

ב"ה Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1521

OU
ישראל

ה' תמוז תשפ"ג - 06.24.23

פרשת חקת
PARSHAT CHUKAT

AVOT CHAPTER 5



"Let Me Repeat"
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb
Page 16



Gimel Tamuz: Miracles
Rabbi Judah Mischel
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מקום זרע ותאנה וגפן ורמון במדבר כ:ה

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT TIMES PARSHAT CHUKAT

CANDLES 7:13PM • EARLIEST 6:19PM • HAVDALA 8:31PM • RABBEINU TAM 9:06PM



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for Divrei Torah by: Rabbi Moshe Hauer
& Rabbi Nachman Winkler

HELPFUL REMINDER

KIDDUSH LEVANA

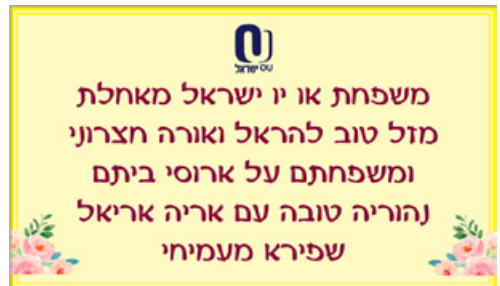
7 Days After Molad:

7 Tammuz/ Sun. night June 25

Last Opportunity to Say

Kiddush Levana:

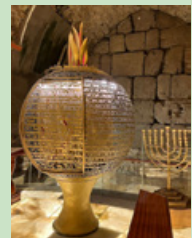
Until 14 Tammuz, Sun. night July 2,
all night



THIS WEEK'S COVER IMAGE!

Photographed by Dr Simon Wiseman

This photograph was taken in the Bet Knesset inside the Kotel Tunnels with the Kotel in the background. Dr Simon Wiseman made aliya over two years ago and lives in Jerusalem. "The photo is very meaningful for me in that it captures the unique atmosphere of this holy place."



CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



	CHUKAT			BALAK		
	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA
Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:13	6:19	8:31	7:13	6:20	8:31
Aza area (Netivot, S'derot et al)	7:29	6:21	8:33	7:30	6:22	8:33
Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:31	6:20	8:32	7:32	6:21	8:32
Gush Etzion	7:28	6:19	8:31	7:28	6:20	8:31
Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	7:30	6:21	8:34	7:31	6:22	8:34
Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:29	6:20	8:32	7:29	6:21	8:32
Netanya	7:30	6:22	8:34	7:31	6:22	8:34
Be'er Sheva	7:28	6:20	8:31	7:29	6:21	8:31
Rehovot	7:29	6:21	8:33	7:30	6:22	8:33
Petach Tikva	7:13	6:21	8:33	7:13	6:22	8:34
Ginot Shomron	7:29	6:20	8:33	7:30	6:21	8:33
Haifa / Zichron	7:21	6:22	8:35	7:22	6:23	8:36
Gush Shiloh	7:28	6:19	8:32	7:29	6:20	8:32
Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	7:30	6:21	8:34	7:31	6:22	8:34
Giv'at Ze'ev	7:32	6:19	8:31	7:33	6:20	8:32
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:27	6:19	8:31	7:28	6:20	8:31
Ashkelon	7:30	6:22	8:33	7:30	6:22	8:34
Yad Binyamin	7:29	6:21	8:33	7:30	6:22	8:33
Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:24	6:20	8:34	7:26	6:21	8:34
Golan	7:28	6:19	8:32	7:29	6:20	8:33

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem) - 9:06PM • Next Week - 9:06PM

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities;
40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat and Haifa)

Daf Yomi this Shabbat: Gittin 39



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Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat
June 21 - July 1 / 2 - 12 Tammuz

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin **4:34 - 4:37**
 Sunrise **5:34 - 5:37**
 Sof Zman Kriat Shema **9:07 - 9:10**
 Magen Avraham **8:23 - 8:26**
 Sof Zman Tefila **10:18 - 10:21**
 (According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)
 Chatzot (Halachic Noon) **12:40 - 12:42**
 Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha) **1:16 - 1:18**
 Plag Mincha **6:18 - 6:19**
 Sunset (Including Elevation) **7:52 - 7:53**



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel

Growing up I always admired Aharon *HaKohen*. I have vivid memories of my experience in first grade when my *rebbe* would break up a fight and say, “Okay boys, today I’m going to be Aharon *HaKohen* and together let’s find *shalom*.” As someone who cared about others more than himself and led an exceptional life in close proximity to the *Borei Olam*, it always pained me to think about the loss he endured with the tragic passing of his sons Nadav and Avihu.

Born in *Mitzrayim* into the home of dedicated *ovdei HaShem*, Aharon confronted Pharaoh together with Moshe, initiated the first of the three *makkot*, led the Jewish people out of *Mitzrayim* and managed their growing panic at *Har Sinai* which tragically resulted in the *cheit HaEgel*. Aharon also supported Moshe’s arms during the battle with Amalek which led to its victory, and he was ultimately given the position of *Kohen Gadol* in the *Mishkan*. Soon after, Aharon lost his two sons only to then face the rebellion of Korach, in which his position as *Kohen Gadol* was challenged but ultimately validated. Finally, the days of Aharon came to a close.

HaShem instructs Aharon and Moshe to ascend *Hor HaHar* together with Elazar, Aharon’s third son,

”קח את־אֶהָרֹן וְאֶת־אֶלְעָזָר בְּנָיו וְהַעַל אֹתָם
הָרֵה הַהוּא:”

On this *pasuk* Rashi comments;

קח את אהרן. בְּדָבָרִים שֶׁל נְחוּמִים – אָמַר לוֹ,
אֲשֶׁרִיד שְׂתַרְאָה כְּתִירָה נִתּוֹן לְבָנָה, מִה שְׂאִין אֲנִי
זָכֹא לְכָה (שם):

Take Aharon - with consoling words - say to him: Fortunate are you that you will see your crown being given to your son - something which I am not privileged. (Midrash Tanchumah)

Before Aharon died a peaceful death, he transferred his priestly garments to Elazar - a moment which Moshe describes as a time of *nachat*. Here we see the happiness that *chinuch* brings.

If we look at Elazar closely, he did not have an easy life. His father dedicated himself to the needs of *Am Yisrael*, a nation that did not always appreciate Aharon’s commitment and challenged his authority at times. Elazar also suffered the loss of two brothers who died tragically when offering a *korban* to *HaShem* they should not have brought. It would be understandable if Elazar decided to pursue a different path than the one his father led. However, Elazar was *zoche* to serve as a *kohen* together with his brother Itamar, and ultimately took over the position of *Kohen Gadol* after his father’s passing. In his final moments on

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In loving memory of our beloved
father, grandfather and great-grandfather

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JOSEPH “JOE” SCHORER Z”L
on his 12th *yahrzeit*, תמוז, ה’

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Finkelman families

olam HaZeh, Aharon saw the continuity of his values and sacrifice.

This week's *parsha* falls at the end of the school year, when families and teachers celebrate the achievements of the next generation of students embarking on a new chapter of their lives. Whether it be celebrating little ones graduating *gan*, middle schoolers and high schoolers entering into a new phase of their education, or college students entering the workforce. As parents of children in different stages of their education, my wife and I feel tremendous pride seeing our children follow on the *derech* that best suits them while aligning with our values.

Beyond our *chinuch*, these achievements could not have been accomplished without the teachers who fostered the growth of my children. In close partnership with parents, teachers are tasked with imparting the values of Torah and helping children build a foundation for themselves as *ovdei HaShem*. This undertaking is no easy feat, and the *parah adumah*, which makes an appearance in this week's *parsha*, is a reminder of that.

There are elements about the life of a Jew that can be difficult to explain to a child. How do we teach children about faith during challenging times? How do we explain the reason for *chukim* (statutes),

such as *sha'atnez*, *Shabbat* and the *parah adumah*? How can we teach children that as members of *bnei Yisrael*, we must embrace concepts we do not understand and perform difficult *mitzvot*? These are questions which educators and parents must be prepared to answer. As each child engages with the world around them in their own way, parents and educators have an opportunity to work together to identify the best way to respond to each child that will be most meaningful to them.

Another critical element that rests on the shoulders of educators and parents is demonstrating that Torah is not a text to memorize - it is a way of life. Bringing Torah concepts to life, teachers and parents have endless opportunities to teach by example. Whether it be staying silent in *shul*, waking up early for *minyan*, giving *tzedakah*, paying a *shiva* call, inviting guests for *Shabbat*, visiting grandparents and supporting those in need. We have a responsibility to show our children what it means to live a joyful and meaningful life as *ovdei HaShem*.

That said, as a parent I have the unique privilege of seeing my children reach new stages throughout their lives while implementing the lessons they learned along the way. In contrast, a teacher's impact

Dr. Moshe Gottlieb z"l

YARTZEIT

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on a student might not be appreciated or even discovered until years later. As the year comes to a close, a teacher might not receive the gratitude they deserve, leaving them hopeful that their impact was a positive one. At graduations I often look for the moments when teachers reunite with previous students and they see the outcome of their efforts. It is always an emotional one for those gathered.

As children of all ages close this year's school year, I hope that parents remember the critical role educators play in the growth of their children. May we never lose sight of the *HaKarat HaTov* we should have to all those involved in helping our children thrive, especially to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for pairing our children with the educators who served as positive role models. May each and every educator see the impact of their efforts and continue to find beauty in every student they come across.

Mazel Tov to my son Yechezkel on graduating 12th grade!

