

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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July 1, 2017

Chukat

7 Tamuz, 5777

Fireworks

Did you know that the Walt Disney Company is the largest consumer of fireworks in the United States? Or that they were invented in China in the seventh century?

National Day Celebrations, Guy Fawkes Night, Independence Day. Looking up toward the stars on the Fourth of July in the USA, one can hardly miss the breathtaking sight of fireworks exploding all over the summer sky. Eyes darting here and there, exclamations of "oohs" and "ahhs" escaping the lips, fireworks are a special treat for young and old.

Did you ever wonder why we are supposed to say a blessing over every piece of food we eat? Or why the "Shema" is written on a piece of animal skin (parchment) and affixed up on the doorpost? Or did you ever think it a bit strange that the Torah spends so much time discussing the sacrifices or exactly which part of one's fields must be left available for the poor? And what about wrapping tefilin ... lighting a candle for Shabbat ... keeping meat and dairy separate ... Why do Jews do these things and more?

The answer is, spiritual fireworks!

Chasidic philosophy explains that G-d created everything with a spark of holiness. The holiness started out as one entity which "exploded." The sparks of the explosion scattered everywhere and were buried within every part of Creation. This explosion was no cosmic accident, though. It was part of G-d's master-plan for the world and His creations.

When we say a blessing over food before eating it, we are elevating the spark of holiness within the food. By using the energy that we derive from the food to do a mitzva (commandment) - like help an old lady carry her shopping bags home, we are further elevating the spark.

That we are ultimately elevating holy sparks by doing mitzvot does not negate the fact that we are also gaining from performing the mitzvot. Saying a blessing is good manners, it teaches us to be thankful to the One who has given us the food. Helping a little old lady can further refine our character and encourages us not to take for granted our good health and strength.

Like real fireworks, we can't see with the "naked eye" exactly where the spiritual sparks go once they've been released. But, when we do mitzvot, we can be assured that the sparks have been elevated. And, can you imagine what a beautiful sight it must be Above when those sparks are released!

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

**"Then Moshe raised his arm and struck the rock with his staff twice;
abundant water came forth and the assembly and their animals drank." (20:11)**

Midrash Rabbah relates: Moshe hit the rock once and water began to trickle out, as is written (Tehilim 78:20), "He struck a rock and water dripped." Bnei Yisrael said to him, "Son of Amram! This is enough water only for a nursing child!" Immediately, Moshe became angry and hit the rock twice. Then the water washed over those who had been mocking, as is written (also in Tehilim 78:20), "Streams flooded forth."

Why did Hashem make the water flow begin as a mere trickle?

R' Eliyahu Hakohen ("Ba'al Shevet Mussar"; Izmir, Turkey; died 1729) answers: The Talmud Yerushalmi (Shekalim ch.6) foretells a day when water will flow from the Holy of Holies in the Bet Hamikdash. That stream will begin as narrow as the antennae of the smallest insect, then it will widen to the width of a grasshopper's antennae, and then it will continue widening and becoming deeper until it is a fierce river. [Until here from the Yerushalmi]. R' Eliyahu continues: Hashem wished to give Bnei Yisrael in the desert a taste of this miracle, so He caused the water to flow in a trickle at first. Had Bnei Yisrael been patient, this trickle would have become a gushing river.

(continued on the other side)

This answers another question, R' Eliyahu writes. The Torah says (verse 12), "Hashem said to Moshe and to Aharon, 'Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of Bnei Yisrael ...'" What did Moshe Rabbeinu do wrong? Why does the Torah accuse Moshe Rabbeinu of lacking faith and preventing the sanctification of Hashem's Name? The answer is that by losing his patience and hitting the rock again, Moshe prevented the above-mentioned miracle from occurring.

R' Eliyahu adds: What is the purpose of this miracle? One possibility is that the appearance of a raging river that began as an almost microscopic trickle coming out of the Holy of Holies—a place where there is no natural spring—will reinforce mankind's belief in Creation "yesh me'ayin" / "something out of nothing." Another possibility is to indicate that the closer one is to holiness, the smaller he appears at first; in the end, however, an overpowering rush of holiness will sweep away the wicked who are distant from holiness. (Aggadot Eliyahu: Shekalim)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

On July 5-6 **Ahavas Yisrael** will be conducting its annual 24-hour donor matching campaign with the goal of raising \$1 million to help our community's most needy families. **During this time, every donation will be quadrupled.** Please consider joining us at our call center to help spread the word on the day of the event. Delicious food throughout! To sign up, go to: <https://www.volunteersignup.org/JKAT8>



We happily wish Mazel Tov to
Mr. Reuven and Mrs. Gavi Frank
on the **birth of their daughter, Miriam Binah.**

Mazel Tov also to the grandparents:
Mr. Michael and Mrs. Terry Frank and **Mr. Meier and Mrs. Sarah Leah Palanker.**
A special Mazel Tov to the great grandmothers: **Sally Friedman** and **Lilian Palanker.**

Yahrzeits This Week:

Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan 13 Tamuz - Thurs night/Friday for father HoRav Moshe Binyomin ben HoRav Aryeh Laib

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 6/30 — 6 Tamuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 7/1 — 7 Tamuz
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:24 a.m.
Berachot Gemara Shiur — 7:05 p.m.
Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 8:05 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 9:20 p.m.

Sunday, 7/2 — 8 Tamuz
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Monday, 7/3 — 9 Tamuz
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Tuesday, 7/4 — 10 Tamuz
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Wednesday, 7/5 — 11 Tamuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Thursday, 7/6 — 12 Tamuz
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Friday, 7/7 — 13 Tamuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Candles — 8:17 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.