

# whY I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

א' -ז' תמוז ה'תשע"ז

June 25 to July 1 '17

Volume 18 #35

## Chukas

### חוקת

#### זמנים

Weekdays

Shachris	
Sunday	6:50 8 & 8:30
Weekdays	5:50, 6:50, 7:30 & 8:30
Weekday Rosh Chodesh	5:40, 6:40, 7:30 & 8:30
Sunday Rosh Chodesh	6:30, 8:00 & 8:30
Mincha	8:20
Maariv	after mincha & 9:15

### שבת חוקת

Light candles	8:12 PM
Mincha	7 & 8:22 PM
Shachris	7:30, 8:50 & 9:00 AM
Mincha	1:45, 6:30 & 8:05 PM
Maariv	9:15 PM
Shabos Ends	9:20 PM

THESE ZMANIM ARE DETERMINED BY THE GABBOIM AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THEIR DISCRETION

זאת חוקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמר דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה תמימה אשר אין-בה מום אשר לא-עלה עליה על

**Which has no blemish, which has never borne a yoke (9:2)** If a person sees himself as "without blemish," confident that he has already reached perfection, it is a sure sign that he "has never borne a yoke" - he has never accepted the yoke of heaven. Otherwise he would understand that he is still full of flaws and imperfections... (The Seer of Lublin)

ויקהלו משה ואהרן את הקהל אל פני הסלע ויאמר להם שמעו נא המרים המן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים

**"Moshe and Aharon gathered the congregation before the rock and he said to them, 'Listen now, you morim / rebels, shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?'"** (20:10) **Rabbeinu Nissim** z'l ("Ran"; Spain; 1290-1380) writes: Moshe Rabbeinu was punished for these words because he generalized in criticizing Bnei Yisrael. It's true that the individual Jews whom he was addressing were "morim" / "rebels." However, our Sages say that one should be in awe of any tziibur / assembly of Jews. Jews as a group can never be labeled by a

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derogatory term, for even if the individuals in the group lack redeeming qualities that others in the group possess, the group as a whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. Even if one is an intentional sinner in his own right, if he is part of a gathering that is serving Hashem, the group is enhanced because that sinner is part of it. How so? Our Sages find a precedent in the ketoret / incense in the Temple, which had one foul-smelling spice in it—the chelbenah. The Ran says that this spice served to “awaken” the fragrance of the other spices [presumably through a chemical reaction]. Similarly, when people with different strengths and weaknesses get together, they awaken previously dormant positive traits in each other. However, the Ran continues, this is true only if the group is not made up entirely of like-minded resha'im / wicked people. If all the members of the group have exactly the same bad traits, then they merely strengthen each other's wickedness. (Derashot HaRan)

**And [Moses] said to them, "Hear now, you rebels, must we bring you forth water out of this rock?"** (20:10) Calling the Jewish people "rebels" was considered a very grave sin for a person on Moses' spiritual level. For when Jews are in trouble, the proper thing to do is help rather than chastise them. (Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev)

### Death Defying

“זאת התורה אדם כי ימות באהל” - אמר ריש לקיש: מנין שאין דברי תורה מתקיימים, אלא במי שממית עצמו עליה, שנאמר “וזאת התורה דם כי ימות באהל”.

[ברכות מ"ג, ב']

אמר ר' יוחנן: לעולם אל ימנע אדם עצמו מדברי תורה אפילו בשעת מיתה, שנאמר “זאת התורה אדר כי ימות באהל” - אפילו בשעת מיתה תהא עוסק בתורה.