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,


Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

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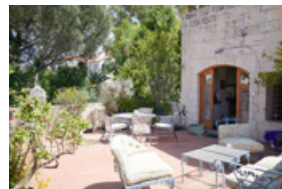
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ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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1ST ALIYA (BAMIDBAR 19:1-17)

Para Aduma: This is the Torah law. Elazar the Kohen shall remove from the camp an unblemished red heifer that has never worked. It is burnt. Cedar, hyssop and red thread shall be burnt with it. The Kohanim involved in the process are Tamei until evening. The ashes are used to purify those Tamei from contact with the dead. On the 3rd and 7th day a mix of these ashes and water are sprinkled on the Tamei person. Absent this process, one who has come in contact with the dead cannot become Tahor.

Even though there is a mitzvah to bury the dead, death defiles. The tuma of contact with the dead prevents one from entering the Mishkan, the holy area. A theory that we have developed of tuma opines that entry to the holy places demands a lofty feeling of our majesty. G-d is Majestic; we, majestic. Death demoralizes. We feel: What's the use, we all end up in the same place. It bruises the sense of our majesty. A detailed look at the symbolism of the purification rituals is beyond this brief outline; but can be looked at as a replenishment of our majesty. The anomaly of the laws of the Para Aduma is: the Kohen who helps to purify others, himself becomes tamei for the day. The Lubavitcher Rebbe saw in this a rich image: our fellow Jews can become purer, though we have to be willing to sacrifice some of ourselves to attract them, just like the Kohen did.



2ND ALIYA (19:18 - 20:6)

Hyssop is dipped in the purifying waters and sprinkled on the person or vessels requiring this purification. A tahor person sprinkles on the tamei person on the 3rd and 7th day; this tahor person then becomes tamei for the day. One who is tamei through contact with the dead and does not do this purification and then subsequently enters the Mishkan has committed a most grave sin. Miriam dies after the camp travels to Midbar Zin in the first month. The people complain: oh that we had died like the others (over these 40 years). Why did you bring us from Egypt to die in this nasty place? Moshe and Aharon went to the Mishkan; G-d's glory appeared to them.

After concluding the laws of purification for those in contact with the dead, Miriam dies. With little fanfare, 39 years have

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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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passed. Take 2 on the march to the Land begins. The complaint of the people here is a twist on the past. Way back, 39 years ago they complained: why did you take us out of Egypt to die in the desert. Now they complain: oh that we would die in the desert. But more importantly, Miriam's death demoralizes the people. The Midrash maintains that water flowed for the people in Miriam's merit. It stopped with her death. But the simple flow of the story is that the death of leaders is demoralizing. It leaves a void. The people have a daunting task ahead, of entering and conquering the Land. The loss of Miriam demoralizes. And so they complain.



3RD ALIYA (20:7-13)

G-d said to Moshe: gather the people to the rock. Speak to the rock. Water sufficient for them and their flock will be produced. Moshe said: Listen oh rebellious ones. Will water emerge from a rock? Moshe hit the rock. Water emerged, enough for the flocks. G-d said to Moshe and Aharon: since you did not believe me, you will not enter the Land.

If the loss of Miriam is demoralizing, the impending loss of Aharon and Moshe compounds that. But conversely, it is a powerful statement of the greatness, the capability, the trust of G-d in His people. The Jewish people are greater than any leader or other; even Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. *You* can take the Land; with or without them. The Jewish people will always *have* great people; but the Jewish people *are* a great people. The Torah will end with the greatest leaders falling short of realizing the dream of entering the Land. But far from being a dystopia, and while not being a utopia, it is an affirmation that the Jewish people as a

people rise above the presence or absence of individual leaders. The death of Miriam, then Aharon and finally Moshe affirms the greatness of the people of Israel.



4TH ALIYA (20:14-21)

Moshe sends messengers to the King of Edom. You are aware of your brother Israel's history: we left Egypt with G-d's help. We need to cross your land, at no cost to you, to enter our Land. The King said no. The people answered: we will stay on the road and pay for water. Edom said no and came with a large contingent. The Jewish people circled back.

Even though Moshe just received the word he will not enter the Land, you would never know it from his behavior. There is nary a hint of hesitation in leading the people to the Land. Leadership is public service. Moshe is a lame duck leader; he is not going to benefit from leading the people. He is not going to see the Land. But he is not in it for himself. His service is for the people. They *will* enter the Land. And lead them he must.



5TH ALIYA (20:21-9)

At Har Hor Aharon is told he will die. Up the mountain, Moshe clothes Elazar in the garments of Aharon. Aharon dies. The entire people mourn for 30 days. The King of Arad in the Negev hears and does battle with the people. The people prevail. The people travel to circumvent Edom. The

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long journey aggravates the people. They complain. Snakes attack. The people regret their sins. G-d tells Moshe to make a copper snake. When the people gaze on it, they recover.

The theme of punishment is a dominant theme in Bamidbar. And while we need to note that our failings are met with punishment, equally as important is the variety of manners of relief from the punishment. Here, gaze on the copper snake and you will recover. This is another example of what is the dominant theme of the entire Torah: G-d's love for man and for the Jewish people. Mankind is never completely destroyed. Nor the Jewish people. Sure, there is punishment. But, well, we err quite a bit. We can't ignore Divine justice. But we also can't ignore the unequivocal loyalty of G-d to His people. The punishments are all episodes of encouragement; because of the ending. He, yet again, is loyal to us.



6TH ALIYA (21:10 - 20)

The travel takes the people to the east of Moav. They travel north to the area of the Emori. The travels are recorded in the books of wars, traveling on to the well. They sang of their fortune and their travels.

The circuitous route of the march is perplexing. From the Sinai desert to Israel is, well, yashar, yashar. Straight up north. Enter Israel from the Negev. Travel north to Chevron. Then keep going. Straight. Yet, they travel east to the nations on the east bank of the Jordan. Edom refuses passage. So they travel south to Eilat, cross over farther east, traveling up through the heart of present day Jordan. Kind of the way to go to Petra. They end up opposite Jericho.

And from there, once they enter the Land, they will go to Shechem. Why this wide, wide swing to the east, up north through Jordan? Why not enter from the Negev straight north? The Torah does not tell us. But we can speculate. At this point in Jewish history, the Jewish people have entered the land 3 times: Avraham. Yaakov when he returned from Lavan. And the spies. And now. Whose footsteps would you like to follow? Avraham and Yaakov both entered from the north and went immediately to Shechem. The spies came up from the south to Hevron. The Jewish people are following in the footsteps of Avraham. Deliberately avoiding the much simpler and direct route, the yashar, yashar route of the spies. Whose footsteps do we follow?



7TH ALIYA (21:21 - 22:1)

Messengers are sent to Sichon for permission to cross his land. Sichon confronts them for war. Sichon is roundly defeated. The people settle in the land of the Emori. They travel to the land of Og, the king of the Bashan. G-d tells them they will succeed against Og, as they did with Sichon. They defeat Og, arriving at the plains of Moav, opposite Jericho.

In this march up the east side of the Jordan, the Divine has been conspicuously

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absent. Israel sent messengers to Sichon. No Divine command. Moshe staked out the cities along the route into the Land. The march into the Land has begun. And while the march of the people until this time has been with the Mishkan in their midst, the manna falling from heaven, slowly the transfer of leadership into the hands of man is occurring. The Jewish people dance with G-d; at times He leads. At times, we. In this dance, the Divine allows the Jewish people to lead. He lurks, ever present. But man is leading this march.

HAFTORAH SHOFTIM 11:1-33

The haftorah opens with an attack on the Israelites from the people of Ammon. The Israelites call upon Yiftach to lead them into battle. He sends a message to Ammon

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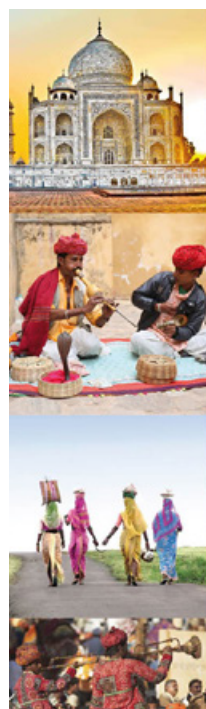
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which includes a reference to the conquest of the lands of Sichon and Og, which apparently is the tie in with our Torah reading.

Yiftach made a condition with the Jewish people regarding his willingness to take on this role as commander: "If you bring me back to fight with the children of Ammon, and God delivers them before me, I will become your head." The Jewish people accepted his terms.

Yiftach after trying to make peace with Ammon has no choice but to go to war. He successfully leads his people in battle and they eliminate the Ammonite threat. ■



STATS

39th of 54 sedras. 6th of 10 in Bamidbar.

Written on 159.2 lines (ranks 39).

10 Parshiyot; 6 open, 4 closed.

87 p'sukim (ranks 43).

1245 words (ranks 40).

4670 letters (ranks 41).

Smallest sedra in Bamidbar in lines, p'sukim, words, letters. Fewer p'sukim than Sh'mini, more words, same number of letters. Chukat is a bit longer.



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A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

"And the people spoke against G-d and Moshe..for there is no bread and no water, and our soul loathes this light bread." (21:5) וידבר העם באלוקים ובמשה..כי אין לחם ואין מים ונפשיו קצה במדבר (כ"א:ה)
 How can the Israelites complain that they lack necessary nourishment for survival, when in the same verse they admitted that they had food, only that it was not substantial?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch answers that what they lacked was the kind of food they were usually accustomed to. The nourishment they were receiving came without any effort on their part, through miracle. It came too easily and thus disregarded, becoming monotonous to them. The Midrash describes the Manna as being completely absorbed by all the limbs in the body, very digestible. Yet, in their discontent they disregarded this nutritive food.

