

# Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shabbos Shorts

ת"ש

July 3 - 4, 2020 - 12 Tammuz 5780 - Parshas Chukas/Balak

Light Candles by 8:19 - Havdalah 9:26



The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored this week by Marc & Debbie Katz in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Zachary Katz, and by Jules Meisler in honor of his wife, Bobbi, on their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

## Mazal Tov

- **Tzivia Bramson** on the Bar Mitzvah of her great-grandson, Chaim Weinstein, son of Henya Chaya & Tzvi Yaakov Weinstein, grandson of Renee & Mayer Weinstein.
- **Cindy & Bob Gerstl** on the backyard Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Joey, son of Nomi & Seth Charnow of Scarsdale, NY. B"H, may his 3 younger brothers have theirs in Shul.
- **Sara & Josh Katz** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Zachary. Mazal Tov also to the grandparents, **Debbie & Marc Katz** and Linda & Steve Katz, brother, Arik, and all the aunts, uncles and cousins.

## Shabbos Schedule

Limited Minyanim are now taking place at YISE under Montgomery County's Phase 2 guidelines. All Minyanim require advance registration and confirmation. If you are interested in attending Minyanim and have not already registered, please go to <https://www.yise.org/minyan> If you are registered for a Minyan and are unable to attend at that time, please do not go to a different Minyan. If you have any questions, please contact [minyan@yise.org](mailto:minyan@yise.org)

### Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 8:19, and not before Plag, 7:04
  - Mincha: 6:55, 8:25
- If you Daven Kabbalos Shabbos prior to Shkia (8:37 PM), it is preferable to Daven Mincha prior to Plag (7:04 PM).

### Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 6:30, 7:00, 9:00, 9:30
- Mincha: 2:30, 5:00, 7:00
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 9:26

## Fast of Shiva Asar B'Tammuz Thursday, July 9

- Fast Begins 4:09 AM
- Fast Ends 9:24 PM

## COVID-19 Updates

- Shul reopening has begun! Go to <https://wp.yise.org/planning-for-shul-reopening/> for more details.
  - Advance registration for Minyanim is **required** and space is limited. Go to <https://www.yise.org/minyan> to register.
  - All other activities at YISE are cancelled, including Youth Groups, Shiurim and special events.
  - The Shul office is still open, but hours may vary.
- Let us Daven to Hashem to keep all of us in good health and to return our lives to normal as soon as possible. In protecting each other as we navigate this unfolding situation, may we grow stronger as individuals and as a community.



Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to YISE. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com> Log in to your regular Amazon account. Search for "Young Israel Shomrai Emunah". It will appear as "National Council of Young Israel, Location: Silver Spring, MD" Continue shopping as you normally would, but remember to always start at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

## Weekday Shiurim

Options for remote learning are listed below. For the latest list and updated times, go to <https://wp.yise.org/remote-learning-schedule/>

- **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-minute Shiur on the Parsha. Sunday through Friday 8:15 AM - **Zoom A.**
  - **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim, followed by a 15-minute Halacha Shiur. Sunday through Thursday, 7:30 PM - **Zoom A.**
  - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), Sundays at 9:30 AM, **Zoom A.**
  - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Gemara Shiur for Men, Tuesdays and Fridays, 6:00 AM, **Zoom A.**
  - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Nach Shiur, Wednesdays at 11:00 AM, **Zoom A.**
  - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Women's Navi Shiur, now studying Sefer Yehoshua, Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, **Zoom A.**
  - **Rabbi Silver's** Parsha Shiur for men & women, a mix of Halacha and Aggada. Tuesdays at 7:30 PM. For more details, contact [rsilver@yise.org](mailto:rsilver@yise.org) **Zoom B.**
  - **GWCK Sunday Kollel Brunch and Learn for Men and Women** - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM
  - Unraveling the Navi with Rabbi Hillel Shaps, **Zoom C.**
  - **Rabbi Tuvia Grauman** - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sundays at 10:00 AM, **Zoom I.** - note new Meeting ID.
  - **Rabbi Yonatan Zakem's** Shiur for men & women, Pearls of Prayer, exploring the depth and meaning of our daily prayers. Sunday evenings, 7:30 PM, **Zoom H.**
  - **GWCK presents CLAS (Community Learning at Shomrai)** - 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM. For more info. contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps, [hshaps@gwckollel.org](mailto:hshaps@gwckollel.org) 347-869-9361.
  - For Men & Women - **Zoom D** (except as noted):
    - Mondays: (for men only) Rabbi H. Shaps, On the Same Page Gemara, **Zoom C.**
    - Tuesdays: Rabbi Winter - Torah Topics, **Zoom J**
    - Wednesdays: Rabbi Grossman - Reading Responsa
    - Thursdays: Rabbi Grossman - Parshas Hashavua
  - For Women - **Zoom E**:
    - Mondays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Tehillim: An in-depth analysis
    - Tuesdays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Bereishis in-Depth
  - **Semichat Chaver Program**, Tuesdays at 9:00 PM with Rabbi Silver. For more information, please contact Rabbi Binyamin Silver: [rsilver@yise.org](mailto:rsilver@yise.org) or Rabbi Hillel Shaps: [hshaps@gwckollel.org](mailto:hshaps@gwckollel.org) - See flyer for details.
  - **The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiur on Daily Halachos for men & women, Tuesdays 9:15 AM, **Zoom F.**
  - **Rabbi Yitzchak Scher's** Shiur for Men and Women, Tuesdays, 1:30 PM - 2:15 PM, "A Second Look- Stories in the Torah from a Deeper Perspective", **Zoom G.**
- Connection Details:** Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call 301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID & password:  
Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019  
Zoom B: ID: 784 431 8176  
Zoom C: ID: 349 754 2180, password GWCK  
Zoom D: ID: 746 455 2195, password GWCK  
Zoom E: ID: 601 853 4021, password Winter  
Zoom F: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613  
Zoom G: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079  
Zoom H: ID: 269 840 3648, password online Pearls, phone 621690  
Zoom I: ID: 978 8156 7874, password RabbiHyatt  
Zoom J: ID: 977 463 8680, password GWCK

## YISE Programs and Listings

**Come join Rabbi Koss's monthly Jewish History class** now on Zoom! Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington and the YISE Chesed Committee - Rabbi Koss will be speaking on a topic in Jewish history, Monday, July 6, from 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM on Zoom. Direct link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87176978136?pwd=UCtwNGVSMHE3ckgrcktSWJiZzk3QT09> Meeting ID - 871 7697 8136, password 329598 Phone number: 301-715-8592 For more information, contact Miriam Friedman at [mfriedman2@yahoo.com](mailto:mfriedman2@yahoo.com)

**Please Join the YISE Women's Chumash Shiur Siyum** - On Wednesday evening, July 8, at 8:00 PM on the YISE Zoom A, please join Rabbi Rosenbaum and women who have participated in the weekly Women's Chumash Shiur for nearly 15 years for a Siyum on their having completed learning the entire Chumash. Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter Meeting ID 416-963-900 and password 492019 or to participate by phone only, please call 301-715-8592 and enter the Meeting ID and password.

**Helping Hands Across Kemp Mill** is a part of YISE's Chesed Committee. The program helps members undergoing serious medical crises. We are always looking for volunteers to help. To be a part of this program by helping with meals, visitation, shopping, childcare, etc., contact: Melanie Karlin, 301-681-4740, [mskarlin@gmail.com](mailto:mskarlin@gmail.com) or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, [mfriedman2@yahoo.com](mailto:mfriedman2@yahoo.com)

**The Rachel Bassan Horwitz Fund** is used for medical needs in our area, elsewhere in the US, and in Israel. In order to continue this much-needed medical fund, your financial help is needed! Tax deductible contributions may be made payable to: YISE Charity SPECIAL Fund, c/o Norma Burdett, 11720 Lovejoy St., Silver Spring, MD 20902. Earmark: Bassan Fund. For more info: Norma Burdett, 301-593-5964 or Pearl Bassan, 301-649-3137.

**Shiurim from Rabbi Gedaliah Anemer, ZT"l**, are available at <http://audio.yise.org>

## Community Programs & Listings

**Free Webinars on Job Search** - 12 Steps to a Successful Job Search (free self-paced tutorial from Montgomery College). For more information, go to: <https://www.ed2go.com/mcdistance/online-courses/twelve-steps-to-successful-job-search-self-paced-free/>

**Remote Night Shiurim from YGW** - Sunday 8:30 PM - 9:15 PM, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate; Monday/Wednesday 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM, Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky; Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM, Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold. Register at [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1715843153121/WN\\_n6jNGqUpTpCN6ikCabUutA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1715843153121/WN_n6jNGqUpTpCN6ikCabUutA)

**Daf Yomi Shiur** currently meets online via a WebEx video conference. There is still room for a few more participants. Anyone interested may email Judd Lifschitz at [lifschitz@slslaw.com](mailto:lifschitz@slslaw.com) to be added to the invite list. Sunday 7:00 AM, Monday - Thursday 9:00 PM, Friday 5:45 PM.

