

Chukas – Rabbi Yosef Serebryanski

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Moses and the rock.

(Numbers 20:7-12) “YHVH spoke with Moses saying: Take the staff (matteh) and assemble the congregation, you and Aharon your brother, and speak with the rock to their eyes, and it will give its waters, and you will take out for them water from the rock and you will give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” And Moses took the staff (matteh) from in front of YHVH as He commanded him. Moses and Aharon gathered the community to the face of the rock, and he said to them, “The rebels please listen, then from this rock we will bring forth for you water.” Moses raised his hand and hit the rock with his staff (matteh) twice, and an abundant surge of water came forth and the assembly and their cattle drank. And YHVH said to Moses and Aharon, “Because you were not steadfast with Me (my words) to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you will not bring this community into the land that I gave them.”

Some of the details of this episode would appear to be missing or encrypted, leaving it open to varied interpretation. As such it raises many questions i.e. the following: How does this incident compare with the story told in Exodus chapter 17? Why was Moses instructed to take the staff? Why did Moses have to talk to the

rock? What does it mean in front of YHVH? What did Moses do wrong? How does the punishment fit the crime? Why is it written that Moses raised his hand, it should say he raised his staff?

Here are a few of the proffered answers. *The rock is identified as being the rock of the well of Miriam. During her life water flowed. Upon her death the water stopped flowing. Now, Moses was told to make the water flow again. *Perhaps Moses was told to take the staff to hit the rock. Maybe he was meant just to hold the staff as a symbol or “reminder” of power and miracles, and then speak to the people. *He was supposed to first speak with the people before turning his attention to the rock.

*Some explain that Moses disobeyed and was punished. He called the people “rebels” and was punished for judging them. *He spoke out of anger with the people and therefore made the mistake of hitting the rock.

A clue to unraveling this story is noting the fact that he raised his hand. As such, obviously one hand still held the staff. In that case it would have made more sense to write that he raised the staff (to hit the rock.) Since the verse does not write in that manner, it would indicate that something else transpired.

Moses knew that there were many people among the assembled who did not trust or believe in YHVH. He knew that even after he brought water forth these people would continue to rebel and would be punished. Therefore he decided to **raise his hand in prayer** before speaking with the rock. In the process of bringing his hands down the staff unintentionally touched the rock. He did this twice. (Mentioned in the book Ahron Aydoos by Rabbi Shraga Yoiv son of Rabbi Nosson Dovid from Shidlovtza.)

*Another way of reading the verse (according to some commentaries) is that he wanted to eradicate the doubts of the rebellious. The words “**he raised his hand**” can be explained as “**he played his hand.**” He lifted the hand holding the staff to chastise them while displaying the symbol (the staff,) a reminder of the events that preceded their miraculous exodus. His anger or disgust that the people were so closed caused him to lower the staff without noticing his imbalance. He unintentionally touched the rock. The Creator had not told him to chastise the

people. It was Moses' personal decision, which in fact was a distraction from the miracle about to occur.

Thus his sin (in this scenario) was that he wanted to protect the people when he should have done precisely what he was told to do by YHVH, without a second thought. By doing so he would have had only positive thoughts about all of the people (as being holy) and the vibration of the words of YHVH would have cleared any and all possible blockages and issues. Thus it could well be that his knowledge caused him to err in this issue.

The Hebrew word for “**staff**” is “**Matteh.**” For most people the word brings up the vision of a physical piece of wood. In Hebrew words are very much based on the action of what is happening. A staff is called “matteh” because it refers to something that a person leans on (or is next to) for support as in Leviticus 26:26 “bread that supports you.” Or it refers to something that changes the course of what is happening. It was used to perform miracles (change nature) as well as to change a person's mind.

With this we can understand what is meant by the words, “**Speak with the rock**” and “**Moses took that which is leaning (matteh) in front of (the word) YHVH as He commanded him.**” The Hebrew letters reflect a flow of vibration of life force from YHVH. In accordance with the order of the Hebrew alphabet, the letters preceding YHVH are; tes, dalet, hey, dalet. It is with this combination of letters, reflecting an expression of the Creator, that he was able to split the rock. Thus the meaning of what he was told “matteh,” and the fact that his staff hit the rock were two different matters.

The physical staff was in the Tabernacle, and that is a simple meaning of the words, “in front of.” Yet on further analysis there is a deeper simple meaning. Moses was told to take the staff but he was not told where to take it from. Therefore, the additional words stating where he took it from must have another meaning. The word “command” also means connection. So Moses resonated with the feeling of that connection and the word that expressed it.

While the first time his staff may have accidentally touched the rock as he brought his hands down from prayer, the second time he used the proper combination of letters. Or he accidentally touched the rock twice, or he hit the rock in the people as

well as the physical rock in front of them. There is a vibration frequency reflected in the numerical value of matteh which is fifty-four, the same numerical equivalent as the letters in the word Moach – brain. Moses represented an intellectual spiritual level and wanted to draw forth from that wisdom for the people.

Kabbalah deals at length with the concept of using various combinations of letters. The Torah is full of secret combinations of power that exists in the arrangement of the letters and the words. This is one reason that people who know basic Hebrew, who never learned the deeper aspects of the Hebrew letters and words, have no understanding of how to decode the secrets of Torah. This type of study was exclusive to people who were clear of impurities so they could utilize their knowledge to handle its power. Many of the “names” are published in various books. Yet the details of how to use them are not. In many instances one detail of how to use them is missed out. Those omissions are a form of protection. There are many dangers in using the forces of creation. As such its knowledge is limited and disseminated on an individual basis, with eligibility determined by the teacher.

