEEKLY PARSHA NEWSLETTER

BS"D



OHIEL
SARA
THE FEMALE VOICE OF TORAH & SONG

Parshat Chukat

By: Rabanit
K. Sarah Cohen

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HALACHA

STORY

Q&A

SHIURIM

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QUOTES

DAVEN FOR

PARSHAT CHUKAT

This week's parashah begins with the Mitzvah of "Parah Adumah," the red heifer whose ashes were used to make the waters through which people would be purified after becoming Tameh. The Torah Hakedoshah refers to this Mitzvah as "Chukat Ha'Torah" - the "statute" of the Torah. Parah Adumah is the quintessential "chok," or law whose reasoning eludes us. We have no way of explaining why specifically waters made from the ashes of this particular cow causes someone pure - or why the Kohen who sprinkles the water becomes Tameh.

The chachamim teach us that even Shlomo Hamelech (a"h), the wisest of all men, waved the white flag, so-to-speak - when he tried to find the underlying reason for this Mitzvah.

We find in the Midrash an astounding statement concerning the Parah Adumah. The Midrash states, "Parah - Elu Yisrael" ("A heifer - this refers to the Jewish people"). Why does the Midrash compare Am Yisrael to a cow? In what way are we like the Parah Adumah?

The answer perhaps, is that the existence of the Jewish people, like the Parah Adumah, is a "chok," a law that defies all logic and cannot be explained according to human

reasoning.

Logically, Bnei Yisrael should have disappeared centuries ago. As a small nation that has endured more persecution than any other, and which has been scattered about throughout the world, wandering from place to place, there is no logical reason for it to have survived. Our continued existence is a "chok," a reality that is no less mystifying and incomprehensible as the Parah Adumah.

In a famous essay, celebrated author Mark Twain observed the astonishing miracle of Jewish survival and he writes:

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star-dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way.

Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk.

His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of

REFUAH SHLEIMAH
&
HATZLACHAH

Yonah bat Henya
 Michael ben Yonah
 Ro'ee ben Rachel
 May bat Ilana
 Ben Tzvi ben Ilana
 Gidon ben Esther
 Esther bat Mazal
 Yosef ben Devorah
 Yaffa bat Rivka
 Baruch Chai ben Zoya
 Rivkah bat Malkah
 Nissan ben Liza
 Gavriel ben Toviyo
 David ben Liza
 Baila Chava
 bat
 Sorka
 Freida Leah
 bat
 Pesha Rachel
 Yehoshuah Mordechai
 ben
 Leah Gita
 Chaim Yehudah
 ben
 Aidel
 Efrat
 bat
 Shifra Tanya

proportion to the weakness of his numbers.

He has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it.

The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished.

The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains.

What is the secret of his immortality?"

Rabbenu Bachya Ben Pakuda, one of the Spanish Midieval scholars, and one of the Rishonim (a"h), wrote in his Chovot Halevavot that if one wants to experience miracles like the miracles of the Exodus, all he really needs to do is contemplate the miracle of Jewish survival.

There is no greater miracle than the Jewish nation's continued existence after centuries of persecution, pogroms, Inquisitions and Holocausts.

This is not to say, however, that we can just sit back proudly and confidently and bask in our triumphs. To the contrary, we must remember that every station along the difficult road of Jewish exile was just that - only a station. As comfortable and confident as the Jews felt in Spain, Germany and in other places, they were eventually forced to leave.

In fact, this pattern began much earlier in our history, in the time of Yaakov Avinu (a"h). He married Lavan's daughters, tended to his sheep and became very successful. Everything was going well until one day he heard Lavan's sons, complaining that Yaakov stole all their wealth. Yaakov had no choice but to flee.

If this sounds familiar, this is because this has repeated itself many times throughout the last two millennia.

The Jews settle down, work well with the native population, accumulate wealth, and feel very comfortable where they are. But eventually the people around them take notice, feel envious, and begin to resent the Jews, leading to persecution and yet another exile.

As grateful as we are for all the opportunities America has provided, we cannot feel too comfortable here. If we are successful, we must not flaunt it. The last thing we want is to catch the attention of the people around us.

True, our existence and survival is a "chok," an extraordinary miracle. But we bear the responsibility to handle this miracle with care, not to allow our feelings of pride to lead us to outward displays of triumphalism and overconfidence.

We must instead carry ourselves humbly and quietly and do all we can to ensure that we continue to be welcome on these shores, rather than ignite jealousy and resentment.

THE STRANGE CASTLE

Surrounded by a carpet green,
The loveliest lawn you've ever seen.
The sweet grass smelled so very fresh,
Its powerful beauty could melt the flesh.

Fragrant fruit trees bowed in the breeze,
And colorful songbirds sing in the trees.

A gurgling brook went its merry way,
And rabbits and deer played there all day.

And in this paradise stood
a magnificent building,
With shimmering marble
and glittering gilding.

A castle fit for a duke or a king,
Breathtaking beyond any imaginable thing.

