



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on Parashat CHUKKAT Year 23 by Dayan Abraham David

The subject of the Parah Adumah, the red heifer, is well known as a 'chuka' a statute, a mitzvah without explanations. Even Shlomo Hamelech, the wisest of mankind, could not give a satisfactory explanation for and gave up rationalizing the understanding behind mitzvah. That is why the satan and the nations question this mitzvah. But what is not well known that there are in fact four mitzvah which are questioned for their apparent contradiction and lacking our understanding and in all of them the Pasuk emphasises the word 'Chuka', it is a statute, do not question it. The Midrash 'Tanchumah' brings them.

The first: A man is forbidden to his brother's wife as 'Arayot' and the punishment is 'Karet' yet if there are no children in his brother's marriage he is allowed and it is a mitzvah to marry the widow. How come? Where has the 'Issur' gone? Then there is the 'Issur' of 'Klayim' not to wear a garment with a mixture of linen and wool 'Sha'atnez' and yet it is permitted

to wear a linen garment of 4 corners with 'techelet' as tsitsit which was made of wool, a contradiction. Again with the 'tzeir le azazel', the goat which was sent to be thrown over the cliff in the desert, this brought 'Kaparah', atonement cleansing the Jewish people of their sins on Yom Kippur even so it made the person who had taken the goat out unclean. How come?

And of course, the red heifer which made not only all those who took part in its preparation unclean but also the person who sprinkled on the 'tameh' unclean. Yet the 'tameh' was cleansed and purified completely, another contradiction. In all these the Torah says 'chuka' it is a statute and you should not question it 'ain laharer achareha'. When a non-Jew asked Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zackai about the 'parah adumah' he gave him an explanation how it worked with an example from life. The non-Jew accepted this as brought down in the 'Yalkut' but when his 'talmidim' who were not happy with his answer asked him, he reiterated it as a 'chuka' a statute and you must accept it without question. Rely on your faith in G-d.

The Midrash 'Tanchumah' says that the reason behind the 'Parah

Adumah' was revealed to Moshe but only to him. For others who are not on such a level it is a '*chuka*' and it will only be revealed to us in '*Olam Habah*'.

It would seem that because we are not at the high level of '*Kedusha*' of Moshe, we are unable to understand the deeper levels of Torah behind a '*chok*' hence we should refrain from rationalizing them, for if we do think we can explain them there is a danger we could deduce concepts and halachot based on them which would be flawed. With other mitzvoth we have rules for deducing and learning from them according to our understanding and we are allowed to do so, but not with '*Chukim*'. For instance we see that the brother's wife is permitted for the mitzvah of '*Yibum*' but we could not learn from there any halachot based on our reasoning of this mitzvah for it would be flawed. The Midrash says when G-d gave the '*Luchot*' to Moshe, the '*Luchot*' were 6 '*Tefakim*', two were in the hands of Hashem, 2 were held by Moshe, and 2 were in the middle. Moshe reached out to grab the middle 2 and that is where he received the shining countenance on his face. The Torah is so great and spiritual, there is a part we can only understand and appreciate when we reach '*Olam Habah*', released from the constraints of our physical selves that is referred to as the 2 '*Tefakim*' in the hand of Hashem, the 2 in the hands of Moshe, this is what has been given to us to understand and appreciate in our world by everyone. The 2 in the

centre are for those who go beyond themselves as Moshe did to understand the higher levels of Torah which must be reached out to. But there is still the top 2 which we look forward to understand in the world to come which we must prepare for through the study of the Torah here. Moshe reached out and was given a glimpse of the middle two '*Tefakim*' which contained the understanding of the '*Parah Adumah*'.