**Kemp Mill Toastmasters** - Wednesday, July 8, 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM. See what Toastmasters is all about and find out how you can become a more confident communicator. Contact Manasseh Katz at [vpr@kempmilltoastmasters.com](mailto:vpr@kempmilltoastmasters.com) for more info. Zoom meeting ID: 986 546 841, password 3671.

**Tapping Your Retirement Nest Egg: A Road Map** - A virtual event with Kemp Mill Village. Wednesday, July 8, 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM via Zoom. Presented by Kimberly Lankford. Registration required by July 7. For more information or to register, contact KMV at [events@kempmillvillage.org](mailto:events@kempmillvillage.org)

**Can You Be a Hero? BHA Hair Drive for Zichron Menachem** - If you have at least 12" of hair to donate, you can now cut it yourself, or schedule an appointment (when available) to have a professional cut your hair for donation. Contact Nancy Mehlman at 301-452-7080 to get complete instructions, to arrange pickup of your hair, or to arrange for a professional stylist to cut your hair for free when available. Please be a hero and be a part of an amazing group of people who have done this very important Mitzvah!

**Partners in Tefillah** matches people with others in need of similar assistance from Hashem. The feedback we have received so far has been amazing. You, too, can Daven for someone else in the community and have them Daven for you. May Hashem answer all your prayers. Please visit [www.yadvehuda.org/partners-in-tefillah](http://www.yadvehuda.org/partners-in-tefillah) to learn more and to sign up.

**Capital Kosher Pantry** - Due to the closure of schools and shuls, the usual steady flow of food donations to the Capital Kosher Pantry has significantly decreased. We're greatly in need of the following very popular food products: Canned white tuna and salmon, sardines, plastic bottles of grape juice, pizza sauce, Near East brand rice mixes, crackers, cereal, whole grain and regular pasta (not spaghetti), Nature's Bakery fig bars. Please purchase these items from any store and then deposit them in one of our donation bin locations: in front of: YISE, KMS, Woodside Shul; in Shalom Kosher, at the front of the store, or in Moti's Market, near the store entrance; in front of the Capital Kosher Pantry - 1910 University Blvd., West, Silver Spring, MD 20902. You can also purchase items online at Target, Amazon, Walmart and elsewhere and arrange shipment directly to Capital Kosher Pantry. Our online wishlist is at <https://www.yadvehuda.org/pantry-wishlist.html> Financial donations to Capital Kosher Pantry are always welcome too. We thank you for your continued generosity and Tizku L'Mitzvot! The Capital Kosher Pantry Team

**Community Website for COVID-19 [www.covidgw.com](http://www.covidgw.com)** In an effort to simplify access to the plethora of available resources for COVID-19 assistance and information, Yad Yehuda of Greater Washington has created a stand-alone website that includes a wide range of resources for the Greater Washington Jewish community. Please visit [covidgw.com](http://covidgw.com) Information on the site is culled from many volunteers and sources from within our community. New information is being added regularly; please visit often to view updated information and resources. May we all merit Hashem's mercy during this challenging time. Please note: If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out by visiting [covidgw.com](http://covidgw.com) If you are not currently experiencing financial challenges, please consider a donation to assist others who are struggling during this crisis.

**Daily Halacha Program from Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold** - Receive one every day in your inbox. Visit [dvarhalacha.com](http://dvarhalacha.com) and click "Sign Up."

**Kemp Mill Village** is providing friendly phone calls and limited deliveries during the pandemic. Call 1-833-KMV-20902 to request service or to volunteer. See [kempmillvillage.org](http://kempmillvillage.org) for more information.

**Silver Spring Gemachim** - For a complete list: [www.gemachexchange.com](http://www.gemachexchange.com)

The Week Ahead	Sunday July 5	Monday July 6	Tuesday July 7	Wednesday July 8	Thursday, July 9 17 Tammuz	Friday July 10
Limited Minyanim will take place at YISE next week, <b>advance registration and confirmation required</b> . You are encouraged to Daven at home at the same time as a Minyan at YISE. Shacharis: Sunday 6:30 AM/7:30 AM/8:45 AM; Monday - Friday 6:00 AM/7:00 AM/8:45 AM. Mincha and/or Maariv: Sunday - Wednesday: 7:00 PM/7:15 PM (Sephardi)/8:30 PM/9:30 PM; Thursday: 2:00 PM/7:05 PM (Sephardi)/8:15 PM/9:30 PM.						
<b>Halachic Times:</b> Earliest Talis and Tefillin: 4:49 AM, Latest Krias Shma: 9:30 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:51 PM						

### Next Shabbos

July 10 - 11, 2020 - 19 Tammuz 5780

Parshas Pinchas

Light Candles: Friday by 8:17

Havdalah: 9:23

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline: Wednesday, July 8 at 12:00 Noon

Submit items for the Shabbos Shorts to: [announcement@yise.org](mailto:announcement@yise.org)

Office Phone: 301-593-4465 Office Fax: 301-593-2330 Eruv line: 301-593-5561

E-Mail: [office@yise.org](mailto:office@yise.org) Website: [www.yise.org](http://www.yise.org)

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Friday - 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Yale Ginsburg - President

Rabbi Binyamin Silver - Asst. Rabbi Simi Franco - Office Manager

## Happy Birthday! Happy Anniversary!

Looking for a way to celebrate someone's upcoming birthday or anniversary? For an \$18 donation, you can include the name (birthday) or names (anniversary) in this section of the Shabbos Shorts. Please send the following information to [office@yise.org](mailto:office@yise.org) - Sponsor name, Birthday or anniversary date, Name (birthday) or names (anniversary). The birthday or anniversary will be listed in the Shabbos Shorts based on the date of the event.

- **Simi & Sammy Franco** wish **Barbara Price** a Happy Birthday
- **Simi & Sammy Franco** wish **Bobbi & Jules Meisler** a Happy Anniversary
- **Bobbi Meisler** wishes her husband, Jules, Happy 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary-- our Independence Day??

## Dvar Torah Dedications/Sponsor a Shiur

During this difficult time, we pray to Hashem that the day that we can all come together again in Tefillah and Torah study in good health arrives speedily. Until that point, YISE continues to offer a number of different remote learning options. These options are now available for sponsorship on an individual Shiur or a daily basis.

Our current limited ability to Daven with a Minyan and to say Kaddish is difficult and a challenge. However, sponsoring a Shiur or other Torah learning is a meaningful way to commemorate a Yahrzeit or honor a loved one. Sponsorships are also a great way to celebrate a Simcha or any other milestone, while helping YISE at a time when many of the Shul's other sources of revenue are not available.

1. The following individual Shiurim are available for sponsorship at \$18 (per day):

- Daily Morning (Sunday through Friday) Tehillim and Parsha Shiur
- Daily Evening (Sunday through Thursday) Tehillim and Halacha Shiur
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's Sunday Morning Mussar Study Group for Women
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tuesday or Friday Morning Gemara Shiur for Men
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's Wednesday Morning Nach Shiur
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's Wednesday Night Chumash Navi Shiur for Women
- Rabbi Silver's Tuesday Evening Parsha Shiur
- Rabbi Silver's Daily Chizuk Dose on WhatsApp
- Rabbi Grauman - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sunday Morning

2. Sponsorship of the Morning and Evening Tehillim and Parsha/Halacha Shiurim together is available for \$25.

3. The Pre-Shabbos Drasha video is available for sponsorship at \$54.

Please email [office@yise.org](mailto:office@yise.org) to sponsor.

Thank you for your support.

## Thank you to this past week's Shiurim sponsors:

### Rabbi Rosenbaum's morning and evening Tehillim/Parsha/Halacha Shiur

- **Anonymous** in blessed memory of שמ׳אל בן סנדר ז׳״ל.
- **Louis Morris** for a Refuah Sheleima for his wife, Judy Morris, Yehudis bas Hinda Kayla.
- **Judy & Rabbi Roy Rosenbaum** in memory of Rabbi Roy Rosenbaum's mother, Ruth Rosenbaum, A"H, whose Yahrzeit is the 6<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz.

### Rabbi Hvatt's Gemara Shiur

- **Anne & Scott Schlesinger** in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Tzvi Aryeh Sandberg.

