



***Authentic Kabbalah - Sephardic Studies  
Benei Noah Studies - Anti-Missionary/Anti-Cult Materials***

## ***The Nature of the Mysterious and the Secret of Faith Commentary to Parashat Hukat***

*By Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok  
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One of the greatest handicaps of the human race is the limitation that is inherent within the human mental faculties. As intelligent, inquisitive, rational and analytical as we humans can be, in the greater scheme of things, we as a race are really an ignorant and primitive bunch.

There was a time, in our distant past, when this was not true. We referred to that era as Gan Eden and "before the fall." Our holy Rabbanim have taught that Adam, prior to the sin, was able to "look from one end of the world to the other." This is a reference to Adam's original superior state of intellect, with which nothing in existence (physical or metaphysical) was outside of his ability to examine, comprehend and assimilate into his reality.

When we speak of the "fall of Adam," keep in mind that the "fall" came about through eating the fruit from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil. In essence, it was the knowledge of evil that caused Adam to fall. Therefore, it is the nature of this fall that must be understood. The knowledge of evil, instead of expanding Adam's intellectual abilities and consciousness, caused them to become severely limited, leaving us in our present human condition of being intellectually handicapped. Our human intellectual handicap, brought about as a result of the fall, now disables us from directly experiencing, understanding and assimilating the higher intellectual/mental faculties known to us today as the realm of the spiritual.

The realm of the spiritual is and always has been an area of higher human mental function. This realm enables the human to experience multiple dimensions of existence

not limited to the physical existence experienced by us through our human brain and the sensory receptors which connect us to and interpret for us the external physical world. In order to rectify our fallen intellect, HaShem gave to Benei Yisrael the Torah. The study of Torah, therefore, has been throughout the centuries the paramount mitzvah.

The Divine reason underlying the commandment to study Torah day and night is two-fold. First, as Pirkei Avot says, it is the study that leads to doing. In other words, with our limited human intellect we cannot possibly know or conceive of the proper form for human society. Therefore, following our limited human intellects inevitably leads us into conflicts, shortages and destruction. The history of the human race not guided by Torah is proof of this. Thus, Torah comes to teach us correct action, 613 mitzvot for the Jew, 7 general categories of mitzvot for the Gentile. When these are observed to the letter, human society can prosper and grow. Thus, the value of the Torah is immeasurable in that it is the necessary foundation of human civilization. Yet, the Torah is also more than this.

The second and most profound function of Torah study is that it expands the human mind and teaches the one who studies it how to think. Torah study refines the minds of its students, enabling them to experience the higher plans of human intellect today referred to as the spiritual realms. It is only through long vigorous study of Torah that the mind is rectified. Once rectified through Torah study and practice one again becomes intuitively aware of the higher dimensions. Thus, the Torah is called the Tree of Life. For once, the human intellect is elevated; the human consciousness called the soul is able to find its way "home" among the spiritual planes.

The soul enlightened by Torah is no longer handicapped and thus is no longer lost among the temptations and confusions of the physical world, like all the other souls. The soul enlightened by Torah thus is separated from the other souls, which remain mired in the filth of human degradation. The soul enlightened by Torah knows of the higher worlds, unseen to others. The soul enlightened by Torah hears the Higher Voice emanating from the Torah between its words (the Bat Kol) and follows its directions – even when such directions appear foolish and meaningless to those of lesser, handicapped intelligence.

The perfect case in point of a seemingly irrational spiritual act, which makes no physical sense, is the mitzvah of the Parah Adumah. The Parah Adumah (Red Heifer) was a special sacrifice whose ashes were used to cleanse the unclean, whereas at the same time these same ashes make unclean the Kohen priest who is preparing them. How is it that ashes that cleanse at the same time imbue impurity? The contradiction is mind boggling.

Rashi begins his commentary on this Parasha expressing this same sentiment and concludes, quoting Midrash Tanhuma, that the Parah Adumah is a Hok (Edict) of HaShem. We do not possess the authority to question it. We do not possess the wisdom to understand it. A Hok (Edict) is a type of Divine command whose rational transcends the limitations of present human mental faculties. If we tried to understand

this mitzvah we would only be able to conclude that it is totally irrational and that it makes no sense whatsoever. Nonetheless, it is a commandment of HaShem. We are required to observe it, in spite of the fact that others looking at us will consider us foolish for doing such an irrational and apparently absurd act.