An example of a person who had intimate knowledge of this power is Abraham. According to tradition, during the course of human history there have been several people who “created” animals or people, by utilizing this power of the knowledge of creation. Abraham actually created a golem. That is how Isaac had no problem when they went on a journey to bring a sacrifice.

Why did Isaac not ask Abraham where the sheep was until they were near the mountain? It was because he knew that his father could create things by simply using combinations reflected in the Hebrew letters. He knew that his father was capable of creating an animal. When they came to the place for the sacrifice he asked his father when he was going to create the lamb. To which his father responded, “When Elokim will show him the (moment to create the) lamb.”

A further way to look at the words of the verses regarding the rock is in understanding how they convey a universal message that applies to the world, in the current day and age. The rock reflects the stubbornness in people who have eyes but do not see. Moses was supposed to open people’s eyes even though he knew people did not want it and were not ready for it. After forty years in the wilderness; they had still not shifted their position and perspective.

One explanation of the verses is: Moses had to take a staff (or the proper letter combination or use some type of force or persuasive measure) to gather the people. Then he was to speak to the rock that was blocking their eyes from seeing YHVH. From that blockage would flow the desire of the Creator. That would be the ultimate display of glory as from the blockage would issue forth that which would vanquish the negative issues still clinging to the people.

He prayed that he (using the physical representation of a rock) would merit the achievement of the desire of the Creator for each person. Using the rock as a metaphor for the people's issues, rather than speaking to it directly (to unblock people's vision) a trickle of water came forth. However, that did not create the opening for the eyes and vision of the rebellious people. He therefore had to hit the rock (with higher resonance by pronouncing the name) a second time.

The first time he hit the rock only a few drops came out. The second time there was a gush of water. The same is true today when those who truly do God's work try to help people. At first all that happens is a trickle. Eventually, after much time and labor that trickle may open into an unstoppable flow of sustaining life force for people. Yet today some of us have become so distanced that we close ourselves off from the possibility of receiving. The further we get from our memories of those miracles, the worse the problem becomes.

Moses had no need to pray. He should have realized that all he needed to do was to follow the vibration of the words of his guidance from YHVH. This is why Moses could not take them to their ultimate destination. Apparently, he did not allow the ultimate to happen for them. He interrupted the flow of Creator force by inserting prayers when they were not necessary. He already had the blessing of YHVH to do his job. For most people this may not be considered as a sin. However, for a very holy person, the slightest deviation is considered a grievous transgression.

The Hebrew word for rebels is "morim." It is interesting that we use the same word to refer to teachers and guides. Perhaps the very choice of that word of reference has allowed for misdirection in the teaching we get from those who are meant to guide us. Sad to say we have many such people who claim to know the best for people but in truth guide them in a way that blocks them from their direct connection with YHVH. Our place is to remember that they are human and help to

create new opportunities for the future. We need to move forward in doing our tasks. We must not let ourselves be dissuaded by those who seek to boost their egos by getting us to follow them like docile sheep.

We all have the blessing to fulfill our task on this planet. We were all created with limitations. We are not to judge ourselves or others as we do not know everything the Creator knows. When we learn how to live with pureness of heart and mind then we will do everything as YHVH intends. The rock that blocks our mind, eyes, ears and hearts will be removed and our thirst for everything will be quenched.

A further lesson can be gleaned here. As the people were about to go into the land, a new era awaited them. Until now they were used to miracles, represented by the staff. This was now being replaced by the **word** of Moses. The word of Moses is sufficient to bring forth the living waters from a rock, a place that is blocked. The right word is sufficient to sweeten the bitter waters. After forty years in the wilderness, Moses had still not won the trust and confidence of many people in their relationship with YHVH. After all these years he had not been able to sanctify YHVH within the people.

People never seem to learn sufficiently from history. It would seem that they do not care about the priorities of their relationships with the Creator. Yet there are many who do and pursue the course of continuing to learn so that they stay on track. Their perseverance in learning and sharing is the glue that spreads outwards to hold all of us together. They help us along the way to seeing and fixing our hearts to be in the right place – to receive – to be enlightened – to acceptance - to do the work the Creator intended for us. It is in this accomplishment that we play our roles to complete the world. Together all those whose heart is in the right place can come together and cause the waters of life to flow freely for all creations.

Knowing the Snake

(Numbers 21:5) **“The people spoke against God and Moses.”** (21:6) **“And YHVH sent among the people the snakes with the venom.”** (21:8) **“Make for you a sorof and put it on a ness (pole) and anyone that has been bitten and sees it and will live.”** (21:9) **“And Moshe made nechash nechoshes (a copper snake) ...”**

The word “**ness**” also translates as miracle. A miracle is something that reminds us that there exists a power beyond nature. It raises the flag so that we take notice of it.

“**Nechoshes**” is copper. When Moshe was told to make the image he was not told which material to use. Since the Hebrew word for snake and copper are the same he made it out of copper. It is a play with words that is very common in Hebrew.