### Rabbi Rosenbaum's Wednesday night Chumash Shiur

- **Judy & Rabbi Roy Rosenbaum** in honor of the marriage of their granddaughter, Chaya Chana Freitag, to Yisroel Nechamkin.

### Rabbi Rosenbaum's Erev Shabbos Parsha Drasha

- **Sandy & Melanie Karlin** to commemorate the 11<sup>th</sup> Yahrzeit of Sandy's mother, Katie Karlin, Kayla Gittel bas Shimon Ber, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz.
- **Lee & Craig Oppenheim** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Craig's mother, Yacha bas Minachim Mendel on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz & Lee's father, Tzvi Hersh ben Avram on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz.



# THE YISE MEANINGFUL TEFILAH PROJECT

**NEW! Videos of the following classes are now available on YouTube (search Meaningful Tefilah Project) and soon on yise.org.**

**Practical Steps to More Meaningful Prayer**, 3 videos, a workshop with Rabbi Rosenbaum, Rabbi Menachem Goldberger and members of the community

**Ashrei/Pesukei D'Zimra**, 3 sessions with Rabbi Rosenbaum

**Better Kavanah**, with Rabbi Hirsh Chinn

**Going Deep: The Meaning of the Amidah**, 6 sessions with Rabbi Rosenbaum

**Going Deep: The Meaning of the Shema**, 3 sessions, with Rabbi Rosenbaum

**The Meaning of Hallel**, 3 sessions with Rabbi Rosenbaum

**A Deep Dive into Hallel**, 3 sessions with Mrs. Sharon Freundel

**Selichos Explained**, with Rabbi Rosenbaum and Marty Jacobs

**Tefilah: Your Personal Stairway to Heaven**, 3 sessions with Mrs. Sharon Freundel

**Pre-Selichos Drasha: L'David Ori**, with Mrs. Sharon Freundel

**Yom Kippur Viduy**, with Rabbi Rosenbaum

**Be a Better Ba'al Tefilah**, 8 sessions with Rabbi Ozzie Burnham covering Shabbat and Yom Tov davening, plus introductory session with Rabbi Rosenbaum

**Escape your Personal Prison Through Prayer**, with Rabbi Yosef Mendeleovich

**Audio versions of many of these classes, plus additional classes, are also available at yise.org:**

**Click on the "LEARN/Shiurim" button, then click "Tefilla"**

*To support further classes by the Meaningful Tefilah Project, please email [stuartrosenthal@yise.org](mailto:stuartrosenthal@yise.org) or send contributions to the shul office marked for "Meaningful Tefilah."*

# Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah  
via the Internet

Volume 26, Issue 35

Shabbat Parashat Chukat-Balak

5780 - B"H

## Covenant and Conversation: R. Jonathan Sacks

**Kohelet, Tolstoy and the Red Heifer** - The command of the parah adumah, the Red Heifer, with which our parsha begins, is known as the hardest of the mitzvot to understand. The opening words, zot chukat ha-Torah, are taken to mean, this is the supreme example of a chok in the Torah, that is, a law whose logic is obscure, perhaps unfathomable.

It was a ritual for the purification of those who had been in contact with, or in, certain forms of proximity to a dead body. A dead body is the primary source of impurity, and the defilement it caused to the living meant that the person so affected could not enter the precincts of the Tabernacle or Temple until cleansed, in a process that lasted seven days.

A key element of the purification process involved a Priest sprinkling the person so affected, on the third and seventh day, with a specially prepared liquid known as "the water of cleansing." First a Red Heifer had to be found, without a blemish, and which had never been used to perform work: a yoke had never been placed on it. This was ritually killed and burned outside the camp. Cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool were added to the fire, and the ashes placed in a vessel containing "living" i.e. fresh water. It was this that was sprinkled on those who had become impure by contact with death. One of the more paradoxical features of the rite is that though it cleansed the impure, it rendered impure those who were involved with the preparation of the water of cleansing.

Though the ritual has not been practised since the days of the Temple, it nonetheless remains significant, in itself and for an understanding of what a chok, usually translated as "statute," actually is. Other instances include the prohibition against eating meat and milk together, wearing clothes of mixed wool and linen (shatnez) and sowing a field with two kinds of grain (kilayim). There have been several very different explanations of chukim.

The most famous is that a chok is a law whose logic we cannot understand. It makes sense to God, but it makes no sense to us. We cannot aspire to the kind of cosmic wisdom that would allow us to see its point and purpose. Or perhaps, as Rav Saadia Gaon put it, it is a command issued for no other reason than to reward us for obeying it.

The Sages recognised that whereas Gentiles might understand Jewish laws based on social justice (mishpatim) or historical memory (edot), commands such as the prohibition of eating meat and milk together seemed irrational and superstitious. The chukim were laws of which "Satan and the nations of the world made fun."

Maimonides had a quite different view. He believed that no Divine command was irrational. To suppose otherwise was to think God inferior to human beings. The chukim only appear to be inexplicable because we have forgotten the original context in which they were ordained. Each of them was a rejection of, and education against, some idolatrous practice. For the most part, however, such practises have died out, which is why we now find the commands hard to understand.

A third view, adopted by Nahmanides in the thirteenth century and further articulated by Samson

Raphael Hirsch in the nineteenth, is that the chukim were laws designed to teach the integrity of nature. Nature has its own laws, domains and boundaries, to cross which is to dishonour the divinely created order, and to threaten nature itself. So we do not combine animal (wool) and vegetable (linen) textiles, or mix animal life (milk) and animal death (meat). As for the Red Heifer, Hirsch says that the ritual is to cleanse humans from depression brought about by reminders of human mortality.

My own view is that chukim are commands deliberately intended to bypass the rational brain, the pre-frontal cortex. The root from which the word chok comes is h-k-k, meaning, "to engrave." Writing is on the surface; engraving cuts much deeper than the surface. Rituals go deep below the surface of the mind, and for an important reason. We are not fully rational animals, and we can make momentous mistakes if we think we are. We have a limbic system, an emotional brain. We also have an extremely powerful set of reactions to potential danger, located in the amygdala, that lead us to flee, freeze or fight. A moral system, to be adequate to the human condition, must recognise the nature of the human condition. It must speak to our fears.

The most profound fear most of us have is of death. As La Rochefoucauld said, "Neither the sun nor death can be looked on with a steady eye." Few have explored death and the tragic shadow it casts over life more profoundly than the author of Kohelet:

"The fate of man is the fate of cattle; the same fate awaits them both, the death of one is like the death of the other, their spirits are the same, and the pre-eminence of man over beast is nothing, for it is all shallow breath. All end in the same place; all emerge from dust and all go back to dust".

The knowledge that he will die robs Kohelet of any sense of the meaningfulness of life. We have no idea what will happen, after our death, to what we have achieved in life. Death makes mockery of virtue: the hero may die young while the coward lives to old age. And bereavement is tragic in a different way. To lose those we love is to have the fabric of our life torn, perhaps irreparably. Death defiles in the simplest, starkest sense: mortality opens an abyss between us and God's eternity.

It is this fear, existential and elemental, to which the rite of the Heifer is addressed. The animal itself is the starkest symbol of pure, animal life, untamed, undomesticated. The red, like the scarlet of the wool, is the colour of blood, the essence of life. The cedar, tallest of trees, represents vegetative life. The hyssop symbolises purity. All these were reduced to ash in the fire, a powerful drama of mortality. The ash itself was then dissolved in water, symbolising continuity, the flow of life, and the potential of rebirth. The body dies but the spirit flows on. A generation dies but another is born. Lives may end but life does not. Those who live after us continue what we began, and we live on in them. Life is a never-ending stream, and a trace of us is carried onward to the future.

The person in modern times who most deeply experienced and expressed what Kohelet felt was Tolstoy, who told the story in his essay, A Confession. By the time he wrote it, in his early fifties, he had already published two of the greatest novels ever written, War and Peace and Anna Karenina. His literary legacy was secure. His greatness was universally recognised. He was married, with children. He had a large estate. His

Sponsored by Enid & Eliyahu Gross  
in honor of their granddaughter, Neshama Laya,  
on the occasion of her 10th birthday

health was good. Yet he was overcome with a sense of the meaninglessness of life in the face of the knowledge that we will all die. He quoted Kohelet at length. He contemplated suicide. The question that haunted him was: "Is there any meaning in my life that will not be annihilated by the inevitability of death which awaits me?"