[שבת פ"ג, ב']

וירם משה את ידו ויך את הסלע במטהו פעמים ויצאו מים רבים ותשת העדה ובעירם  
**“Then Moshe raised his arm and struck the rock with his staff twice; abundant water came forth and the assembly and their**

לכבוד האי גברא וב"ב הרוצים בעילום שמם על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו שיהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם הקב"ה יברך אותם בכל מיילי דמיטב בעושר ואושר ואריכות ימים בבריאות מיט ידישע נחת בזה ובבא עבגצב"ב

**animals drank.”** (20:11) Midrash Rabbah relates: Moshe hit the rock once, and water began to trickle out, as is written (Tehilim 78:20), “He struck a rock and water dripped.” Bnei Yisrael said to him, “Son of Amram: This is enough water only for a nursing child!” Immediately, Moshe became angry and hit the rock twice. Then the water washed over those who had been mocking, as is written (also in Tehilim 78:20), “Streams flooded forth.” Why did Hashem make the water flow begin as a mere trickle? **R' Eliyahu Hakohen** (“Ba'al Shevet Mussar”; Izmir, Turkey; died 1729) answers: The Talmud Yerushalmi (Shekalim ch.6) foretells a day when water will flow from the Holy of Holies in the Bet Hamikdash. That stream will begin as narrow as the antennae of the smallest insect, then it will widen to the width of a grasshopper's antennae, and then it will continue widening and becoming deeper until it is a fierce river. [Until here from the Yerushalmi]. R' Eliyahu continues: Hashem wished to give Bnei Yisrael in the desert a taste of this miracle, so He caused the water to flow in a trickle at first. Had Bnei Yisrael been patient, this trickle would have become a gushing river. This answers another question, R' Eliyahu writes: The Torah says (verse 12), “Hashem said to Moshe and to Aharon, ‘Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of Bnei Yisrael . . .’” What did Moshe Rabbeinu do wrong? Why does the Torah accuse Moshe Rabbeinu of lacking faith and preventing the sanctification of Hashem's Name? The answer is that by losing his patience and hitting the rock again, Moshe prevented the above-mentioned miracle from occurring. R' Eliyahu adds: What is the purpose of this miracle? One possibility is that the appearance of a raging river that began as an almost microscopic trickle coming out of the Holy of Holies—a place where there is no natural spring—will reinforce mankind's belief in Creation “yesh me'ayin” / “something out of nothing.”

Another possibility is to indicate that the closer one is to holiness, the smaller he appears at first; in the end, however, an overpowering rush of holiness will sweep away the wicked who are distant from holiness. (Aggadot Eliyahu: Shekalim)

### True believers

"המה מי מריבה אשר רבו בני ישראל את ד' ויקדש בם" - יכול היה אהרן לומר: רבונו של עולם, לא עברתי על דבריך, למה אני מת? וכן משה: על "למה לא תביאו את הקהל הזה?" משל למה לדבר דומה? לשתי נשים שלוקות בבית דין - אחת שקלקלה בזנות ואחת שאכלה פגי שביעית. אמרה להם אותה שאכלה פגי שביעית: בבקשה מכם, הודיעו לבריות על מה אני לוקה, שלא יאמרו אף אני קלקלתי, הביאו פגי שביעית ותלו עליה ואמרו: זו קלקלה ולקתה, וזו אכלה פגי שביעית ולקתה... אף כך אמר משה רבינו: הרי גזרת עלי למות במדבר עם הדור הזה שהכעיסוך - עכשו יאמרו לדורות הבאים שאני כמותם - יכתב עלי על מה נענשתי, לפיכך נאמר "יען לא האמתם בני".

[במדבר רבה י"ט, ו']

ויאמר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן יען לא האמתם בני להקדישני לעיני בני ישראל לכן לא תביאו את הקהל הזה אל הארץ אשר נתתי להם

**"Hashem said to Moshe and to Aharon, 'Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of Bnei Yisrael, therefore you will not bring this congregation to the Land that I have given them.'**

