



CANDLE LIGHTING 8:10 PM | 7 TAMUZ | JULY 13, 2024 | HAVDALA 9:13 PM

שבת פרשת חקת
SHABBAT PARSHAT CHUKAT

Haftorah is Judges 11:1-33. Pirkei Avot Chap. 5.

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA	6:44 PM
EARLIEST CANDLES	6:55 PM
SHKIA	8:28 PM
TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM	9:08 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA	7:55 AM
MAIN	9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA	9:19 AM
POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR	10:00 AM
FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR	11:30 AM
PRE-MINCHA SHIUR	7:20 PM
MINCHA	8:00 PM
MAARIV	9:13 PM

KIDDUSH

Kiddush is sponsored by Vivian Lerner on the yahrzeit of her sister Connie^{נ"ע}, Kreintsche Sara Bat Chaiim Tzvi.

SEUDAH SHLISHIT

Seudah Shlishit is co-sponsored by the Winchesters on the yahrzeit of Steve's father, מאיר דוד בן שמואל גרשון הלוי, David Winchester^{נ"ע}, and Esther Schwed on the yahrzeit of her father, Moshe Yehuda ben Menachem^{נ"ע}.

TORAT ACHIM - 2ND ANNUAL

- 1) Fundamentals: after kiddush, Chapter 3 of "To Heal a Fractured World", by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks.
- 2) Mishna Tractate Chullin, 5:00 PM, at Chava & Chayim Goldberg's home.
- 3) Tzurba M'rabanan (women's chabura), Laws of Bikur Cholim (Vol. 4) - Esther Schwed's home, 5:00 PM.
- 4) Tzurba M'rabanan (men's chabura), laws of Shabbat.
- 5) Gemara: Beginner/intermediate chabura, the laws of returning lost objects, 2nd Chapter of Bava Metzia, Monday night at 8:00 PM.
- 6) Pre-Mincha Shiur: Contemporary Topics in Monetary Halacha.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The strategic planning committee is ready to solicit input via focus groups. We encourage all members to indicate their interest, availability, and preference of in-person vs. zoom by Tuesday, July 16, here: [Your Input](#).



SUNDAY
7/14

MONDAY
7/15

TUESDAY
7/16

WEDNESDAY
7/17

THURSDAY
7/18

FRIDAY
7/19

WEEKDAY MINYANIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM

SHACHARIT	8:00 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM	6:25 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM
MINCHA/MAARIV	8:15 PM	8:15 PM	8:14 PM	8:13 PM	8:13 PM	6:41 PM

ZMANIM

Earliest Talit	4:30 AM	4:31 AM	4:32 AM	4:33 AM	4:34 AM	4:35 AM
Gedolah	1:39 PM	1:39 PM	1:39 PM	1:39 PM	1:39 PM	1:39 PM
Shkia	8:27 PM	8:27 PM	8:26 PM	8:25 PM	8:25 PM	
Tzait	9:07 PM	9:07 PM	9:06 PM	9:05 PM	9:05 PM	

UPCOMING EVENTS

TBA - TBA

IN OUR FUTURE

July 20 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Liz Jacob on the 21st anniversary of her conversion.

Aug. 24 - Kiddush is sponsored by Michelle & Zvi Dubin in celebration of Jon's Auf Ruf and upcoming wedding to Ruchie Gross

Aug. 24 - Seudah Shlishit is co-sponsored in memory of Warren Wolf and by Michelle & Zvi Dubin in celebration of Jon's Auf Ruf.

KIDDUSH & SEUDAH SHLISHIT



- Enjoy Scotch at Kiddush, please donate a bottle to the shul from time to time.
- To sponsor a Kiddush (prices start at \$318, plus a bottle of scotch) email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com.
- Want to know what is on the menu for Kiddush? If so, please email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com so he can put you in the WhatsApp group.
- To sponsor for \$136 Seudah Shlishit (or in the case of multiple sponsors, \$100 per sponsor), email dmgarfunkel@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Solidarity mission to Israel via Mizrahi, with Rabbis Markowitz and Katz, will take place July 29 - August 1. Click here for more information: [Fair Lawn Mission to Israel](#). For questions, email ariel.brum@gmail.com.

SHIURIM



- SAMSON RAFAEL HIRSCH ON THE PARSHA, Tuesdays at 1:00 PM (<https://zoom.us/j/7291311899>, PW: 112233).



- TORAH FOR YOUR COMMUTE, via a Whatsapp group, with 3-minute daily Halacha insights. To join

email Rabbi Shestack at

rabbishestack@gmail.com.