TORAH GEMS

When the Edomites refused permission to the Bene Yisrael to pass through their land into Canaan, the people became disheartened and they spoke against Hashem and Moshe. G-d sent serpents to punish them for the *lashon hara* they had spoken. For the serpent was the first to sin with *lashon hara* against G-d and succeeded in persuading Adam and Chava to eat from the *Etz Hadat*. The people came and begged Moshe to pray to G-d on their behalf. He did and was told to make a serpent and place it on high and everyone bitten by snakes would be cured if they gazed at it. Moshe did as he was commanded and made a serpent of copper and when those bitten gazed up at it they were cured. The Mishna in Rosh haShana asks the question: did the serpent really cure them? Of course not, they were cured when they looked up and turned their hearts to G-d in Heaven. But we may ask why was the cure through the serpent? It would have been enough to tell

them to look upwards. The Ramban explains that their cure was a miracle within a miracle. As a doctor of medicine, the Ramban was aware that a person bitten by a mad dog, even after a physical cure, would have a relapse if he was shown an image of the dog. For the fear of the dog is so imbedded in his mind it would cause him a relapse. Here G-d demonstrated that His cure could work against all the rules of natural medicine.

The Bal Hatanya gives another explanation that even the *nachash* which was doing the damage and which represented the power of evil is also from G-d, '*ain od milvado*', there is nothing outside G-d. Even the '*Sitra achara*', the power of evil, is from Him. So when they gazed at the serpent and looked up to Hashem they connected all power in this world to Him. We could give another explanation, that they had to recognise the reason for their punishment which was for speaking *lashon hara* as represented by the serpent who was the first to speak *loshan hara*. They were reminded that the cure had to be a *teshuvah*, for the *lashon hara* they had spoken against Hashem. They had also lost faith because of the Edomites for refusal to allow them to pass through the land. For this they had to raise their eyes to heaven and praise G-d for saving them in spite of their having spoken *lashon hara*. *Lashon hara* has great effect to distance a person from G-d as the serpent did to Adam. Hence the repentance must be strong and

sincere and with that limb which sinned to be used in the service of G-d, when they looked up to heaven in prayer they drew themselves closer to Hashem.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

In Maseket Kiddushin (31a) the story is told of a gentile by the name of Dama ben Nesina, from whom the Sages wished to buy a precious gem for the *Ephod*. The Sages offered him the princely sum of six hundred thousand gold dinars for the stone. However, the key to the strong room in which the gem was kept was under the pillow on which his father was asleep. Dama ben Nesina decided to forgo the sale rather than wake his father.

The following year Dama ben Nesina received his reward for treating his father with such extraordinary '*Kibud Av*'. A red heifer was born to one of his cows, and the Sages bought it from him at the aforementioned sum of six hundred thousand gold dinars.

This story also tells of the love the Jewish people had even for the mitzvot like Parah, which was a Chuka and not a logical mitzvah like honouring one's parents which could also be a sort of insurance policy that his children would honour him in return.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

1. One should eat the fruit in hand he has made the beracha on even if he notices a nicer one he has missed out after he has said the beracha.

2. When one sits down at a table to eat fruits, even if he has finished the fruit he made the beracha on and he now gets more fruit which had not been before him, he does not need to make a beracha since it was as if he had in mind for all fruit he will eat.

3. This will also apply to a guest in the house of another, since his mind is on all he will be given by the host even though he has not thought about it.

4. But someone who just eats a fruit by the way, once he has finished eating that fruit, he must make a new beracha on any more fruit he eats which was not in front of him.

5. In such a case if there is some fruit still left before him and he then decides to eat other fruit there is a doubt if he needs to make another beracha. He should make a beracha with kavanna just not mentioning G-d's name explicitly.

**Minis & Maxis childrens' services
from ages 3-11 at 10.45am in
school library & classroom**

*If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush
Please contact
Nathaniel Bendayan 07825 871749
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724*

**We have a regular Youth
Minyan organised by Jason
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses
followed by a kiddush**

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	9:06 pm
Shabbat terminates	10:38pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat for the summer	7:15 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat Shacharit	8:30 am
Shiur Pirke Avot	7:40 pm
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	8:40 pm
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Mincha followed by Arbit Arbit for the summer	7:30 pm

**DO NOT LIGHT YOUR SHABBAT
CANDLES BEFORE PLAG HAMINCHA
WHICH IS 7:37PM**