The Hebrew term for snake is usually “**nochosh**” but here the term “**sorof**” is also used. In Deuteronomy 8:15 both terms are used. Nochosh also means (Genesis 44:5) whisper and is used in many places to represent the whisper and feeling that occurs with divining. Sorof means burning and refers to the venom that burns in a person. This is a good example of how the Biblical Hebrew language is all verbs as the words and names represent action words.

Similarly with the name Nachshon as he was the first to go into the sea of reeds causing the sea to split. The Midrash Rabbah explains that he was called this name since he was Nachshol – (the first person who) went into the surf. The three letters of the word nochosh are the first three letters of the name Nachshon.

(Teshuvos Hageonim) “**Nochosh**” is an acronym for the three Hebrew words that mean ban - niddui, cherem, shamto.

The term nochosh has the word chosh in it which means to feel or to be in a hurry. The idea of the original snake is that feeling that causes people to do things. Thus the original snake was not a snake but a feeling, whisper or sense about actions we take.

Choshash - sense, chashai - quiet, chashoi – secret, choshav – think, etc. All these words that have the letters chosh as their base and thus have something to do with feeling and sensing. A snake feels the ground in order to move and slithers quietly.

From the fact that he used a snake to cure the effects of the venom we learn about how to create an antidote. Therefore it cannot just write snake ‘nochosh’ but has to use the word venom.

The reason for looking up was not just to see the snake but in Hebrew “**hibit**” means to look into. In other words by looking beyond the exterior and seeing the

Creator life force in it a person is now beyond the external aspect of the snake, seeing where it originated.

There are those who are busy with the spiritual and forget about being grounded and dealing with the physical. At the same time there are those who only look at the physical and do not see the Creator spirit and life force in matter. Both are not balanced.

Rabbi S. Hirsch explains one reason for the snake in this episode. The people were not aware of the Divine protection they had in the wilderness. This reminded them of the dangers and made them aware that each breath of life is a blessing since God protects us every moment from the elements that can destroy us.

Thus the protective screen was temporarily removed. The remedy for anyone bitten by a snake was to remember the image or danger and thus live by appreciating the Creator. We are surrounded by many elements that can destroy us and by seeing and understanding them we learn about them and the protection we have.

Many look at what is happening in the world around and see how protected they are. Many people still question what will be even after seeing the present protection. One of the prophecies tells that there will be war all around Israel but not in Israel and that seems to be what is happening today. All the nations are gathering for war with each other near Israel.

For many years I have wondered how things will happen as there are many different prophecies, so it is interesting to watch that which unfolds. One way that the word “nochosh” is explained is that it refers to the negative impulses of a person. Those impulses do not let us have full trust in the Creator.

Yes, the future is unknown but at the same time the changes in the world are showing that we are coming closer to a major shift and change on all levels. It is a difficult time to live in but also exciting as something new comes forth with each new moment. We can know that we will live in the world to come by understanding the protection in the present.

Transforming Pent Up Energy

A person, who lives according to what is dictated to him/her, eventually stops thinking for him/herself, blocking out all other thoughts or feelings in the process. Doing so leads to a buildup of frustration (even though those thoughts and feelings are being sublimated or ignored) and can eventually lead to mental distress and/or physical illness.

When this process continues for many generations, we create whole societies of people who do not think for themselves. They think in the way they have been “trained,” which promotes narrow vision and prevents the type of expansion and growth that is necessary for proper adaptation and long-term survival. The end result of this is death. The individual dies within, which results in the physical death of the society through slavery, war with others and internal wars.

A human being receives and emits signals or energy. The life force that flows freely to each person becomes pent up when it is not being properly released. This causes it to be released at a later time in a more destructive form, such as through rioting, destruction of property, killing or other acts of violence.

For some, the pent up energy causes them to feel as though they are imploding. For a select group the response is found in blowing themselves up. They desire the death of others because they feel dead inside. The destruction we see in society is a reflection of the internal problems in that society.

A large part of contemporary society lives as desensitized people. They are accepting of any lie or falsehood as long as it does not disturb their way of life or that part of themselves that they keep hidden. Those who observe the phenomenon but remain silent are complicit in the problem.

What is to become of us? Where do we find the answer?

It is definitely an era of messy antics galore. Maybe that is what is meant the messianic era. We have followed the gods of power, money, lust, etc., and have forsaken the god of humanity. Can we still reclaim that humanity?

Why is it that people are so afraid of death or what happens after death? Why cannot people just live in the present and be responsible for each moment of life?

Is having constant awareness too much for them? Is the act of taking personal responsibility something that our system has taught us not to do because of the desire to control exhibited by certain individuals?

Many things that we believe to be free actually come with great cost. A person is free to do what he/she wants until it catches up to him/her. We live with structures that are ever changing and shift with the flow of life whether we like it or not. We can listen and go with the flow or not.

People's minds and perspectives are developed by the things they have been taught and experiences they live through. Accepted structures or ways of life allow people to stop thinking. Eventually they become limited or stuck in perception. Perception, freedom and choice then exist within a limited and controlled context.

Total freedom is wonderful but cannot exist in a vacuum as it becomes destructive. Utilizing structure and rules to the extreme (even for protection) is ultimately just as destructive as complete freedom. One brings quick death while the other brings about slow death. Where is the balance?

Death is one way to become free of the form that holds us prisoner in the physical reality. It brings a person closer to the spirit source and elevates the person. In fact, the Hebrew word "kach," which means 'to take,' refers to death in Numbers 20:25 and also means convince, elevate or bring close.

