



תשפ"ה PARSHAS VAESCHANAN RAV BRAZIL
THE GURUMAN AND CHUKIM

ראה למדתי אתכם חוקים ומשפטים כאשר צוני ה' אלקי לעשות כן בקרב הארץ אשר אתם באים שמה לרשתה. ושמרתם ועשיתם כי היא חכמתכם ובינתכם לעיני העמים אשר ישמעון את כל החוקים האלה ואמרו רק עם נבון וחכם הגוי הגדול הזה.

See that I taught you *Chukim* and laws as Hashem commanded me, to fulfill in *Eretz Yisrael* where you are coming to. Observe and fulfill them because they manifest your wisdom and deep understanding in eyes of the nations who when they hear about all these *Chukim* they will express their astonishment of your incredible intelligence and smartness. Rav Shach ztl asks a contradiction from this *passuk* to a Rashi in the beginning of *Parshas Chukas* which concerns the *Para Adumah*.

זאת חקת התורה - לפי שהשטן ואומות העולם מונין את ישראל לומר מה המצוה הזאת ומה טעם יש בה לפיכך כתב בה חקה גזירה היא מלפני ואין לך רשות להרהר אחריה:

Chazal say that Satan and the nations try to persuade *Am Yisrael* to be skeptical about this seemingly irrational mitzvah. Therefore the word *chok* is written in order to convey that it is a mitzvah that is to be performed without understanding its reason and one is forbidden to question or to reflect upon its rationale. From here we see that that the *mitzvos* in the category of *Chukim* do **not** demonstrate the wisdom of *Am Yisrael* but rather to the contrary, that we are ridiculed in

their eyes in that we perform rituals that make no sense at all?

We can answer that there are two types of *Chukim*. *Shaatz* for example is a *chok* that one is forbidden to wear clothing made from a mixture of wool and linen. However, this prohibition does not possess an inner contradiction. This is not so with the mitzvah of *Parah Adumah* where the mitzvah is a paradox for it purifies one who is *tamei* and at the same time the sprinkler of these ashes who is presently undefiled now becomes *tamei*. *Parah Aduma* is a ritual that appears to be absurd and totally illogical.

However, if we take a closer look at these two *pessukim* we can find an answer. The first *passuk* mentions both חוקים ומשפטים which is in contrast to the second one which mentions only חוקים. This conveys that being a nation who fulfills the משפטים of the Torah which includes Civil Laws such as business ethics, honesty, decency, and *middos tovos* בין אדם לאדם, then even our *Chukim* that we fulfill will find favor and respect in the eyes of the world. However, if our משפטים which are dealings with others are riddled with cheating, stealing, abusiveness, corruptness etc, then we will only be criticized as foolish and absurd, thereby being a waste to society, parasites with fabrications of fantasy.

We found that the Rebbeinu Bachya also gives the same interpretation.

את כל החקים האלה - היה לומר את כל המצוות האלה, כי אין האומות משבחים ומפארים לישראל בשביל החקים אבל ילעגו עליהם, אך הזכיר החקים להפליג ולומר, כי מתוך שיראו האומות שישראל

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מתעסקין במצות השכליות ובמשפטים ישרים אשר השכל מעיד עליהם שהם משפטים צדיקים, מסודרים בסדר נכון ובהנהגה ישרה, יתבאר להם מזה כי החקים שאין טעמן נודע, לא דבר ריק הוא אבל יש בפנימיותם חכמה גדולה נסתרת, אין הכל זוכין לה, והאומות בעצמם יפארו לישראל בכל, ותבענה תהלתם לומר אף על החקים רק עם חכם ונבון. וטעם רק, למעט שאר העמים:

Instead of the *goyim* saying that all our *Chukim* and religiosity are **ריק** and empty, they will praise us with **רק עם** that there must be an profound depth to their fulfillment which just **they** are not privy to.

