

whY I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

ד' - י תמוז ה'תשע"ח

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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	8:15
Maariv	after mincha

שבת חקת

Candle Lighting	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
Shabbos ends	9:21 PM

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for all other zmanim

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

One of the key events in this week's parashah is Moshe's hitting the rock to draw forth water. Immediately afterward, Hashem decreed that Moshe would not enter Eretz Yisrael. The commentators struggle mightily to understand the nature of Moshe's sin and why Hashem responded as He did. (Eleven different explanations are offered inside this issue.) Why are there so many different explanations? Why doesn't the Torah tell us more explicitly what Moshe's failing was? The commentary **Esh Dat** notes that just as Moshe's sin is unknown, so his burial place is unknown. The midrash records that after Moshe's death, Bnei Yisrael quarreled with each other. One said, "He was buried to the right," while another said "To the left." One said, "Up there," but his friend retorted, "No, it was down there." What does this teach us? That just as Moshe is a mystery to us in his death, so, too,

his life is beyond our complete comprehension. In particular, any sin that he may have committed was too subtle to be recognized by us. (Quoted in Likutei Batar Likutei) Then why even discuss this subject? Should even our greatest commentators be judging Moshe Rabbenu, the "Master of all Prophets"? **R' Yitzchak Meir Alter z"l** (the first "Gerrer Rebbe"; died 1866) explains: If a story is included in the Torah, then clearly we are meant to study it. Each generation and each community is steered by G-d towards finding a lesson in the story which provides useful ethical teachings for that generation or community. All of the interpretations offered by the commentators may legitimately be found in the story of Moshe's sin because each of them teaches a valuable ethical lesson. (Chiddushei HaRim).

Getting even

"זאת חוקת התורה" - אומר רש"י, מדרש אגדה העתקתי מיסודו של ר' משה הדרשן בדברים אחדים בענין זה, וזהו:
 א) "ויקחו אליך" - משלהם, כשם שהם פרקו נזמי הזהב לעגל משלהם, כך יביאו פרה זו לכפרה משלהם...
 ב) "פרה" - משל לבן שפחה שטינף פלטין של מלך. אמרו: תבוא אמו ותקנה את הצואה, כך תבוא פרה ותכפר על העגל...
 ג) "אדומה" - על שם החטא, שהחטא קרוי אדום.
 ד) "תמימה" - על שם ישראל שהיו תמימים ונעשו בעלי מומים ע"י העגל, תבוא זו ותכפר עליהם ויחזרו לתמותם.
 ה) "אשר לא עלה עליה עול" - כשם שפרקו מעליהם עול שמים.
 ו) "אל אלעזר הכהן" - כשם שנקלו על אהרן לעשות להם העגל, ולפי שאהרן עשה את העגל, לא נעשית עבודה זו על ידו, שאין קטיגור נעשה סיניגר...
 ז) "ושרף את הפרה" - כשם ששרף העגל.
 ח) "עץ ארז ואזוב ושני תולעת" - ג' מינים הללו כנגד שלשת אלפי איש שנפלו בעגל. וארז הוא הגבוה מכל האילנות, ואזוב נמוך מכולם - סימן שהגבוה שנתגאה וחטא, ישפיל את עצמו כאזוב ותולעת ויתכפר לו...
 ט) "למשמרת" - כמו שפשע העגל שמור לדורות, וכשם שהעגל מטמא כל העוסקים בו, כך פרה מטמאה כל העוסקים בה, וכשם שנטהרו באפרו של עגל, כך נטהרו מאפרה של פרה אדומה.
 [רש"י עפ"י ר' משה הדרשן].

Why Didn't Moshe Rabbenu Enter Eretz Canaan? Our parashah relates that after Miriam's death, the fresh-water spring which had miraculously traveled with Bnei Yisrael disappeared. Bnei Yisrael complained to Moshe, who turned to Hashem. He said: "Take your staff and talk to the rock, and it will provide

