



Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Chukat

June 23, 2018 10 Tammuz, 5778

<p>TORAH ARTSCROLL 838 HERTZ 652</p> <p>HAFTORAH ARTSCROLL 1187 HERTZ 664</p>	<p>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Parshat Chukat</p>																																									
<p>BAR MITZVAH OF SAMUEL SOLEIMANI</p>	<p>In his recent (2011) bestseller, <i>The Social Animal</i>, 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. 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</p>	<p>significant part played by emotion in decision-making. The French Enlightenment emphasized the role of reason, and regarded emotion as a distraction and distortion. We now know scientifically how wrong this is.</p> <p>Antonio Damasio, in his <i>Descartes' Error</i>, tells the story of a man who, as the result of a tumor, suffered damage to the frontal lobes of his brain. He had a high IQ, was well-informed, and had an excellent memory. But after surgery to remove the tumor, his life went into free-fall. He was unable to organize 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</p>																																								
<p>Times</p>			<p>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 make good choices. The problem is that much of our emotional life lies beneath the surface of the conscious mind.</p> <p>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 (<i>kelayim</i>); of wearing cloth of mixed wool and linen (<i>shaatnez</i>); and of eating milk and meat together. The law of the Red Heifer with which our parsha begins, is described as the <i>chok par excellence</i>: "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 behavior to counteract some of the darker</p>																																							
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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 or 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 do to our animal and plant environment everything 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”. In his essay Civilization 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 civilization.” 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 behavioral 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. 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.

Please join us this Shabbat
as we welcome back
Chazzan Yitzy Spinner and his wife
Rachel for his final proba.



Please make every effort to attend Friday night davening in the Beit Midrash, Shacharit and Mussaf in the Main Sanctuary and then join us at 12:15 pm in the Beit Midrash for a Meet & Greet with them.

Please answer the survey you will be receiving after Shabbat ends.
Thank you all for helping us in our search.



Great Neck Yoetzet Halacha Lisa Septimus
Welcomes your questions about mikvah, observance of taharat mishpacha (halacha relating to married life) and women’s health, as it connects to Jewish law. Reach out to her at:
Phone: 516.415.1111
Email: greatneckyoetzet@gmail.com.
All conversations and emails are kept confidential.



Great Neck Synagogue
26 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023
516-487-6100

Rabbi Dale Polakoff, Rabbi
Rabbi Ian Lichter, Assistant Rabbi
Dr. Ephraim Wolf, z”l, Rabbi Emeritus
Eleazer Schulman, z”l, Cantor Emeritus
Rabbi Sholom Jensen, Youth Director
Zehava & Dr. Michael Atlas, Youth Directors
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Harold Domnitch, Chairman of the Board
Lisa Septimus, Yoetzet Halacha 516-415-1111

**SALLY & SEYMOUR OLSHIN
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM
GNS SUMMER 2018
LEARNING PROGRAM**

Guest Speaker:

Rabbi Baruch Simon

Questions in Kashrut



Rabbi Simon, the Colonel Jehiel R. Elyachar Professor of Talmud at the Yeshiva Program/Mazer School of Talmudic Studies, received his semikha (rabbinic ordination) from Yeshiva University's affiliated Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) in 1988. A graduate of Yeshiva University's High School, Rabbi Simon earned his B.A., magna cum laude, in Judaic Studies from Yeshiva College. Rabbi Simon was a fellow of the prestigious Caroline and Joseph Gruss Kollel Elyon and a fellow of the Katz Kollel. Before teaching in the Yeshiva Program, Rabbi Simon was a member of the Halakha faculty at the Isaac Breuer College of Hebraic Studies at Yeshiva University.

**Sunday, June 24th
9:15 am following
Shacharit 8:30 am**

**Series
Sponsorships - \$180**

**To dedicate a
lecture, contact the
synagogue office**

**516.487.6100
mtwersky@gns.org**



26 Old Mill Road
Great Neck, NY 11023

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RABBI POLAKOFF'S SHABBOS DRASHA THROUGH 5778 IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF **PINCHAS BEN YOSEPH** FOR OTHER SUCH OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT HOWARD WOLF 516-643-3344

IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS MOVING INTO THE GREAT NECK AREA PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW.

OFFICE HOURS FOR RABBI POLAKOFF

Wednesdays: 10-12; Thursdays: 1-3. He can always be reached via 516.637.3674 or dpolakoff@gns.org.