He searched for an answer in science, but all it told him was that "in the infinity of space and the infinity of time infinitely small particles mutate with infinite complexity." Science deals in causes and effects, not purpose and meaning. In the end, he concluded that only religious faith rescues life from meaninglessness. "Rational knowledge, as presented by the learned and wise, negates the meaning of life." What is needed is something other than rational knowledge. "Faith is the force of life. If a man lives, then he must believe in something ... If he does understand the illusion of the finite, he is bound to believe in the infinite. Without faith it is impossible to live."

That is why, to defeat the defilement of contact with death, there must be a ritual that bypasses rational knowledge. Hence the rite of the Red Heifer, in which death is dissolved in the waters of life, and those on whom it is sprinkled are made pure again so that they can enter the precincts of the Shechinah and re-establish contact with eternity.

We no longer have the Red Heifer and its seven-day purification ritual, but we do have the shiva, the seven days of mourning during which we are comforted by others and thus reconnected with life. Our grief is gradually dissolved by the contact with friends and family, as the ashes of the Heifer were dissolved in the "living water." We emerge, still bereaved, but in some measure cleansed, purified, able again to face life.

I believe that we can emerge from the shadow of death if we allow ourselves to be healed by the God of life. To do so, though, we need the help of others. "A prisoner cannot release himself from prison," says the Talmud. It took a Kohen to sprinkle the waters of cleansing. It takes comforters to lift our grief. But faith – faith from the world of chok, deeper than the rational mind – can help cure our deepest fears.

**The Hidden Meaning of the Bilam Story** - Many questions have rightly been asked about the story of Balak and Bilam and the would-be curses that turned into blessings. Was Bilam a true man of God, or was he a fraud, a magician, a sorcerer, a practitioner of dark arts? Did he have genuine powers? Was he really – as some of the Sages said – the equal of Moses? Was he driven by the prospect of reward and honour from the Moabites and Midianites, or was he motivated by animosity toward the Israelites and their seeming closeness to God? Why did God first tell him not to go, then seemingly change His mind and tell him to go? What is the meaning of the episode of the talking donkey? Did it really happen, or was it, as Maimonides argued, a vision in Bilam's mind?

These are real questions, much debated. But there are more fundamental ones. What is the story doing here at all? The entire episode occurred away from the Israelites. No one from their side, not even

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Moses, was there to witness it. The only witnesses were Balak, Bilam, and some Moabite princes. Had the Israelites known the danger they were in, and how they were saved from it, it would have given them pause for thought before engaging in immorality and idol worship with the Moabite women, in the episode that follows on immediately from the story of Bilam. They would have known that the Moabites were not their friends.

Even Moses would not have known what happened, had God not told him. In short, the Israelites were rescued from a danger they knew nothing about by a deliverance they knew nothing about. How then did it, or could it, affect them?

Besides which, why did God need Bilam to go at all? He said ‘No’ the first time. He could have said ‘No’ the second time also. The curses would have been avoided, Israel would have been protected, and there would have been no need for the angel, the talking donkey and the various locations, sacrifices, and attempted curses. The entire drama seems to have been unnecessary.

Why did God put into Bilam’s mouth the extraordinary poetry that makes the blessings among the most lyrical passages in the Torah. All He really needed Bilam to say – and Bilam did eventually say it – was the promise He gave to Abraham: “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse”.

Who was to be affected by this episode? What was the intended change it was meant to bring about? Who was its target audience? It did not affect the Moabites. They proceeded to get their women to successfully entice the Israelite men. A plague then struck the Israelites, taking 24,000 lives.

It did not affect the Midianites, whose hostility to Israel was such that God later told Moses: “Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them”. Several chapters later God instructed Moses to take military vengeance against them.

It did not affect Bilam himself. The Torah is very subtle about this. First, we read about the Moabite seduction of the Israelites and the deadly plague it caused. Then, six chapters later, we read that in the course of the war against the Midianites, Bilam was killed. Then, several verses later, “They were the ones who followed Bilam’s advice and enticed the Israelites to be unfaithful to the Lord in the Peor incident, so that a plague struck the Lord’s people”. In other words, having gone through what should surely have been a transformative experience of finding curses turned to blessings in his mouth, Bilam remained implacably opposed to the people he had blessed, and seemingly to the God who put the words into his mouth, and was still capable of devising a plot to injure the Israelites.

It did not change the Israelites, who remained vulnerable to the Moabites, Midianites, and the enticements of sex, food and foreign gods. It did not change Moses, who left it to Pinchas to take the decisive act that stopped the plague and was soon thereafter told that Joshua would succeed him as leader.

So, if it did not change the Moabites, Midianites, Israelites, Bilam or Moses, what was the point of the episode? What role did it play in the story of our people? For it does play a significant role. In Deuteronomy, Moses reminds the people that the Moabites “did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Bilam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim to pronounce a curse on you. However, the Lord your God would not listen to Bilam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you”.

Joshua, when he came to renew the covenant after the conquest of the land, gave an abridged summary

of Jewish history, singling out this event for attention: “When Balak son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Bilam son of Beor to put a curse on you. But I would not listen to Bilam, so he blessed you again and again, and I delivered you out of his hand.”

The prophet Micah, younger contemporary of Isaiah, said in the name of God, “My people, remember what Balak king of Moab plotted and what Bilam son of Beor answered,” just before he delivers his famous summary of the religious life: “He has shown you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”.

At the culmination of the reforms instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah after the Babylonian exile, Nehemiah had the Torah read to the people, reminding them that an Ammonite or Moabite may not enter “the assembly of the Lord” because “they did not meet the Israelites with food and water but had hired Bilam to call a curse down on them. Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing”.

Why the resonance of an event that seemingly had no impact on any of the parties involved, made no difference to what happened thereafter and yet was deemed to be so important that it occupied a central place in the telling of Israel’s story by Moses, Joshua, Micah and Nehemiah?

The answer is fundamental. We search in vain for an explanation of why God should have made a covenant with a people who repeatedly proved to be ungrateful, disobedient and faithless. God Himself threatened twice to destroy the people, after the Golden Calf and the episode of the spies. Toward the end of our parsha, He sent a plague against them.

There were other religious peoples in the ancient world. The Torah calls Malkizedek, Abraham’s contemporary, “a priest of God most high”. Yitro, Moses’ father-in-law, was a Midianite priest who gave his son-in-law sound advice as to how to lead. In the book of Jonah, during the storm, while Jonah the Hebrew Prophet was sleeping, the Gentile sailors were praying. When the Prophet arrived at Nineveh and delivered his warning, immediately the people repented, something that happened rarely in Judah/Israel. Malachi, last of the Prophets, says: From where the sun rises to where it sets, My name is honoured among the nations, and everywhere incense and pure oblation are offered to My name; for My name is honoured among the nations – said the Lord of Hosts – but you profane it...”

Why then choose Israel? The answer is love. Virtually all the Prophets said so. God loves Israel. He loved Abraham. He loves Abraham’s children. He is often exasperated by their conduct, but He cannot relinquish that love. He explains this to the prophet Hosea. Go and marry a woman who is unfaithful, He says. She will break your heart, but you will still love her, and take her back.

Where, though, in the Torah does God express this love? In the blessings of Bilam. That is where He gives voice to His feelings for this people. “I see them from the mountain tops, gaze on them from the heights: This is a people that dwells apart, not reckoned among the nations.” “Lo, a people that rises like a lion, leaps up like the king of beasts.” “How good are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel!” These famous words are not Bilam’s. They are God’s – the most eloquent expression of His love for this small, otherwise undistinguished people.

Bilam, the pagan prophet, is the most unlikely vehicle for God’s blessings. But that is God’s way. He chose an aged, infertile couple to be the grandparents of the Jewish people. He chose a man who couldn’t speak to be the mouthpiece of his word. He chose Bilam, who hated Israel, to be the

## Likutei Divrei Torah

messenger of His love. Moses says explicitly: “The Lord your God would not listen to Bilam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you.”

That is what the story is about: not Balak, or Bilam, or Moab, or Midian, or what happened next. It is about God’s love for a people, their strength, resilience, their willingness to be different, their family life (tents, dwelling places), and their ability to outlive empires.

The Rambam explains that all God’s acts have a moral message for us. I believe that God is teaching us that love can turn curses into blessings. It is the only force capable of defeating hate. Love heals the wounds of the world.

### Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

“The entire House of Israel wept over Aaron” Why was Moses, the greatest prophet who ever lived and who sacrificed a principledom in Egypt to take the Hebrews out of Egypt, denied entry into the land of Israel? Was it because he struck the rock with his staff rather than having spoken to it? But it was God, after all, who commanded him to “take the staff, gather together the witness-congregation, and speak to the rock”! And previously, shortly after the splitting of the Reed Sea, but before the Revelation at Sinai, God had commanded him to strike the rock with his staff to bring forth water for the nation. Apparently, striking the rock could not have been such a heinous crime.

