

# HAVURAT YISRAEL WEEKLY NEWS

10 Tammuz 5782

SHABBAT HUKKAT

July 9, 2022

## Shabbat Shalom!

7:15 pm Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat  
8:13 pm Candle Lighting

8:45 am Mishnayot Class  
9:00 am Shacharit  
9:14 am Latest Shema  
Parasha p.838 Haftorah p. 1187  
11:00 am Drasha, Kids Program  
6:30 pm Gemara Shiur  
7:00 pm Perek  
7:25 pm Mincha, Seudah Shlisheet *sponsored by members of Havurat to say tzetchem leshalom to Linda & Serge Merkin*  
9:10 pm Maariv, Havdalah

## Kiddush is sponsored by

- ☆ Rita & Lou Gutnicki commemorating the Yahrzeit of his father Shlomo Yosef ben Yehuda Arye Leib z"l.
- ☆ Family members (Sandy & Jay, Larry & Barb, Jonathan, Martine, Jennifer and Rachel) celebrating the Aliyah of Linda & Serge Merkin.

## Upcoming Sponsorships

July 16 Marcia Isaac  
July 23 Available  
July 30 Rachel & Louis Ordentlich

**Breakfast this Sunday Morning** is sponsored by Jane Stiefel. A plaque will be placed on the memorial board in memory of her mother, Michal bat Chayim z"l.



### Minyan Alert!

Summer is here!  
Some of our regular attendees are away.  
Please make a special effort to come to our daily and Shabbat minyanim on time.



## Learning English

Free English as a Second Language (ESL) Class with Marc Rose on Mondays, 7:30 pm.

**Hebrew class for beginners** — with Bruce Jacobs  
Tuesdays at 8:00 pm on Zoom  
For information, call Yael Yopez at 516-460-3202

**Next Sunday is a fast day, 17th of Tammuz, and the commencement of the three weeks leading to Tisha B'Av.**

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## LAWS OF THE THREE WEEKS

By Rabbi David Algaze

Since on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month of Tammuz, the enemies of Israel breached the wall of the city of Jerusalem, thus ushering in a period of savage pillaging and many atrocities inside the city, this day marks the beginning of the period of mourning called "The Three Weeks" or Bein hametzarim." (lit. "Between the straits"). This period extends itself until Tish'a Be'Ab, the day of the burning of our Holy Temple. Why do we fast on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz?

Moshe Rabbenu went up to Mt. Sinai on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan and was there for forty full days. On the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, the people, thinking that the forty-day period had passed, asked Aaron for a replacement for Moshe and thus they built the Golden calf. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, as Moshe returned, he saw the people worshipping the Calf and he broke the Tablets of the Law.

In addition, on that day an idol was placed in the Temple. The Rabbis wondered if that was the idol placed by King Menashe in the period of the First temple or one placed by a Roman general, Apostomus, towards the end of the Second Temple. He also burned the Torah on that day.

With the breaching of the wall, the daily sacrifice that was offered for 420 years uninterrupted was canceled.

We observe a period of mourning that becomes increasingly more stringent on Rosh Hodesh Ab and even more so on the week when Tish'a Be'Ab falls. It is customary to recite the Tikkun Chatzot after midday. Weddings are not performed, even for those who never married, but engagements and shidduchim may be held with minimal celebrations. Music is forbidden and this applies especially to live performances, dance music, and other joyous tones. Recorded music may be permitted in some instances, especially when needed to provide a relief from stress or depression. A Jew who makes his living from playing a musical instrument is allowed to do so until the Nine Days.

There is a custom not to eat meat or drink wine during these weeks, but this is not mandatory at all and one may have meat on Shabbat or a banquet that celebrates a mitzvah, e.g. a brit milah, pidyon, completion of a tractate and so on.

The blessing of shehecheyanu is not recited and therefore one should refrain from eating a new fruit or wearing new garments that would require the shehecheyanu blessing. This prohibition is lifted on Shabbat. New garments may be purchased during this period, but one should not wear them until after Tisha Be'Ab. Haircuts are also forbidden during this period for Ashkenazim. Sephardim refrain from shaving or haircuts only, on the week in which Tisha Be'ab falls, namely starting from the Saturday night before the Fast.

On the three Sabbaths of this period, there are special haftarot that contain the messages of warnings as presented by the prophets; these are called the "Three [haftarot] of Tragedy." On the seven weeks following Tish'a be'Ab special haftarot are read that include messages of consolation and they are called the "Seven of Comfort."

SUNDAY July 10 / 11 Tammuz	MONDAY July 11 / 12 Tammuz	TUESDAY July 12 / 13 Tammuz	WEDNESDAY July 13 / 14 Tammuz	THURSDAY July 14 / 15 Tammuz	FRIDAY July 15 / 16 Tammuz
7:30 am Gemara Shiur 8:00 am Shacharit 8:45 am Breakfast sponsored by Jane Stiefel 9:30 am Parasha Class in Spanish — Rabbi Algaze	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit  7:15 pm Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat 8:08 pm Candle Lighting

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# FAITH AND THE UNKNOWABLE

By Rabbi David Algaze

*“This is the decree (hukkah) of the Torah, which G-d commanded saying: Speak to the children of Israel and they shall take to you a completely red cow, without blemish...” (Bamidbar 19:2)*

The law of the red heifer contains a basic contradiction. Its function is to purify the impure and yet the preparer of this solution becomes himself impure by touching it. How could the power to purify and its opposite, the power to defile, coexist in the same essence? Thus, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai explained this paradox to his students: “Neither the corpse defiles nor the heifer or its waters purify. Rather G-d said, ‘I made a decree (hukkah) and you are not allowed to transgress my order.’” (Tanhuma)

This law has become the paradigm of all the commandments. The Rabbis explain thus the sentence that introduces the law of the red heifer, “This is the law (hukkah) of the Torah” rather than “this is the law of the heifer” to mean that the law of the red heifer contains all the principles of every other commandment in the Torah. Just as one may not understand the law of the red heifer, we may not comprehend any of the other laws of the Torah. Why would the Lawgiver create laws that Man may not comprehend? Are the laws irrational, lacking any meaning except the fact that G-d commanded them?