Unaware, we may find ourselves complaining about the benefits G-d provides to us daily. We take everyday miracles for granted. We need to learn to appreciate and realize that every little thing provided for us is beneficial to us and be grateful for it. - Shabbat Shalom

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"Let Me Repeat"

The poem had a place of prominence on our kitchen bulletin board for many years. We had clipped it from a women's magazine, and although it was too sugary and sentimental for my personal literary taste, it was very encouraging to my wife and me as we raised our teenage daughters. The poem was written by an early middle-aged mother and described a visit she had with her daughter, now grown, over tea one fine afternoon.

We have long lost our copy of that poem, but its message remains as clear as day. The poem relates how, over tea that day, the younger woman thanked her mother for all the lessons she learned from her. She confessed that she once found her mother's repetitive teachings about proper behavior to be useless and annoying. But she now had come to appreciate just how useful and important those teachings were. She thanked her mother for what she learned and expressed special gratitude for her patient reiteration of those lessons. The mother ends her poem with an expression of pride in herself and in her daughter.

This poem and its lesson came to mind recently—just the other day, in fact—when

I visited the synagogue where I served as rabbi some years ago. A young man whom I remembered as a teenager approached me and said that he felt he owed me an apology. He proceeded to tell me how sorry he was for not appreciating my tendency, in my sermons and lectures, to repeatedly emphasize the importance of the precise translation of Hebrew words and phrases.

"Each time that you would insist that the common translation of, for example, *kedusha* as 'holiness' was not quite accurate, we kids would roll our eyes in exasperation. You would sometimes do that three or four times in just one sermon." He then told me how he and his friends had come to understand the importance of nuance, especially in rendering biblical Hebrew into English.

I must confess that even today I preserve that tendency to repeat myself, and it is not always attributable to my increasingly frequent "senior moments." Quite the contrary; I consciously and intentionally repeat matters that I think are important, especially in my public speeches. I base my conviction that repetition is necessary and effective upon a comment by a great man on a passage in this week's Torah portion, *Parshat Chukat* (Numbers 19:1-22:1).

The story is well known. The Children of Israel complain to Moses and Aaron about the lack of water in the wilderness. They fall upon their faces in prayer, and the Almighty responds by telling Moses to take

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his staff, gather the people, and speak to the rock which is before their eyes. The Lord assures Moses that he will be able to draw forth sufficient water from the rock for the people and for their cattle.

Moses takes the staff, assembles the people, and castigates them angrily. He then lifts his hand and strikes the rock with his staff not once but twice. Indeed abundant water flows from the rock.

The Almighty then expresses his disappointment to Moses and Aaron. He tells them that because they did not believe in him sufficiently to sanctify his Name before all the people, they would be denied the privilege of bringing the people into the holy land.

Throughout the ages, commentaries have found difficulty with this narrative. Rashi insists that Moses sinned by striking

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the rock and not just speaking to it. Others have objected to Rashi's approach because drawing water from the rock in the desert is equally miraculous whether it is accomplished by speaking to the rock or striking it. Water flowing from a rock when it is struck with a wooden staff is itself a wondrous miracle, certainly sufficient to impress the people with God's miraculous powers.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, the late 20th century sage whom I was privileged to meet personally, offers a simple and innovative response to this objection. He writes: "The Almighty preferred that Moses speak to the rock because he wanted to teach the lesson that one must speak words of Torah and ethics even to those who seem not to comprehend. Repeating and reviewing ultimately results in understanding. A parent, for example, must never despair

of educating his children just because they appear not to understand what he is telling them. One must constantly speak to others, over and over, until they understand and act accordingly, just like the rock could not understand but eventually fulfilled God's will. Certainly, human beings, although they seem now not to understand at all, will eventually reach understanding."

Rabbi Feinstein's insight is such an important one, especially to rabbis, parents, and teachers. Rarely does our audience seem to be attentive and receptive to our message. But if we earnestly attempt to present our message intelligently, and if we repeat it sufficiently, we will be heard, later if not sooner. This was the experience of the mother who wrote the poem which graced our kitchen wall for many years, and this was the experience of the young man who came to appreciate the importance of precise translation after hearing me drone on and on about it in his youth.

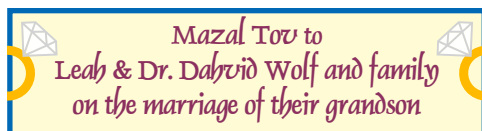
Although Rabbi Feinstein does not quote any Talmudic sources supporting the great value of repetition, he could easily have referred to the following passage in the Talmud, tractate *Eruvin* 54b:

"Rabbi Perada had a student whom he would teach each lesson four hundred times until the student finally understood. One day, Rabbi Perada received an invitation to attend a *mitzvah* celebration. He first sat with the student and repeated the daily lesson four hundred times, but this time to no avail. The student simply did not comprehend. Rabbi Perada asked him why he was having such difficulty on that day. The student responded that as soon as he heard that the master was

invited to a *mitzvah* event, he became distracted, thinking that at any moment the master would interrupt the lesson and not review it with him the four hundred times that he required. Rabbi Perada patiently instructed his disciple to be calm, pay attention, and be confident that he would deliver the lesson as many times as necessary. He reviewed it four hundred times, and the disciple finally understood." The Talmud continues to describe the earthly and heavenly rewards which Rabbi Perada received for his most unusual commitment and forbearance.

The Talmud is thus teaching us, and Rabbi Feinstein underscores it, that our sincerely-spoken words are not wasted. The educational lessons that we try to impart are eventually heard. We must not give up in our attempts to inspire, instruct and influence others. We can be assured, in the words of King Solomon: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." (*Kohelet* 11:1)

The Almighty had good reason to tell Moses to speak to the rock. Even rocks eventually get the message. ■



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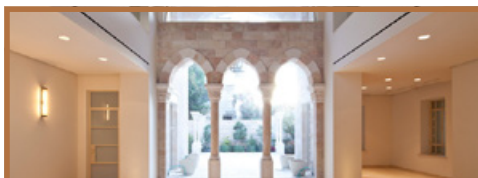


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THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

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Healing the Trauma of Loss

It took me two years to recover from the death of my father, of blessed memory. To this day, almost twenty years later, I am not sure why. He did not die suddenly or young. He was well into his eighties. In his last years he had to undergo five operations, each of which sapped his strength a little more. Besides which, as a rabbi, I had to officiate at funerals and comfort the bereaved. I knew what grief looked like.

The Sages were critical of one who mourns too much too long.¹ They said that God Himself says of such a person, "Are you more compassionate than I am?" Maimonides rules:

"A person should not become excessively broken-hearted because of a person's death, as it says, 'Do not weep for the dead nor bemoan him' (Jer. 22:10). This means, 'Do not weep excessively.' For death is the way

of the world, and one who grieves excessively at the way of the world is a fool."²

With rare exceptions, the outer limit of grief in Jewish law is a year, not more.

Yet knowing these things did not help. We are not always masters of our emotions. Nor does comforting others prepare you for your own experience of loss. Jewish law regulates outward conduct not inward feeling, and when it speaks of feelings, like the commands to love and not to hate, *halachah* generally translates this into behavioural terms, assuming, in the language of the *Sefer haHinnuch*, that "the heart follows the deed."³

I felt an existential black hole, an emptiness at the core of being. It deadened my sensations, leaving me unable to sleep or focus, as if life was happening at a great distance and as if I were a spectator watching

2 Maimonides, Hilchot Avel 13:11.

3 Sefer ha-Hinnuch, command 16.

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1 Moed Katan 27b.

a film out of focus with the sound turned off. The mood eventually passed, but while it lasted I made some of the worst mistakes of my life.

I mention these things because they are the connecting thread of parshat Chukat. The most striking episode is the moment when the people complain about the lack of water. Moses does something wrong, and though God sends water from a rock, He also sentences Moses to an almost unbearable punishment: "Because you did not have sufficient faith in Me to sanctify Me before the Israelites, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land I have given you" (Num. 20:12).

The commentators debate exactly what he did wrong. Was it that he lost his temper with the people ("Listen now, you rebels" [Num. 20:10]? That he hit the rock instead of speaking to it? That he made it seem as if it was not God but he and Aaron who were responsible for the water ("Shall we bring water out of this rock for you?" [Num. 20:10])?

What is more puzzling still is why he lost control at that moment. He had faced the same problem before, but he had never lost his temper before. In Exodus 15 the Israelites at Marah complained that the water was undrinkable because it was bitter. In Exodus 17 at Massa-and-Meriva they complained that there was no water. God then told Moses to take his staff and *hit* the rock, and water flowed from it. So when in our parsha God tells Moses, "Take the staff ... and *speak* to the rock," it was surely a forgivable mistake to assume that God meant him also to hit it. That is what He had said last time. Moses was following

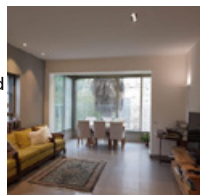


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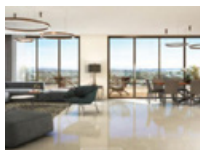
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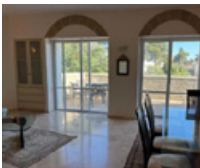
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precedent. And if God did not mean him to hit the rock, why did He command him to take his staff?

