

### Is Having Children a Logical Decision?<sup>1</sup>

Would it be logical to willingly sign up for a situation that will:

Cost you lots of money?

Cause you countless sleepless nights?

Create innumerable messes (some really smelly ones!)?

Rob you of hard-to-come-by time, at a period in your life when you are busiest?

Wreak havoc on your body (and, possibly, your marriage)?

Provide you with crushing responsibility for years to come?

Offer no guarantees (whatsoever!) of outcome?

And yet, so many of us willingly embark on parenthood.

Professor L. A. Paul, a distinguished metaphysics philosopher, explains that deciding to have children is not a rational decision. Rational decisions are based on outcomes, but having children is an epistemically transformative experience" (i.e., it can change everything you know to be true). You cannot know what the experience of having your own child will be like until you experience it.

You may be so transformed by this baby that his or her well-being becomes more important than your own. You may be completely changed, finding room within yourself for another who becomes as important, or even more important, than your own self

Does that make sense? No. Is it logical? No. But some of the greatest experiences in life result from actions that go far beyond logic.

**Chukat refers to supra-rational laws**, keeping G-d's laws due to our devotion to His will even when it is beyond our understanding. It begins with the most enigmatic law—the law of the red heifer, whose ashes were sprinkled on those who became ritually impure.

The clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean person ... and he shall be clean at evening ... But] he who sprinkles the water of sprinkling ... shall be unclean.—NUMBERS 19:19-21

One of the fascinating things about this ritual is that although the ashes purify the impure individual, the kohen performing this act becomes impure himself!

Midrash Tanchuma elucidates:

All who are involved in the preparation of the heifer, from beginning to the end, become impure, but the heifer itself purifies the impure! G-d says: "I have made a *chok*, a decree ..."

**The Torah is teaching us to care about another person's impurity and corruption and to do everything within our power to rehabilitate him.**

What about the time, energy, and resources that it will rob me of? What if my contact with him will diminish me, emotionally, materially, and spiritually?

Just as the Torah instructs the kohen, who is very careful not to become impure, to do so, so must we.

Does it make sense? No. Is it logical? No.

But life isn't about doing things that are only logical. Our lives are about transcending our egos—putting aside our own self-interests, opening ourselves up to loving another, and doing something purely out of our devotion to G-d's will even when we cannot fathom the reasoning behind it.

Indeed, some of the greatest experiences in life result from actions that go beyond logic.

1. *Chukat* refers to supra-rational laws, keeping G-d's laws due to our devotion to His will even when it is beyond our understanding.

a. Generally speaking, the mitzvot are divided into two categories: logical *mishpatim* ("laws" or "judgements") and supra-rational *chukkim* ("decrees").

The *mishpatim* are mitzvot such as the commandment to give charity or the prohibitions against theft and murder, whose reason and utility are obvious to us, and which we would arguably have instituted on our own if G-d had not commanded them. The *chukkim* are those mitzvot, such as the dietary laws or the laws of family purity, which we accept as divine decrees, despite their incomprehensibility and—in the most extreme of *chukkim*—their irrationality.

[A third category, the *eidot* ("testimonials"), occupies the middle ground between the decrees and the laws. A testimonial is a mitzvah which commemorates or represents something—e.g., the commandments to put on *tefillin*, rest on Shabbat, or eat matzah on Passover. These are laws which we would not have devised on our own, certainly not in the exact manner in which the Torah commands; nevertheless, they are rational acts. Once their significance is explained to us, we can appreciate their import and utility.]

Yet **each of these terms—*mishpatim*, *chukkim* and *eidot*—is also used by the Torah as a synonym for "mitzvah" and a reference**

<sup>1</sup> Chana Weisberg, *Shabbat deLights*, Vayikra/BaMidbar/Devarim, (Chabad.org), pp. 149-151.