- SHABBAT SHIUR, 40 minutes pre-mincha.
- FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT, after Kiddush.
- MESORAH-IN-REVERSE lecture series at Seudah Shlishit.
- Tzurba M'Rabanan on Shabbat, and on Wednesdays at 7:30 PM (to be adjusted as Maariv time changes) on Zoom with Shalom Brauser.



CONTACTING THE RABBI

The Rabbi is always available for halachic and pastoral issues. For less exigent matters, text, call, or drop by during the Rabbi's office hour, Tuesdays, 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM, or feel free to reach out to the Rabbi to make other meeting arrangements.



GITA COOPERWASSER^{נ"ע} YOUTH EVENTS

July 20 - Park Playdate, Edison Park

August 17 - Park Playdate, Park TBD

August 31 - Park Playdate, Park TBD

September 21 - On Shabbat - Learn, Eat, and Play High Holiday Program.

October 13 - Sukkah decoration, w/donuts.

November 9 - Motzei Shabbat Parent Child Learning, 1st-4th Grade, followed by pizza.

December 7 - Motzei Shabbat Parent Child Learning, 1st-4th Grade, followed by pizza.

GITA COOPERWASSER^{נ"ע} YOUTH PROGRAM



- SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS, 1ST - 4TH GRADE: LETIZIA & NICOLE; 3 YRS - K: GENESIS & LYLA
- Youth group for children in 1st to 4th Grades starts at 9:00 AM (Drop Off) in the Youth Room on the left upon entering the social hall.
- Youth group for children 3 years old through Kindergarten starts at 9:15 AM (Drop Off) in the Youth Room on the right upon entering the social hall.
- Parent & Me room opens at 9:15 AM in the Beit Midrash.
- 5th through 9th graders will meet for Torah and games at 10:00 AM in the David Schwitzer^{נ"ע} Social Hall.
- Rabbi Meet & Greet, every Friday night, kids can come over to the Rabbi after davening to receive a cup of grape juice and a ticket!
- Children's corner at Seudah Shlishit - On Hiatus.
- Children earn tickets for coming to minyan (Friday night and/or Shabbat day), asking the rabbi questions or attending parent-child learning programs! Tickets can be redeemed for prizes.



18-25 Saddle River Road
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
201.797.0502
<http://www.avavatachim.org>

Join us for a
PLAYDATE IN THE PARK

SHABBAT Afternoon
July 20th at 3:45 PM
Edison Park



Snackswill be provided!





Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

CHUKAT • חוקת

FROM THE TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS OF **RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS** 7"צז

With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship of Covenant & Conversation, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel.

"I have loved the Torah of R' Chaim Schimmel ever since I first encountered it. It strives to be not just about truth on the surface but also its connection to a deeper truth beneath. Together with Anna, his remarkable wife of 60 years, they built a life dedicated to love of family, community, and Torah.

An extraordinary couple who have moved me beyond measure by the example of their lives." — Rabbi Sacks

This year's series of essays and videos were originally written and recorded by Rabbi Sacks zt"l in 5771 (2010–2011). These timeless messages are accompanied by a new [Family Edition](#) (2023–2024), created to inspire intergenerational learning on the *parsha*.

Descartes' Error

In his 2011 bestseller, *The Social Animal*, New York Times columnist David Brooks writes:

We are living in the middle of the revolution in consciousness. Over the past few years, geneticists, neuroscientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, and others have made great strides in understanding the building blocks of human flourishing. And a core finding of their work is that we are not primarily products of our conscious thinking. We are primarily the products of thinking that happens below the level of awareness.¹

Too much takes place in the mind for us to be fully aware of it. Timothy Wilson of the University of Virginia estimates that the human mind can absorb 11 million pieces of information at any given moment. We can be conscious of only a tiny fraction of this. Most of what is going on mentally lies below the threshold of awareness.

One result of the new neuroscience is that we are becoming aware of the hugely significant part played by emotion in decision-making. The French Enlightenment emphasised the role of reason and

regarded emotion as a distraction and distortion. We now know scientifically how wrong this is.

Antonio Damasio, in his *Descartes' Error*, tells the story of a man who, as the result of a tumour, suffered damage to the frontal lobes of his brain. He had been known to have a high IQ, was well-informed, and had an excellent memory. But after surgery to remove the tumour, his life went into free-fall. He was unable to organise his time. He made bad investments that cost him his savings. He divorced his wife, married a second time, and rapidly divorced again. He could still reason perfectly but had lost the ability to feel emotion. As a result, he was unable to make sensible choices.