(20:12) **R' David Halevi** z"l (Taz; 1586-1667) writes: Many ask: Didn't Hashem previously tell Moshe that he would not enter Eretz Yisrael because he questioned how Hashem was going about redeeming Bnei Yisrael from Egypt? (See Rashi to Shmot 6:1) He answers: Moshe's sin in Egypt was committed privately. Therefore, his punishment was annulled when all of Bnei Yisrael were sentenced to die in the desert, lest it appear that he was no better than they. Now, when Moshe sinned again in a very public fashion, he was punished anew. (Divrei David) **R' Yehuda He'chassid** z"l (Germany; died 1217) asks: Hashem has many ways of punishing one who sins. Why did Moshe Rabbeinu have to \*die\* for this particular act? He answers: It is noteworthy that Moshe's downfall came about through the very same implement that he used to perform so many miracles — the staff. This is meant to serve as a lesson to us that Hashem does not show favoritism. Despite all the good that Moshe did, he too was punished severely—with death—for his sin. Also, this teaches

that, although Moshe Rabbeinu said (Devarim 30:20) that clinging to Hashem is "your life and the length of your days," he meant this to refer to Olam Haba, not to This World. Thus, if a tzaddik dies young—Moshe Rabbeinu died at a younger age than any of his ancestors going all the way back to Adam Ha'rishon—no one should think that the Torah's promise was not kept. (Sefer Ha'chassidim)

**"Hashem said to Moshe and to Aharon, 'Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of Bnei Yisrael, therefore you will not bring this congregation to the Land that I have given them.'**

**They are the waters of strife . . ."** (20:12-13) Our Sages teach that the reason that Pharaoh commanded that all male babies be drowned was that his astrologers foresaw that the redeemer of Bnei Yisrael would meet his downfall through water, as in fact happened to Moshe in our parashah. Why water? asks **R' Yehuda Loewe** z"l (the Maharal of Prague; died 1609). Moreover, how could the astrologers foresee something that was dependent upon Moshe Rabbeinu's free will? Maharal explains: Obviously the astrologers did not foresee the exact event that occurred in our parashah. [If they had, they would not have thought that the redeemer could be drowned as an infant.] Rather, they saw that the nature of the redeemer (Moshe) would be the opposite of the nature of water. How so? The world consists of "chomer" (the raw "materials" of nature) and "tzurah" (the "forms" that are developed out of that raw material). In all of history, Moshe Rabbeinu was the person who came closest to perfection—the ultimate tzurah. In contrast, water has no tzurah at all. Moreover, the nature of water is to dissolve a tzurah with which it comes in contact back into chomer. This is why Noach's generation was punished with water; having corrupted their tzurah in the worst way possible, their fate was to be turned back into chomer. And, this is what the astrologers saw—the redeemer of Bnei Yisrael could meet his downfall only through water. (Gevurot Hashem)

המה מי מריבה אשר רבו בני ישראל את ה' ויקדש בם

**"\*They\* are the waters of strife, where Bnei Yisrael contended with**

**Hashem, and He was sanctified through them."** (20:13) Rashi z"l comments: "These are \*they\* that were alluded to, though unwittingly, on another occasion. It was these waters [which caused Moshe's death] that Pharaoh's astrologers foresaw, saying that Israel's deliverer would be punished through water. For that reason they had decreed (Shmot 1:22) 'Every son that is born shall you cast into the river'." **R' Menachem Ben-Zion Zaks** z"l (rosh yeshiva in Chicago) observes: The evil Pharaoh could not kill Moshe. Indeed, Pharaoh's own daughter made a mockery of his decree by raising Moshe in the royal palace. But the "waters of strife"—the infighting of the Jewish People—were able to kill Moshe. This, writes R' Zaks, is a recurring problem in our history. Whereas our enemies fail to destroy us and to implant seeds of impurity within us, we manage to inflict these wounds on ourselves. This is true in particular when we attack our own leaders, actions which have far-reaching consequences and which cause lingering hatred. This characteristic of our People was noted long ago by the prophet Yeshayah (49:18), "Those who cause your ruin, and your destroyers, are from you." We read in Tehilim (81:8), "I will test you at the waters of strife, selah." This is the ultimate test that G-d places before us constantly: Can we overcome that failing which led to the "waters of strife" and killed Moshe and Aharon? (Menachem Zion)

