

# Torah Weekly

July 3-9, 2022  
4-10 Tammuz, 5782

Torah Reading:  
Chukat: Numbers 19:1 - 22:1  
Haftarah:  
Judges 11:1-33

## PARSHAT CHUKAT

Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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No One Forgotten.

## Where There's a Will There's a Why

Why do certain people find satisfaction in Judaism while others are bored stiff? Why is faith exciting for some and irrelevant for others, a joy for one guy and an absolute burden for the next? One fellow cannot imagine going to work without first putting on his *tefillin* and the other hasn't seen his *tefillin* since his bar mitzvah 40 years ago. This woman can't wait to get to *shul* and the other can't wait to get out. Why?

This week we read about the ultimate mitzvah of faith, the Red Heifer. It is a statutory commandment whose reason still remains a mystery. I must admit, to take the ashes of a red heifer and sprinkle them on a person so he may attain spiritual purification is, indeed, rather mind-boggling.

According to the Midrash, the Almighty promised Moses that to him He would reveal the secret meaning of this *mitzvah*, but only after Moses would initially accept it as a Divine decree. If he would first take it on faith, thereafter rational understanding would follow.

The truth is that there are answers to virtually every question people may have about Judaism. Intelligent skeptics I meet are often amazed that what they had long written off as empty ritual is actually philosophically profound, with rich symbolic meaning. But the skeptic has to be ready to listen. You can hear the most eloquent, intellectual explanation but if you are not mentally prepared to accept that listening may in fact be a worthwhile exercise, chances are you won't be impressed. Once we stop resisting and accept that there is inherent

validity, suddenly Judaism makes all the sense in the world.

It is a psychological fact that we can grasp that which we sincerely desire to understand. But if there is a subject in which we have no interest, we will walk into mental blockades regularly.

The sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, says this explains why some very astute businessman may sit at a Talmud class and find himself struggling to grasp basic principles of rabbinic reasoning. Why is it that the same person who can concoct brilliant schemes in the boardroom fails to follow straightforward logic in the *Talmud* class? The answer, says the Rebbe, is that this businessman is really not that interested in the subject. But if it was half as important to him as making money, he might well become a *rosh yeshiva*!

So, in the same way that G-d told Moses that he could come to comprehend the meaning of the Red Heifer but only after he accepted it, similarly today, those who genuinely wish to understand Judaism will succeed, but only if they buy into the product on some level first.

When I was studying in yeshiva, I would always try to attend the annual "Encounter with Chabad" weekends for university students. These were organized to expose Jewish students to Judaism over a Shabbat and there were lectures by leading Rabbis and religious academics. Once a young man shouted back at the lecturer, "How can you expect me to put on *tefillin* if I don't believe in G-d?!" The speaker calmly replied, "First put on *tefillin*, and I promise you will see that you really do

believe in G-d."

We all have a G-dly faith inside us. It just needs to be revealed. As illogical as it may sound, if we start by observing a mitzvah, we find that our faith will follow through and begin to blossom. It has been shown to be true again and again. If we are not interested, no answer will be good enough. If we are genuinely searching for truth and we are objective, there are ample and meaningful answers.

By Yossy Goldman

## How to Live Like Ash and Water

The law of the red heifer is the most mysterious law of the Torah. Somehow, the red heifer would purify one who contracted the most severe form of ritual impurity, that of coming in contact with a human corpse.

Life is synonymous with holiness, for G-d is the **Life is synonymous with holiness** source of life. The red heifer represents the power to purify even the most severe form of ritual impurity, represented by death, the antithesis of holiness and life.

Indeed, Chassidic philosophy explains that the red heifer captures the secret of the uniquely Jewish approach to purifying the negativity within each of us. It is the key to dealing with our inner passions, which overwhelm us with the force of their energy.

What were the requirements for the red heifer? The *Torah* tells us:

The L-rd spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: This is the statute of the Torah that the L-rd commanded, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel and have them take for you a perfectly red, unblemished cow, upon which

no yoke was laid.”

The heifer must be red, it must be unblemished, and it must never have been burdened by a yoke. Red is the color of passion. The heifer represents the animalistic emotions within the human heart. A yoke represents the taming of the animal.

At times we look inside ourselves, and we experience the emotional intensity of our animalistic urges and cravings. We look at our inner red heifer and we fear that its raw, animalistic energy is too powerful for us to control; we see nothing but impurity.

The Torah’s insight into the red heifer is as profound as it is revolutionary:

“The cow shall then be burned in his presence; its hide, its flesh, its blood, with its dung he shall burn it . . . They shall take for that unclean person from the ashes of the burnt purification offering, and it shall be placed in a vessel [filled] with spring water . . . A ritually clean person shall take the hyssop and dip it into the water and sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, and on the people who were in it, and on anyone who touched the bone, the slain person, the corpse, or the grave.”