What is even harder to understand is the order of events. *God had already told Moses exactly what to do.* Gather the people. Speak to the rock, and water will flow. This was *before* Moses made his ill-tempered speech, beginning, “Listen now, you rebels.” It is understandable if you lose your composure when you are faced with a problem that seems insoluble. This had happened to Moses earlier when the people complained about the lack of meat. But it makes no sense at all to do so when God has already told you, “Speak to the rock ... It will pour forth its water, and you will bring water out of the rock for them, and so you will give the community and their livestock water to drink.” Moses had

received the solution. Why then was he so agitated about the problem?

Only after I lost my father did I understand the passage. What had happened immediately before? The first verse of the chapter states: “The people stopped at Kadesh. There, Miriam died and was buried.” Only then does it state that the people had no water. An ancient tradition explains that the people had hitherto been blessed by a miraculous source of water in the merit of Miriam. When she died, the water ceased.

However it seems to me that the deeper connection lies not between the death of Miriam and the lack of water but between her death and Moses’ loss of emotional equilibrium. Miriam was his elder sister. She had watched over his fate when, as a baby, he had been placed in a basket and floated down the Nile. She had had the courage and enterprise to speak to Pharaoh’s daughter and suggest that he be nursed by a Hebrew, thus reuniting Moses and his mother and ensuring that he grew up knowing who he was and to which people he belonged. He owed his sense of identity to her. Without Miriam, he could never have become the human face of God to the Israelites, lawgiver, liberator, and prophet. Losing her, he not only lost his sister. He lost the human foundation of his life.

Bereaved, you lose control of your emotions. You find yourself angry when the situation calls for calm. You hit when you should speak, and you speak when you should be silent. Even when God has told you what to do, you are only half-listening. You hear the words but they do



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not fully enter your mind. Maimonides asks the question, how was it that Jacob, a prophet, did not know that his son Joseph was still alive. He answers, because he was in a state of grief, and the Shechinah does not enter us when we are in a state of grief.⁴ Moses at the rock was not so much a prophet as a man who had just lost his sister. He was inconsolable and not in control. He was the greatest of the prophets. But he was also human, rarely more so than here.

Our parsha is about mortality. That is the point. God is eternal, we are ephemeral. As we say in the *Unetaneh Tokef* prayer on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we are “a fragment of pottery, a blade of grass, a flower that fades, a shadow, a cloud, a breath of wind.” We are dust and to dust we return, but God is life forever.

At one level, Moses-at-the-rock is a story about sin and punishment: “*Because you did not have sufficient faith in me to sanctify Me ... therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land I have given you.*” We may not be sure what the sin exactly was, or why it merited so severe a punishment, but at least we know the ballpark, the territory to which the story belongs.

Nonetheless it seems to me that – here as in so many other places in the Torah – there is a story beneath the story, and it is a different one altogether. Chukat is about death, loss, and bereavement. Miriam dies. Aaron and Moses are told they will not live to enter the Promised Land. Aaron dies, and the people mourn for him for thirty days. Together they constituted the greatest

leadership team the Jewish people has ever known, Moses the supreme prophet, Aaron the first High Priest, and Miriam perhaps the greatest of them all.⁵ What the parsha is telling us is that for each of us there is a Jordan we will not cross, a promised land we will not enter. “It is not for you to complete the task.” Even the greatest are mortal.

That is why the parsha begins with the ritual of the Red Heifer, whose ashes, mixed with the ash of cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool and dissolved in “living water,” are sprinkled over one who has been in contact with the dead so that they may enter the Sanctuary.

This is one of the most fundamental principles of Judaism. *Death defiles.* For most religions throughout history, life-after-death has proved more real than life itself. That is where the gods live, thought the Egyptians. That is where our ancestors are alive, believed the Greeks and Romans and many primitive tribes. That is where you find justice, thought many Christians. That is where you find paradise, thought many Muslims.

Life after death and the resurrection of the dead are fundamental, non-negotiable principles of Jewish faith, but Tanach

5 There are many midrashim on this theme about Miriam’s faith, courage, and foresight.

4 Maimonides, Eight Chapters, ch. 7, based on Pesachim 117a.

is conspicuously quiet about them. It is focused on finding God in this life, on this planet, notwithstanding our mortality. “The dead do not praise God,” says the Psalm (115:17). God is to be found in life itself with all its hazards and dangers, bereavements and grief. We may be no more than “dust and ashes” (Gen. 18:27), as Abraham said, but life itself is a never-ending stream, “living water”, and it is this that the rite of the Red Heifer symbolises.

With great subtlety the Torah mixes law and narrative together – the law before the narrative because God provides the cure before the disease. Miriam dies. Moses and Aaron are overwhelmed with grief. Moses, for a moment, loses control, and he and Aaron are reminded that they too are mortal and will die before entering the land. Yet this is, as Maimonides said, “the way of the world”. We are embodied souls. We are flesh and blood. We grow old. We lose those we love. Outwardly we struggle to maintain our composure but inwardly we weep. Yet life goes on, and what we began, others will continue.

Those we loved and lost live on in us, as we will live on in those we love. For love is as strong as death,⁶ and the good we do never dies.⁷ ■

6 Song of Songs 8:6.

7 See Proverbs 10:2 and 11:4.

These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt”l are part of his ‘Covenant & Conversation’ series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org for more.

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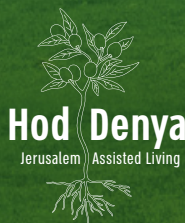
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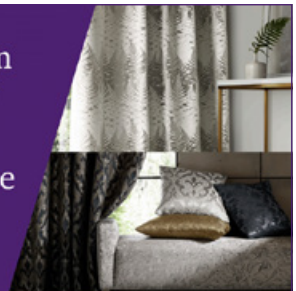
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10:20 AM

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commentary **Rabbi Dr.
Aaron Adler**

11:30 AM

Shivat Tzion in Tanach:
**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

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9:15 AM

Divrei Hayamim (L'Ayla)
Rebbetzin Pearl Borow

10:30 AM

The Thought of Rav Kook
on Eretz Yisrael: A study of
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Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

11:45 AM

Novel Parsha Nuances
Rabbi Avi Herzog

8:30 PM

Semichat Chaver
Program **Rabbi Elyada
Goldwicht** (The Bais)

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9:30AM-12:30PM
Old City Tehillim
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TUE, JUN 27

9:15 AM

Rebbetzin Shira Smiles
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

10:30 AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Yosef Goldin

9:30AM Minchat Chinuch
Rabbi Breitowitz

2:00 PM Men's Talmud
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

7:30PM (The Bais) Safrus
(Men) **Rabbi Tzvi Mauner**

8:00PM
Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi Machlis**

SPECIAL EVENTS

9:15AM-1:00PM
L'Ayla-Full morning of
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7:00PM
Keshet - Senior
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Communication w
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9:00 AM

Torah and Technology
Rabbi Shimshon Nadel
(new course)

10:15 AM

Contemporary Halachic Issues
Rabbi Anthony Manning

11:30 AM

Ani Maamin-But Do You Know
if it's Really True? (new course)
Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum

12:30 PM Lunch and Learn

Rabbi Neil Winkler

8:00 PM

Halachic Controversies
Rabbi Aschi Dick (The Bais)

SPECIAL EVENT

8:00PM-12:30PM

Book Launch Paths
of the Maharal
Dr. Moshe Kuhr

THURS, JUN 29

9:00 AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Ari Kahn
(Resumes July 6)

10:15 am

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Baruch Taub

11:30 AM

Unlocking the Messages
of Chazal
Rabbi Shai Finkelstein
(Resumes July 13)

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Mesechta –
Bava Basra
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

SPECIAL EVENTS

8:45AM-6:00PM

From Dinosaurs to
Nuclear Energy- Full
Day Tiyl with
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9:15AM – 1:00PM

Sefer Tehillim Yom Iyun
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Rabbi Taub

Parsha, 7:00PM Mon
Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

Rebbetzin Shatz

(L'Ayla)-Insights of
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

Rabbi Goldwicht

Parshat HaShavua
Wed. 8:30PM
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9:25AM Sefer Tehillim:
Structure and Significance
Mrs. Chana Deutsch

10:15AM The Paradigm of
Constant Connection: A Text-Basis
Exploration of Tehillim
Mrs. Sara Malka Reichman

11:00AM Brunch

11:30AM The Internal Life and
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Mrs. Yael Dworkin

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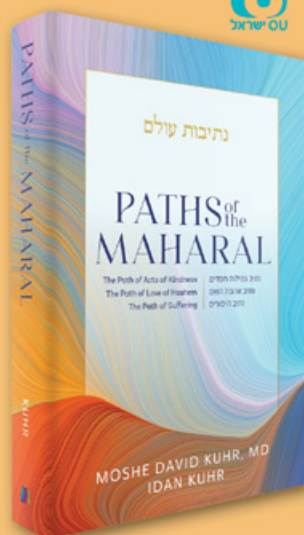
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 withdrawal and expulsions in 2005

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 How Israel can declare independence
 from the US and remain friends




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Navigating Through Changes

וְלֹא־הָיָה מִיָּמִים לְעֵדָה וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־
אַהֲרֹן: וַיָּרֶב הָעָם עִם־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר וְלוֹ
גִּוְעֵנוּ בְּגֹועַ אֲחִינוּ לִפְנֵי ה' (במדבר כ: ב-ג)

The congregation had no water; so they assembled against Moshe and Aaron. The people quarreled with Moses, and they said, "If only we had died with the death of our brothers before the Lord."... (Bamidbar 20: 2-3)

When reading the weekly parsha, we ought to place the events that transpire in chronological perspective (notwithstanding that some *mefarshim* adhere to the principle of *ein mukdam u'mecuchar baTorah* – that at times events can be recorded out of order).