Yet, HaShem knows more about creation and the universe than we do. HaShem cannot be limited by frail and retarded human intellect. Just because we do not understand or believe in the spiritual realms does not make them any less real. We still interact with unseen and undetectable worlds on a daily basis. In Korah like arrogance, the handicapped human mind seeks to reject the reality and existence of anything it cannot understand. Sticking one's head in the sand does not make the world to disappear. One is simply putting oneself into a position to have one's head chopped off, without ever knowing what hit him.

To rectify this was Torah given. Yet, we who observe the Torah must exercise a supra-rational level of human intellect in order to receive Torah's benefits. This supra-rational level of human intellect begins with a character trait, which we call – Faith.

Parashat Hukat was given to us to teach us faith. Faith is the most important ingredient in the life of a student of Torah and servant of HaShem. So important is faith that the Talmud (Macot 24A) states that the entire Torah can be summed up into a single message proclaimed by the prophet Habakkuk "the righteous shall live by his faith."

When Benei Yisrael again sin against HaShem, He punishes them with a plague of scorpions. The method that HaShem relates to Moshe Rabbeynu for healing those bitten by the poisonous serpents is to gaze upon the brass serpent (nahash nehoshet). It was the mere act of faith in HaShem; the mere gazing upon an image that neutralized poisonous venom and allowed the inflicted individual to recover.

By power of faith, the Benei Yisrael warred with two mighty kings, Og and Sihon, who were descendants of a giant race, and not fully human. These same Benei Yisrael in last weeks Parasha were condemned to wander in the desert for forty years because of their lack of faith. Now, that they have found faith, they are victorious.

Faith, in and of itself is only a means to an end. Faith enables the human mind to experience life beyond the limitations of an intellect that is convinced it knows best about what is possible and impossible. Acting in faith is step number one is realizing that we do live in a world greater than what we merely experience with our senses.

Faith convinces the mind that there is greater opportunity and potential than meets the eye. Faith motivates one to explore the inner space of higher dimensions. Faith burns in one's soul and passionately drives one forward to improve oneself and one's environment. Faith impels one to learn more, do more and learn more again to do more again. Faith assures you that even what appears to be stupid on the outside might have the most profound and sublime meaning on the inside. Yet, without faith such an inside would forever remain invisible.

The precise reasons as to why the Parah Adumah makes the clean to be unclean and the unclean to become clean is not really important. What matters most is that the mitzvah of the Parah Adumah performs the functions for which it was Divinely ordained. In our many sins, we no longer have the ashes of the red heifer to cleanse us all of our uncleanness. Because of our collective state of ritual uncleanness none of us to this day can step foot on the Temple mount, for fear that we would stand upon holy ground while impure and thus bring judgement down upon our heads. Even this is a mystery which the truly G-d fearing accept and observe in faith.

There are an infinite number of parallel dimensions and other worlds, some are corporeal, and others are purely spiritual. Yet, somehow by G-d's great design all these worlds and dimensions are intertwined one with another. What happens in one affects the others. Therefore, our observance of the mitzvot indeed has a reverberatory affect upon dimensions and worlds unseen by our physical eye. When we deny this due to our limited mental abilities to comprehend a reality of such profound magnitude, we are like those detractors who mocked Benei Yisrael for believing in the apparently ridiculous belief that a red cow can somehow make one pure and impure all at the same time.

Those of us who know, trust in HaShem. Those of us who trust in HaShem know. Know what, you ask? We know that there is a greater level of existence than can be physically experienced. We endeavor to sharpen our minds so that when the higher realms are experienced we can comprehend them as best as is humanly possible. We know that this can only come about by our study of Torah and by observance of its mitzvot. We know that we do not understand everything that the Torah teaches us. Nonetheless, we will devote our lives to continuing Talmud Torah (learning) and continued human growth until such a time when we can again merit to have the ashes of the Parah Adumah sprinkled over us by Eliyahu HaNavi in preparation of the coming of Mashiah.