וישלח משה מלאכים מקדש אל-מלך אדום כה אמר אחיך ישראל אתה ידעת את כל-התלאה אשר מצאתנו

We read in our parashah (20:14-17), **"Moshe sent emissaries from Kadesh to the king of Edom: 'So said your brother Yisrael—You know all the hardship that has befallen us: Our forefathers descended to Egypt and we dwelt in Egypt many years, and the Egyptians did evil to us and to our forefathers. We cried out to Hashem and He heard our voice; He sent an emissary and took us out of Egypt; now behold! We are in Kadesh, a city at the edge of your border. Let us pass through your land! We shall not pass through field or vineyard, and we shall not drink well water; on the king's road we will travel—we will**

**not veer right or left—until we have passed through your borders’.**”

Why did Moshe appeal to Edom (the descendants of Esav) as a “brother”? Also, why did Moshe mention Bnei Yisrael’s suffering in Egypt? **R’ Chaim Palagi** z”l (1788-1868; Chief Rabbi of Izmir, Turkey) explains: Eretz Yisrael’s holiness derives from the fact that it is where Creation began. Being closer to the Source, it receives the Divine flow of goodness more directly, and it therefore is more complete. (This, writes R’ Palagi, is reflected in the fact that Eretz Yisrael contains a little bit of nearly all of the world’s climates.) In matters of spirituality, also, Eretz Yisrael’s goodness is more authentic and complete. Halachah dictates that younger siblings honor their firstborn brother. This is for exactly the same reason that Eretz Yisrael has a special status, i.e., each of them is closer to its source. Moshe’s message to Edom was: Do not worry that we will harm you as we pass through your land. For the same reason that we desire Eretz Yisrael, we honor you as descendants of our firstborn brother, Esav. If so, why are we claiming Eretz Yisrael for ourselves? Because, by being enslaved in Egypt, we paid-off the debt created by Hashem’s covenant with Avraham, while you did not. (Artzot Ha’chaim)

**You know all the adversity that has befallen us** (20:14) How was Moshe so certain that Edom was aware of all our hardship? A clever fellow explained as follows: Our Sages inform us regarding Ya’akov and Eisov’s descendants (Megillah 6a): “I shall be filled, for she was destroyed’ (Yechezkel 26:2); if this one is filled, that one is destroyed, and if that one is filled, this one is destroyed.” Consequently, Moshe knew, that when the Jewish people are suffering harsh conditions, certainly the offspring of Eisov are experiencing good times. (Chiyucho shel Torah)

והפשט את אהרן את בגדיו והלבשתם את אלעזר בנו ואהרן יאסף ומת שם

**And Moshe undressed Aharon of his garments, and put them upon Elazar, his son.** (20:26) Our Sages note the uniqueness of this statement - normally, Aharon would have had to remove all of his garments, so that Elazar could don his undergarments

first. As Aharon removed his outer garment, however, Elazar immediately put it on; this became Elazar’s undergarment. Aharon’s undergarments became, in turn, Elazar’s outer garments. There is a profound lesson is this: Aharon’s “inner” garments or essence - the way he acted in the privacy of his home - was reflected externally by his children. Children invariably reveal the actual values and outlook presented in their homes. No matter how impressive an external facade of piety one may try to build, one’s children see and inherit the parent’s inner essence and commitment to Yiddishkeit. (Peninim on the Torah)