Blackout Years

The episode of *Mei Meriva* that appears in Parshat Chukat occurred in the fortieth year in the desert, shortly prior to the time that the nation was to enter Eretz Yisrael. The people complained that they lack water following the death of Miriam, in whose merit the traveling well supplied water for the people during their journey throughout the *midbar*. Rav Soloveitchik points out that between Parshat Shelach in which we are informed of the transgression of the *meraglim* and their punishment to wander

in the desert for forty years, and Parshat Chukat – 38 years passed. The Rav refers to these as the “**blackout years**” – since the Torah is silent on what transpired during these thirty-eight years. The Rav explains that during those years most of the nation (all those above the age of twenty) died and so the nation was engaged in burying the dead. That is the reason that the laws of Parah Aduma follow Korah- since it was with what the people were primarily occupied during those years.

Rabbi Frand in his sefer “The Power of a Vort” highlights an interesting perspective from those thirty-eight years. He cites Rav Simcha Zissel who claims that during those thirty-eight years Klal Yisrael didn’t transgress. They had no complaints and avoided any missteps. In fact, this is not a mere hypothesis drawn up, it has a basis in a Mishna in Pirke Avot (5:4), which lists 10 times that Bnei Yisrael challenged God in the *midbar*. The gemara In Arachin (15a) spells out the ways the nation tested God, and it turns out that all ten events occurred during the first 18 months in the *midbar*, other than Mei Meriva which occurred in the fortieth year! Had Bnei Yisrael challenged God at any point in between, it would have been recorded in this source as well.

That is amazing. For thirty-eight years, Am Yisrael behaved perfectly. Why is it that they were unable to control themselves and were so susceptible during the first year and a half and what triggered similar behavior

during the final year in the desert?

Transitions

Rav Simcha Zissel offers a tremendous insight into human nature. The first 18 months and the final year in the *midbar* were **transitional periods**. An individual who feels that a drastic and abrupt change is about to enter his or her life is unable to make calculated decisions. At this juncture, the nation was about to enter Eretz Yisrael. That meant, saying goodbye to the gift of the manna and having to sweat to earn their livelihood. The fear of this and other drastic changes in their lives made them vulnerable to making hasty and foolish decisions.

Change is something that is very challenging to many individuals. It is very comfortable to maintain the status-quo. Even if change can bring about a better situation, the unknown and need for adjustment is scary, troublesome and often preferred to

be avoided. In the book “Who Moved My Cheese” by Spencer Johnson, there is a depiction of how challenging it can be to face a new reality and how often one rejects any adjustment to their routine. This was essentially what caused Am Yisrael’s downfall. When on the cusp of change both as they transitioned into and out of the desert they panicked and reacted in disarray.

We all experience transitions in our lives. It could be changing schools, moving to a new community, getting married or starting a new job. These are challenging periods. The lesson we can learn from the transitional years in the desert is to be careful to prepare for these changes. To do all we can to refrain from allowing changes in our routine to create instability in our lives. May we be successful in navigating through all challenging periods and may such transitions be smooth and successful! ■



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Actual Accounting

The Staff of Aesculapius or the asklepiian, is a serpent-entwined rod wielded by the Greek deity associated with healing and medicine. In modern times, it is the predominant symbol for medicine and health care. We have its source in *parashat Chukat*, where we find the Jewish people feeling discouraged and complaining about the manna. Hashem sends fiery serpents against *Am Yisrael*, and when the snakes begin biting them, many die. The people come to Moshe with remorse and beg him to pray for them. Hashem instructs Moshe Rabbeinu to place a copper serpent on top of a pole - when those who were bitten would look up at it, they would live. (*Bamidbar* 21:5-9) The *parshanim* are troubled as to why there was a need to make this serpent. After all, it seems the Jews had already done teshuvah by admitting their sin! What was

the purpose of this representational figure?

Chazal (*Rosh Hashanah* 29a) understand that its purpose was to further deepen the teshuvah process initiated by the people. By gazing at the serpent displayed overhead, they were directed to look toward the heavens and commit themselves more fully in the service of Hashem. The symbolic nature helped them internalize the important lesson that snake venom does not kill, rather, it is sin that forms the consequence.

A fascinating insight into this episode is found in the writings of the *Chatam Sofer*. He explains that when the Jews asked Hashem to remove the snakes, they were asking to remove the primordial snake from within them. They wanted Hashem to take away their *yetzer hara* so they would not come to sin repeatedly. Hashem's response was the directive to make a snake and raise it on a staff, thus teaching the people the secret in overcoming the *yetzer hara*. To avoid sin, one must look it in the eye and identify the allure. Only when we determine the pitfalls and understand the ramifications of our actions, can we come to dedicate ourselves completely to the Will of Hashem.

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Rav Kaufman in *Mishchat Shemen* sees a continuation of this theme toward the end of the *parashah* where we learn of the war against *Sichon* and *Og*. It is noted in *Sefer Iyun Tefilah*, that Dovid Hamelech references this war twice in the *Hallel Hagadol*. "Ve'natan artzam le'nachalah ... nachalah le'Yisrael avdo - And [He] presented the land as a heritage ... a heritage for Israel His servant." (*Tehillim* 136;21-22) What is the meaning of the dual allusion? Hashem forbade *Am Yisrael* from doing battle with *Amon* and *Moav* so He first gave their land to *Sichon*. Once *Sichon* was in possession of those lands, the Jews were able to conquer it and subsequently rule the territory originally belonging to *Amon* and *Moav*. One can imagine how proud *Sichon* must have felt in his victory over *Amon* and *Moav*. Yet, it was short lived, as he was only a pawn in the Hand of Hashem.

"*Al ken yomru ha'moshlim, Bo'u Cheshbon tibaneh ve'tikonen ir Sichon* – The minstrels therefore say: Come to Cheshbon! Let *Sichon's* city be built and established." (*Bamidbar* 21;27) Chazal teach us here to do an accounting, a *cheshbon* of the world. Recognize and ascertain what motivates our choices and decisions. As we strive to live in accordance with what Hashem wants from us, we can hope to take part in Hashem's master plan for only good things. ■



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Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

Gimel Tamuz: Miracles

Reb Yanki Tauber related a *ma'aseh*, a story about the Lubavitcher Rebbe:

A group of highschool students once came to see the Rebbe. The students had each prepared a question, which they posed to the Rebbe in the course of their meeting together. The Rebbe fielded an array of questions on faith, philosophy and modern Jewish life. At the very end of the meeting, one student raised his hand and with innocent audacity asked, "People say that you have supernatural powers... Is this true? Do you have the ability to perform miracles?"

"The ability to work miracles is not confined to a select group of individuals," replied the Rebbe, "but is within reach of each and every one of us. We each possess a soul that is a spark of Godliness. So we each have the power to transcend the limitations imposed upon us by our physical natures, no matter how formidable they may seem. To demonstrate this to you, I will now perform a miracle." An audible gasp swept through the group.

The Rebbe then scanned the room, making eye contact for a brief moment with each of the young people gathered around his desk. With a smile and serious tone, he continued, "Each and every one of us in this room will now resolve to improve

himself in one specific area. You will each choose an aspect of your personal life, character development, mitzvah observance or commitment to bettering the wellbeing of others. It will be some improvement that you recognize as necessary, but until now you have perceived it as being beyond your ability to accomplish.

"I bless you to succeed, and prove to yourselves that the *neshamah* indeed has the power to overcome the *guf* (body), this natural physical 'reality' within which we are accustomed to living. That will certainly be a miracle of note."

.....

This week will mark *Gimel Tammuz*, the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, zy'a. An indefatigable leader overseeing a worldwide network of *shlichus*, the Rebbe was a *tzadik*, a *gadol baTorah*, a commander in chief, a *nasi*, a revolutionary, and a spiritual entrepreneur. Considering it his responsibility to nourish and lift up every Jewish soul in the world, he was the great *baal achrayus*, leader of his generation. From Chabad-Lubavitch World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights, the Rebbe engaged in advancing the depths of Torah insight and scholarship (there are more than 400 volumes of the Rebbe's Torah in print), to sharing advice, insight and blessings with countless individuals across the world.

And there were open miracles. A powerful flow of *yeshuos* manifested and

continues to manifest blessings of success, healing, fertility, *parnassah* and rescue from danger. Miracles were ‘performed’ at weekly distributions of tzedakah dollars, during ‘*kos shel bracha*’ events following Yamim Tovim, through spoken blessings, prophetic advice, written responses to letters, and prayer-requests that he brought to ‘the Ohel’, the resting place of his father in law, the Previous Rebbe. Indeed, multiple volumes of indisputable, tangible miraculous wonders have been recorded.

The Rebbe’s ability to see the big-picture, to peer into the future, and to understand the inner, hidden world, seemed to focus the power of his blessings and prayers into fulfillment of needs that the receivers had not even known about. He was an embodiment of the concept of צדיק גורר מקיים, והקב"ה מקיים, A *tzadik* makes a decree, and Hashem follows it.

All of this, however, misses the much more significant, and ‘miraculous’ aspect of the Rebbe’s impact. As Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk said, “There are rebbes who are so great that they can revive the dead. But really, reviving the dead is God’s business. The mark of a true Rebbe is one who is able to revive *the living*...” Over more than half a century of dedication to the men,

women and children of Klal Yisrael, and all humanity, the Rebbe was מחייה החיים — he ‘resurrected the living’, often just through pointedly expressing his indefatigable optimism and faith in humanity, and his constant and persistent focus on the good.