I believe that the key to our understanding of the incident of the rock lies in a curious contrast between Moses and Aaron hinted at in our Biblical text, which highlights the profound tragedy – as well as the exalted majesty – within the unique persona of Moshe Rabbeinu, Moses our teacher.

Our Biblical portion of Hukat also records the death of Aaron the High Priest: “And Aaron died there at the top of the mountain... and the entire house of Israel wept over Aaron for thirty days”. Apparently, Aaron was a more popular religious leader than was Moses...

Moses recognized his own prophetic potential in the realm of the intellectual and spiritual; he craved and gloried in his fellowship with the Divine. But he also realized that to be a leader of the people you must be a superb shepherd of your flock, you must get into the details of their daily lives, and you must be involved in the often petty arguments between husbands and wives. This requires the patience of “small-talk” and human camaraderie, whereas Moses could reach the level of communicating God’s Torah only because his soul constantly yearned for “heavy-talk”, God-talk. Moses knew he would not have the patience to “win over the nation” to his side by drinking le’haim with them and dancing at their weddings. Hence God suggests to Moses that Aaron “be his spokesman to the people...”

For, you see, the contrast between Moses the man of God and the necessity for a person of the people become only greater with every passing year in the desert... So when the Hebrews again kvetch for water, God tells Moses to take his staff of leadership not to strike in punishment the hard, stiff-necked rock which symbolized ungrateful Israel, but rather to speak to the Hebrews with words of love and empowerment, with words of the leniency and softness of the Oral Law which will and must emerge from them as they continue to mature, as they partner with God in completing both His Torah and His World. But alas, the ungrateful nation has worn Moses down; he can only strike them (the rock) in frustration and refer to them as rebels. And since Moses can no longer love and empower Israel with loving words of the Oral Law, Moses’ leadership must end in the desert. [excerpted]

At the end of our *Parashah*, Bil'am prophesies about the End of Days, and he says (24:17): "A *Kochav* / star has issued from Yaakov . . ." *Midrash Eichah Rabati* sees in this verse an allusion to Bar Kochva, who Rabbi Akiva said was *Mashiach*. *Rambam z"l* writes (*Hil. Melachim* 11:2): "Rabbi Akiva and all the Sages of his generation thought that Bar Kochva was *Mashiach*. Once he was killed, however, they realized he was not *Mashiach*."

R' Yitzchak Arieli *z"l* (1896-1974; *Mashgiach* of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav; author of *Enayim La'mishpat*) writes: Rabbi Akiva saw in Bar Kochva many of the traits that *Mashiach* is supposed to have, and he tried in to instill in Bar Kochva *Yir'at Shamayim* / fear of Heaven, as well. Bar Kochva and his followers were inspired by physical prowess, and Rabbi Akiva and his students tried to teach them to be inspired by Torah and fear of G-d. They were successful, thus saving the youth of the generation.

For his part, Rabbi Akiva was inspired by his immense love for the Jewish People and for the Land of Israel. Though only decades had passed since the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*, Rabbi Akiva refused to believe that it was too soon for the redemption to occur.

As in the story of Bar Kochva and Rabbi Akiva, writes R' Arieli, the eventual redemption will begin as a "physical" movement, a desire to build a country in a homeland. But, that will not be the complete redemption, for, at that stage, there will not yet be a longing for spiritual redemption. That longing will come only later, as we read (*Hoshea* 3:5), "Afterward, *Bnei Yisrael* will return and seek out *Hashem*." (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shirat Ha'geulah* p.13-14)

## The Fast of Erev Shabbat Parashat Chukat

R' Avraham Abele Gombiner *z"l* (the "*Magen Avraham*," one of the most important commentators on the *Shulchan Aruch*; Poland; died 1682) writes: On Friday of the week in which *Parashat Chukat* is read, some individuals have the custom to fast because, on that day in 5004 [1244], twenty wagon-loads of *Sefarim* / Torah works were burned in France. This fast day was not established on the day of the month on which that tragedy occurred, as most commemorations are, because it was revealed to the sages of that time in a dream that the decree was connected with the *Parashah*, as we read (19:2), "This is the decree [regarding] the Torah."

Also, in 5408 [1648, during the Chmielnicki Massacres], two great Jewish communities were destroyed on that day.

(*Magen Avraham*, end of ch.580)

R' Tzidkiyah ben Avraham Ha'rofeh *z"l* (Italy; died 1275) lived at the time of the first event above. He provides some additional (and some different) details:

We have written this as a remembrance of what occurred in our own days due to our many sins -- the Torah of our *Elokim*, approximately 24 wagon-loads of books of *Talmud*, *Halachah* and *Aggedeta*, was burned in France on Friday of *Parashat Chukat* in the year 5002 [1242]. We heard from some of the rabbis who were present that they asked through a dream whether this was a Divine decree, and they were answered: "This is the decree [regarding] the Torah." They decreed that, from that day onward, individuals who are able to should fast on Friday of the week of *Parashat Chukat*. May its ashes atone for us like a burnt-offering on the altar's pyre!

(*Shibbolei Ha'lekket* 263)

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**“Elokim came to Bil’am.” (22:9)**

*Midrash Rabbah* teaches: We read (*Devarim* 34:10), “Never again has there arisen in *Yisrael* a prophet like Moshe.” However, among the gentiles a prophet like Moshe has arisen, so that the nations cannot argue that they would have served *Hashem* if they had had a prophet like Moshe. Who was that prophet? Bil’am. [Until here from the *Midrash*]

R’ Mordechai Neugroschl *shlita* asks: How does having a prophet like Bil’am, a thoroughly evil man and a very poor role model, prevent the nations from claiming that they would have served *Hashem* if they had been given a prophet?!

He explains: When *Hashem* offered the Torah to the gentile nations, they refused to accept it because it went against their natures. They were not willing to work on themselves. And, they did not believe that *Bnei Yisrael* were any more interested in self-improvement. Rather, they claimed that *Bnei Yisrael* served *Hashem* because they had a seer who could tell them the future. The nations were not looking for a prophet who would inspire them. Also, Bil’am’s prophesy had no impact on his personality, as we see from the Torah. Even so, such a seer was adequate to prove false the nations’ claim that they would have served *Hashem*.

(*Mi’darchei Ha’lev Ha’yehudi Al Kuzari* p.43)

**“The people will arise like a lion cub and raise itself like a lion.” (23:24)**

The *Zohar* states: “Who is a strong nation like *Yisrael*! When the dawn appears, the get up like a lion to serve their Master with songs and praises, and they study Torah every day.” [Until here from the *Zohar*]

R’ Avraham Abish Zeinwirth *shlita* (Yerushalayim) writes: This relates to the *Gemara* (*Beitzah* 25b) which states: “Why was the Torah given to the Jewish People? Because they are brazen.” R’ Shmuel Eliezer Eidels *z”l* (*Maharsha*; Poland; 1555-1631) explains that one who is overly shy cannot learn, because he won’t ask questions. Therefore, the Torah was given to the brazen, to the nation that is strong like a lion.

(*Even Yekarah Al Shulchan Aruch Ha’Zohar* p.62 #4-5)

**“He has told you, man, what is good, and what *Hashem* seeks from you -- only to do justice, love of kindness, and walking discreetly with your *Elokim*.” (*Michah* 6:4 - from the *Haftarah*)**

R’ Chaim of Valozhyn *z”l* (Belarus; 1749-1821) writes that this verse describes a progression: “To do justice” means doing what is right -- for example, learning Torah -- just because one is obligated to, even though it is not “*L’shma*” / with the proper intention. “Love of kindness” refers to learning Torah *L’shma*. Likewise, the *Gemara* (*Sukkah* 49b) defines “*Torat Chessed*” / “Torah of kindness” (*Mishlei* 31:26) as Torah studied *L’shma*. “Walking discreetly” also refers to serving *Hashem L’shma*, not in order to be recognized by others.

We are taught (*Avot* 2:1), “What is the straight path that a person should choose? That which will bring him glory from man.” When a person is still “choosing” a path, not yet committed, explains R’ Chaim, he may choose a path that will bring him glory from man. Afterward, however, he should serve *Hashem L’shma*.

(*Ruach Chaim*)

**“This is the *Chukah* / decree of the Torah, which *Hashem* has commanded . . .” (19:2)**

*Rashi z”l* writes: Because the *Yetzer Ha’ra* and the nations of the world taunt the Jewish People, saying, “What is this commandment and what reason is there for it,” the Torah describes it as a “*Chukah*,” implying: “It is an decree from before Me; you have no right to question it.”

