



Agudas Yisroel Anshei Kielce

ZMANIM FOR PARSHAS CHUKAS

Candle Lighting: 8:45 pm
Mincha/Kabbalas Shabbos: 7:10 pm & 8:45 pm
Shacharis: 8:45 am
Sof Zman Kriyas Shema: 9:30 am
Pirkei Avos Shiur: 7:45
Mincha (Seudas Shlishis): 8:35 pm
Maariv/Motzei Shabbos: 9:53 pm
Motzei Shabbos Rabbeinu Tam: 10:15 pm
Sunday & Monday Shacharis: 8:00 am

To sign for the bulletin, submit announcements, add names to the cholim list or yahrzeit calendar go to www.agudahsouth.com/mailling-lists/ or speak to one of the gabbaim.

How To Speak To A Rock

Parshas Chukas

By: Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein

Rocks do not hear. Speaking to them seems pointless.

Targum Yonoson clearly had this in mind when it paraphrases our pasuk as, “Both of you adjure the rock through the Great and Explicit Name.” In other words, the rock did not have to “listen.” The active agent was the power in uttering the Name of Hashem.

Medrash Yelamdenu, however, sees our pasuk differently. ‘Speak’ – a dvar halacha[2] or a perek.” Moshe and Aharon were instructed to speak words of Torah in proximity to the rock.

Here is the explanation. For close to forty years, Miriam’s well supplied the Bnei Yisrael with their water. It had ceased being miraculous, and become part of the natural order of things. (The well was one of that small group of things that Hashem created in the final moments of the six days of Creation[3], making it part of the natural world. This should not be surprising. The One who ordered clouds to drop their rain, and the Nile to overflow and irrigate the land, can just as easily order a rock to become a travelling well!)

When the well ceased to provide their needs, the people assumed that the change was part of the change in their life style necessitated by their imminent entry into the land of Israel. They knew that HKBH was gradually weaning them away from

the miraculous order He had accustomed them to during their sojourn in the wilderness. Now, it was time to slowly transition them to the order that would prevail when they entered the Land – an order we regard today as natural and expected. They concluded that the failure of Miriam’s well was part of the change-over.

That conclusion was mistaken. Water was withheld from them in much the same way that droughts would occasionally plague the Jewish community in the future – as a consequence of its sins. Jews react to such a Divine edict with a set of predictable and determined behaviors. They gather together in a given place – even a nondescript place, devoid of the presence of the Shechinah that graced the Beis Hamikdosh. A leader delivers a message intended to bend the spirit of the people to the Will of the Creator. They conclude with a joint communal prayer session. All of this is outlined in the second perek of Taanis.

As part of their preparation for life in Israel, Hashem wanted that the Bnei Yisrael come into the Land already familiar with the spiritual protocol to follow in times of distress. They would need it in their arsenal. He wanted them to understand its potency, so that they would realize that this program would be effective even without the merit of Moshe and Aharon in their midst.

Moshe and Aharon’s job at the rock was to demonstrate the efficacy of tefillah to the people. They were to do this by establishing the prototype response to an unfavorable Divine edict. According to the plan, Moshe and Aharon would speak word of mussar and of Torah learning at the rock. (A sugya in learning, even though not related to words of inspiration or exhortation, is also an effective preliminary to a group davening

session!) Immediately after, the people would join in a communal tefillah. Hashem would respond by refreshing the well. It would give “its waters,” meaning the waters that had become part of the nature of that rock until recently, and would now return in all their strength.

The pasuk continues. “You shall bring forth water for them.” Note that here it does not speak of “its waters,” but of generic, undefined waters. Here Hashem offers them Plan B. Should the merit of their Torah and davening not suffice, He would still not abandon them to die of thirst. He would still intervene and miraculously bail them out. For this, however, Moshe would need the staff that he had used so often before to bring about miracles. Should the preferred plan fail, should the learning and davening not bring them to the spiritual level at which Miriam’s well would be restored, Moshe’s mateh would be pressed into service. Water would flow, but only enough to sustain them. It would not be terribly attractive, and it would not be available in abundance.

In fact, this is precisely what happened. Moshe hit the rock, and it provided water miraculously, although not very much. This explains why soon after this episode, the people once again complain, “Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in this wilderness, for there is no food and no water[4].”

The people survived, but an enormously important teaching moment had been lost. Klal Yisrael had followed the procedure that they would implement at all times in the future, but it had failed. Miriam’s well was not restored to its previous function. Had it succeeded, the people would have directly experienced the power of Torah learning. Away from the Mishkan, they would have seen a session of Torah learning bring the Shechinah to their midst. Chazal tell us that when a person succeeds in presenting a topic in halachah as accurately as it was given at Sinai, then the Shechinah is drawn to that place as surely as it was at Sinai. Just as the Shechinah rested upon the mountain, so does it rest in the four amos of halachah, when halachah is accurately conveyed. Moshe became angry, however. His anger precluded his understanding of the sugya completely and accurately. The Shechinah did not come to rest among them, and the subsequent davening was therefore not as effective as it could and should have been.

The Bnei Yisrael saw Hashem miraculously save them – but they did not see from up close the efficacy of the combination of limud Torah, gilui Shechinah, and davening. This was a terrible handicap for the future.

1. Based on Ha'amek Davar, Bamidbar 20:8
2. Our text of the Medrash (in both Yalkut Shimoni and in Yelamdenu) does not have the words “dvar halacha.”
3. Pesachim 54A
4. Bamidbar 21:5

**This week’s kiddush is sponsored by:
Leon & Malka Jakubovic and Heshi & Bayla Kuhnreich in honour of the yahrzeit of Malka's & Bayla's father David ben Shmaryahu OB''M.**

Shimon & Judy Sturm to welcome back their kids who grew up in Agudah South.

The kids’ program will take place downstairs beginning at 9:30 am.

**Seudas Shlishis is sponsored by the shul.
The guest speaker for seudas shlishis is Rabbi Schaya Scheinberg.**

The cholim list is being updated for Chodesh Tamuz. If you would like to submit a name to the cholim list please email gabbai@agudahsouth.com or contact one of the gabbaim.

Upcoming weekday schedule for Parshas Balak

<p>Shacharis Sunday: 8:00 am Monday: 8:00 am Thursday: 7:00 am & 7:55 am Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday: 7:00 am & 8:00 am</p>	<p>Mincha 8:50 pm Maariv 9:10 pm</p>
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To sponsor Kiddush/Seudas Shlishis contact Baruch Klein (kiddush@agudahsouth.com).
All those wish to submit names to the cholim list can email gabbai@agudahsouth.com or contact one the gabbaim.
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