In the book of Numbers chapter 19 we find a fascinating idea. The concept of the red heifer is about transforming or removing the energy of death. The cow must be completely red not even one hair of a different color as it represents the extreme of whatever red represents. When it is burned it is transformed into ashes. These ashes mixed with a few ingredients can then be sprinkled on a person removing the energy of death from person.

Thus while killing a person creates the feeling and energy of death it is possible to remove it. Generally it is explained that we are all walking around with some aspect of the energy of death. When the Messiah will be here then the energy of death will be removed from all people. Till then it seems we must endure.

Tanya chapter 38 explains that the soul level called neshomah does not need to be corrected but is here to help us settle the physical reality. When our speech and

actions do not connect with the inner soul called neshomah we remain tied to the lower forces of existence. Our intention is of prime importance as to what the life force connects with.

When we can transcend the place and resonance of where we created the negative energy or feeling of death then we can transform it and come back to a new level of existence. The book of Numbers then goes on to say how the landscape was changed by removing the people from it.

While it is not our place to fix the whole world we can fix our self in many ways. We can transform energy by raising our resonance to another frequency. We cannot do this if we are attached to the old attitudes and perceptions or by going from one way of limited thinking into another.

First people need a way to have positive expression of the pent up energy. Then they need guidance of how to think and transcend the previous existence. Understanding how the oneness of life exists in all matter is of great importance in finding a new balance. That is where the heart exists in all its glory. Once individuals and then society does this we will have transformed life on this planet in unison.

Filling Their Void

Each aspect of existence is connected internally with beyond definition. That is the reason why there are many things for which we have no answer. It also is one reason for the nagging sensation that we feel when there is something we are missing, or have “missed” or failed to complete to perfection.

We have limited vision. Therefore, we are incapable of seeing all of the infinitesimal pieces that fit together to form perfection. It is a design that we cannot fathom. The wonder of its brilliance would render us unable to complete our tasks with any measure of sanity. Yet, it is in the connection with beyond definition that we are all one.

Simplicity and giving oneself up to the Creator’s desires is key to connecting with the oneness of existence. Those who do so accept (in their simplicity) that no matter how much they learn, they truly “know” nothing.

The people who remain blocked believe that the fact that they are experts about their surrounding structure makes them truly smart. They are convinced that their learning has made them brilliant. They profess to recognize the existence of something that is greater than them. They are quick to point out how what they have learned enables them to “know” the reasons and desires of the source of all beings.

It is easy for a person standing outside the realm of their influence to become alienated if they cannot relate to those teachings and achieve the touted results. Yet those who unquestionably follow the teachings of these individuals place them on a God-like pedestal by divesting themselves of the power of individual exploration for truth. They become lazy and complacent. Actually, each individual should have the option of discovering the thing that “rings true” within him/her self.

People search for reasons for things in order to find a way to relate to them within a limited framework. The problem is that some people invent reasons in order to pacify people; they also use those explanations to control people’s behavior. This has gone on for so long that people don’t know how to distinguish truth from fiction. The result loses many souls that might have found joy in knowing truth.

It is stated in the Kabbalah book of Sefer Yetzirah (1:7) that: “The beginning is rooted in the end and the end in the beginning.” Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch explained the phrase as follows: “This is the level of Divine influence called “iggulim” (circles), where the beginning and end exist as one (they are indistinguishable). Nevertheless, the main thing is structure.”

Those people who are far sighted observe the endlessness. They understand that there is a need for a structure base for their present state to stay in balance. Those who are short sighted relate to endlessness only as the capacity to achieve for themselves (“the sky is the limit.”) Life for them is a race for recognition, glory and power rather than pursuance of the truth regardless of the cost. They utilize their brilliance to manipulate things in the short term. With all their learning and knowledge, their lack of clear vision spins them in circles. This leads to the end of the physical life with few accomplishments that count for anything.

The world is always in motion shifting and moving towards a new time period. When a person is focused on disturbing events or gets “hung up” on miniscule of

old structure, he/she is unable to witness the occurrence of new growth. Their dreams do not help them to comprehend the transformation ensuing and its potential in each and every moment. That is likely because they have been programmed to believe that only the patterns they were taught will invoke a certain future. They have been closed up, rather than expanded by their holy associations.

Ultimate transformation is a truly difficult concept for people to understand. It is illustrated (Numbers 19:2) by the description of the pure red heifer, which possesses a unique purity. Similarly, this type of purity is just as rare to find among people. Yet it is exactly through this purity that transformation can occur.

Can you imagine existing in a space where words are not needed for communication? In this space everyone knows what everyone else is feeling or thinking. No thing or thought is hidden. The present issues that damage society would naturally disappear since every individual would openly live being part of everything and everyone with no separation. Each person will have his/her unique expression and it will always be complimentary to the whole.

In the meantime we are crippled by our “need” to comprehend everything. We focus on this requirement as opposed to simply accepting the fact that everything is incomprehensible. We can only understand as much as our capacity allows us to understand. That capacity has not been determined by us, and as such, it should suffice.

Via the void we can connect to a space that is beyond our comprehension and limitations. A void was used to create the space we occupy. Thus, it is the void that allows us to reconnect to the space from which we came.