לכבוד האי גברא וב' 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 מילי דמיטב מיט יידישע נחת בעושר ואושר ואריכות ימים בבריאות בזה ובבא עבגצ"ב

water." Instead of doing this, Moshe yelled at Bnei Yisrael, and then hit the rock (twice). Immediately, Hashem informed Moshe that he would die in the desert. What was Moshe's sin? Below is a sampling of answers: **Rashi** (to 20:12): Had Moshe spoken to the stone as he had been told to do, Bnei Yisrael would have said, "If an inanimate stone which has no needs obeys Hashem's commands, how much more so must we obey Him?!" By not bringing about this kiddush Hashem/sanctification of G-d's Name, Moshe caused a chillul Hashem/desecration of G-d's Name. **Rambam** (in Shemoneh Perakim, ch. 4): Bnei Yisrael believed that every word that Moshe spoke came from Hashem. Therefore, when Moshe yelled at them, they assumed that G-d was angry at them. This caused a chillul Hashem because there was no reason for Him to be angry at the moment. **Ramban** (to 20:1, quoting Rabbenu Chananel): Moshe said (20:10), "Notzi"/"We will give you water," instead of, "Yotzi"/"He [Hashem] will give you water." This minimized the miracle and implied that Moshe would find water using his own wisdom. **Later commentaries** note that Moshe's death sentence is mentioned ten times in the Torah. This may be an allusion to his failure to use the letter "yud" (in yotzi" instead of "notzi"). The gematria of yud is ten. **Rabbenu Bachya** (to 20:8, as explained by later commentaries): In an earlier incident (Shmot 17:6), Moshe brought forth water by hitting a rock once. By now hitting the rock twice, Moshe implied that Hashem had weakened. **Sforno** (to 20:8): Moshe and Aharon made a conscious decision to lessen the miracle from a wholly supernatural one (in which a stone would turn to water when it was spoken to) to a more concealed miracle (in which water would appear to flow out of a rock naturally). They did this because they believed that Bnei Yisrael were unworthy of an open miracle and that their attempt to cause such a miracle

would therefore fail. In fact, however, Bnei Yisrael needed to see an open miracle at just that moment to refute their belief that Hashem had taken them from Egypt to abandon them in the desert. **R' Yosef Albo** (in Sefer Ha'ikarim): Moshe should not have waited for Hashem's instructions. He should have felt pity for them and ordered water to appear. "A tzaddik decrees and Hashem fulfills." **R' Yitzchak Abarbanel**: Moshe's death had been decreed earlier because he had caused the spies to err through his instructions. Aharon's death was decreed because of his part in the Golden Calf. A leader who does not protect his people will be found lacking and unfit to lead. For some reason, however, Hashem waited until our parashah to announce His decrees. **Maharal** (in Gur Aryeh): All of Moshe's actions during this incident showed a slip in the level of his own emunah/faith. For example, he hit the stone twice (not once) and he yelled at Bnei Yisrael. One whose faith is perfect never loses his temper because he knows that all of his troubles are from G-d. A person with faith is always happy. **Me'am Lo'ez**: By losing his temper, Moshe slighted the honor of G-d's people, and therefore, of G-d himself. **Sefat Emet** (R' Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter z"l, the "Gerrer Rebbe"): Moshe's death was not a punishment per se. Rather, the actions of hitting the stone and talking to it represent two different kinds of leadership. [On various occasions, the Rebbe offered different descriptions of the two types of leadership – see Sefat Emet: Years 5647, 5650, 5654.] Moshe's actions showed that he could not provide the kind of leadership that the new generation needed. Because of this "generation gap," Moshe had to be replaced. **R' S.R. Hirsch** (The Pentateuch, p.371): Moshe's loss of his temper showed that he had lost hope in Bnei Yisrael's ability to fulfill their destiny as a people. He wondered if all that he had toiled for was in vain. For this, he died. R' Hirsch adds: "[T]he impressive fact remains that, on account of such a small, easily to be understood, momentary weakness in their emunah, the leaders had to suffer the same fate that was meted out to the generation of the wilderness for their continuous lack of emunah. The grave of the great leader at the very

border of the Promised Land to which he had at last brought his people, next to the graves of those who died in the wilderness, now bears everlasting witness to the impartial justice of the Divine rule, in the scales of which the slightest errors of the great saintly men weigh equally to the worst sins of ordinary mortals."

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No Yoke

"אשר אין בה מום אשר לא עלה עליה עול" - אם נמצא אדם מישראל החושב שאין בו מום והוא כליל השלמות סימן שלא עלה עליו עול מלכות שמים, ולכן אינו יודע ואינו מרגיש מה רבים מומיו...
[בשם החוזה מלובלין.]