R’ David Kimchi *z”l* (*Radak*; 1160–1235; Narbonne, France) writes: Even the *Chukim*, about which is it said, “They have no reason,” it is true that they do not have a reason that can be understood by the majority of people. However, a wise person who studies the commandment carefully will find a clear and understandable reason.

(*Hakdamat Ha’Radak L’Sefer Yehoshua*)



**“*Hashem* said to Moshe and to Aharon, ‘Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of *Bnei Yisrael*, therefore you will not bring this congregation to the Land that I have given them.’” (20:12)**

R’ Levi ben Gershon *z”l* (“*Ralbag*”; 1288–1344) writes that this verse should not be understood as punishing Moshe, and Moshe’s hitting the rock is not the immediate reason why Moshe did not enter *Eretz Yisrael*. Rather, Moshe did not enter *Eretz Yisrael* because *Bnei Yisrael* were not worthy at that time of conquering *Eretz Yisrael* quickly. Yet, if Moshe had entered the Land, he surely would have completed the *Mitzvah* of conquering *Eretz Yisrael* in short order (unlike his successor, Yehoshua, who did not complete the conquest even after 14 years). How, then, are we to understand *Hashem*’s criticism of Moshe in our verse? *Hashem* is saying: “Maybe, if you had spoken to the rock instead of hitting it, you would have raised *Bnei Yisrael* to a higher level of faith, such that they would then have deserved to conquer the Land quickly. Then, you could have entered the Land with them!”

*Ralbag* continues: This understanding is proven by a number of verses. We read that *Hashem* said to Yehoshua (*Yehoshua* 1:2): “Moshe, My servant, has died. Now, arise, cross this Jordan [River], you and this entire people . . .” *Hashem* calls Moshe “My servant,” a term reserved for exceptionally righteous people, indicating that Moshe had not sinned. Also, Moshe himself told *Bnei Yisrael* (*Devarim* 1:37), “With me, as well, *Hashem* became angry because of you, saying, ‘You, too, shall not come there.’” Moshe would not have blamed *Bnei Yisrael* for his inability to enter the Land if it had been his own fault.

(*Commentary to Yehoshua*, ch.1, “*Ha’to’elet Ha’shelishi*”)

# ISRAEL REPORT

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## REPORT: JORDAN VALLEY NOT INCLUDED IN SOVEREIGNTY PLAN (Arutz-7 6/29/20)

Galei Tzahal reported Monday that US officials now say that the original plan to apply Israeli sovereignty to about 30% of Judea and Samaria - including most of the Jordan Valley - is no longer under consideration.

"The message from the Americans is growing that 30% sovereignty is off the agenda and the Jordan Valley is outside the map."

On Friday, Channel 12 reported that Israel had told Jordan that the sovereignty plan would not include the Jordan Valley, but would instead be limited to two or three large settlement blocs.

According to a senior PA official who spoke with Channel 12, Mossad chief Yossi Cohen's recent visit to Jordan relayed a message to the Hashemite Kingdom that Israel will not apply sovereignty over the Jordan Valley – a major bone of contention between Israel and Jordan's government.

## NETANYAHU, GANTZ CLASH AS SOVEREIGNTY TARGET DATE NEARS (Israel Hayom 6/29/20)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's main coalition partner, Benny Gantz, signaled his opposition on Monday to advance a plan to apply sovereignty to parts of Judea and Samaria under the provisions of the Trump administration's newly unveiled peace plan.

Netanyahu was quoted by a spokesman as telling legislators from his right-wing Likud party that the steps due to be debated by the cabinet as early as Wednesday did not depend on Gantz's support.

The two uneasy partners in a coalition formed last month were both meeting visiting officials from Washington, which wants to see consensus within the Israeli government before giving a green light to Netanyahu's plans.

A Netanyahu-Gantz rift might, therefore, delay a cabinet debate on annexation that both had agreed could begin as early as July 1.

A source in Gantz's party quoted him as telling the US officials on Monday – Ambassador David Friedman and White House adviser Avi Berkowitz – that the July 1 target date was "not sacred".

In remarks broadcast later, Gantz told members of his centrist Blue and White party that "what is not corona-related will wait until the day after the virus". He has estimated the health crisis could last another 18 months.

The Trump administration's newly unveiled Vision for Peace stipulates that Washington will endorse an Israeli decision to apply sovereignty to large parts of Judea and Samaria and the Jordan Valley as long as Israel commits to holding good-faith negotiations with the Palestinians and avoid construction in certain areas that could become part of a Palestinian state. That state will only be established four years after negotiations begin and only if the Palestinians fully renounce terrorism and carry out major reforms, and only if they are no longer considered a threat to Israel.

International opposition has mounted in the past few weeks, with Palestinian leaders, the United Nations, European powers and Arab countries allied with Israel all denouncing the planned move.

Addressing Likud lawmakers, Netanyahu said Blue and White was "not the decisive factor this way or the other", according to a spokesman. Netanyahu appeared to be alluding to support for annexation from ultra-Orthodox and far-right legislators.

## ISRAELI CAMPAIGNERS WANT JEWISH RUINS INCLUDED IN WEST BANK ANNEXATIONS (YNet 6/29/20)

The Israeli government faces calls from campaigners to declare sovereignty

over ancient Jewish ruins on land in the occupied West Bank that Israel does not plan to annex under U.S. President Donald Trump's peace blueprint.

The annexation plan, which the government is due to start discussing as of Wednesday, envisages Israel annexing Jewish settlements and the Jordan Valley - some 30% of the West Bank. Under Trump's plan, a Palestinian state would be created in the rest of the West Bank.

An Israeli advocacy group called "Safeguarding Eternity" is worried about what will happen to Jewish archaeological sites on parts of the West Bank not included in Trump's annexation map.

It wants Benjamin Netanyahu's government to guarantee Israeli control over sites such as the remnants of hilltop Hasmonean and Herodian forts dating back two millennia, and hundreds of ruins from earlier Jewish rule.

"This entire plan - it's right, its essence - is the connection of the Jewish people to their land and our heritage," Eitan Melet, a director of Safeguarding Eternity, said as he stood among a jumble of limestones that were the foundation of the desert fortress of Cypros, overlooking the Palestinian city of Jericho. "If we don't take our heritage sites into account, this plan has no right to exist at all."

The Israeli government has not commented on the campaigners' demands. The Palestinians reject Trump's blueprint and Israel's plan to annex territory they seek for a future state.

Assaf Avraham, an archaeologist at Israel's Bar-Ilan University, said he too was worried about the fate of archaeological sites in the West Bank.

"If these areas are not in the hands or under the sovereignty of (authorities) that know how to take care of and maintain archaeological sites, and which have the motivation to do so, we really fear for these places," he said.

The Palestinian Tourism and Antiquities Ministry dismissed such concerns. It said in a statement that it is "able to protect and preserve the cultural heritage sites under Palestinian control, as maintenance and restoration work is carried out continuously".

Interim 1993 peace accords granted the Palestinians limited self-rule in West Bank areas, where they agreed to secure Jewish heritage sites.

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## **AFTER EMBASSY MOVE, U.S. TO SELL ENVOY'S HOUSE NEAR TEL AVIV (YNet 6/30/20)**

The U.S. State Department has put the ambassador to Israel's official residence outside Tel Aviv up for sale, in a decision aimed at cementing the American embassy's controversial move to Jerusalem.

The beachfront mansion in the affluent Tel Aviv suburb of Herzliya is going on the market because most of Ambassador David Friedman's day-to-day activities are based at the embassy in Jerusalem, the State Department said. "Following the decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem it made sense to sell the residence in Herzliya," it said. "Much of the embassy's operations have shifted to Jerusalem and the ambassador has established an official residence there."

The Trump administration moved the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 2018, shortly after recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Friedman, a long-time supporter of Israel's hard-line settler movement, played a leading role in the embassy's move.

Most foreign delegations have their embassies in Tel Aviv because of Jerusalem's contested status.

Israel's parliament, supreme court, president's residence and most ministries are headquartered in Jerusalem. But the Palestinians claim east Jerusalem - which Israel captured in 1967 and later annexed in a move unrecognized by most of the international community - as capital of a future state.

The presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Joe Biden, said in April that he considered the Trump administration's decision to move the embassy "short-sighted and frivolous," but said he would not move it back to Tel Aviv if elected president in November.

News of the residence's sale was first published in the Israeli business newspaper Globes on Monday. The paper said the house, which sits on a 1.25-acre (0.5 hectare) plot of land, has a roughly \$87 million asking price.