**“Moshe stripped Aharon’s vestments from him and dressed Elazar his son in them.”** (20:28) **Ramban** z”l writes (in his commentary to Parashat Tetzaveh) that the vestments of the Kohen Gadol must be made with kavanah / intention to perform the mitzvah of making the vestments. **R’ Aharon Lewin** z”l hy”d (the Reisher Rav; killed in the Holocaust) asks: There is a halachic dispute whether kavanah is an essential aspect of mitzvah performance. According to the view that all mitzvot require kavanah, why does Ramban single out this mitzvah? And, if one holds that mitzvot do not require kavanah as an essential aspect of their performance, why should this mitzvah be different? He answers: Only in rare instances does the Torah tell us a reason for a mitzvah. For example, the Torah says (Shmot 28:2), “You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor.” In such cases, everyone would agree that the mitzvah requires specific intention to accomplish the reason specified in the Torah. **Two more examples:** The Torah says (Vayikra 23:42-43), “You shall dwell in sukkot for a seven-day period; every native in Yisrael shall dwell in booths, so that your generations will know that I caused Bnei Yisrael to dwell in sukkot when I took them from the land of Egypt; I am Hashem, your G-d.” **R’ Yoel Sirkes** z”l (the Bach; 1561-1640) rules that one has not fulfilled the mitzvah of eating in the sukkah properly if he does not focus on the fact that G-d provided shelter to Bnei Yisrael in the desert. The

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iTorah says (Bemidbar 15:38-40), “Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them that they shall make themselves tzitzit on the corners of

their garments... So that you may remember and perform all My commandments and be holy to your G-d." Therefore, wearing tzitzit requires a person have kavanah to remember all the mitzvot. (Ha'drash Ve'ha'iyun)

**ויראו כל-העדה כי גוע אהרן ויבכו את-אהרן שלשים יום כל בית ישראל**

**"When the entire assembly saw that Aharon had died, they wept for Aharon for thirty days, the entire House of Yisrael."**

(20:29) Rashi z"l writes: "The entire' – both men and women, because Aharon used to pursue peace and promote love between contending parties, and between man and wife." **R' Yitzhak Dadon** (Yeshivat Merkaz Harav in Yerushalayim) illustrates the degree to which a person can go to prevent bad feelings between people with the following story: **R' Avraham Elkanah**

**Kahana-Shapira** z"l (1914-2007; rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel) was invited to attend a bar mitzvah, but when the day came, he felt ill. Reluctantly, he agreed to his family's entreaties that he remain at home. Suddenly, R' Shapira asked whether the bar mitzvah boy has an older brother and, if so, whether he (R' Shapira) had attended the older brother's bar mitzvah. When both questions were answered in the affirmative, R' Shapira got up and said, "In that case I must go. Otherwise, the bar mitzvah boy could be hurt because I came to his brother's bar mitzvah, but not to his." (Rosh Devarcha)

**Rabbi Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira**, born May 20 1913; died September 27 2007 Ashkenazi chief rabbi, he was one of Israel's most divisive religious figures. Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi (1983-93), Avraham Shapira who has died, aged 94, was a champion of the settler movement, a revered adjudicator of Jewish law - and one of Israel's most divisive religious figures. Still active into his 90s he won notoriety - even among fellow Orthodox Jews - when he urged soldiers to disobey orders to evacuate the Gaza Strip in 2005. Shapira believed that the territory Israel had won in 1967 was promised by God and belonged to Jews in perpetuity.

"Surrendering" an inch of sacred turf was tantamount to blasphemy, he felt. While such views are commonplace in rightist circles, Shapira's willingness to defy the army signified a huge breach within Israel's "national religious" camp, especially coming from such an establishment figure. His proteges traditionally encourage military service as a patriotic duty. Given that most NCOs now come from Israel's observant minority, the rabbi's stance seemed all the more corrosive. Shapira invariably warned

