

## SHABBAT SHALOM—VAYAKHEL-PEKUDAI-HACHODESH—2010

As we conclude the reading of Sefer Shemot this Shabbat, we shall all rise and declare the traditional--CHAZAK, CHAZAK, VENITCHAZAIK: the declaration of the formula of Jewish continuity.

This Shabbat our declaration of CHAZAK will be pronounced in between the use of two Sifrai Torah; the declaration of CHAZAK becomes the connecting link between two Sifrai Torah and two seemingly different Readings.

First, we have the final two portions of Vayakhel and Pekudai—two for the price of one! This is followed by a second Sefer Torah from which we will read the Maftir for Parshat Hachodesh, its content initiating the 'counting' of Jewish time and its first recorded event, the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. It is the declaration of the exodus then and its upcoming celebration of Pesach in just 2 weeks which makes it a most relevant theme. In between the reading from these two Torah Scrolls, we declare: CHAZAK, CHAZAK, VENITCHAZEK.

It is more than coincidental. It is the very definition of the stuff of which Jewish destiny is determined. Our final two portions of Sefer Shemot describes the building of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle in the desert, a very spiritual place but filled with lots of 'things'. No doubt they were holy things; sacred things, important things, meaningful things, but none the less, 'things'.

In the spiritual realm there might be a tendency to play down the need for 'things' but the Jewish formula says: CHAZAK—our lives can be ennobled by 'things', even modern ones, which, when used appropriately can add quality and joy to our lives. As long as there is Kedusha—purpose, and proper priority given to the use of our 'things' we can and should declare CHAZAK—they are an important part of our being. The technology and productivity of this age on every level can be beneficial if used moderately and appropriately. You can't live without the physical.

And then there is the second CHAZAK—in the form of Parshat HaChodesh—HACHODESH HAZEH LACHEM—'this month is for you!' is the theme of our special Reading. This month; every month is for you, filled with the greatest of gifts, the greatest 'thing' going—TIME. A fresh month of TIME!

Judaism declares that we are the custodians of time. We are masters of time. Unlike any other 'thing' we fortunately get a new supply, like clockwork, on a daily basis—HAMECHADAISH BETUVO BECHOL YOM—G-d replenishes our 'time' account every day. But unlike any other 'thing' there is no savings plan, no deferments, because once gone, it's lost forever. A delicate balance; lost and found; the magic of the gift of

time. Ironically, when all appears lost, when it seems to be getting so dark, CHAZAK—a new supply affords us yet another chance.

VeNITCHZAIK—we can and should be strengthened by one additional thought. With our gift of TIME comes a direct link with the manufacturer, a sort of 24/7 Hotline. We have the instruction manual called the Torah and Tradition but sometimes forgotten is that direct link just waiting to take our call. Consider the following Memo, sent to me, but meant to be shared with you. It reads—

**'TO:** YOU;....  
**DATE:** TODAY;...  
**FROM:** G-D;...  
**SUBJECT:** YOURSELF;...  
**REFERENCE:** LIFE

Hi there!...Long time no speak! This is G-D. Remember me? I just wanted you to know that today, as usual, I will be handling all of your problems for you. Over the years I've gotten pretty good at it.

So please remember, if life happens to deliver a situation to you that it appears you can't handle, you do not have to worry about attempting to resolve it yourself. Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for G-D to do) box. Once the matter is placed into the box, don't hold onto it by worrying about it. I will get to it in MY TIME. All situations will be resolved, but in MY TIME, not YOURS.

Yes, I know you think you have deadlines, but I do have a little pull and things generally happen around MY TIME. It's kind of the way I made things. So don't worry. Instead, focus on all of the wonderful things that are present in your life now. Best regards and I'll be watching over you so drop me a line or at least a thought.'

CHAZAK—the relative value of 'things'; CHAZAK—the relative value we place on our use of 'time'; VeNITCHAZEK— A connection with the Divine which results in our true strength and enables the proper use of our material and physical gifts in a timely fashion so as to make the best use of both. With that formula we are ready to face the upcoming challenges of VAYIKRA—the daily call for a productive and meaningful life. The blessing of time makes every 'thing' invaluable, renewing our strength and resolve every day.

CHAZAK is not the end, it's just the beginning. Let us use our strengths to gain even greater heights to successfully respond to all of our 'callings'

Shabbat Shalom  
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