

SHABBAT GUIDE

CHUKAT

ABOUT THE STORY OF CHUKAT

The word *chukat* means "laws, ethics, and decrees." From a kabbalistic point of view, we know the Bible is not about laws and actions that we "have" to do. Instead, the Bible is about the Universal Law of Cause and Effect. We should always think clearly about any actions we take, and what and whom we are affecting with them. When studying the Bible, which teaches us about our own lives, we should always apply its lessons to search out the reasons behind all of our actions. In this way, we will understand our own karmic impulses and influences as well as our *tikkun* (correction) process.

MICHAEL BERG ON CHUKAT

In the Midrash, there is a story about when Abraham sent his son Ishmael away with his mother. She's in the desert, doesn't see any water, and thinks she's going to die of thirst. But then it says the Creator opened up her eyes, and she sees the wellspring of water. The Midrash tells us to remember this phrase: "Everybody must know that they are blind until the Creator opens up their eyes."

The understanding is that we are constantly blind, which means that, truly, we don't understand or see anything. Even though our conscious, logical mind is trying to tell us that we're seeing, understanding, and knowing, it is all lies. We have no idea what's going on until the Creator opens up our eyes. We have to live our life knowing that 99.9% of the time we're seeing lies and illusions; however, every once in a while the Creator is going to open up our eyes.

Everything that any person ever needs is there for them. Whenever a person worries how they are going to make money, feed their children, and so on, the solution, the assistance, is there. Whatever problems we think we have, the solution is right there in front of

us. If we have a lack in our life, the fulfillment of that lack exists at the same time, and it is right in front of us. But because we live in the illusion of this world, we can't see it.

Almost everything we're seeing right now is not true, and if we merit it, every once in a while, the Creator will open up our eyes. We see a little bit of truth here, a little bit of truth there, but most of the time, we have to accept that much of what we're seeing is not true. Second, is the understanding that the answer we need at any given time to everything is always right there. The solution, the assistance, is right there. And if we have that consciousness, we see it, and it's revealed to us. Yet, if we don't have that consciousness, it's not revealed to us. On Shabbat *Chukat*, there is an overriding elevation of consciousness that we want to understand. Everything that we need is right here, and the strength of that consciousness is what reveals it.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

The portion of Balak tells of a spiritual battle between positive and negative forces over our soul. The energy available this week asks us to completely open ourselves to the Light, without trying to influence how or when we receive it. Make the effort to be open to the Light's direction, even if it doesn't come to you as planned.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.