Numbers (19:20) states “**Zohs Chukkas.**” The Aramaic translation and interpretation is; “**This is the decree of the Torah.**” There are a variety of ways to reflect upon these words. One is that the people were given a chance to connect at Mount Sinai with the Creator, in purity. The people did not desire that pure connection. Thus, they were given decrees and laws through the vehicle of Torah. This would force them to realize that they do not truly understand the reason for anything.

People are experiencing a feeling of emptiness. They are searching for something to fill their needs. They do not know where to look. They experiment with a variety of lifestyle expressions, beliefs and practices that they discover along their journeys. They surely benefit from the lessons that they learn from their forays into these lifestyles. Yet those experiences do not conduct them to their ultimate goal of achievement.

One of the fascinating aspects of the burning of the red calf and the mixing of its ashes is the following: While everyone who is sprinkled with that transformative mixture becomes pure; the person who actually prepares the mixture becomes impure. One lesson gleaned from this is that the righteous need to abdicate their place of holiness and connect with the people who they need to elevate. The Talmud illustrates this idea by stating that the Jews were spread among the nations to bring those souls that have become estranged back to their connection with the Creator.

Self-righteous people have apparently decided otherwise. They isolate themselves in their own space in order not to become negatively affected by the people they meet. This has caused the identity of righteousness to be associated with disconnection from the common world. All of which can lead a person bent on self-righteousness to stray far from accomplishing his/her purpose here.

It is time for the self-righteous to recognize that they will achieve elevation by striving to bridge the gap between the divine and human existence. Once they use their connection to the Divine to reveal it in all aspects of this world, all others will follow suit.

We will not be united as a result of judgment of self or others, nor promoting fear or control, or by being better or worse than others. Our unity will emerge from pureness of heart and simplicity. It will be the natural positive flow that follows being wholly connected by seeing the Creator life force in everything. United in Divine purpose we will work as one force to restore ourselves and the earth to our proper place.

Numbers (chapter 20) tells the well-known story about Moses hitting the rock. When Miriam, died the well that had existed in her merit dried up. (Numbers 20:3) **“Then the people quarreled with Moses.”** This is strange. After all of the

miracles that occurred in Egypt and in the wilderness, it would have made sense to come to Moses and simply say, “We now need water!” To say they quarreled with Moses illustrates the fact that they did not have faith in their God despite all of the miracles that they had personally witnessed. They were like stone. All the goodness and kindness shown to them had no effect.

In verse 20:7 Moses is told: **“Speak to** (the word *el* can also mean from, on or with) **the rock to their eyes** (commonly translated as; in front of them) **and it will give its waters.”** On a deeper level this reflected the fact that the people were like rocks and needed direct action to jar them open. In verse 20:10 Moses and Aharon gather the people in front of the rock and say: **“Listen you rebels, then from this rock we will take out water.”**

The single act of taking water from a rock would just be viewed as another miracle. This alone would not have changed them. The thing that Moses and Aharon actually had to do was to speak with the people and explain to them that their behavior likened them to “rocks.” It was necessary to explain the need to open up, to have the belief of the Creator flowing through them. Only then could the rock exemplify the course of action that had to take place next.

As Moses and Aharon did not do this (in a sufficient manner) the next verse states: **“Because you did not make them trust in me to sanctify me in front of the children of Yisroel, therefore you will not bring these people into the land.”** (Moses going into the land would have not made the people better humans or to have proper faith.)

In a similar vein the Chasam Sofer once came to a student of his who was a Rabbi in a town for twenty years. When he saw that the people did not care about their connection with God he told his student that it was his fault. The student asked the Chassam Sofer, “But how that is possible?” In explaining, the Chassam Sofer used the very words that the Creator expressed to Moses: **“After all these years you still have not made them have believe in me.”**

Movement

Water is a comfort to many and can also be a source of unhappiness and destruction. Purification and re-balancing is something that happens through water as well as through the earth, air or fire. When mankind

removes the life force from something, it can be renewed by bringing life source from an alternate part of our existence.

Ashes are what remain after a fire. Yet when those ashes are mixed with water, they are capable of bringing healing and life. (Numbers 19) The ashes of a red heifer (cow) are mixed with pure living water and a few other ingredients to remove the energy of death and restore life. While ashes may represent death, since a separation of elements occurs, there still remains some life form associated with that death.

Transformation is also represented by ashes. There are certain parts of life that only happen after we experience disconnection then transformation, culminating in restoration of a new life.

There is always a small fire burning within. It is up to us to determine if we use it to spark a bigger flame or choose to extinguish even the small one. Furthermore, movement is a sign of continuing life. Thus, the direction that one is moving may be altered for the better at any given point within one's journey.

Each day of our lives we face new predicaments that are laced with choices. When we filter our experiences and choices through our connection with the source of all life, we have the option of purifying the path in which we walk. At this critical moment in world history, we have a choice of purification and life, or death and the destruction of mankind. The choice is up to each one of us to act for the good of the world.

We are waiting for the time when the Creator of heaven and earth will remove the spirit of impurity from the flow in creation and return all nations to visibly move with the oneness of existence. Till that time, we must each individually do that which we are capable of to keep our connection clear and focused with the oneness of existence.

Leaving Your Mark

What is it that the Creator engraved within us to be an indelible part of our physical and soul nature?

We have many avenues through which we can access and analyze what affects the body and what is part of our essential nature. For many individuals, doing the same with the spiritual, which is less tangible, is more difficult. To have better comprehension of our spiritual issues it is important that we attempt to connect with the path set for us by our predecessors.