If it sells at that price, it would be the most expensive residential sale in the country, topping Russian-Israeli billionaire Roman Abramovich's recent purchase of a home in Herzliya for \$65 million earlier this year.

## **CABINET APPROVES: UP TO 250 PARTICIPANTS AT WEDDINGS (Arutz-7 6/30/20)**

The Cabinet approved on Monday evening the enforcement of emergency regulations following a decision approved earlier in the day by the "Coronavirus Cabinet".

According to the decision, weddings and Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebrations (or similar celebrations in other religions) will take place with the participation of up to 250 people. At other events, the number of participants may not exceed 50. The provision will be in effect until July 9, 2020.

From July 10 through July 31, the number of participants in an event taking place in a building may not exceed half of the allowed occupancy, and no more than 100 people (the number of participants allowed in an event in an open area will remain at 250).

The draft order approved by the Cabinet will be brought as soon as possible before one of the Knesset committees authorized to discuss the issue.

In addition, an order by the Director-General of the Ministry of Health regarding the operations of summer camps and the holding of exams in higher education institutions will be signed soon.

The Ministry of Health is calling on the public to adhere to the basic guidelines for maintaining social distancing, wearing a mask and strict hygiene so that the spread of the coronavirus in Israel can be prevented.

## **KNESSET MOVES TOWARD REINSTATING SHIN BET CORONA SURVEILLANCE (JPost 6/30/20)**

The Knesset on Monday moved toward reinstating the Shin Bet's (Israel Security Agency) surveillance of coronavirus-infected citizens only three weeks after the program ended.

The new authorization for the program was for 21 days, which is supposed to

give the Knesset Intelligence Subcommittee time to finish debating and approve a long-term bill to regulate the issue.

Restoring the program is a victory for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu despite opposition from Shin Bet Director Nadav Argaman and most of the members of the opposition, including former IDF deputy chief of staff and current Meretz MK Yair Golan.

Netanyahu and his allies have portrayed the dilemma as choosing between the lesser of two evils: sacrificing some privacy to Shin Bet surveillance or being compelled to lock down the country's economy again.

The Knesset vote also completes a rapid turnaround in what has proved to be a three-stage corona-era drama dating back to mid-March.

From mid-March to June 9, the Shin Bet tracked citizens infected with the coronavirus over the objections of Argaman and civil-society NGOs.

According to the Health Ministry, around one-third of the then-16,000 infected persons were discovered by the Shin Bet's cellphone-tracking technology and would not have been discovered by other available means.

Other supporters of the program, such as Yamina's Ayelet Shaked, have said the program never should have stopped and that privacy pails in importance to saving lives and keeping the economy open by keeping infection rates under control.

Opponents of the program, such as Yisrael Beytenu MK Eli Avidar, have slammed it as destroying Israeli democracy.

At hearings over the issue on Sunday, Avidar, Golan and former IDF Maj.-Gen. and current Yesh Atid MK Orna Barbivai said the government was using dishonest scare tactics and "defrauding the public" to press forward with the program.

The rate of sick persons and persons on ventilators in Israel was still falling, despite rising infection rates, and the volume of deaths from COVID-19 in Israel is relatively few, they said.

Further, they lambasted the government for undermining alternatives.

Avidar accused the Health Ministry of lying about its commitment to human epidemiological studies since an official told the committee around 400 nurses were tracking infections, when in fact only 23 are currently working on the issue.

## **EDUCATION MINISTRY TELLS SCHOOLS TO PREPARE FOR ONLINE CLASSES IN SEPT. (JPost 6/30/20)**

In a memo obtained by Haaretz, schools around Israel were instructed to prepare for three possible scenarios for the start of the next school year: a full lockdown, no lockdown or a partial lockdown that would incorporate online learning with physical learning.

According to the memo, regardless of scenario, elementary and middle schools must cut their obligatory lesson plans down to around 70% compared to those that are taught under the current Education Ministry plans, in order to allow more flexibility when dealing with unexpected coronavirus-related circumstances.

The memo was written by outgoing Education Ministry director-general Shmuel Abuhav and sent to principals across the country on Tuesday, the day before the end of the current school year.

As confirmed coronavirus cases have been rising rapidly since reopening and Israelis fear a second wave, the topic of fully reopening schools next September has come into question. Earlier on Tuesday, 30 students and five teachers in a school in Ashdod tested positive for COVID-19.

In the memo, Abuhav tells schools they must each build three different work plans for the next school year "based on their knowledge and experience from the first wave."

## **CHAIRMAN OF ISRAEL'S YAD VASHEM TO STEP DOWN AFTER 27 YEARS (Israel Hayom 6/29/20)**

The chairman of Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum and Memorial said Sunday he will be stepping down after 27 years.

Avner Shalev, 81, said in a letter to Yad Vashem employees that he made the decision to leave the position after nearly three decades following a "thorough self-examination." He said that he was stepping down by the end of the year and gave no further details on his reasons for leaving.

Shalev guided a period of dramatic transformation at one of the world's foremost Holocaust remembrance institutions. During his tenure, the site expanded to include a new museum, a centerpiece that draws hundreds of thousands of visitors a year, and the solemn Hall of Names, a collection of 4.8 million names of Holocaust victims, which is a mainstay during visits of foreign dignitaries to Israel.

He also oversaw the creation of an international school for Holocaust studies and an institute for Holocaust research.

According to his letter, a successor has not been designated.

Yad Vashem is an almost sacred institution in Israel, where students, soldiers, and company outings tour regularly and where the country holds its annual Holocaust remembrance day ceremony.

Still, during Shalev's term, the institution has weighed in on a number of controversies.

It lambasted an Israeli-Polish compromise over a Polish Holocaust hate speech law, saying a joint statement by the countries' prime ministers contained "grave errors and deceptions" over Poland's role in the Holocaust.

It also came out against a government plan in 2018 to deport tens of thousands of African migrants, saying it saw the issue as a "national and international challenge that requires empathy, compassion, and mercy."

"The experience of the Jewish people over generations heightens this obligation," it said.

### **NEFESH B'NEFESH SEES STEEP RISE IN ALIYAH APPLICATIONS** (Arutz-7 6/29/20)

Nefesh B'Nefesh, an organization which helps facilitate immigration to Israel, reported a massive increase in applications this month.

Zev Gershinsky, Executive VP of Nefesh B'Nefesh reported Monday that he "considered waiting until tomorrow for this update, but today – the second to last day of June – Nefesh B'Nefesh has officially reached a record of 1195 opened Aliyah applications this month, three times more than the 398 applications which we recorded in June 2019. "It is now imperative for all organizations involved in Aliyah to make sure we turn this increased interest into an actual wave of Aliyah. This is certainly possible."

Last week, Nefesh B'Nefesh, which operates in partnership with the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, The Jewish Agency for Israel, Keren Kayemeth Le'Israel and JNF-USA, announced it signed a contract with EL AL Airlines for 14 group Aliyah flights to arrive in Israel over the next three months. Throughout July, August and September, there will be designated blocks of seats on EL AL flights from JFK to Tel Aviv, reserved for Nefesh B'Nefesh Olim. There will also be two summer group Aliyah flights arriving from the West Coast as well.

"We deeply appreciate the patience and understanding of our Olim as we navigate Aliyah together during this unprecedented time," said Rabbi Yehoshua Fass, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Nefesh B'Nefesh. "It is incredible to witness and take part in this moment, where there is an unparalleled increase in Aliyah interest. With hundreds of seats now available for Olim, we look forward to taking a large step forward to ensuring that we can assist in the fruition of these Aliyah dreams."

This announcement comes in the wake of an unprecedented increase in Aliyah interest from North American Jews, with Nefesh B'Nefesh reporting its highest number of calls and applications these past two months, from the time the organization was founded.

### **'STATUS QUO ON RELIGIOUS ISSUES IS A CORNERSTONE OF OUR ABILITY TO LIVE IN ISRAEL'** (Israel Hayom 6/26/20)

The appointment of United Torah Judaism MK Yakov Asher as chairperson

of the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee is a historic moment: for the first time since Israel's inception, a representative of the ultra-Orthodox community will head this committee. Over the years there have been various religious chairpersons, the most recent of them being Habayit Hayehudi MK Nissan Slomiansky, but none of them were Haredi.

Q: Did you want this position or were the rabbis eyeing it?

"The possibility came up during the coalition talks. The rabbis didn't say no to the idea, and it was certainly time for it to happen, to show the world that we can sit at this central junction. There's also the belief that legislation should be for the whole people and not just certain parts of it."

Q: So now, after you've "conquered" this position, will you hold on to it tightly as you did with the Knesset's Finance Committee?

