



Parshat Chukat

The Torah is not written in the order in which events happened, and this week's parshah jumps to the end of the Jews' forty years in the desert, the 38th year, to be exact. We begin by learning about a special mitzvah that enables a Jew who is tameh--impure-- to become pure again and thus be allowed in the Mishkan. This is the commandment of the parah adumah, the red cow. If someone becomes impure because of contact with a dead body, the ashes of the parah adumah, together with cedar wood, a branch of hyssop, and wool, can purify him.

When the People of Israel arrived in the desert of Zin, Miriam passed away, and the well of water that they had always had in her merit dried up. So the people had no water and complained to Moses. God told Moses to talk to the rock and tell it to bring forth water. But Moses instead hit the rock with his stick, and water gushed out. God then told Moses that because he did not follow his instructions exactly, he would not be able to go into the Land of Israel.

The Jews wanted to continue traveling towards Israel, so they sent messengers to the king of Edom asking him permission to pass through Edom's land, which was next in their route. The king responded that they may not travel through his land, and if they try to, he will come and kill everybody. The Jews said that they would not take any food or drink any water, they would just walk on the road so they could get to the other side, but the king still said not. So, the Jews had to take a longer route to get around the land of Edom.

God told Moses to take Aaron and his son Elazar up a mountain called Mount Hor. There, Moses took Aaron's clothing and put it on Elazar, and Aaron lay down and passed away. When the Jews saw Moses and Elazar come down alone, they realized that Aaron had passed away, and everyone began to weep. They mourned for 30 days.

The extra-long journey around the land of Edom discouraged the Jews, and they complained again to Moses. Poisonous snakes then attacked the camp, and G-d told Moses to put up a brass serpent high on a pole. Everyone who had been bitten and then saw Moses' brass serpent was then healed.

The Jews sing a song of thanks to God for the well that provided them with water in the desert.

Now the Jews reach another land that they must pass through. So, they send a message to Sihon, King of the Amorites, asking for permission to pass through his land. This time, Sihon did not just say no, he actually went out to war against the Jews. They fought back and won, gaining all of his three lands. Then Og, King of Bashan, came out to fight and the Jews won him too and conquered his land.

THIS PART OF THE NEWSLETTER IS YOURS.

Dear reader, the newsletter is for all of us and should be written by all of us.

Here is the space where you can ask question and we will try to answer.

Here is the space where you can tell your story.

And most important this is a space for ALL at the "River", Christians and Jews. As we share the space to pray and to love our God, we want this space to be shared too.

So, if you feel, that you need to ask something or want to share your story, please write it down and email to: bristoljewishcongregation@yahoo.com or simply give to one of the leaders.

This is your space and we are waiting for your voice.

SHORT HISTORY OF BRISTOL JEWISH CONGREGATION - HOW WE GOT HERE INTO THE "RIVER"

Long, long time ago Pastor Dave visited Bristol Hebrew Congregation. Bristol's Orthodox Jewish Community. He looked around, asked some questions and met some Jews. That is the short history of Bristol Jewish Congregation at the "River".

OK, that was very short, but not going into too much details... Pastor Dave after his visit to BHC kept in touch with some members who just formed new congregation (BJC). And if it was not for Pastor Dave, who knows how things would develop, or not develop.

In a nutshell, thanks to the generosity of Pastor Dave and the "River" community Bristol Jewish Congregation found its place in Bristol.

Thanks to that Christians and Jews started to work together among their people. And the work has just one goal. Bring people closer to God, to each other and spread God's love.

Thank you, Pastor Dave, —Thank you people of the "River" A Totally Christian Church.



Bristol Jewish Congregation

Bristol Jewish Congregation is an independent autonomous Synagogue.

We believe Judaism should be authentic, honest and open-minded. If you just moved to Bristol or have never been involved in synagogue and have any Jewish connection you are welcome too.

Whether you're looking for a place to pray and learn, the opportunity to give or volunteer, or just a supportive group of friends, you'll find a warm welcome at Bristol Jewish Congregation Synagogue at "the River".

We hold services every Shabbat and most festivals. Bristol Jewish Congregation is not affiliated to any of the movements and we hold a variety of service styles. Some services, are conducted mostly in English, others may be more traditional in style where Hebrew is the main language. We try to make all services accessible to everyone regardless of previous preferences. Visiting rabbis and service leaders are welcomed from a variety of denominations.



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Bristol Jewish Congregation



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JEWS AT THE "RIVER"

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME....

Welcome to our first ever Jews at the "River" Newsletter. The newsletter is here to help, to answer questions, to educate and to inform.

Bristol Jewish Congregation is the unique place and unique congregation. BCJ is the living proof, that Christians and Jews can work together. Why is that so unique? Firstly, in today's world people quite often are afraid of their own existence on this troubled planet. Secondly people are very suspicious of something or someone that does not look familiar. And thirdly there is so little faith among different people. But not here, not at the "River". Here people love people, people trust people, people have faith. They have faith into each other, but more important they have FAITH in GOD. Yes, Christians of the "River" A Totally Christian Church and Jews of Bristol Jewish Congregation at the "River" have Faith in One and Only GOD. The GOD that created you and me, the GOD who made as equal, the GOD who gives us directions and teaches as how to live together despite our differences.

So now you know it, why we are so unique and why we are so special. Not because we are better or wiser, but because we understand how it is important to live together and love one another. This is the first time... maybe the first time you hear this but not last.

TWO PEOPLE UNDER ONE ROOF

May our courage match our convictions, and our integrity match our hope.

May our faith in ONE GOD bring us closer to each other.

May our meeting with the past and present bring blessing for the future.

(from the prayer of interfaith understanding)

