



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

The Power of Torah Study

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

This is the Chok (decree) of the Torah... (19:2)

In the beginning of Parshas Chukas, we are introduced to the law of the *Parah Adumah*, the red heifer. The Torah prefaces the details of the *Parah Adumah* with the following statement: "This is the *Chok* (decree) of the Torah." Rashi explains that a *Chok* is a category of *Mitzvos* that are beyond human understanding.

There are other *Mitzvos* that are categorized as *Chukim* apart from the *Parah Adumah*. For example, *Shaatnez* (not wearing a garment made of wool and linen) and *Kashrus* (dietary laws) are *Chukim*. Why is *Parah Adumah* singled out as the paradigm *Chok*?

Rav Dovid Feinstein explains that the *Parah Adumah* is a metaphor for the Torah itself. The ashes of the red cow, when mixed with water and sprinkled on a ritually impure person (according to the way the Torah prescribes), have the power to cleanse a person from his or her impurity. This is a decree from Hashem and we don't understand how or why that cleansing occurs. So, too, the Torah has cleansing power. If a person studies the Torah diligently and properly, it will transform that person into a purer and more sincere individual. There are countless people who, merely as a result of increased Torah study, have profoundly enhanced their character traits. Just as we cannot understand how the *Parah Adumah* transforms a person from impure to pure, we also do not understand how studying Torah, even areas seemingly unrelated to character development, can purify one's character. Notwithstanding our lack of understanding, both have that cleansing power.

Thus, when the verse writes "This is the *Chok* of the Torah," the implication is not only that *Parah Adumah* is a principal *Chok*, rather, it means that the idea of the *Parah Adumah* – that it has mystical purification functions – illustrates the refining capabilities of Torah study.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

"The words of one who hears the sayings of G-d, and knows the mind of the Supreme One..." (24, 16)

He knows how to determine precisely the time in which He is angry. (Rashi)

What would Bilaam be able to say to curse Bnei Yisrael in that short moment that Hashem is angry? He was planning to say kal'aim (destroy them). (Tosfos Berachos 7a)

Rav Yochanan taught, "From the blessing of that wicked one (Bilaam) we can derive what curses he had in his heart to curse Bnei Yisrael. (Sanhedrin 105b)

Bilaam was only going to say one word, destroy them. How does that include the inverse of the blessings said in Mah Tovu?

Parsha Riddle

What is the famous symbol of medicine? From where does it originate?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Where in NaCH do Dasan and Aviram show up in a different form?
Answer: Melochim I. The cows used on Har HaCarmel were a reincarnation of Dasan and Aviram (Rav Chaim Vital).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

We have previously noted that the fiery serpent fashioned by Moses in compliance with the Divine command in parashas Chukas was ultimately destroyed centuries later by King Hezekiah, due to its having become an object of idolatrous worship. (Melachim 2 18:3-4) The Talmud justifies Hezekiah's bold act, despite that fact that his righteous predecessors Kings Asa and Yehoshaphat had not done so, by the principle that "they had left place for him to be great," and it considers the act a precedent for the general idea of the possibility of religious innovation, which cannot be automatically ruled out on the grounds that the reforms in question were not implemented by great men of earlier generations. (Chullin 6b-7a) This principle is occasionally invoked by halachic authorities to justify their recommendations of what they consider to be improvements in halachic practice, despite their innovative nature:

- *Machzor Vitri (331) endorses a certain technical change made to the customary Rosh Hashanah liturgy by R. Yitzhak Halevi, and invokes the above Talmudic principle.*
- *R. Shlomo Yehudah Tabak recommends that synagogues be laid out in such a way that the women will not gaze at the men, despite the fact that earlier synagogues had not generally been so constructed, and invokes the above principle. (Shut. Teshuras Shai 1:125) R. Yoel Teitelbaum of Satmar disagrees, however, arguing that the application of the principle is limited to later authorities of sufficient stature vis-à-vis the earlier ones to be entitled to disagree with them, but certainly does not justify our rejection of the practice of great and holy men of the previous generations. (Shut. Divrei Yoel OC 10:8)*
- *R. Avraham Laniado prohibited the consumption of grape leaves due to their infestation with insects. In response to the objection that there was a venerable, long-standing custom to eat them, he retorted that the great men of earlier generations who had allowed this were presumably unaware of the infestation, and he invokes the above principle. (Shut. Beis Dino Shel Shlomo YD 19) Other authorities, however, have argued for at least a certain degree of deference to established custom in similar contexts. (Shut. Igros Moshe YD 4:2, Shut. Minchas Shlomo 2:63)*

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. The Sukkah is for us.
2. The attack was after our departure.
3. We were for Aharon, then Moshe.
4. We protected.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was a refugee.
2. I was a king.
3. I reported Lot's capture.
4. I required a high jump.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Korach, Dasan, Aviram (We were holy, We were holed, We separated, Watch out below!)

#2 Korach's arguments (I am all blue, I am full of scrolls, He is the Nasi?, From Hashem?)

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to **WIN a Claw Machine Arcade Game**



Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers. **Answer as many as you can. Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!**

The raffle has been postponed until after the shuls are reopened. We are still accepting entries to the raffle.

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