against violence, and in 1995 he had condemned Yitzhak Rabin's ostensibly religious assassin as a man "without conscience or Jewish morality". Even so, his 2005 edict sparked fears of civil war. One Labour party legislator wanted him tried for incitement to rebellion. In the event only 40 soldiers obeyed his call. The disengagement passed with considerable ideological pantomime and sad tales of personal upheaval, but no serious casualties. None the less, opposition leader Yossi Beilin felt Shapira had misled an entire generation by hinting that divine intervention may stop the process. When the pullout did happen, it left behind the "biggest spiritual crisis in years". Gaza was not Shapira's first foray into politics. Soon after leaving the chief rabbinate he co-founded the Rabbis' Union for the Complete Land of Israel. Its 500 clerics attacked the Oslo Accords for transferring land to Palestinians - forbidden under Jewish law, they claimed. In 2003 Shapira asked the Knesset to boycott a ceremony honouring the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. American evangelicals, he claimed, were deceiving Jews and Christians into imagining a "common faith shared by both". Shapira inspired thousands as dean of the Mercaz Ha-Rav Kook Yeshiva, one of Israel's largest talmudic academies and the flagship of religious Zionism. He probably wielded more influence in that post than as chief rabbi, as most settlement rabbis are Mercaz graduates. Many national religious Jews, who make up two-thirds of Israel's 12% observant minority, considered Shapira the gadol ha-dor - greatest authority of his generation on Jewish law. Shapira's tenure at Mercaz was not without incident. **Rabbi Tzvi Tau**, seen as an obvious spiritual heir, resented being bypassed as rosh yeshiva. Eventually Tau left Mercaz in 1997 to form the more philosophically engaged and Bible-focused Yeshivat Har ha-Mor. Shapira preferred students to study Talmud and halakha (Jewish law). The final straw came when Shapira accepted a state-backed diploma programme at Mercaz. He was born in Ottoman-ruled Jerusalem. His parents were of European origin and were Jews with deep roots in the holy city. He studied at Jerusalem's Etz Haim (Tree of Life) and Hebron Yeshivas. As his scholarly reputation grew he associated with leading Talmud sages, **Rabbis Yitzhak Ze'ev Soloveichik, Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz, and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein**. Palestine's pre-Zionist Old Yishuv were mostly orthodox Jews who regarded human efforts to rebuild Jewish sovereignty as premature, even heretical. Shapira, however, warned to the contrary

ideas of Palestine's first chief rabbi, Abraham Isaac Kook, and his son, Tzvi Yehuda Kook. Both characterised secular Zionists as unwitting pioneers in an act of divine providence. Where the father stressed the bonds linking all Jews, Tzvi Yehuda, Shapira's predecessor at Mercaz Ha-Rav, helped turn "national religious" politicians from moderates into assertive messianists after the 1967 six-day war with Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Shapira moved to Mercaz Ha-Rav as a teacher after marrying Penina Ra'anan. In 1956 he was appointed to the Jerusalem supreme rabbinical court and became its head in 1971. As chief rabbi from 1983-93, Shapira pressed a nationalist agenda together with his equally fervent Sephardi (oriental Jewish) opposite number, **Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu**. Though criticised by some for partisanship, he did rule in favour of recognising Ethiopian Beta Yisrael ("falashas") as authentic Jews. And in 1986, despite conservative opposition, he judged that organ transplants were acceptable in halakha. Rabbi Shapira also inspired the hardal trend within Zionism - an acronym that appropriately spells "mustard" in Hebrew and Arabic. Hardal represents formerly "modern orthodox" Jews who have adopted the theological rigour and outward paraphernalia of black-gaberdined ultra-orthodox haredim. Yet where traditional haredim generally shunned the secular state, hardalim championed its promotion - until the Gaza pullback, that is. Four sons survive him, of whom the eldest, **Rabbi Ya'akov**, succeeds him as rosh yeshiva at Mercaz Ha-Rav. [*The Guardian Sunday 7 October 2007*]

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**יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי ואלקי אבותי שתשלח מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף לחולים**

אליהו זאב בן בריינדל  
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הרב משה יהודה בן שרה  
אברהם פנחס בן שרה עטל  
ישראל יוסף בן יוכבד  
דוד בן טובשין  
חיים משה בן שרה  
רחמה חוה ביילע בת חיי  
אלטע שרה גיטל בת חיי  
בתי בת שרה  
בריינדל בת פעשא לאה  
תמר האובה בת גוטקע רייזל  
משה שלמה בן גאלדע רעכל  
חנינה בן גאלדע רעכל

**בתוך שאר חולי ישראל. אמן**

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