The path traveled by our ancestors is not necessarily something that can be determined by where we find ourselves living today. More than likely, for most individuals, the converse is the case. A variety of events and factors that have occurred over the millennia or centuries have served to separate us from the passageway our forefathers (we) once traveled.

History records multitudes of incidences that have been the causative factor for changing our direction. These events include such things as Crusades, inquisition, political intrigues or pressures, family associations, illnesses and alternating popular religious movements. The impact these various issues has had upon our family lines has, in many cases, served to alter our course, and deter us from a path that we could be traveling.

Studying various documents and texts that precede us can assist us in finding resonance within ourselves. The truth that emerges can often upset or confuse people as it conflicts with what they have been taught or conditioned to believe. Yet one cannot alter the truth, as it speaks to and permeates the soul with its wisdom and familiarity. When one identifies the truth as it relates to that center within, no amount of outside interference can erase the soul's need to connect with that reference point. Once recognized and established, the individual can recalibrate and continue on the path of his/her forbearers.

Along our journey, women have played a pivotal role. Miriam was one of the women who guided other women on their path. (Numbers, Ch.20) When she died, the well and the water source for the well that nurtured her people, dried up. She was intimately connected to the properties of water. Her utilization of those properties enhanced her unique expression of healing and love that related to all of the people.

Her story is written immediately after the section about purification with the ashes of the Red Heifer. The ashes that are a transformation of the calf are part of the process of invoking energy of transformation upon the person upon whom they were sprinkled.

Once the Jewish people were all purified as individuals, this transformation and purification had to be reflected on a universal level. Miriam was the one who represented all people on a universally spiritual level. Once the people were transformed, she also underwent transformation, and thus could not remain in her physical body. That is when the flow of the physical channel of her cultivation ceased in this realm.

Although her death generated a void, it revealed a most amazing miracle. Physically she completed the work of her mission here. Yet even after suffering the loss of her physical expression, it was clear that the nurturing and love that she infused into this world was enough to sustain the people for many future generations. Although the people continued devoid of her physically, they were forever enriched by the indentation of her love upon them. This enabled them to better handle the future, as the love that she had given to them was ingrained into their being.

It is interesting to note that Moses and Aaron both had successors, yet no one was appointed to, or filled, Miriam's place. She left living on within the hearts of all people. Those who have been designated to travel her path have maintained the qualities of being able to complete their tasks by infusing their love into the physical world before departing from it.

The journey one makes is just as important as the destination. Each step that we transverse is the destination of that moment. When we are fully connected to the present, the past and the future exist here as well. Thus, while you are on your journey, you are also presently at your destination.

Viewing things from this perspective helps us to better understand and relate to our inner selves. It also facilitates our own personal and unique connection with the Creator and all of creation. If all people lived in this manner, they would be able to base their actions and reactions on the reality of the present rather than being focused on fear and uncertainty.

The words “journey” and “destination” do not compute to a person who has a pure and simple heart. Most of us have a need for these designations, while those few pure souls amongst us have no relationship to those terms.

Some are searching to identify the path of our ancestors as a conduit to accomplishing their goals. Once on the passageway that is proper for them, they will completely resonate with the clarity they require for their journey.

Others have no need of such direction, as the purity of their souls relinquishes them from any responsibility other than infusing their portion of love into this world. For such a person, the world around them is simply a distraction to which they have no relationship. Life simply flows for them until they have enacted purification – the rest is irrelevant.

Ingrained in each of us is a place beyond words. It is from there and within that space that all healing, love and wisdom emanates.

Levels of connection to the source of life!

(Num.Ch.19-21) The word Chuka (or Chakeeka) means engrave(d). When an object is engraved, we know that the mark that we see in it is permanent. Yet we can make a permanent mark on something without engraving.

What is the difference? When something is engraved, the marking that exists is something that has emanated from the source of the material of which it is made. Any other type of marking, whether it is permanent or not, is made with a substance (ink, metal, etc.) that is added to the item. It is something that bonds to the item being marked. That bonding might be strong or weak, but ultimately it is of another essence or identity and cannot compare to engravings that utilize the internal/actual source of the product.

This Torah portion is a response about dealing with the issue of death that revisited itself upon the people after the golden calf. However, before understanding the response, we must first understand the essence of the relationship between Moses and the Creator. It was Moses who received and communicated that which the Creator wished the people to receive.

Most people cannot relate to the level of communication that Moses had with the Creator. When Moses transferred the information onwards it was a transfer that came through his deepest soul essence, such was the intensity of the connection that he had with The Creator.

It is said that Moses was not a man of words; “He was heavy of mouth and heavy of speech” (Exodus 4:10). The people were incapable of understanding Moses when he spoke. The vibrational level of his acceptance and transference of information was one that few were able to interpret or even to relate to. This is why he needed a translator, which was his brother Aharon.

The Kabbalah speaks of four specific spiritual worlds: Atzilus, Briah, Yetzirah and Assiya. Moses was connected in the highest of those realms – Atzilus. Mankind generally connects in the lowest spiritual realm – Assiya. Within each of these worlds exists a myriad of levels. Mankind is able to contemplate the level on which Moses existed, yet is limited in its ability to fully understand it or to operate anywhere near that vibrational level.