**to all commandments of the Torah.** A case in point is the Torah section of Mishpatim (Exodus 21-24), which opens with G-d's words to Moses, "And these are the *mishpatim* that you shall set before them." The 53 mitzvot that follow are indeed primarily logical laws, but they also include a number of "testimonials" and at least one supra-rational "decree"—the last mitzvah in the series, which is the prohibition against mixing meat with milk ("Do not cook a kid in its mother's milk").<sup>2</sup>

b. Chukat Parshah Commentary<sup>3</sup>

1) *This is the decree (chok) of the Torah... (Num 19:2)*

This phrase can be understood in two ways. On one level it means that *this--the law of the red heifer--is the ultimate "decree," the most supra-rational of all the Torah's precepts.* A deeper meaning is that all of Torah is, in essence, divine decree. It is only that with many of the mitzvot, the supra-rational divine will comes "clothed" in garments of reason (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi).

2) In everything that G-d taught Moses, He would tell him both the manner of contamination and the manner of purification. When G-d came to the laws concerning one who comes in contact with a dead body, Moses said to Him: "Master of the universe! If one is thus contaminated, how may he be purified?" G-d did not answer him. At that moment, the face of Moses turned pale.

When G-d came to the section of the red heifer, He said to Moses: "This is its manner of purification." Said Moses to G-d: "Master of the universe! This is a purification?" Said G-d: "Moses, it is a *chok*, a decree that I have decreed, and no creature can fully comprehend My decrees" (Midrash Rabbah).

3) In reference to what did King Solomon say (Ecc 7:23), "I thought to be wise to it, but it is distant from me"? He said: "All of the Torah's commandments I have comprehended. But the chapter of the red heifer, though I have examined it, questioned it and searched it out—I **thought to be wise to it, but it is distant from me**" (Midrash Rabbah)

4) Nine red heifers were prepared from the time that the Jewish people were commanded this mitzvah until the Second Temple was destroyed. The first was prepared by Moses, the second by Ezra, and another seven were prepared from Ezra until the

Temple's destruction. The tenth Heifer will be prepared by Moshiach, may he speedily be revealed, Amen, may it be the will of G-d (Mishneh Torah<sup>4</sup>).

2. *The Torah is teaching us to care about another person's impurity and corruption and to do everything within our power to rehabilitate him.*

- a. The fact that the ashes of the heifer "purify the contaminated and contaminate the pure" carries an important lesson to us in our daily lives: **If your fellow has been infected by impurity and corruption, do not hesitate to get involved and do everything within your power to rehabilitate him.** If you are concerned that you may become tainted by your contact with him, remember that the Torah commands the *kohen* to purify his fellow Jew, even though his own level of purity will be diminished in the process (The Lubavitcher Rebbe).<sup>5</sup>

b. Matthew 9:10-13

<sup>10</sup>While Yeshua was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.

<sup>11</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>12</sup>On hearing this, Yeshua said, **"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."** <sup>13</sup>But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

c. Matthew 11:16-19

<sup>16</sup>"To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: <sup>17</sup>"We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' <sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they

4 The Mishneh Torah is a purely legal work. As he explains in his introduction, Maimonides included only the final rulings of Torah law, leaving out the reasoning and deliberations behind them, in order to make it a readily accessible guide to daily life for all. Also in those rare cases in which Maimonides appears to "digress" and interject a philosophical insight or some background information, upon closer examination these always prove to be a statement of law and a practical instruction on daily living.

The same is true of the above quoted passage. At first glance, it appears to be a brief piece of history concerning the red heifer, followed by a prayerful appeal to the Almighty to send Moshiach. But Maimonides is demonstrating to us the true definition of "belief in Moshiach." **To believe in Moshiach is not just to believe that he will someday come, but to expect his coming on a daily, hourly, and momentary basis.** It means that no matter what you are discussing, the subject turns to Moshiach at the slightest provocation. It means that in the midst of arranging the laws of the red heifer, a spontaneous plea erupts from the depths of your heart: "May he speedily be revealed, Amen, may it be the will of G-d!"