Its turrets rose to the very sky,
Its gate, no enemy could defy.
This lovely and bewitching place,
Was filled with everything of grace.


Beauty everywhere filled the eye,
Beauty to make one ache and sigh
But what was this? What awful smell?
An odor bubbling up like a well...

Its horridness, the air did fill,
And made a person feel quite ill.
What place did this have in paradise?
I asked the question once and twice.

Above the sewage, awful creatures,
With many legs and slimy features
What is this? Can this really be?
Read on - and you'll be sure to see.

The description here is not imagination.
It's a parable that requires explanation.


The garden and palace represents a Jew,
Who is full of Torah, through and through.
A precious person like a gem,
Dearly beloved of Hashem.



Tapestries of fine spun gold,
Paintings that were rare and old.
Carpets several inches thick,
And furniture the prime of the pick.

Heavy Mahogany and Oak,
Everything there of splendor spoke.
Crystal chandeliers so bright,
Shedding a multicolored light.
Upholstered chairs of purple satin,
Sofas begging to be sat in.

Paneled walls of golden wood,
Beauty wherever one looked or stood.
Ivory trinkets all about,
Fantastic opulence, no doubt.
Halls of marble, silken chambers,
Venetian vases of azure and amber.



But if this dear man should start to speak,
Evil talk that from his mouth does reek,
Lashon hara, idle talk,
Lies and words that hurt -
Evil, from his mouth does spurt.

That which only the soul can feel,
But which nevertheless, very real.
The beauty will vanish,
the gleam will fade,
Replaced with ugliness which
he alone has made.

THE KEY TO MY HEART

"What can I do for you?" asked the Rabbi of Karlin to a student who complained he could not feel sincere regret for his wrongdoings. "I have not been able to find the key to your heart," continued the Rabbi.

The student looked into the eyes of the Rabbi and cried, "Who needs a key! Use an axe if you have to!"

"No need," smiled the Rabbi, "your heart has finally opened."

There is no one whose door is completely closed. Hashem created a spark within each of us that can be accessed and rekindled with just a little bit of effort, understanding and love.

The key to opening the heart of every Jew is the willingness to reach out in every which way necessary in order to access the deepest part of his neshamah.

Some people knock gently, and when there is no response on the other side of the door, they leave. Some people ring the bell and others simply stand at the door waiting for a sign of life on the other side. Whether the door will open will depend on your efforts and hard work. If you love your fellow Jew, you will be willing to use the "axe" to break down his door!



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Once upon a time, all villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer all the people gathered but only one boy came with an umbrella - that's **FAITH**

When you throw a baby in the air she laughs because she knows you will catch her - that's **TRUST**

Every night we go to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning but still we set the alarms to wake up - that's **HOPE**

We see the world suffering and marriages falling apart, but still, we get married - that's **LOVE**

On an old Man's shirt was written a cute sentence: "I Am Not 60 Years Old; I Am Sweet 16 with 44 years of Experience." - that's **ATTITUDE**

QUOTES

** "Just because I'm on a different path doesn't mean I'm lost." **

** "Hashem's delays are really calculated deliveries!" **

** "A man without decision of character can never be said to belong to himself. He belongs to whatever can make captive of him."

**ATTENTION LADIES**

Call us to host a learning group in your community.
(347) 430-5700

Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen will be speaking
 on the following dates:

Date: June 28, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: July 1, 2017 - Shabat

Time: 5:00pm

Place: 1364 E7th - Bklyn, NY

Date: July 10, 2017

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 8201 Castor Ave.
 Philadelphia, PA

Date: July 12, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: July 26, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: July 30, 2017

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 148 Copley Ave.
 Teaneck, NJ

Date: Aug 2, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: Aug 15, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: August 26, 2017 - Shabat

Time: 5:00pm

Place: 1364 E7th - Bklyn, NY

Date: August ?? - To Be Announced

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 115 Addison Rd.
 Bergenfield, NJ 07621

ANNOUNCEMENT

Audio-visual shiurim of

Rabanit

Kíneret Sarah Cohen

Are Now Available For Viewing At

www.torahanytime.com

Instructions: Register for free and click on the "Ladies" tab at the top of the Home Page. Scroll down and look for Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen. Underneath the image for the Rabanit, click on the "**follow**" tab if you want to be notified via email or text about a shiur that has become available for viewing.

Shiur Will Post B'ezrat Hashem
 On Tuesday, June 27

The Three Weeks

The Pain Of Royalty

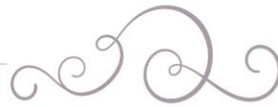
Log on and enjoy the live
 lectures and be inspired.



Newsletter Dedication

Sara Bat Mimon Ha'Kohen (A"H)

Ohel Sara is named after this tzadikah (my grandmother). May the inspiration that women draw from this weekly newsletter benefit her neshamah in Gan Eden and may we all be redeemed as a result.



Ohel Sara wishes all it's readers a Shabbat Shalom u'Mevorach!



Candlelighting Time

**8:13PM
NY TIME**



**You can now make a donation
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Ohel Sara Congregation

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