The Rebbe embodied a superhuman, miraculous dedication to others, and continues today to urge and empower us to confidently awaken the Divine spark within and activate our Godly souls.

After sharing Torah thoughts, a *maamar* discourse or a public address, the Rebbe encouraged all to put the ideas discussed into action. Holy inspiration and awakening must be drawn down into vessels. In Chabad, a *hachlata* is a resolution, a conscious decision, to outwardly manifest one’s intentions for improvement and accomplishment.

This *Gimmel Tamuz*, in the spirit and merit of the Rebbe, let us make a *hachlata*; choose an aspect of our life, some necessary improvement, and even if it seems beyond our ability, may we do it and be successful. Let us live with the Rebbe’s example of optimism, faith and courageous action, and may we see open miracles in our own lives and the lives of all Israel. ■



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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

In our *sedra* this week, *Parshat Chukat*, the Torah recalls the song of thanks that the Jewish people sang in appreciation for the well which appeared in the dessert which supplied them with ample water to drink.

(יז) אָז יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת עָלִי
בְּאֵר עֲנוּלָה: (יח) בְּאֵר חֲפְרוּהָ שְׂרִים כְּרוּהָ
נְדִיבֵי הָעָם בְּמַחֲקֶהָ בְּמִשְׁעָנֶתָם וּבְמַדְבָּר מִתְנַהָה:

Then Yisrael sang this song- To the well, we called out! Well that the princes dug, that the noble ones excavated, carved out with their staffs, a gift from the wilderness...

Rashi, explains our verse-*B'eer Chafaruha Sarim*- Well that the princes dug- to mean- this is the well that Moshe and Aharon dug.

The Arizal suggested that the first letters of the first few words of our verse - *B'eer Chafaruha Sarim*, *Karuha* - spell out an acronym comprising the word *B'Choshech* - In darkness.

The *Yesod HaAvodah*, the *first Slonimer Rebbe z'ya*, explains the words of the *Arizal* as teaching us a very important, and eternally relevant message. When a Jew experiences times of darkness, when

we might be struggling to find joy or fulfillment in our *Avodat Hashem*, then we should emulate *Moshe and Aharon* and "dig wells." In times of despair or in times when we feel disconnected or uninspired, we should dig deep and delve into and immerse ourselves in *limud torah*, until we find and experience once again the life-giving water that is the *Torah HaKedosha*.

May each of us be blessed with the strength and fortitude to "dig wells," to find the spiritual sustenance we need through the proverbial waters of life inherent within the *Torah HaKedosha*. ■

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Roman Bondarenko, a United Hatzalah volunteer EMT happened to be nearby when his proximity alert went off, notifying him of the unfolding emergency. Racing to his car, Roman swiftly maneuvered through traffic, making his way to the scene to help.

Upon his arrival, he met Shmuel Shaulzon, a United Hatzalah volunteer paramedic, who had also responded to the distress call. Together, the two volunteers assessed the situation and discovered the woman struggling to breathe, her face and lips swollen from the severe allergic reaction. The clock was ticking, and every second counted.

Realizing the gravity of the woman's condition, Roman and Shmuel immediately sprang into action. The pair administered an EpiPen injection, a life-saving tool designed to counteract severe allergic reactions. After the injection, the woman's symptoms began to disappear quickly. With each passing minute, her facial swelling and eye inflammation began to subside, and her breathing returned to normal. Several minutes later, an intensive care ambulance arrived and evacuated her to the nearby hospital for further care and medical checks.



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Do History & Global Warfare Affect Redemption?

As our nation neared the doorstep of Israel, major regional wars erupted in the East bank of the Jordan river. The Torah doesn't provide the actual timelines of these conflicts in relation to our arrival, but it does juxtapose these battles to our entrance into Israel. Evidently, these wars were part of the larger divine choreography of Jewish history.

During the war, fierce battles were waged between Moav and a branch of Emori commanded by Sichon, a despotic king who was also a mighty warrior. When Sichon's forces trounced Moav, they captured huge tracts of land, including a major metropolis called Cheshbon. This was no small skirmish, but a major regional military conflagration which profoundly shaped Jewish history.

Who Will Win?

To the naked eye, these wars seemed completely unrelated to Jewish history. However, to the prophetic eye, these battles held great consequences. As Moav were our long-lost cousins, descended from Avraham's nephew Lot, we were barred from any aggression toward them. Had Moav prevailed in their war with Sichon and retained their lands, the territory would have remained, effectively, "off limits" to

Jewish history.

There were no such restrictions governing the Emori. Though they didn't inhabit Israel proper, and were halachically allowed to remain in their lands, culturally, they were part of a larger Canaanite society whose barbaric and idolatrous behavior hindered the advance of monotheism in the region. Sichon's victory over Moav and the resulting land concessions, opened the doors for our own conquest of these lands. Though Jewish presence in the East Bank of the Jordan river always fluctuated, one day, these tracts of land will be part of Greater Israel. The wars between Sichon and Moav were not incidental. History was conspiring to advance Jewish redemption. You just need the proper lens to recognize it.

Synchronicity

We distill and propel human history and as we march to Yerushalayim humanity also advances its ideal historical reality. Consequently, the arc of human history must veer toward the trajectory of Jewish redemption. During galus, when we were sidelined from history, these two arcs were disconnected. However, as Jewish redemption awakens, the synchronicity between human history and Jewish redemption becomes more obvious. So it was 3300

years ago in the plains of Moav, and so it has been over the past 400 years in Western civilization at large.

Redemption doesn't occur in a historical vacuum and, certainly, our final redemption, which will rehabilitate all of humanity, didn't develop on the sidelines of history. Several major revolutions of the past four centuries paved our road back to Yerushalayim.

Democracy

Daily, after praying for our return to Yerushalayim, we pray for the restoration of "just" leaders and for ethical systems of government. One day, Moshiach will install a moral and benevolent monarchy, regulated by the fear of Heaven. Until that day, however, our return to the city of justice must be founded upon an ethical political system. Historically, monarchies perpetuated class inequality and repressed human freedom. The world hadn't yet developed a moral political system which could brace our return to Israel. Humanity hadn't yet imagined democracy.

Gradually, by the 18th century, after centuries of human suffering, humanity replaced oppressive monarchies with just and equitable democracies. We were now equipped with a relatively fair and moral political system to assure an ethical return to sovereignty. One day, a king named Moshiach will arrive, but until that day we must employ democracy to rebuild the city of justice.

Colonialism

As we left Yerushalayim for exile we were divinely sworn not to attempt a militarily uprising, but instead, to patiently await a peaceful return to our Homeland.

Throughout history, this oath presented an insurmountable barrier to our return to Israel. No ruler of this hotly contested land would willingly cede it back to us and we couldn't militarily recover it. We were dead-ended into waiting for Moshiach.

Beginning in the 16th century, Europe began to colonize much of the underdeveloped third world. Beginning in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it slowly became evident to the colonial powers that sovereignty must be restored to local ethnic populations. This opened the door to an internationally authorized Jewish return to Yerushalayim without any Jewish military aggression. In 1917, the Balfour declaration invited us to walk through the door of history without violating our historical oaths. Without Colonialism, we would still be barred by oaths prohibiting an armed revolution.

Pax Americana

During the same period that Colonialism was fading, the United States was emerging as a dominant global superpower. Industrialism, Capitalism, America's role in WWI, WWII and the defeat of Communism secured America's role as the preeminent international superpower, which enjoyed widespread diplomatic and cultural influence. US support for Israel, especially during the early years of our fledgling state was invaluable to our survival. The Declaration of Independence of 1776 in Philadelphia enabled the Declaration of Independence in Yerushalayim in 1948. Once again, world history was aligning with Jewish history.

Nationalism

As organized religion collapsed during the 19th century, national identity began to

dominate human consciousness. For the first time, people identified more with their state and their national heritage, and less with their religious affiliation. Inspired by this surge of Nationalism, Jews began to think of their own nationhood, land, and ethnic identity even though, unfortunately, many were abandoning classic religious behavior. The rise of worldwide Nationalism ignited the rise of Jewish Nationalism, drawing millions of Jews back home.

Redemption doesn't occur in a historical vacuum. The wars in Moav were necessary for our advance into Israel. Similarly, the rise of Democracy, the advent of Colonialism, the emergence of the United States as a world power and the popularity of Nationalism were all crucial in returning Hashem's people to their chosen Homeland.

Cultural Demolition & Reconstruction

Though history, in general, facilitates redemption, wars in particular, unlock hidden redemptive potential¹. Hashem prefers a world of peace and harmony, and wars represent historical malfunction. Great wars follow severe cultural deterioration. When decayed values become deeply embedded, society collapses into war. Wars expose moral corruption and social decomposition.

These cultural voids which appear in the wake of wars, require Jewish redemption to restore moral spirit, and to repair the fallen and contaminated human condition. The horrific wars of the twentieth century exposed the moral and religious decay of European culture. Around the turn of the

20th century, European capitals such as Paris, Barcelona and Vienna brimmed with bright optimism that a modern cosmopolitan Europe driven by democracy, tolerance, capitalism, science and culture would no longer experience war and hatred. Yet, as this culture was godless and constructed upon secular values, it slowly degenerated into the dark doctrines of hatred and fear, leading to both horrible wars and to appalling genocides which took the lives of hundreds of millions. The wars and mass executions of the 20th century laid bare the moral hollowness of the modern world. The resulting moral void desperately cried out for spirit, and for God.