Rashi explains this verse as a debate between Israel and the nations. “Because Satan and the nations of the world torment the Jewish People by saying, ‘What is this mitzvah of Para Aduma? What is the reason for it?’” Therefore, the Torah writes, ‘This is the hukkah of the Torah.’ It is My decree and you are not permitted to comprehend it.”

There are some who would explain this phenomenon as educating us into being obedient of the Supreme King. By simply following His commandments without our seeking the reasons behind them, we declare our subjugating our will to His. However, Rashi offers us a glimpse that a profound intellectual divide separates the faith of Israel from the other nations. The nations represent the philosophy that the only acceptable truths are those that can be explained by our reason and everything outside of our logic is false. They believe that they should be able to grasp the logic behind any concept, and therefore demand the reason for the mitzvah. They are unwilling to subjugate their intellect to their Creator, while the Jewish people affirm a faith that is radically different from this philosophy. This arrogance of the nations is precisely what the Torah wishes to counter by giving us laws we do not understand such as the law of the parah aduma.

This conceit and overconfidence inherent in Man’s belief that he may understand everything is most evident in Western civilization and its source in Greek science and philosophy. The Greeks advanced scientific research by their curiosity in understanding physical phenomena and chart their development and causation. However, the driving force behind this research was the belief that the human mind could understand everything, that there was no mystery that human reason could not unlock.

This philosophy, represented by the philosopher Gottfried Leibniz was called the theory of “sufficient reason”, namely that everything happens for a reason. Modern science has begun to question this fundamental principle of Western civilization. In fact, many mathematicians today use mathematics to show that mathematics itself has limitations. Kurt Gödel demonstrated that there are certain true statements that may not be proved using the rules of mathematical logic. (Scientific American, March 2006) In general, modern science is altering the simple assumption that Man is capable of understanding everything and that Reason has its limits. Our system of reasoning is incomplete, because some truths are unprovable. The overconfidence in reason known as rationalism has placed upon logic and mathematics, law and morality, demands for consistency and completeness that can never be satisfied. Thus, a perfectly understood universe is beyond our reach.

This is the message of the Torah. The mitzvot have a reason; it is just that we cannot comprehend it. The Torah emanates from a

Supreme Intelligence and therefore it is inconceivable that this Intellect created laws devoid of reason or meaning. Rather, we must believe that the reason behind the laws is beyond human understanding at this stage in our development.

The Vilna Gaon compared this concept to looking at a globe and seeing that one tiny dot represents an entire country. We see only a dot but the reality has numerous details, activity, color and dimensions that are not visible in the globe. Similarly, every *mitzvah* is like a little dot: all we see is the tiny representation of an infinite universe that is beyond our intellect or imagination.

Rashi said that the attitude of the nations “torment” us with their criticism of our philosophy. Yet, modern science is showing that Israel’s philosophy of recognizing the limits of reason and the acceptance of the unknowable is more harmonious with contemporary scientists than the previous simplistic philosophy of rationalism that prevailed until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The submission to a Higher Intellect makes us more humble before the Creator and more “scientific” regarding the true nature of the Universe. This is the message that Israel delivers to the world: accepting that you do not know everything enlarges you and connects you to a Higher Being.

## REACHING THE RABBI

*The Rabbi is always accessible but sometimes the volume of calls or the time when calls are received make it difficult to answer immediately.*

*A better way would be to first text or WhatsApp message the Rabbi. He will respond as soon as possible. You can also reach the Rabbi in the office,*



*Please only make calls to his cell phone for urgent matters.*

## Please keep in touch!

While we may be saying L’Hitraot, we’re not saying goodbye! We truly treasure all of our community and look forward to staying in touch with you and greeting you at our new home. Here is our contact info:

- Linda phone: 917-656-2720 (forwards to: 055-400-4044) email: docmerkin@gmail.com
- Serge phone: 917-656-2722 (forwards to: 055-400-4049) email: serge.merkin@gmail.com
- Address: 23 HaMenorah Street, Efrat 90435 ISRAEL

Sincerely,

*Linda & Serge*

## Are you still a member of Havurat?

Membership dues were due January 1st and payable by **March 31st of each year** and a member retains the status of “good standing” only when dues are up to date. Please pay your membership on time and in full to enjoy special members’ prices. All Membership privileges are extended **only** to fully-paid -up members. We want everyone to be not just a member, but a part of our caring family. If not now, when?

**Refuah Shlema** Chava Naomi bat Doba Chana, Rivka Gitel bas Miriam (sister of Debbie Greenberg), Alte Ester Riva bat Devorah Shifra (Eileen Alter), Batya bat Rachel (Betty Feit), Batsheva Friedle bat Rachel, Roiza bat Yita Feiga (Rosalie Tenzer), Yael bat Sheindel Ettl, Eshrat Bat Esther (Arasheben’s friend), Malka Bat Buca (Yeni Hassin), Devorah bat Sarah, Yaa-kov ben Leah, Tom Hamori (Zeev Zelig ben Sarah Tish), Yossef Ben Sarah, Zalman Mordechai Yitzchak Halevy ben Alta Chana (Stuart Greenberg)