5 [https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/2961/jewish/Commentary.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2961/jewish/Commentary.htm)

2 [www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/2797/jewish/The-Logic-of-the-Mitzvot.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2797/jewish/The-Logic-of-the-Mitzvot.htm)

3 [https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/2961/jewish/Commentary.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2961/jewish/Commentary.htm)

say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>19</sup>The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her deeds" (i.e., "the proof is in the pudding.")

3. *Indeed, some of the greatest experiences in life result from actions that go beyond logic.*

a. Joshua 6:1-7

<sup>1</sup>Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. <sup>2</sup>Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. <sup>3</sup>March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. <sup>4</sup>Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns (i.e., *shofarot*) in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. <sup>5</sup>**When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in.**" <sup>6</sup>So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." <sup>7</sup>And he ordered the army, "Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD."

b. Joshua 4:1-5:

<sup>1</sup>**When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan**, the LORD said to Joshua ...

<sup>4:19</sup>On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan **and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho.**

<sup>5:2</sup>At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again." <sup>3</sup>So Joshua ... circumcised the Israelites at Giv-at Ha'aralot. <sup>4</sup>Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. <sup>5</sup>All the people that came out had been circumcised, **but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not ...**

<sup>8</sup>And after the whole nation had been circumcised, **they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.** <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.

<sup>10</sup>On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover ...

1) Gilgal is approximately 10-12 miles east of Jericho.

c. Jonah 1:1-3

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: <sup>2</sup>"Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." <sup>3</sup>**But Jonah ran away from the LORD ...** He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for ... Tarshish **to flee from the LORD.**

1) There is an old saying, "you can run but you can't hide." This means you can try to escape what you fear most but ultimately you must face it. This saying originated in the United States in the 1940s and is attributed to boxing great Joe Louis (the Brown Bomber) describing his impending fight with light heavy weight champion Billy Conn (the Pittsburgh Kid).

4. <sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: <sup>2</sup>"This is a *requirement of the law* (תקת התורה) that the LORD has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you **a red heifer without defect or blemish** and that has never been under a yoke. <sup>3</sup>Give it to Eleazar the priest; **it is to be taken outside the camp** and slaughtered in his presence. <sup>4</sup>Then Eleazar the priest is to take some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the front of the tent of meeting. <sup>5</sup>While he watches, the heifer is to be burned—its hide, flesh, blood and intestines. <sup>6</sup>The priest is to take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning heifer. <sup>7</sup>After that, the priest must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water. He may then come into the camp, but he will be ceremonially unclean till evening. <sup>8</sup>The man who burns it must also wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he too will be unclean till evening. <sup>9</sup>"A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp. They are to be kept by the Israelite community for use in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from sin. <sup>10</sup>The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also wash his clothes, and he too will be unclean till evening. **This will be a lasting ordinance ...**

a. Hebrews 9:11-14

<sup>11</sup>But when Messiah came as high priest **of the GOOD THINGS that are now already here**, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, **is not a part of this creation.** <sup>12</sup>He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup>**The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.** <sup>14</sup>**HOW MUCH MORE**, then, will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblem-

ished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

1) This argument is *kal v'chomer* - one of "The Seven Rules of Hillel."

*Kal v'khomer* (light and heavy) is the first of the seven rules for understanding the scriptures written by Hillel. **Hillel did not invent the rules**—they are so old we see them used in the Tenach.

a) The *kal v'komer* thought-form is used to make an argument from lesser weight to one of greater weight—it is often, but not always, signaled by a phrase like "**how much more** ..."

