

DAF TSAFON

5 July 2025
9 Tamuz 5785

Parashat Chukat
ArtScroll 838 Hertz 652



In our Parasha we are confronted with death. We read of the death of Miriam, the result of Moshe striking of the rock which leads to the death of Ahron and the decree of death against Moshe. And of course, the start of the parasha which discusses the strange law of the Red Heifer, the red cow which purified one who had come into contact with a dead person.

This gives me the opportunity to discuss the laws of Nichum Aveilim, comforting the mourner and what is required of a visitor to a house of mourning. We are told in the Mishna, one of the activities which has tremendous reward in the World to Come is the mitzvah of Nichum Aveilim – comforting the mourner. According to certain authorities, it is a mitzvah in the Torah, part of Gemilut Chassadim, acts of kindness. Some derive it from the story in Genesis, when Avraham died God blessed Yitzchak. The Talmud itself interprets this to mean that God comforted the bereaved, Yitzchak.

But what is required of us?

The Shulchan Aruch, the code of Jewish law teaches us the principle which is essential:

“The comforters are not permitted to begin speaking until the mourner speaks first.”

“Upon entering or leaving the house of the mourner, the visitor should not extend greetings to him, because such greetings are not appropriate to one who is grieving.”

When the visitor gets up to leave, he should say Hamakom... May the Almighty console you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

The obligation as we see it, is to visit the house of mourning, to sit quietly and then if engaged in conversation, respond. It is not for us to initiate conversation.

One may not make a comment such as, “What can you do?” – as that implies that we could do something. Instead, we say Baruch Dayan Ha’Emet, blessed is the true judge.

What is the rationale behind the law?

When a person is in mourning people feel that they have an obligation to make them feel better. So, they may tell a story about a loss that they have suffered in order to take the mourner’s mind off the mourning. NO! The mourner needs to come to terms with the loss and certainly is not interested in what you have to say. They want to talk about the loss, what the deceased meant to them etc. That is the act of comforting the mourner, not to drive them mad with your prattle!

The second point of this law is, **what can you really say to give the mourner comfort?** They need to know that you are there for them, so that they can talk. If they don’t want to talk, that is also OK.

I remember attending a funeral of a young child whose father was a Rabbi. How does one comfort a Rabbi for his loss? Whatever I would say he had heard anyway. So, I asked my Rabbi. He said that my obligation is to enter and to sit with the mourner which is what I did. It gave the Rabbi comfort, and I felt that I had helped him even by not speaking.

The same Law applies to another mitzvah of Bikkur Cholim, visiting the sick. There is no obligation to initiate the conversation, neither is there any obligation to speak about your own illness or some relative who was sick and was in a worse situation. The patient really does not care. The patient is suffering enough without your talking!

As the Orchot Chaim writes: “My son, be mindful when you visit the sick, for the visitor eases his illness”. Try to help him return to his Creator and pray for him. Then depart, and do not allow your presence to be a burden on him for his illness is enough of a burden. When you go to visit the patient, be happy and cheerful. Converse joyfully, for his eyes and heart depend upon those who come to visit him.

Shabbat Shalom

Haftarah

ArtScroll 1187

Hertz 664

The King of Ammon sought to recapture from Israel the land that had once been the heritage of Ammon’s kinsman, Moab. In one of history’s earliest recorded diplomatic exchanges, Jephthah refuted Ammon’s claims to the land and offered that nation a chance to withdraw graciously its demands and its armies. Then, when his warnings went unheeded, Jephthah invoked the Divine intervention that delivered Ammon into his hand.

מזל טוב



Mazal Tov

We wish a big Mazal Tov to our
Bat Mitzvah

SARAH GERGELY

daughter of Peter and Esther, elder sister of Hannah,
and cherished granddaughter of
Peter and Susan Kadar & Juli and Pali Gergely.

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to Sarah, as well as
her family and friends
on this very special occasion.

מזל טוב

Wedding anniversary

Trevor and Jackie Collins

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Saturday, 19 July** - Shabbat Mevarachim – Sit Down Kiddush
Guest Speaker: Colonel Michael Scott CSC, GAICD
- **Saturday, 2 August** – Tisha B'av Service & Movie Night
- **Monday, 4 August** – NSS Annual General Meeting
- **Sunday, 10 August** – Songs for Heroes

**Our congregation acknowledges the following
yahrzeit anniversaries and wishes long life to those
who are commemorating a yahrzeit
during the coming week.**

חיים ארוכים

Sheila Adelstein	mother of Stephen Adelstein and Barbara-Ann Adelstein
Paul Henry Balla	father of Audrey Balla and Sandra Levenston
Benjamin Simon Braham	husband of Belinda Braham, father of Sophie Braham
Gertrude (Trudie) Collins	mother of Trevor Collins
Lara Friedman	daughter of Sharon Friedman
Daniel Leonard Herrman	brother of Jonathan Herrman
Lisa Hubner	mother of Judy Marks
Barbara Rachel Kamlade	sister of Norman Olbourne
Sandra Ruth Levy	sister of Jacob Levy
Ethel Milch	mother-in-law of Sharon Milch
Harry Miller	father of Jules Miller
Keith Neumegan	brother of Miriam Myers
Johan Petersen	father of Tina Vander Heyden
Marta Vickers	mother of Peter Vickers, grandmother of Naomi Brandon and Rachel Abudy