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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)

וישלה משה מלאכים מקדש אל-מלך אדום כה

אמר אחיך ישראל אתה ידעת את כל-התלואה 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 p.28)

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)

וירדו אבתינו מצרימה ונשב במצרים ימים רבים וירעו לנו מצרים ולאבתינו

"The Egyptians did evil to us and to our forefathers." (20:15) Rashi comments: From here we learn that the Patriarchs suffer when troubles befall the Jewish people. With this mind, says **Rav Eliezer David Gruenwald ztza**"I, we can understand the statement in the Haggadah: "We were slaves ... and if Hashem had not taken our forefathers out of Egypt..." Since the paragraph begins in first person, why does it switch to speak of our forefathers? The answer is that the Patriarchs were redeemed from Egypt with us. In fact, in the Patriarchs' merit, Hashem took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt earlier than they deserved. (Chasdei David)

עברה נא בארץ לא נעבר בשדה ובכרם ולא נשתה מי באר דרך המלך נלך לא נטה ימין ושמואל עד אשר נעבר גבלך

By the king's highway we will go (20:17) In our Divine service there is only one road for the Jew to follow: the "highway" of G-d, the King of the universe. As the Previous Rebbe put it, "When it comes to our religion - the Torah, its commandments and Jewish customs - no one can rule over or control us." (Likutei Sichot)

יאסף אהרן אל עמיו כי לא יבא אל הארץ אשר נתתי לבני ישראל על אשר מריתם את פי למי מריבה

Aaron shall be gathered unto his people (20:24) Why does the Torah use this unusual phrase to mean that Aaron was about to pass away? Because despite the fact that Aaron would no longer be alive in the physical sense, his positive character traits and exemplary behavior would be "gathered up" and perpetuated by the Jewish people forever. (Peninei Torah)

קח את אהרן ואת אלעזר בנו והעל אתם ההה

Aaron will be gathered to his

people, for he shall not enter the Land that I have given to Bnei Yisrael, because you defied My word at the waters of strife. Take Aharon and Elazar his son and bring them up to Mount Hor...

(20:24-25) The Midrash Tanchuma comments on the words, "Take Aharon," as follows: Hashem said to Moshe, "Do Me a favor and tell Aharon that his time has come, for I am embarrassed to tell him." What does it mean that Hashem is embarrassed to tell Aharon? What could Moshe tell Aharon that Hashem could not? **Rav Elazar M. Shach Zatzal** explains: We read in the Pesach Haggadah, "If He had brought us before Har Sinai and not given us the Torah, that would have been sufficient [to make us indebted to Him]." What would be the purpose of coming to Har Sinai and not receiving the Torah? Chazal teach (Bava Batra 12a) that a sage is greater than a prophet. Rav Shach explains that Torah is a greater revelation than prophecy. Hashem enables us to see things through the eyes of Torah that even a prophet cannot see. Thus we are indebted to Hashem - first, for bringing us to Har Sinai where we reached great levels of prophecy, and, second, for giving us the Torah through which we can see even more. Throughout the ages, commentaries have struggled with the question: what sin caused Aharon's death? Whatever sin it was so minute that it is imperceptible to us; only on the hair-splitting level at which Hashem judges the most pious was it a sin. Had Hashem Himself told Aharon why he had to die, Aharon's prophetic abilities would not have sufficed to comprehend the reason. Only Moshe, the consummate teacher of Torah could make Aharon understand. The interpretation is borne out by the midrash, says Rav Shach. The midrash teaches that Moshe came to Aharon early in the morning and said, "I was thinking about a question at night and I don't know what it was." Aharon responded, "Let's study together until it comes back to you." They started reading at the beginning of the Torah, and after each section Aharon said, "Hashem created a perfect world." They learned until the creation of Adam, and Moshe said, "What can we say about Adam, who brought death to the world?" Aharon

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answered, "What is there to say except that we accept Hashem's decree?" Only then, concludes Rav Shach, after Moshe reminded Aharon of the perfection of Torah, was Moshe able to say to Aharon, "Are you ready to die?" (Haggadah Shel Pesach Avi Ezri)

הופשט 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)

וידבר העם באלקים ובמשה למה העלינתו
ממצרים למות במדבר כי אין לחם ואין מים
ונפשנו קצה בלחם הקלקל. וישלח ה' בעם את
הנחשים השרפים וינשכו את העם וימת עם
רב מישראל

“The people spoke against Elokim and Moshe: ‘Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in this Wilderness, for there is no food and no water, and our soul is disgusted with the insubstantial food?’ Hashem sent the fiery serpents against the people and they bit the people. A large multitude of Yisrael died.” (21:5-6)