2) There are several examples of *kal v'khomer* in the Tenach:

a) Deuteronomy 31:27

... If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, **how much more** will you rebel after I die!

b) 1Samuel 23:1-3

<sup>1</sup>When David was told, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah ...," <sup>2</sup>he inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" The LORD answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah." <sup>3</sup>But David's men said to him, "Here in Judah we are afraid. **How much more**, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!"

c) 2Kings 5:13-14

<sup>13</sup>Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? **How much more**, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" <sup>14</sup>So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times ... and his flesh was restored ...

d) Jeremiah 12:5a

"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, **how can you compete** with horses? If you stumble in safe country, **how will you manage** in the thickets by the Jordan?"

e) Matthew 7:7-11

<sup>7</sup>"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>9</sup>"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup>Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? <sup>11</sup>If you, then, though you are (bad), know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more** will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

f) Matthew 12:9-13

<sup>9</sup>... (Yeshua) went into their synagogue, <sup>10</sup>and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Yeshua, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" <sup>11</sup>He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? <sup>12</sup>**How much more** valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." <sup>13</sup>Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored ...

g) Romans 5:9-10, 17

<sup>9</sup>Since we have now been justified by his blood, **how much more** shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! <sup>10</sup>For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, **how much more**, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ...

<sup>17</sup>For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, **how much more** will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Yeshua the Messiah!

h) 2Corinthians 3:7-9

<sup>7</sup>Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, **came with glory** ... <sup>8</sup>will not the ministry of the Spirit **be even more glorious?** <sup>9</sup>**If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more** glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

i) Hebrews 12:9

<sup>9</sup>Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. **How much more** should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!

3) **In order for the author of Hebrews to use this argument effectively, THE "LIGHTER" PRINCIPLE MUST BE TRUE—OTHERWISE THE "HEAVIER" PRINCIPLE CANNOT BE DERIVED FROM IT.**

a) **THE PRIESTHOOD OF AARON MUST EFFECTIVELY RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OF OUR SEPARATION FROM GOD IN THE OLAM HAZEH FOR THE PRIESTHOOD OF YESHUA TO EFFECTIVELY CONNECT US TO GOD IN THE OLAM HABAH.**

b) Aaron is the high priest of "good things"—Yeshua is the high priest of "greater things" (v. 11).

c) Aaron entered the earthly Tabernacle by "means of the blood of goats and calves"—Yeshua entered the heavenly Tabernacle by "his own blood" (v. 12).

- d) The blood of earthly sacrifices sanctifies those who are “ceremonially unclean” making them “outwardly clean,” i.e., effecting “the cleansing of the flesh (NAS) (v. 13)—the blood of Yeshua cleanses “our conscience,” i.e., who we are on the “inside” (v.14).

1] This parallelism in vv. 13-14 is important:

- a] In Hebrew thought, a person is an “inner being” and an “outer reputation.”
- b] Or, what we are on the “inside” and the way we “appear” on the “outside.”
- c] Or, a *neshamah* (a living soul) housed in a body of “flesh.”
- d] So, this contrast is about the difference in the “sanctity” effected by Aaron’s earthly ministry and as over against Yeshua’s heavenly ministry.

- 4) The fact that the author of Hebrews “combines” the “blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer” (9:13) shows that he has an *Olam HaZeh—Olam HaBah* contrast in view. Why?

There are many things that are quite unfamiliar to sacrificial ritual in the text regarding the Red Heifer.

- a) The color of the heifer is important—it had to be red (v. 2), presumably because of the color of blood.
  - 1] In the standard sacrifices of Lev 1-9, there is no mention of the color of the animal that is to be offered; the only requirements are in configuration and perfection.
- b) The factor that makes this pericope (passage) unique is that the animal involved is *not* a sacrificial animal!
  - 1] This was a cow, not a bull (cf. Lev 1:3, “a male without defect”).
  - 2] It was *slaughtered*, not sacrificed (v. 3).
  - 3] It was killed *outside the camp*, not at the holy altar (v. 3).
  - 4] The blood of sacrificial animals was sprinkled against the altar on both sides (see Lev 1:5)—some of the blood of the heifer was sprinkled from the priest’s finger *seven times toward the front of the Tent of Meeting* (v. 4).
  - 5] Instead of separating the hide and dung from the meat and fat of the sacrificial victim (as with the sin offering [see Lev 4:3-12]), the heifer was to remain intact while it was burned (v. 5).

- c) It is primarily the ashes of the red heifer (Num 19:9) that are the focus of this act, for they will be used in the ritual of the waters of cleansing.