"While I've only been at this position for two weeks, I can already say that for us this role is very important and that in future coalition agreements we will prefer it over other committees. It's an important role where we can influence legislation and also block laws that have no place."

Q: In the committee session on the coronavirus, you said that "the committee will not be a rubber stamp, and we'll demand to review the rules." Do you mean the committee will leave its mark on the bills that it approves?

"I think the correct procedure in approving emergency regulations is that the legislator determines that the rules will be for three months, so that we can review them again under a magnifying glass. For example, at the moment, we are changing the rules that we were shown, such as the decision to prohibit police from entering homes."

Q: Do you believe in the principle of live and let live?

"In principle – of course I do. But you can't forget that we live in a Jewish State and see ourselves as the gatekeepers of religion, so that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will know that the Sabbath in this land is a different day. Just as the state determined that cinemas are closed on memorial days, to give symbolism to those days, we believe that stopping public transportation should also be something symbolic."

Q: How will you deal with disputed issues of religion and state like transport on the Shabbat, kashrut, LGBTQ efforts to change the surrogacy law and such? Will you keep the status quo or make reforms?

"The status quo is the cornerstone in our ability to continue to live in this country. Unfortunately, we understand we live in a country where not all things in it happen according to our views and my belief that all Israelis are responsible for each other. Of course, as part of my job in parliament, I will strive for keeping the status quo, despite it being far from what we hope for. We'll do everything to keep it, and we will not be part of a government that doesn't."

Q: What is your position on the conscription law and arrangements with yeshivas?

"This issue cannot be solved using force, and that's been proven. The issue pops up time and again only due to populism that deepens the divides in Israeli society. The attempt that was made to take MK [Avigdor] Liberman's bill and tell us it will be brought for parliament's approval, and that it will pass only if it's exactly as it was written without any changes – is completely unacceptable to us. There has never been a case in the Knesset, even with issues much less sensitive than the draft law, where a bill was brought to parliament and passed all the obstacles without any changes."

Q: Do you support the position of the Knesset speaker that the High Court of Justice interferes too much in the legislation of parliament?

"There's no doubt that there's a problem that the borders between the legislature and the judiciary have been blurred. Today we live in a reality where all is allegedly justiciable, and when social or security issues that have a lot of influence on Israeli society come before the court, decisions are made according to a specific world view. I hope and pray that the judges are honest people, otherwise, each man would swallow his fellow alive, but on the other hand, they can't free themselves of the view that keeping the Sabbath has no value, so what chance do we have, that in a session on the issue of Sabbath

we will succeed? That's what the Knesset is for, where all representatives of the public sit."

Q: Do you support legislating the override clause that will allow parliament to amend High Court rulings?

"I think it should be legislated while discussing it with the Supreme Court judges, calmly and not aggressively. There is a problem here that can not be ignored. But I doubt that this kind of legislation can be put forward, while many of the coalition partners – mainly Blue and White – oppose it, and therefore the law is not on the table."

Q: Do you plan to call a meeting of committee members with the justices?

"Definitely – yes. I definitely think I should meet with the heads of the judiciary and hold talks with them. In general, I believe in communicating. I didn't come to the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee in order to covertly pass the override clause. I'm not disguising myself as someone else but I am saying my opinion, even if the judges disagree with it."

Q: How are your relations with Justice Minister Avi Nissenkorn?

"Excellent relations. He is a wise man who came to the Knesset with a lot of public experience. There is no doubt that my cooperation as chairperson of the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee with the justice minister and other ministers is important, even though that doesn't mean we'll agree on everything."

Q: Are you coming with a lot of energy to this role?

"How does Yair Lapid put it? 'We came to work.'"

### **ANNEXATION MIGHT BE RIGHT, BUT NETANYAHU'S PROCESS IS FLAWED** (Yaakov Katz, JPost 6/30/20)

Whether you support annexation or not, here is one thing everyone can agree on – applying Israeli sovereignty to Judea and Samaria is a historic move, one that has the potential to change Israel for decades to come.

While the coronavirus is here and now, annexation is more vague. Does it change anything right away? Probably not. Israelis who live in annexed areas remain Israelis, and Palestinians who live nearby remain Palestinian. In the long term, though, this will change.

COVID-19 will one day (hopefully soon) become something the world will either cure or learn to live with, while annexation will be something whose consequences will remain unclear.

Will the European Union impose sanctions on Israel and downgrade relations? Will Jordan rip up the peace treaty? Will Palestinians launch a new intifada? Will the Democrats take the Oval Office, the Senate and the House in November and penalize Israel? And will apartheid become an accusation Israelis will have to get more used to hearing?

With so much at stake, it would be natural to expect our government to take this issue seriously, to hold cabinet meetings, to convene panels of experts from different disciplines (security, economic, legal and more) and to then present its plans to the Knesset or even the public for discussion and debate. Sadly, this is far from being the case. Instead, what we have is a classic example in how not to formulate policy and how not to make decisions of strategic and historic ramifications.

Just look at the past week. The animosity between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Alternate Prime Minister Benny Gantz is no secret. The disgust they show one another was on display for the world to see at Sunday's cabinet meeting when Gantz threw his hands up in the air after Netanyahu refused to let him make some opening remarks.

Gantz got his revenge on Monday when he met with US Ambassador David Friedman and Special Envoy Avi Berkowitz and said that annexation was not important for Israel and could wait. Netanyahu responded that afternoon, saying that Gantz has no influence over annexation, "not one way or another."

Is this how a unity government makes a decision of such strategic proportions?

The truth is that the writing had been on the wall since January, ahead of the

unveiling of US President Donald Trump's peace plan. Then, Netanyahu – facing a third election – announced his intention to annex parts of the West Bank immediately after the rollout of the plan.

When that didn't happen – at the time, the White House hit the brakes and said it first wanted a stable government in Jerusalem – Netanyahu waited. He made annexation one of the centerpieces of his campaign in the March election but also when it was over, using it to explain to the public why he needed to remain prime minister.

When the Netanyahu-Gantz government was formed in May, the prime minister again spoke about how annexation would come soon, putting July 1 in the coalition agreement as the date for it to begin.

The problem is that in the five months since the plan was rolled out in Washington, and the two months since the coalition was formed, the government has yet to hold even one serious in-depth discussion about what is going to happen.

Gantz and Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi are said to have seen a number of maps without being told which one Netanyahu is planning to adopt, not to mention members of the Likud Party, who have no idea what is happening behind closed doors.

Is this the way a government is meant to function? Is this the way we want our leaders determining issues that strike at the core of the country's existence?

Of course not. This criticism has nothing to do with the legitimacy of applying Israeli law to parts of the Jewish people's homeland. It has to do with proper governance and how a prime minister and his ministers are meant to make decisions with historic ramifications.

People can argue about annexation, but at least have a process that does it justice.

### **SOVEREIGNTY IN THE JORDAN VALLEY MUST COME FIRST** (Nadav Shragai, YNet 6/30/20)

Is Israel really hesitating to grab the opportunity presented by the "deal of the century"? There are troubling signs that this might be the case.

First, the plan to apply sovereignty to large parts of Judea and Samaria and the Jordan Valley involved 30% of the territory. Then came the idea of extending sovereignty in phases – a bad idea that only invites round of violence and terrorism. Now, it appears we've sunk even lower, as Arab officials have said that the sovereignty bid will exclude the Jordan Valley, and any move made in Judea and Samaria will only be symbolic.

Historic decisions may require careful consideration, but they also require courage and determination.

The US Middle East peace plan is not without its faults but Israel should have seized the opportunity and immediately apply sovereignty to the 30% the Americans suggested. But if that is not in the cards, Israel should start by extending sovereignty to the Jordan Valley first and shelve the plan to do the same with respect to the large settlement blocs.

The reason for this is simple: The greater Jerusalem area, Maaleh Adumim, Gush Etzion and Ariel will all eventually come under Israeli sovereignty – there's a public consensus about that, one even the international community understands that, albeit it will never publicly admit it.

This is not the case for the Jordan Valley, which does not enjoy any sort of consensus. Former prime ministers Ehud Olmert and Ehud Barak have negated the idea that the Jordan Valley is vital to Israel's security needs, and two American administrations, one Republican and one Democrat attempted to undermine Israel's hold of the area.

Moreover, unlike Judea and Samaria, the Israeli government itself has neglected to encourage the settlement enterprise in the area and has refrained from making it a bona fide settlement bloc.

This is why extending Israeli sovereignty to the Jordan Valley is urgent. The smaller communities in Judea and Samaria need it to anchor the sovereignty bid. The larger settlement blocs can wait.



# 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 Tov?*

### 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](http://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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