R' Dov Meir Rubman z"l (rosh yeshiva in Vilkomir, Lithuania and Haifa, Israel; died 1967) asks: How is it possible that, after witnessing Korach's fate and after seeing Moshe Rabbeinu draw water from a rock, Bnei Yisrael complained—and against G-d, no less?! He answers: There is no rational explanation for their behavior. A thinking person could not have acted as they did. However, Bnei Yisrael were not behaving rationally at that moment. Instead, they saw their thirsty children and their thirsty animals, and they panicked. Then why did they deserve to be punished? R' Rubman explains: Moshe Rabbeinu must have been as thirsty as everyone else, but he did not complain. He understood that Hashem is always present and that Hashem can supply water in an instant. Thus, Moshe felt as if he had water; he just could not drink it at the moment. This is how all of Bnei Yisrael were expected to have felt after they experienced the miracles that they experienced. (Zichron Meir)

“The people spoke against Elokim and Moshe: ‘Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in this Wilderness, for there is no food

and no water, and our soul is disgusted with the insubstantial food?” (21:5) In Parashat Be'ha'alotecha we read that Bnei Yisrael complained about a lack of meat. The question is asked: If mahn could taste like anything, why didn't they imagine that it tasted like meat? **R' Aharon Lewin z"l Hy"d** (the Reisher Rav; killed in the Holocaust) answers: In the desert Bnei Yisrael were prohibited to eat meat except when they brought a sacrifice. If the mahn could taste like meat, it would effectively circumvent this prohibition. Therefore, the mahn could not taste like meat. (Ha'drash Ve'ha'iyun)

This week we present excerpts from the will of **R' Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lissa z"l** (died 1832), best known by the names of two of his many works, Netivot Hamishpat (the "Nesivos") and Chavat Da'at. R' Lorberbaum's works cover the areas of Torah commentary, the five megillot, halachah, and Talmud commentary. He also served as rabbi in several Eastern European cities. It is written in the Torah [about Avraham - Bereishit 18:19]: "For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him to keep the way of Hashem . . ." If commanding one's children after him brings on G-d's love, it is proper and right for every person to have written before him things that relate to the ways of Hashem and awe of Him so that he may leave it for his children - maybe they will accept it from him, and he will merit thereby to be bound up in the bond of life.

Therefore, I have applied my heart to write instructions that relate to the fear of G-d Who is Honored and Awesome. **1.** My beloved sons! Man is first judged [in Heaven] with regard to his Torah study [Kiddushin 40a]. You should have a fixed quota of verses and mishnayot every day; even though Chazal said [Sanhedrin 24a], "Talmud Bavli includes everything" [and therefore it is not necessary to study Tanach or Mishnah - see Tosfot to Kiddushin 30a], they [Chazal] had already filled their bellies with Tanach and Mishnah. While you never saw me do this [i.e., study these subjects], I did so in my youth. In my old age I was overwhelmed by my responsibilities and I could not fulfill my heart's desire. **2.** If you merit to be among those who are capable of studying, establish for yourselves a simple quota of not less than one daf/folio of Talmud a day,

following the order of the Talmud. This is besides your in depth study, and it should be like a law that is not broken. [Rabbi Shlomo Katz of Hamaayan notes: This was a century before the founding of the Daf Yomi movement.] If you are skilled in developing original interpretations of Torah, set aside one hour a day to study in depth, for the main question that man is asked [in Heaven] is: "Did you debate and discuss wisdom?" However, your in depth study of gemara should be directed at clarifying the halachah and not the pilpul/sophistry which is popular in this generation because of our great sins . . . **3.** Study Tehillim several times, including the meanings of the words. It should be fluent on your lips, with Rashi's commentary, so that you will understand well when you recite it in supplication. Recite five chapters a day - no fewer - because it inspires the heart to serve Him, may His Name be blessed . . . [Hamaayan]

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

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אברהם פנחס בן שרה עטל
ישראל יוסף בן יוכבד
דוד בן טובשין
חיים משה בן שרה
אלטע שרה גיטל בת חי
בתי בת שרה
בריינדל בת פעשא לאה
תמר אהובה בת גוטקע רייזל
משה שלמה בן גאלדע רעכל
חנינה בן גאלדע רעכל
בתוך שאר חולי ישראל. אמן

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