

## **RABBI AHARON ZIEGLER - PARASHAT CHUKAT—2021 5781**

This coming Sunday, June 20, which is the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, we will observe the 46th Yahrtzeit of my esteemed mother-in-law. (my wife Libby's mother, CHAVA ROCHEL BAT R'SINAI, A'H.) This Dvar Torah is dedicated to her memory. May she be a Ma'liza Yeshara for her Family and Klal Yisroel.

**SHE WAS A STAUNCH BELIEVER IN RELIGIOUS ZIONISM AND AN ARDENT SPOKESPERSON ON ITS BEHALF. "TEHEI NAFSHA TZERURA BITZROR HACHAYIM**

### **"POWER OF DIBBUR"**

In our Parasha, Moshe disobeys Gd, by striking the rock instead of speaking to it! Moshe is commanded (20:8) to take his staff and speak to the rock in the presence of all of Israel. We must ask ourselves, if Gd's intention for Moshe to speak to the rock, why tell him to bring along the staff? Furthermore, isn't it no less a miracle for a rock to produce water regardless of whether it is hit or spoken to?

Many commentators attempt to answer these questions. I would like to share an answer from Rav Bienenfeld, it is an answer that draws out an important lesson for all of us.

The people, now about to enter the Promised Land, needed to make a transition from living a life dependency upon miracles into a life of normalcy. Where once they could expect open and immediate Divine intervention to provide for their needs and help them from their enemies, they would now have to learn to obtain that same Divine help differently. Upon arriving in the Land, both the power of speech, of prayer, together with their deeds would be the trigger for Gd's salvation. HaShem tells Moshe to bring along the staff, but not to use it, but rather to demonstrate that by speaking, by the power of sincere and genuine prayer, what the staff was once able to accomplish until now, can now be achieved through Avodah Sheh' balev, Service of the heart, namely- Tefillah.

Instead of following this plan, Moshe Rabbeinu, in a fit of anger (Rambam) rebukes the people. The opportunity to teach the People the extraordinary power of Dibbur (speech) was tragically lost. That HaShem's boundless kindness and providence could be attained by the power of Dibbur would have been a glorious Kiddush HaShem—sanctification of His Name (20:12).

Rav Moshe Feinstein draws another educational lesson from this event. One might have assumed that there was no benefit speaking to a rock, an inanimate object. While this may seem to make sense on the surface, it is not pedagogically correct. We often hear from parents and teachers lament, "my words fall onto deaf ears" so why try? This is a terrible mistake, for who can know what benefit, in the long run, might accrue to the growth of a student or child precisely because of the patient effort of a dedicated teacher or parent. Rav Preida had the patience and perseverance to teach the same thing 400 times to a student (Eirubin 54b)

Indeed, if a rock, a lifeless object, can respond to speech and give forth water, how much more so a living vibrant human being, filled with intellectual and spiritual potential, when exposed to the Kedusha the Holy words of Dvar HaShem through loving parents and teachers.

Moshe and Aharon erred by the “waters of Meriva”. The event is recorded to encourage us as parents and educators to remain ever vigilant in our efforts to transmit to future generations what we have learned from our forebears and to pray that our children, students and community will listen and rise to our expectations and exceed their own.

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim--- Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

### QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT CHUKAT

- 1-What Shabbat of the year is the beginning of our Parasha read as a Maftir? Why then?
- 2- If a dead body of a Gentile is in a room, may a Kohen enter that room? State reason for yes or no.
- 3-What new challenges did our people face when Miriam died?
- 4-From where does Rashi derive the concept that it is proper Derech Eretz to purchase something from the host or vendor when using their facilities?
- 5-Why did Moshe and the people fear King Og more than the other kings they had to fight, that G-d had to say “Do NOT FEAR HIM” (21:34)
- 6-In ch. 21, our people again complain, and this time HaShem punishes them with a fiery snake that burns and kills. What was the antidote to stop the killings from these snakes?
- 7- Where else in the Torah do the three words “ZOT CHUKAT HATORAH” appear, and what is the connection between the two places?
- 8-The Eifer, the ashes of the burnt red cow, are used to be Metaheir those who were Tamei from a met. Who in the Torah compared himself to Eifer and Afar?
- 9-What month and day of month did Aharon HaKohen die?
- 10- What month and day of Month did Miriam , the sister of Aharon and Moshe die?

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Modern medicine:

*Humor of the day:* Patient complains to Audiologist, “I keep hearing ringing in my ear, what should I do?” Audiologist: “Don’t answer it”