Moses gave the Torah (guidance) to the people on the level of his soul essence. This is the connection that the Creator used in order to communicate with His Creations. No other person since Moses has been able to connect, while being in a physical body, with the essence of such an elevated spiritual level and be able to retain a balance.

God tells Moses and Aharon with regards to transmitting this information: (Numbers 19:1-2) “This is the statue of the guidance that Hashem has connected in expression.” Similarly, we find (Leviticus 27:34) “These are the connections that God has connected Moshe for the children of Israel.” There is no use of the word “I.” By use of this “third person” reference we are able to understand that the Creator has communication with people on a variety of levels. Moses was a person who was always growing and thereby changing. Thus when he changed, his levels of connection and communication with the Creator changed as well. As the leader he was also affected by the changes of the people.

The Jews believed that after leaving Egypt they would go into the land of Israel. When Moses ascended Mount Sinai death ceased to occur. The return of death happens after the people made the golden calf. We find that in the wilderness even those who follow Moses die despite his connection with God. In this portion we also read of the death of Miriam and Aharon, who pass away before Moses.

The existence of death causes the re-emergence of a state of total impurity. As the leader, Moses is now given another way to transform the energy of death into life for the people. This is by use of the ashes of the sacrifice of the Red Heifer. The person sprinkling the ashes becomes impure while the impure person upon who the ashes are sprinkled becomes pure. It is thus an act and energy of transformation.

The red heifer represents the extreme element of anger, desire, love, etc. Turning it into ashes represents transforming pure feeling and emotion. It is needed, since the energy of death exists and there needs to be a way to remove the energy of death.

There were nine instances that ashes were made from a red heifer and the tenth is supposed to be made by Moshiach himself. People see it as physical project just as they envision a physical Temple.

There is a tradition that the Temple exists and will come from heaven, thus the Temple is not dependant on people's physical imagination. The tenth purification of the red heifer may be more spiritual than physical. The transformation will happen in the physical but it will come with the spiritual change that happens when death no longer exists.

Many people believe that they have a direct connection (or communication) with God. It is very important to know that it is impossible to be totally sure that the messages that one receives truly emanate from the Creator. Being aware of that will prevent you from fooling yourself or other people.

Those who are open to spiritual energies are also vulnerable. Although the connection may seem perfect at the time, it often leads to being hurt. Moses had an open connection with the Creator that led to his severe

disappointment and hurt by what eventuated from the messages that he kept giving to the people. Purity and simplicity is protective, yet it also has limits.

With Moses, the ultimate redemption did not happen, which caused Moses and the people much pain. We have spiritual leaders in each generation who help people. Yet with all the wonders and help that they give, each one has definite limitations. The people that follow a leader with logic or belief do not want to recognize that the person or spirit has limits.

Moses was within the spiritual realms that relate to this creation. Having knowledge of the Creator beyond the level of Moses is a matter of knowledge that others can have. There are many levels and aspects of connection with the Creator. Meanwhile, the sensation, experience or understanding that people ascribe to the term "God" is done without realizing the limitation of their words, thoughts or speech. Therefore, there are many descriptions about how the Messianic era will come about.

Contemplate the following. There are tens of millions of people worldwide who claim that they are Jewish or of Jewish heritage. If all of them were to come together from all around the world, society would change very quickly. All of the souls that are Jewish would return. All people would return to serving through their personal connection with the Creator.

This single change could transform the world without a war or allow war to happen among those who wish to fight and destroy themselves.

Moshiach will be of a totally higher and different spiritual connection that is beyond the worlds that mankind currently relates to. Moshiach will be the essence of a level beyond the world of Atzilus. This will open a new dimension of union with the Creator that will create an instantaneous nullification of the divisions between the levels that exist between the spiritual realms (worlds). All of the upper worlds will be one with the lower worlds and instantly all of creation will be immersed in total understanding and awareness of the Creator on every level.

If the Creator is everywhere then there is no need to look to find, nor is there a need to be connected since we are anyway connected. It is simply a matter of what a person can perceive of or relate to with pure simplicity. To leave the superficial and connect within brings automatic quiet everywhere. We just need to remove the dirt that has accumulated over time.

At present we still have a need to find our place in the creation. We believe that we are at the edge (sharp or dull) of a major shift on this planet. We need to continue our lives while being ready to move at a moment's notice.

Knowing the moment

(Numbers chap.16-17) When should we decide to take decision making into our own hands? When should we wait for God to do something?

Korach took things into his own hands and suffered consequences. Moses says to wait until God tells us what he wants. Moses had a special connection with the Creator that allowed him to know that the Creator would directly answer his questions. No one else had that level of connection to the Creator. Thus Moses felt assured that waiting would yield an answer to everything. However, the rest of the people did not share his direct relationship with the Creator. Therefore, they were not confident that they would receive an answer to their perplexing situation simply by waiting.

There are times when it appears to us that God wants us to make choices and take things into our own hands. Yet there seem to be times when God wants us to be totally submissive to the choices of God and not question. We do not always see the delineation between those two situations. There are leaders that we should listen to and those to whom we should not listen. How are we able to know when to do things, whom to listen to, and to know what it is that we are supposed to do?

Moses was a leader that we were supposed to listen to because he had a direct connection and yet the people had hesitations for various reasons.