Another man with a similar injury found it impossible to make decisions at all. At the end of one session, Damasio suggested two possible dates for their next meeting. The man then took out a notebook, began listing the pros and cons of each, talked about possible weather conditions, potential conflicts with other engagements and so on, for half an hour, until Damasio finally interrupted him, and made the decision for him. The man immediately said, "That's fine," and went away.

It is less reason than emotion that lies behind our choices, and it takes emotional intelligence to

¹ David Brooks, *The Social Animal*, Random House, 2011, x.

make good choices. The problem is that much of our emotional life lies beneath the surface of the conscious mind.

That, as we can now see, is the logic of the *chukim*, the “statutes” of Judaism, the laws that seem to make no sense in terms of rationality. These are laws like the prohibition of sowing mixed seeds together (*kelayim*); of wearing cloth of mixed wool and linen (*shaatnez*); and of eating milk and meat together. The law of the Red Heifer with which our *parsha* begins, is described as the *chok* par excellence. As it is written:

“This is the statute of the Torah.”

Num. 19:2

There have been many interpretations of the *chukim* throughout the ages. But in the light of recent neuroscience, we can suggest that they are laws designed to bypass the prefrontal cortex, the rational brain, and create instinctive patterns of behaviour to counteract some of the darker emotional drives at work in the human mind.

We know for example – Jared Diamond has chronicled this in his book *Collapse* – that wherever humans have settled throughout history they have left behind them a trail of environmental disaster, wiping out whole species of animals and birds, destroying forests, damaging the soil by over-farming and so on.

The prohibitions against sowing mixed seeds, mixing meat and milk, combining wool and linen, and so on, create an instinctual respect for the integrity of nature. They establish boundaries. They set limits. They inculcate the feeling that we may not treat our animal and plant environment however we wish. Some things are forbidden – like the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden. The whole Eden story, set at the dawn of human history, is a parable whose message we can understand today better than any previous generation: Without a sense of limits, we will

destroy our ecology and discover that we have lost paradise.

As for the ritual of the Red Heifer, this is directed at the most destructive pre-rational instinct of all: what Sigmund Freud called *thanatos*, the death instinct. He described it as something “more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it over-rides”.² In his essay *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, he wrote that “a portion of the [death] instinct is diverted towards the external world and comes to light as an instinct of aggressiveness”, which he saw as “the greatest impediment to civilisation.”

The Red Heifer ritual is a powerful statement that the holy is to be found in life, not death. Anyone who had been in contact with a dead body needed purification before entering the sanctuary or Temple. Priests had to obey stricter rules, and the High Priest even more so.

This made biblical Judaism highly distinctive. It contains no cult of worship of dead ancestors, or seeking to make contact with their spirits. It was probably to avoid the tomb of Moses becoming a holy site that the Torah says, “to this day no one knows where his grave is” (Deut. 34:6). God and the holy are to be found in life. Death defiles.

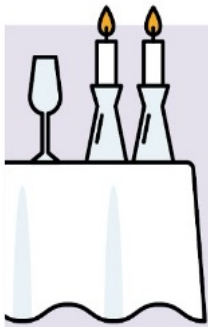
The point is – and that is what recent neuroscience has made eminently clear – this cannot be achieved by reason alone. Freud was right to suggest that the death instinct is powerful, irrational, and largely unconscious, yet under certain conditions it can be utterly devastating in what it leads people to do.

The Hebrew term *chok* comes from the verb meaning, “to engrave”. Just as a statute is carved into stone, so a behavioural habit is carved in depth into our unconscious mind and alters our instinctual responses. The result is a personality trained to see death and holiness as two utterly opposed states – just as meat (death) and milk (life) are.

² Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" in *On Metapsychology*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984, p. 294.

Chukim are Judaism's way of training us in emotional intelligence, above all a conditioning in associating holiness with life, and defilement with death. It is fascinating to see how this has been vindicated by modern neuroscience.

Rationality, vitally important in its own right, is only half the story of why we are as we are. We will need to shape and control the other half if we are successfully to conquer the instinct to aggression, violence, and death that lurks not far beneath the surface of the conscious mind.



Around the Shabbat Table

1. How do you think emotion plays a role in decision-making?
2. How does the Red Heifer ritual address the death instinct?
3. Can understanding our unconscious mind help us control aggression and violence?

● These questions come from this week's **Family Edition** to Rabbi Sacks' Covenant & Conversation. For an interactive, multi-generational study, check out the full edition at www.RabbiSacks.org/covenant-conversation-family-edition/chukat/descartes-error/