SEYMOUR & SALLY OLSHIN ADULT ED PROGRAM

As the summer approaches, please take note of our special Summer Series Lectures:

Sun. June 24th @ 9:15 am - Rabbi Baruch Simon

Rabbi Simon will speak about the halachot in the kitchen including the need for two ovens, two dishwashers etc...

Sun. July 8th @ 9:15 am - Rabbi Moshe Weinberger

Tues. July 24th @ 7:00 pm - Sandra Rapoport

Sun. July 29th @ 9:15 am - Rabbi Dovid Hirsch

Tues. August 14th @ 8:15 pm - Dr. Ed Reichman

Sponsorships are available by calling the shul office or emailing Rabbi Lichter at lichter@gns.org.

ROSH HASHANAH SCOPE DEADLINE & NEW FEATURE

Please submit all SCOPE magazine articles, recipes, photos, ads, sponsorships and any other material by **June 25th** to Diane Rein at drein@verizon.net. We would also like to include a new feature in SCOPE magazine - Letters to the Editor (maximum 150 words per letter) - to express short responses and/or corrections to previously published articles. Thank you very much to our SCOPE sponsors (we have about 70!) for their strong support this past year by sponsoring 3 issues (Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah and Pesach) for a total cost of \$100 for the year. If you would like to continue to be a SCOPE sponsor, then it is not necessary to contact the shul. If you no longer would like to be a SCOPE sponsor please contact Mark Twersky by **Monday, June 25th** to remove your name from the list. We hope others who are not currently SCOPE sponsors will request to have their names added. You can dedicate the sponsorship in honor or in memory of a loved one. Thank you so much!

CHAVERIM CENTER

Join us on **June 27th** from 11:30-2:00 for the next Chaverim.

SISTERHOOD EVENTS

If you are interested in receiving Sisterhood emails, please email farlafrumkin@gmail.com. Membership is not required to be on the email list, attend events or help out. It is a great way to keep track of all Sisterhood events.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

June 24: Summer Lecture: Rabbi Baruch Simon

June 27: Chaverim Center

July 8: Summer Lecture: Rabbi Moshe Weinberger

July 24: Summer Lecture: Sandra Rapoport

MAZAL TOVS & COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to Rebecca Soleimani and Moossa Soleimani on the Bar Mitzvah of their son **Samuel**.

Mazal Tov to Hadassah & Jack Wachstock on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson **Rami**, son of **Mira & Yakir Wachstock**.

Mazal Tov to Linda & Bob Glaser on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson **Jack**, son of **Debra & Mickey Oralevich**.

FORUM ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE & ADDICTION

Great Neck Synagogue is among various synagogues in the neighborhood sponsoring a forum on substance abuse and addiction in our community on **Sunday, June 24th at 8:00 pm** at Shaare Zion Synagogue, 225 Middle Neck Rd. Rabbi Zvi Gluck, founder and director of Amudim will be the featured speaker.

BIKUR CHOLIM THANK YOU

If you know anyone that can benefit from Bikur Cholim, please email Diane Rein at drein@verizon.net. Thank you very much to our amazing team of approximately 25 volunteers who have dedicated their time and effort making weekly phone calls and visits over the past year to those in need in our shul. Their tremendous chesed is an inspiration to all of us.

SHABBAT FOOD

Friday drop-offs are continuing at 91 Baker Hill Rd before 1:30 pm. Please have food neatly wrapped and placed in coolers on front porch.

Y A H R Z E I T

Saturday, 10 Tammuz

Charles Berlin for Harold Berlin

Joel Crane for Sylvia Crane

Jerrald Weinstein for Leonard Greenberg

Nate Weisel for Phillip Kaplan

Ron Malen for Yitchak ben Avraham Noveck

Sunday, 11 Tammuz

Fred Shaw for Lillian Shaw

Mansour Farhadian for Avramy Sohayegh

Monday, 12 Tammuz

Joan Katz for Bessie Sadinoff

Elain Berger for Murray Sobol

Tuesday, 13 Tammuz

Sharon Goldwyn for Edna Mishkin

Edmond Ohebshalom for Pouran Ohebshalom

Mansour Farhadian for David Sohayegh

Wednesday, 14 Tammuz

Hyman Katz for Israel Katz

Edward Mazur for Phil Mazur

Rabbi Dale Polakoff for William Rosenzweig

Phyllis Safdieh for Aaron Shampman

Thursday, 16 Tammuz

Payman Rabiei for Gohar ben Benyamin

Harry Lumerman for Beila Rifka Lumerman

Tina Machnikoff for Philip Machnikoff

Zehava Atlas for Philip Machnikoff

Daniella Muller for Philip Machnikoff

Ken Magida for Bessie Magida