Tradition says that before the Jews left Egypt, 4/5 of the people died during the plague of darkness. This happened because either they did not want, or were unable, to leave Egypt. The fact that they were unable might have been attributed to a physical issue or a spiritual issue that presented a barrier to their traveling or leaving the country. We are able to deduce from the counting that was done in the desert that approximately three million Jews left Egypt. (It states that 600,000 men between the ages of twenty and sixty were counted. Allowing for wives and children would put them at about three million.) Thus we can assume that approximately twelve million died before the people went out of Egypt.

In the wilderness, following their rebellion against Moses and God, many more Jews died. At various interludes death follows the upheaval that results from their dissent. After Moses shifts the assignment of the leadership (previously accorded to the first-borns, which was also an Egyptian way of life) to the Levites, the previous leaders of the tribes die. Added to their apprehension and misery is the fact that they still have not arrived in the Promised Land. They are “stuck” in the middle of a wilderness, death is all around them, and they see no way out.

Korach was a Levite as well as a first-born. It was his perception that the choices that Moses gave the people in the wilderness were causing problems. Assuming that his assessment of the situation was correct caused him to direct the people in their rebellion. This led the people to publicly question Moses’ leadership. God’s swift reaction left no doubt as to the fact that HE chose Moses.

It is understandable that upon hearing the reports about the dangers in the land of Israel, the Jewish people would be upset. They question who is this God? They want to kill the Moses who brought them this far only to be very disappointed in their future prospects.

In the thousands of years since then, nothing seems to have changed. Some believe in a God, some question God and some don’t think that there is anything to believe in.

After thousands of years our choices are the same. Moshiach is not yet here (because if he is here you will not be reading this). The only thing we can perceive about the world of the future is further devastation and destruction. The bright promise that we pray for daily seems to always be beyond the reach of the people. The people can only connect and live with the Creator in the present, which is truly all that exists.

Our various levels of perception, various types of faith, and pumped up egos prompt us to take things into our own hands. At times we achieve some success, and at other times we fail miserably. Taking things is an aspect of separation, since allowing things to be is humbling. Sometimes the humbling prevents us from doing what we should. At those times it is only our “taking action” that seems to create. If we simply allow things to be, are we doing what the Creator wants, or not? It would seem that the Creator wants some interaction, but at what price for us?

The Jews’ momentary hesitation of not going into the land caused them to be delayed in the wilderness for forty years. The same thing happens in our lives. We hesitate in making decisions or doing things. Sometimes we do things, but not in the proper time. There are consequences to our action or inaction.

The end result seems that when the Jews finally enter the land it is the Levites and the Priests who do their work. The issue of the redemption from obligation of being a first born is addressed, etc. After all of the time that has passed since then, where did all of those actions leave us? The land was never fully occupied, even in ancient Israel. The people are given a King (and hence we are given “leaders”) because that is what they want. We have leaders based upon our desire to have leaders. Yet it also seems it is God’s desire that we have leaders since He allows it. We seem to live in a world where darkness and light are part of the same confusion.

It is our choice whether or not to see, believe and connect with the Creator even within the limitations of our own being. We choose whether or not to recognize our limitations. We decide if we will rise beyond those limitations in order bring the future balance into the present.

The big question is: What are YOU willing to do?

Whether those who rebelled against Moses were right or wrong is not the point. The point is that whenever we rebel, question, or create a separation, people on both sides get hurt. The kind of problems that kept the Jewish people in the wilderness are the same as the ones that exist today that keep us from moving to a better future.

There are people who think that they are right and have the right to say or do whatever they want. If we are passive, life will simply continue onwards with its existent problems. When we voice our opinion or take action we fix one problem but sometimes create another, because we have an agenda.

The people knew that they were told they were going into the land. However, they did not know "When" that would happen. We also are told that there will be redemption sometime in the future. Again the question is: "When will it be?" We do not know. We simply believe that it will happen. Those who do not know if they should believe in a future redemption or not can only say "I am here in this world so I might as well make the best of it." This can be true especially if living in the present allows me to listen to what the Creator wants of me in each moment.

The spiritual and physical structures of thousands of years are leading the world towards mass destruction. Tradition says that God created and destroyed hundreds of worlds before this one. Are we simply here waiting for the next one? Had the Jews gone straight into Israel, no one knows exactly what would have happened. We still do not know exactly what we are waiting for or how long we will have to wait. The only thing we have left is the belief and trust that we have perpetuated for thousands of years. For thousands of years' people held on to spiritual belief and/or physical practices that have given them a strong sense of purpose or hope. Ultimately people are still waiting for a future of unknown quality. They still have no proof that their individual or collective beliefs or definitions are correct.

Everything is possible. Some things are probable. The indefinable remains undefined only until time and space confines provide an outline for

definition. All of the opposites that co-exist in this world at the same time make this world a place of confusion. The confusion and conflicts cause people to look at things from different perspectives, which generate the possibility of growth in every situation. The growth does not excuse why the situation was created. To move forward we really have to let go, often more than we think or feel.

The positive side to the story of all the rebellions in the wilderness with Moses is that it illustrates that every moment has within it the possibility of change. Utilizing that possibility in its most constructive manner means leaving ourselves totally open to the Creator's will. Korach took the moment trying to force his agenda and belief while Moses knew the moment by listening and following the order of creation and the will of the Creator.

In order to listen and know the moment it takes preparation, which is why many are doing what they can to prepare to be ready for the future. In this way when the moment is at hand they will move with it into the future existence of complete harmony and balance.