- 1] The burning of the animal with its blood and dung is unprecedented—the normal pattern for the sacrifice of the burnt offering is given in Lev 1:3-9.

- d) The burnt offering & the red heifer—striking differences:

1] With the burnt offering:

- a] It had to be male.
- b] It was presented at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting
- c] The priest was to place his hand on the burnt offering in identification of the act of atonement.
- d] It was to be sacrificed at the altar.
- e] The blood was to be sprinkled on the altar, not burned with the animal.
- f] The animal was to be skinned and cut in pieces.
- g] Special attention was to be given to burning the head and the fat.
- h] The various parts were to be cleansed and washed before being burned.

2] With the red heifer:

- a] It had to be female.
- b] It was taken outside the camp to be killed.
- c] The priest had to be present, but there was no identification made with it.
- d] A bit of its blood was sprinkled from the priest’s finger toward the tabernacle seven times.
- e] The rest of the animal was to be burned in its entirety, without the draining of its blood or the cleansing of its dung.
- f] Its ashes were used for cleansing.

- e) The priest who officiates at the burning of the heifer and the one who does the actual work at his command are ceremonially unclean for the rest of the day—both may be considered clean after washing their bodies and their clothes.

- 1] Since they are unclean, they are not to handle the ashes after the fire has died down (v. 9)—a third person, one



who is ritually clean, must take them to a place outside the camp that is ceremonially clean.

2] The ashes cannot be brought into the camp—but they are holy.

3] Only a clean person can touch them—but in touching them—that person himself becomes unclean.

4] **The text serves as a field day for allegorists—but the fact is the elements are not explained—it is a SOD!**

b. Hebrews 13:11-14

The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp.<sup>12</sup> **And so Yeshua also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.** <sup>13</sup>**Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.** <sup>14</sup>**For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.**

c. **The fire of the burnt offering was augmented with cedar, hyssop, and scarlet stuff (perhaps scarlet-colored wool) (Num 19:6).**

1) These elements were also employed in the purification ritual of the leper (see Lev 14:40).

a] Rashi points out that hyssop is a **lowly plant** - the Hebrew word for red wool, *tola'at*, also means worm, a **lowly creature**. This reminds the *Metzora* that his origin is *adama*, and that **he is lowly**. But the tall, mighty cedar is also important. **Hyssop and cedar must be in balance**. Just as the cedar stands tall and mighty, so must Adam. But Adam must also recognize his lowliness, his fragility—like the hyssop.<sup>6</sup>

2) Psalms 51:1-7

<sup>1</sup>When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba ...

<sup>2</sup>**Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin ...**

<sup>7</sup>**Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean ...**

d. Numbers 19:7

<sup>7</sup>*the priest must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water. He may then come into the camp, but he will be ceremonially unclean till evening.*

1) Hebrews 9:10

They are ... a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings external regulations applying **until the time of the new order**.

a) Part of the same *kal v'chomer* argument mentioned above (Heb 9:14)—the things “external” have to do with the *Olam HaZeh*—the “new order” obviously has to do with the *Olam HaBah*.

b) AND, unless Ezekiel 40-48 is a complete metaphor (which it isn't), the same “external regulations” will be in effect when Messiah comes and establishes the Kingdom.

e. Numbers 19:10

<sup>10</sup>*The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also wash his clothes, and he too will be unclean till evening. **This will be a lasting ordinance** both for the Israelites and for the foreigners residing among them.*

1) The celebration of Passover (Exo 12:14, 24).

2) The celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exo 12:17).

3) The menorah is to be kept burning before the Lord (Exo 27:21; Lev 24:3).

4) The Aaronic priesthood (Exo 28:43; 29:9).

5) Not eating fat or blood (Lev 3:17).

6) The ritual associated with the slaughter of the red heifer (Num 19:10, 21).

7) The offering of the First-fruits (Lev 23:14).

8) The celebration of Shavuot (Lev 23:21).

9) The celebration of Sukkot (Lev 23:41).