Within this moral vacuum we were invited back to Yerushalayim, to repair the moral diseases of the 20th century and to bring Hashem back to our world. Great wars leave voids and redemptive potential is unleashed. ■

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1. See Rav Kook, Orot, Orot Mei'ofel, The War, parts 5,8,9.



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SHOFTIM 11:1-33

The connection between the story of Yiftach and this week's parsha seems to be quite obvious. Parshat Chukat describes the conquest of the land of Sichon HaEmori. The land originally belonged to Moav and Ammon and through military efforts, Sichon conquered this land. Seeking direct passage into Eretz Yisrael, the Jewish people asked to cross through the Emorite land, *אֶעֱבְרָה בְּאַרְצָךָ לֹא נָטָה בְּשׁוֹדָה וּבְכָרֶם לֹא נִשְׁתָּה, מִי בְּיַר בְּדֶרֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ גֵּלָךְ עַד אֲשֶׁר־נַעֲבֹר גְּבֻלְךָ: Let me pass through your country. We will not turn off into fields or vineyards, and we will not drink water from wells. We will follow the king's highway until we have crossed your territory.* Not only did the Emoraim refuse to let Bnei Yisrael pass through, they came out and attacked them. Bnei Yisrael were victorious and ultimately the tribes of Reuven, Gad and half of Menashe settled in these lands.

In our Haftorah, this incident comes back to haunt Bnei Yisrael. Ammon accuses the Jewish people of robbing them of their land. Yiftach repeats the story almost word for word in our parsha, recounting how the disputed land was actually first conquered from the Ammon nation by Sichon. After requesting safe passage, the Jewish people defended themselves and were ultimately victorious and acquired Sichon's land. There was no cause for Ammon's threat and ultimate battle as the Jewish people

had legitimate claims to the land.

However, upon closer analysis, the two stories don't align as neatly as it seems upon first glance. Yiftach recounts an exchange that precedes the battle with Sichon. He shares that first Bnei Yisrael asked the nations of Edom and Moav to pass through their lands. However, when looking at the narrative presented in the Torah, it doesn't mention Moav - not in the Bamidbar account nor the Devarim account. How could this be? Could Yiftach have embellished the story when speaking to the nation of Ammon?

The Abarbanel offers a profound insight that applies not only to this incident but across the entire cannon of our holy sefarim. He suggests that *כל מה שנאמר בכל the entire Torah and the words of all the Neviim were written with the Divine spirit, b'ruach haKodesh.* At times the Divine truth is not obvious. The prophets were provided with the Dvar Hashem so that we might know the ultimate, if hidden, truth. We do not have this advantage nowadays and must therefore recognize that perhaps there is a deeper truth needed to understand the events of the day. Even though this truth is unknown to us we must retain faith. ■

Rebbeztzin Dr. Adina Shmidman is the founding director of the Orthodox Union Women's Initiative and the rebbeztzin of the Lower Merion Synagogue in Bala Cynwyd, PA.

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Discovering Our Freedom: The Full Israel Life

In the nation at large, all desire for living of life - the life of the individual and the community - all hope of redemption flows only from this spring of life, in order to live full Israelite life without contradiction and constriction - and this is the desire for the Land of Israel, the holy soil, the Land of God. (Eretz Cheftetz 5:4) (Naor translation)

We don't often associate religious life with freedom and liberty. Regulated routine and regiment are the cornerstones of Jewish life.

Rav Kook, however, throughout his writings, continually celebrates the value of freedom and insists that this value is essential to the Jewish experience. In order to understand the unique approach of Rav Kook, we turn to his often quoted comments regarding *Chag Cheruteinu* - the Festival of Freedom. Rav Kook reformulates for us the definition of what it means to be a slave.

Rav Kook teaches that the difference between a slave and a free person is not merely a matter of social position. We can find an enlightened slave whose spirit is free, and a free man with the mentality of a slave. True freedom is that uplifted spirit by which the individual - as well as the nation as a whole - is inspired to remain faithful to

his inner essence, to that spiritual attribute of the Divine image within him. It is that quality which enables us to feel that our life has value and meaning.

A person with a slave mentality lives his life and harbors emotions that are rooted, not in his essential spiritual nature, but in that which is attractive and good in the eyes of others. In this way, he is ruled by others, whether physically or by social convention.

Vanquished in exile, we were oppressed for hundreds of years by cruel masters. When we return to the Land, when we live again amongst our people and in a culture whose underpinnings are Torah values, we free ourselves - we can be free in our very essence.

(Adapted from *Ma'amerei HaRe'iyah*, 'Celebrations of the Soul' pp. 141-143)

Assur Means To Be Imprisoned

Rav Moshe Shapiro zt"l, one of the eminent Torah teachers of Jerusalem, discusses the concept of sin and the Hebrew term associated with it: *Assur*. The word for imprisonment, *maasar*, stems from the same root as *assur* (We are familiar with this term for the morning brachot, '*matir asurim*'). At first glance, it is difficult to see how imprisonment, *maasar*, is connected

with the concept of something being prohibited. Furthermore, the word, *assur*, literally means “tied” (to something). How does this come to mean “prohibition”? The answer to both questions is that a person who does something that is prohibited, *assur*, ceases to be free. He becomes enslaved to the prohibited act that he has committed. The concept of *assur*, tied, underscores that we are being enslaved by an existence that should not be our natural existence (The Choice to Believe, Feldman, pp. 301-302).

Free Bird

A discussion ensues in tractate Shabbat regarding catching a bird and the prohibition of the hunting/capturing of an animal on Shabbat. The Talmud says that even when it is directed into a house it remains free: “We are dealing with a “free bird” (a sparrow), because it does not accept authority.” The bird is not intimidated and evades capture even in a house. “As the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Why is it called a free bird [*tzipor dror*]? Because it dwells [*dara*] in a house as it does in a field” (Shabbat 106b).

Rav Kook, in his inimitable style, offers an exquisite lesson from a seemingly “dry” halachic text.

The bird symbolically represents man’s quest for freedom in this world. When one retains their unique ideals and aspirations even when they are boxed in “by a house”, by some external force that seeks to subdue its flight, the free person is able to continue his quest and he refuses to be hindered by any other force.

It is for this reason, says Rav Kook, that in our rituals and prayers we continually harken back to *yitziat mitzrayim*, the exodus

from Egypt. This event remains an everlasting symbol of our pursuit of freedom - to remain true to ourselves and our ambitions (Ain Aya, Shabbat Vol. 2, p. 274-275).

Charut is Cherut

Our true essence is pure and good. We need only to know it well and then we will naturally pursue the right path. This says Rav Kook is the meaning of the well known teaching in the mishna which interprets the verse describing the writing of the Ten Commandments on the tablets of stone (Shemot 32:16). The Torah describes its letters being written as *charut* - which means chiseled into the stones. The sages comment that the word can also be read as *cherut* - freedom (Avot 6:2). Freedom is a byproduct of living life in accordance with the inclination for good and for the holy that is etched into the soul of a Jew. (Ibid. p. 275)

The Exalted Feeling of Freedom *Teshuva*

One of the novel contributions of Rav Kook’s in his writings about *teshuva* is how repentance is a process that is freeing, untethering and empowering. The following excerpt from ‘Orot Hateshuva’ highlights that the delight of liberty and freedom are achieved with the act of *teshuva*:

“As the divine illumination grows in him, he is liberated from every servitude to the alien forces that have come to dominate him. The whole community, too, when it is ready to experience the desire for *teshuva*, is at once liberated, through the divine illumination that exerts its influence upon it as a concomitant of the desire for *teshuva*.” (Orot HaTeshuva 15:9) ■

Refuah Shleima to Yisrael Ben Leah



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An Oleh Who Wants to Lain His Aliya

Question: As the *gabbai* in an Ashkenazi *shul*, I recently called up for an *aliya* a guest who asked if he could *lain* his *aliya*. I told him no, and he looked surprised/disappointed. Did I do the right thing?

Answer: All agree that in the *gemara's* time, the *oleh* read the Torah aloud for the *tzibbur*. In fact in Tannaic times when only the first *aliya* had an opening *beracha* and the last one had an ending *beracha* (Megilla 21b), all the middle *olim* did was read the Torah. The Rambam (Tefilla 12:5) also describes *kri'at haTorah* as the *olim* doing the *laining*.

Other *Rishonim*, though, report a *minhag* that a *ba'al korei* *lains*, whereas the *oleh* makes the *berachot* and reads along quietly (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 141:2). Tosafot (Megilla 21b) and the Ran (Megilla 12a to the Rif's pages) explain the *minhag* as instituted to not embarrass one who does not know how to *lain* (at least, without preparation).

The Rosh (Megilla 3:1) presents Talmudic precedent of lowering individual

participation to avoid embarrassment for the less skilled. Those people bringing *bikkurim* who knew how to, used to make the *bikkurim* declaration alone, whereas those who did not know, had it recited before them; to not embarrass those who needed help, it was instituted that everyone would do it with help. We see from the Rosh's comparison that our *minhag* that it is not just that the *oleh* does not need to *lain* but that he specifically should not do so. A similar post-Talmudic *minhag* is that a *chatan* does not recite the *berachot* under his *chupa*, which, according to the Orchot Chayim (Kiddushin 21) is so that those who cannot recite them fluently will not be embarrassed.