Purity is not achieved by suppressing or waging war against desire. The Torah teaches us to look right at the passionate, forceful red heifer. Look at its core and understand that the red heifer is not negative, nor is it spiritually neutral. The Torah wants us to understand that the heifer can be the most powerful agent of purity in our life. The power of desire, its incredible force and energy, is not evil. For while the external expression of the desire may be negative and must be burned, the ashes of the heifer, its inner essence, is the source of purity. When the ashes are mixed into the “living waters,” when the power of desire is directed toward a positive goal, the heifer itself will be an unbridled force that will provide spiritual and emotional purity.

*By Rabbi Menachem Feldman*

**Sunday, July 3, 2022 --- 4 Tammuz, 5782**

**Passing of Rabbeinu Tam (1171)**

Rabbi Yaakov ben Meir of Ramerupt (1100?-1171), known as "Rabbeinu Tam", was a grandson of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, 1040-1105), and one of the primary authors of the Tosaphot commentary on the Talmud; the Bet-Din (rabbinical court) he headed was regarded as the leading Torah authority of his generation.

**Maharam Imprisoned (1286)**

Rabbi Meir ben Baruch ("Maharam") of Rothenburg (1215?-1293), the great Talmudic commentator and leading Halachic authority for German Jewry, was imprisoned in the fortress at Ensisheim. A huge ransom was imposed for his release. The money was raised, but Rabbi Meir refused to allow it to be paid lest this encourage the further hostage taking of Jewish leaders. He died in captivity after seven years of imprisonment.

**Passing of Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz (1805)**

Rabbi Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz (1730-1805) was the rabbi of Frankfurt and the author of *Sefer Hafla'ah* and *Sefer HaMikneh* -- commentaries on the Talmud -- and *Panim Yafot*, an exegesis on the Torah. Rabbi Pinchas and his brother Rabbi Shmuel Shmelke of Nikolsburg (Mikulov) were students of the [Mezritcher Maggid](#). They were amongst the first adherents to the Chassidic movement to hold rabbinic posts in Western Europe. The famed Rabbi Moshe Sofer, known as the [Chatam Sofer](#), considered Rabbi Pinchas to be one of his main teachers.

**Passing of R. Mendel Futerfas (1995)**

As a young man, R. Mendel Futerfas (1906–1995) studied in the underground network of Yeshivat Tomchei Temimim in Soviet Russia. He subsequently was given the task of obtaining the funds necessary to maintain the network of hidden classes, a mission fraught with danger of tremendous proportions. He later risked his life once again to oversee the clandestine escape of hundreds of Lubavitcher Chassidim from the U.S.S.R. via Lemberg in 1946.

**Monday, July 4, 2022 --- 5 Tammuz, 5782**

**Ezekiel's Vision of the "Chariot" (429 BCE)**

On the 5th of Tammuz of the year 3332 from creation (429 BCE), Ezekiel, among the only prophets to prophesy outside of the Holy Land, beheld a vision of the Divine "Chariot" representing the spiritual infrastructure of creation.

**Wednesday, July 6, 2022 --- 7 Tammuz, 5782**

**Purim Ostroh (1792)**

The Jewish community of Ostroh (in what is now western Ukraine) was miraculously spared when a Russian army led by General Suvorov attempted to breach its walls, claiming Polish insurgents were present inside. To commemorate the miracle, the day of 7 Tammuz was established as a local day of rejoicing, and a special scroll in which the story was inscribed was read each year on this date.

**Thursday, July 7, 2022 --- 8 Tammuz, 5782**

**Spanish Inquisition Abolished (1834)**

On July 15, 1834, the Office of the Spanish Inquisition was abolished by the Queen Mother Maria Christina, after nearly three and a half centuries. However, the right of public worship (including permission to mark places of worship and advertise religious services) was not granted to the Jews until 1967.

**Friday, July 8, 2022 --- 9 Tammuz, 5782**

**Jerusalem Walls Breached (423 BCE)**

The Babylonian armies of King Nebuchadnezzar breached the walls of Jerusalem on the 9th of Tammuz in the year 3338 from creation (423 BCE); King Ziddikiahu of Judah was captured and taken to Babylon (Jeremiah 39:5. A month later, the capture of Jerusalem was completed with the destruction of the Holy Temple and the exile of all but a small number of Jews to Babylon). Tammuz 9 was observed as a fast day until the second breaching of Jerusalem's walls (by the Romans) on the 17th of Tammuz, 3829 (69 CE), at which time the fast was moved to that date. (Talmud, Rosh Hashanah and Tur Orach Chaim 549)