The source of intelligence is from the mind which is called **מח** which is the acronym of **משפטים חוקים**. When the *goyim* see only our *Chukim* they will claim that they are meaningless. However, after seeing how we excel above everybody else in **בין אדם לחבירו** they will quickly change their minds and declare that even the letter **ח** representing **חוקים** are full of Hashem's hidden wisdom.

There is an incredible story of *Hashgacha* that brings out this point. Two close irreligious girl friends who grew up together, one day decided to part ways from each other in order to search for a more meaningful life. One left to go to Seminary in *Eretz Yisrael* and became a true *Baalas Teshuva*. She got married raised a family and had a husband learning in *Kollel*. Her close

friend sought a different path and was drawn to different cults over the years but never felt any true satisfaction for her inner yearnings. They lost contact with each other. One day the *Kolel* wife received a phone call from her old friend who said that she was travelling to India to join a special Guru and she felt she wanted to stop first in *Eretz Yisrael*. She was asking to stay by her house for two days and visit her. She was invited for Shabbos and she came. Her religious friend felt that upon her arrival she has a heavenly sent opportunity to bring her to an awareness of her true identity of the *neschama* and get her inspired with the Shabbos. Everything went smoothly as she enjoyed the meal, the *zemiro*s and the children who participated in the Shabbos joyful spirit. For the break in the afternoon she thought to bring her friend to a *shiur* given by a local dynamic Rav with the hope that perhaps his *derasha* might give her insight and inspire her. To her dismay the Rav spoke about *Hilchos Hashavas Aveidah* the laws of returning a lost article in all its details. To say the least, her friend was obviously painfully bored to death. She apologized profusely for the topic of the *shiur* which she thought was going to be on totally something else, but she

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already knew in her heart that the effort and attempt to influence her friend after all these years to become religious were now dashed to pieces. After they returned home her friend thanked her and said that she had another appointment, packed up her bags and left. The Satan seemed to have won and "she blew it".

Two years later she gets a call from her same friend who says that she is returning to *Eretz Yisrael* in order to learn about Torah and what it means to be a *Yid*. Her friend almost fainted. What happened? The last thing I knew was that you were going to some cult in India by a top Guru. She responded with the following. I was in the cult for nearly two years. I became an avid student and advanced in the ranks of the learning group. One day the leader under the Guru came to me and said that I have finally merited to have an exclusive meeting with the Guru for two hours in which I was privileged to discuss anything I desired. I was both so excited and nervous for this rendezvous with the "holy of holies". We decided to talk and walk. After about an hour as we walked on the road I noticed an object lying to the left of me which appeared to be a wallet. I bent down to pick it up and saw that it was full of cash and

cards. The next second I felt the wallet being suddenly torn away from my hand by Guruman with a big smile on his face as he stuffed the wallet into his pocket without even examining its contents. Innocently I said there are cards inside which would probably give some identity to the person who lost it. He continued walking and said G-d is good and bestowed it to me because of my service to him. I responded that the contents obviously tell us about the owner why don't you just look and see. Guruman just continued to smile and once again repeated his mantra G-d is good he presented me with a heavenly gift. Her friend continued, I felt my heart suddenly sunk as if it was hit by an immoral and narcissistic torpedo. In my eyes Guruman just lost all my *kovod* for him and his movement, which in my concern were now bankrupt. It was then that my memory clicked on back to the boring speech of the Rabbi which I heard when I spent the Sabbath by you and the detailed laws and circumstances of returning a lost article. In those few moments of the wallet encounter, all those boring Torah minutiae laws suddenly felt like an embrace and kiss from G-d demonstrating His love and respect for Man and his property. This could not

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and would not have been invented by Man. I felt and experienced the divinity that lies within them. It was then I instantly knew that my journey seeking an inner truth is over. I must now go and actualize myself and rediscover my soul in a deep way.

Aside from the incredible *Hashgacha* that one can glean from this story, it also illustrates the message of the Torah that through our observance of the *Mishpatim*, *kovod Haberiyos*, *Lashon Harah*, never embarrassing someone, *chesed*, *tzedakah* etc brings about a consciousness that every other part of the G-d given Torah is the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Gut Shabbos,

Rav Brazil