The Rosh did not think we can learn from *bikkurim* to *aliyot*. There, an embarrassed person might abrogate his obligation to bring *bikkurim*, whereas here, we can let him choose between improving his reading ability and not getting *aliyot*. The Rosh's reason for the *takana* is to prevent a situation where one claims proficiency in *laining* he does not possess, thereby causing the *tzibbur* to have an improper *kri'at haTorah*. If we leave the choice of which *olim* can *lain* up to the *tzibbur*, it will likely cause fighting.

The Rama (OC 140:1) presents the *minhag* as a fact, but while the Beit Yosef (OC 141) discusses it, in the Shulchan Aruch (OC 141:2) he describes, as apparent co-equals, the possibility of the *ba'al korei* or the *oleh*

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



reading aloud. The very broad Ashkenazi practice is to not allow the *oleh* to *lain* for himself. Sephardi practice is more fluid; many Sephardi *batei kneset* allow proficient *lainers* (regarding whom the Rosh's main problem does not apply) to read their own *aliya* (see Yalkut Yosef, OC 141:(24); Orchot Yosher I, OC 7). The Rambam-following Teimani community consistently has the *olim* read for the *tzibbur*.

If your *oleh* was Ashkenazi, there is nothing to discuss; if he did not know the *halacha*, he can be taught it. What if: the *oleh* is Sephardi, you know he can read well (and either the *shul* leaves *laining* style to the *ba'al korei* or he knows how to read the *tzibbur's* way), and the *ba'al korei*, who spent time preparing, does not mind? Since even among Sephardim, an *oleh* generally does not read, he cannot ask to be an exception in a *shul* whose policy is to not allow exceptions. (There are exceptions, e.g., Simchat Torah, bar mitzva boys who read only *maftir*, and when the person who is anyway *laining* gets an *aliya*. However, these are exceptions based on case, not on the person; the latter is what causes embarrassment or fighting.)

What about for Teimanim, for whom the *oleh's* reading is fundamental and consistent? Is the *tzibbur's* or the *oleh's minhag* the determinant? In our response (Matot Masei 5777) about an *avel* whose ruling is to be *chazan* on Rosh Chodesh, whereas the *shul's minhag* is that he should not, we

posited that the determinant is if the *minhag* addresses the concern of the individual or the community. In this case, the Rosh and Tosafot agree that the concern is for the community. Therefore, you correctly followed the *shul's* Ashkenazi ruling. ■

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Working in Vineyards in Israel and Abroad – Kilei HaKerem, Part 1

QUESTION

I live in the United States, I study wine-making and viticulture at the university here and I have some questions concerning my situation.

A Am I allowed to work in a winery that makes non-kosher wine (not kosher, meaning just *stam yeinam*)?

B Is it permissible to work in the vineyard of such a winery? And what should I be careful of when working in the vineyard?

C It is customary here in the region to sow between the rows (there are certain areas where cover crops are planted right under the vines themselves) all kinds of seeds such as clover, rye, etc. as nitrogen binders. Am I allowed to actually do the sowing myself? Does *kilei hakerem* apply to vineyards outside of Israel? Does it apply in a vineyard belonging to a non-Jew? Is it considered *kilei hakerem* before flowering occurs (usually in the middle of the growing season they mow everything over)?

ANSWER

A Today, *stam yeinam*, wine handled by a non-Jew, is forbidden for eating and not for benefit (*hana'ah*). So, from a halachic

perspective, as long as you don't drink the wine, it is not prohibited. That is, you may work in such a winery but abstain from drinking the wine. While there are opinions that forbid buying and trading with such wine (*Shulchan Aruch* YD 123:1), the Rama (*ibid.*) is lenient even in the case of actual trade; he was not concerned that one would come to drink or eat it, and therefore as long as the work does not involve tasting the wine, it is possible to be lenient.

B Regarding working in the vineyard of such a winery, there is no problem. However, *kilei hakerem* does apply in vineyards outside of Israel. This may be a problem, as we will discuss next week. ■

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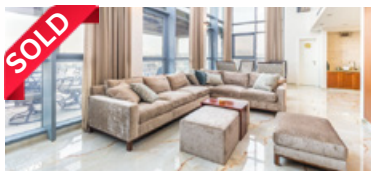
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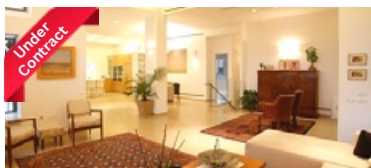
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Conclusion – A Double Pidyon Haben?

Last time we saw that Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk was adamant that a woman would never have to perform a pidyon haben twice. Therefore, in the case of a woman born with two uteruses, a condition called uterus didelphys, the first-born son would require a pidyon haben. However, even if the woman would subsequently deliver a baby from the "other" uterus, the child would not be required to undergo pidyon haben.

We can understand the logic of this position, since the obligation of pidyon haben is that the first-born son is to be redeemed. There is no classic halachic discussion as to where the pregnancy developed and, therefore, this has no bearing on the halachic obligation. Since the woman already had one first-born, any other sons cannot be claimed to be the "first-born".

But, as we saw last time, Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshutz cited a Midrashic source that Yocheved redeemed Moshe, even though she had previous children. After giving birth to Aharon and Miriam, she was rejuvenated, and she reverted back to her pre-birth state.

While this is a somewhat fanciful tale, it appears to indicate that there are rare cases in which the same woman would have to perform a pidyon haben twice.

My friend, Rabbi Eitan Kupietzky, wrote an article on this subject that appeared in the respected medical halachic journal *Assia*. He concludes the article with an interesting anecdote. He heard from students of the late posek Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, that a case was presented to him of a woman with uterus didelphys, and the question was asked regarding the obligation of her children and pidyon haben.

Rabbi Elyashiv is reported to have ruled that if a son was born from one uterus and then a son was born from the other uterus, both boys would need to undergo pidyon haben. Rabbi Kupietzky wrote that he corroborated this story with other people close to Rabbi Elyashiv who reported that there were at least two cases of women with uterus didelphys who were instructed to perform the double pidyon haben.

While such testimonies lack sufficient proof and specific sources for the reported halachic position, Rabbi Kupietzky suggests that Rabbi Elyashiv must have taken into account the Midrashic sources cited by Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshutz.

This is far from a definitive halachic decision, but it is an indication that in the rare case of uterus didelphys, there are those who would require the first boy born from each uterus to undergo pidyon haben. ■

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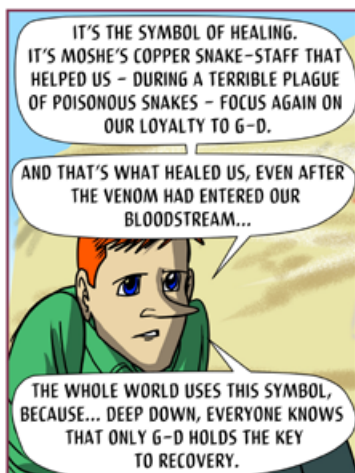
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Speaking To A Rock

We are taught in Parshat Chukat that Moshe Rabbeinu wasn't allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael because he incorrectly hit a rock in which he was supposed to speak to in order to draw out water. Wait, because Moshe hit a rock, he could not enter Eretz Yisrael?! Was it really that big of a deal? At the end of the day did he not release the water that was supposed to come out of the rock? He found another way to accomplish the result, why such a harsh punishment?

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) answers that hitting and speaking to the rock represents two different methods of relating to God. The method of hitting a rock is a very public and open miracle and disrupts the laws of nature, while speaking to the rock is very gentle and relaxed. The speaking to the rock represents the personal and intimate form of connection to God as expressed through Teffilah. Hashem was asking Moshe to prepare Am Yisrael for a new form of life as they transition into Eretz Yisrael.

The open miracles of the desert such as the maan and the cloud of glory were no longer going to be present, life was going to take on a natural form and would require real effort to build up the land themselves

and fight to conquer the land. The ways of the past were no longer applicable, and Moshe's method of transmission needed to be handed off now to lead the nation in their new state. They would not have a direct line of nevuah with God as they did in the midbar. God would now be found behind the scenes, and we would need to reveal Him through our day-to-day efforts. As Am Yisrael now transitions to fulfill its purpose it must learn to stand on its own with a continuous conversation with God leading us.

Raphael Roshwalb 11th Grade, Raanana



Why does it say “Zot chukat haTorah” — “This is the statute of the Torah” — instead of “Zot chukat parah adumah” — “This is the statute of the red cow”?

ANSWER: The laws concerning the parah adumah are paradoxical. On the one hand, when the mixture is sprinkled on the tameh person he becomes tahor. On the other hand, those who are involved in the preparation of the parah adumah become tameh.

The people appointed to prepare the parah adumah may rationally argue, “Why should we become tameh for the sake of those who were not careful to avoid contact with a corpse?”

Through the statute of parah adumah the Torah is teaching that a Jew must help another Jew even if it requires sacrifice. This is “chukat

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haTorah” — “a basic principle of Torah” — and though we may not easily comprehend it, we must practice it in our daily lives.

There is a popular adage, “give until it hurts.” Unfortunately, many people give when it hurts, but very few give until it hurts. The statute of parah adumah, which is described as “the statute of Torah,” teaches us to help another Jew even if it hurts. As a teen, oftentimes I don’t want to, for example, show up to class on time or run to throw out the trash but in this adage the Torah really teaches us that it’s truly special when it’s out of our comfort zone. As the pasuk says, וְאֶהְיֶה לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ just as you would push through obstacles for yourself, you must also push yourself for others. ■

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